

An Ethnohistorical Overview of Groups with Ties to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

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The cover image was cropped at the bottom to delete the caption
“Interior of Blackfoot Lodge,” which is incorrect.
The entire image is represented above.

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Introduction

Among all of the places that feature prominently within the history of the Pacific Northwest, few rank as important as Fort Vancouver. And, among those places that feature prominently within the region's history, perhaps Fort Vancouver stands alone in the sheer ethnic and racial diversity of its historical occupants. A contact point between different tribal groups prior to European contact, the site occupied by Fort Vancouver was uniquely well situated within the densely populated and resource-rich "Portland Basin" – the lowland area surrounding the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. The site was positioned between two core areas of tribal settlement, one on the Columbia Cascades upstream and the other at Sauvie Island and the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers a short distance below. Moreover, the fort site sat along traditional routes of travel, between the coast and the interior along the Columbia River, and north and south through the Willamette and other River basins of what would become western Oregon and Washington. It was located in an area where diverse groups – resident Clackamas, Multnomah, and Cascades Chinooks, as well as interior Klickitats, Cowlitz, Kalapuyas, and many others – converged for shared resource harvests and trade long before the Hudson's Bay Company was ever a presence in the region.

Fort Vancouver was the administrative headquarters and main supply depot for the Hudson's Bay Company's fur trading operations in the company's immense Columbia Department. The Fort was at the core of almost all political, cultural, and commercial activities involving Euro-Americans in the Pacific Northwest during the 1820-1840s. A diverse population congregated around the post for trade, employment, and security. Constructing their fort at this site in 1824-25, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) brought together a characteristically diverse group of fur traders – a cast assembled largely before their arrival on the lower Columbia, during the Company's more than 150-year history of trading furs across the North American frontier. Seeking men skilled in the fur trade with few local loyalties, the HBC enlisted the services of Iroquois, Cree, and Native Hawaiian men, in addition to a cadre of French Canadians, Scots, Métis (mixed-race people of American Indian and European ancestry), and others recruited from other HBC posts throughout northern North America to operate and support the fort's operations. In turn, these men married American Indian women from within the region, frequently with the encouragement of HBC officers who recognized the strategic advantages of such alliances to the Company's interests. Over time, American Indian traders and trappers converged at the fort – both in the "Village" (or "Kanaka Village") of mixed-race families that accreted on the fort's margin, and in preexisting Native villages a short distance away. Slaves from as far away as the northern California Pit River and Shasta tribes, as well as from tribes up and down the

Pacific coast, lived within the mixed-race community of the fort and provided services to households and HBC operations alike.

And yet, the story of Fort Vancouver is even more complex than this description might suggest. The roughly 25 years of sole HBC occupation of the Fort Vancouver site represented a period of dramatic demographic change, perhaps the most dramatic changes ever known, on the lower Columbia River. Through the 1830s, the Chinookan peoples and other tribes of the lower Columbia River region were decimated by diseases. Some estimates suggest up to 90% of the population perished during the time of HBC operations at Fort Vancouver. By the end of that decade, many spectators describe the remaining Chinookans as scarce, while new peoples – Klickitats and other tribes of the interior Northwest - were occupying their village sites and their commercial roles in the Portland Basin. Through the 1840s, the HBC increasingly looked inland, to interior tribes less affected by the epidemics or the initial overexploitation of furs, for both trade alliances and intermarriages. By the early 1850s, the arrival of the American military at Fort Vancouver dramatically transformed the role of the fort for Pacific Northwest tribes. The Village community slowly dispersed along numerous pathways, while tribes residing nearby were assigned to various reservations, strategically positioned away from the growing non-Native settlements of the Portland Basin. Between 1855 and 1879 – a period of almost precisely equal length to the era of exclusive HBC occupation of Fort Vancouver – the Vancouver Barracks became a place where Indians were gathered together in preparation for relocation to reservations and where prisoners of war were detained from numerous Indian wars of the West. Members of the Nez Perce, Paiute, Bannock, Shoshone, Yakama and other tribes all were represented in the prisoner population of the Barracks. In the aggregate, then, during the period of HBC management at Fort Vancouver, almost every tribe in the Pacific Northwest had been represented in some way within the Fort Vancouver population, as were various Native Hawaiian communities and eastern Canadian First Nations.

All of these historical developments create distinctive challenges for the National Park Service (NPS) staff seeking to manage the Fort Vancouver site and interpret its history to the public. Unlike most other National Park Service Units, the multi-ethnic and multi-tribal character of Fort Vancouver is central to the history and mandates of the park. As a partner in the Vancouver National Historic Reserve (VNHR), Fort Vancouver National Historic Site (FOVA) – a unit of the NPS - has taken the lead in protecting and interpreting cultural resources within the Reserve. When taking on such tasks as telling the Fort Vancouver history to the public, or making determinations as to which American Indian tribes should be consulted when human remains are encountered, NPS staff have been called upon to make decisions about historical tribal affiliation based on the complex and sometimes elusive history of Native peoples at the fort. The current document has been developed, in part, to provide a little more context and clarity to these efforts.

This document summarizes the outcomes of an effort to identify the diverse human populations associated with Fort Vancouver. Through a review of ethnographic, historical, and ethnohistorical information found in various research libraries and archives, this research has sought to illuminate the many reasons that Native Americans converged at the fort and to reconstruct the paths taken by these people after their departure. In the process, we are able to identify those modern communities that are significantly linked to the history of Fort Vancouver – in turn, this will allow the NPS to better engage these contemporary groups in the protection and public interpretation of the park. The study represents what is sometimes termed a “traditional association study,” within the National Park Service, a study that seeks to identify contemporary populations that possess historical ties to a NPS unit, using historical and ethnohistorical methods. Such studies represent a necessary first step for making determinations of cultural affiliation under the terms of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in the event of future inadvertent discoveries on federal lands managed by the NPS. Beyond its NAGPRA implications, however, the study will assist the NPS in interpretation of the site to the public, tribal coordination for Section 106 of the NHPA, and in the maintenance of government-to-government relations with American Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. The report should also have some value in developing interpretation on the park’s history: a major goal in the park’s General Management Plan is to interpret “Kanaka Village” to the public, and this study will provide a better means to interpret the multi-cultural nature of the Village. Taking a principally ethnohistorical approach, this study will also provide a baseline for future anthropological, sociological or other cultural studies related to its core themes.

The current project was initiated to achieve these various goals by FOVA staff – principally Drs. Douglas Wilson and Robert Cromwell – working in collaboration with the Pacific-West Regional Anthropologist, Dr. Frederick York. The project was funded with NPS Ethnography Program support and this funding was obligated to the University of Washington Pacific Northwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (PNW-CESU) under cooperative agreement # CA9088A0008. Dr. Douglas Deur, of the PNW-CESU, was the lead researcher for this research, and was responsible for carrying out the investigations summarized in this document in collaboration with NPS staff.

In such a historically rich setting, establishing tribal affiliation is no easy task. The majority of modern tribes in the Pacific Northwest arguably have a credible basis for claiming some level of association with Fort Vancouver. There are those who have especially strong historical connections, such as Grand Ronde, Cowlitz, Warm Springs, and Yakama, as well as the federally unrecognized Chinook Indian Nation and Cascades Tribes. Yet, there are innumerable tribes who have more passing associations – with tribal sub-groups, families, or individuals who were connected to the fort as residents, visitors, slaves, labor, or prisoners. Adding complexity to this picture, a

significant number of the American Indians and (to a lesser degree) Native Hawaiians who became part of the multi-racial community at Fort Vancouver did not return to their home communities, so that their descendents do not live among their tribes of origin. More complex still, a good portion of the mixed-race community of Fort Vancouver were ultimately absorbed into the larger population of Euro-American settlers, so that some modern individuals who would categorize themselves as “non-Indian” are also descended from the multiethnic community that converged for a time at Fort Vancouver. While these non-Native descendents have no standing under NAGPRA and other federal laws and policies relating to American Indians, they are still among the descendents who may yet possess a keen personal interest in the fate of human remains, or the content of public interpretation, uncovered at Fort Vancouver.

This diversity of descendents clearly echoes the diversity of the original fort community. The diffuse identities of the various descendent populations of the Fort Vancouver community presents this park’s staff with some unique challenges compared to many other units of the National Park Service, in that they have sought to consult with, and respond to the concerns of, an unusually long list of “traditionally associated populations.” This is no easy task, especially in light of the narrowly-defined legal and policy context in which American Indian consultation must take place. Yet, there is a hopeful message that can come from an understanding of these complexities, and indeed from the larger history of the fort’s multiracial and multiethnic community. The modern descendents of Fort Vancouver’s tribal population, while diverse and with interests that are occasionally at odds with one-another, possess a common history and shared interests. If consultation and communication between these groups proceeds from an understanding of these shared interests, the management and interpretation of Fort Vancouver may yet help to foster cross-cultural understanding and to provide a key point of historical reference in an increasingly multiethnic modern Pacific Northwest region. Perhaps this may prove an appropriate way to honor the memory of the ancestors who lived in this place - most of whom had to navigate the unparalleled racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the Fort Vancouver community during the 19th century.

Methods

The current study seeks to illuminate past patterns of use and occupation of Fort Vancouver by Native Americans using the methods of ethnohistory. As such, this research involved a broad review of historical and ethnographic information on these themes. All research was carried out by Dr. Douglas Deur of the University of Washington and Portland State University, with the support of two research assistants – Deborah Confer and Patrick Hammons. In addition to receiving valuable help from these assistants, Dr. Deur was aided significantly in this research by Drs. Fred York, Robert Cromwell, and Doug Wilson of the National Park Service, while also receiving some assistance from cultural resource staffs working for various tribes with ties to Fort Vancouver.

The research involved a review of existing documentation, including a reading of the vast historical literature relating to Fort Vancouver as well as ethnographic writings relating to those tribes who appear to have the most direct ties to the fort. This work was conducted principally in the collections of both the University of Washington and Portland State University. A few materials were also consulted in the library collections of the University of Oregon. Certain publications were of particular value, such as the work of Harriet Duncan Munnick (1972, 1974) who summarized the birth, marriage, and burial data from the mission of Fathers Blanchet and Demers at Fort Vancouver; we also reviewed in excess of 100 published traveler’s accounts of the lower Columbia River region in search of pertinent details. Also of particular value in these research library collections were various theses and dissertations that presented detailed information regarding the fort’s multi-ethnic community (e.g., Kardas 1971).

In addition, and perhaps more importantly, this research involved a detailed review of archival materials relating to the study’s themes in local, regional, and national collections. The information gathered in these collections was used to fill gaps in the existing, published record. We conducted a review of materials available in the Fort Vancouver research library, especially the vast collection of John Hussey’s papers, as well as archaeological documents and other “gray literature” reports, as well as lists produced by NPS staff and contractors of former HBC employees and residents of the fort (e.g. Beechert 2001; York n.d.). At the Oregon Historical Society Library, we reviewed collections of papers from individuals associated with Fort Vancouver historically (including but not limited to the Ermatinger collections, the Narcissa Whitman papers, and the Gray family papers), as well as collections pertaining to Indian removal to reservation communities (especially the papers of Joel Palmer) and a variety of genealogical files for families associated with Fort Vancouver and Champoeg. We also reviewed documents from their archaeological sites vertical file folders and photo collections. We obtained a small number of sources from the University of Washington Special Collections, such as the William Fraser Tolmie papers and the ethnographic notes in the Melville Jacobs and Pacific Northwest Collections. We

obtained selected materials from the Washington State Historical Society (Tacoma) the Clark County Historical Museum and Genealogical Society (Vancouver, WA) – principally publications, pamphlets and electronic resources related to the study’s core themes.

We also reviewed a number of documents from the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, ordering rolls of microfilm for relevant documents such as employment records, Indian store records and reports alluding to Indians living near the fort. The correspondence of John McLoughlin and other Fort Vancouver officers was of particular value and we reviewed this correspondence in particular detail. McLoughlin especially was under orders to provide ethnographic information in his correspondence with the HBC Governor and Committee, and this information was of value in the current effort.¹ A few items were obtained remotely from the American Philosophical Society and Smithsonian Institution archives, including ethnographic accounts of particular tribes and the George Gibbs materials respectively.

Using the federal National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) collections, we also reviewed all Indian Claims Commission (ICC) documents, including published and unpublished materials available for all adjudicated lands within a roughly 150 mile radius of Fort Vancouver. These included those of Chinook (Dockets 176, 234), Cowlitz (Dockets 218, 208,175), Chehalis (Docket 237), Yakama (Dockets 47, 98, 161, 164, 165), and Warm Springs materials (Dockets 104, 198), as well as dockets relating to the claims of Clatsop (Docket 105), Nehalem (Dockets 106, 240) and Tillamook (Dockets 107, 239, 240) that include parenthetical information about the Portland Basin. For each of these dockets, we reviewed all relevant expert testimony reports, oral testimony transcripts, and printed notices of ICC findings.

At the Sand Point NARA archives, we also reviewed all relevant sections of available records including those in Record Group 75 (including, but not limited to, the Letters of the Oregon Indian Superintendency, Letters of the Washington Indian Superintendency, and Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs); Records Groups 48 (Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior Letters received from the War Department, 1/1876-12/1880); Record Group 94 (Returns from U.S. Military Posts, Correspondence from Indian wars; Reports of Post Officers, and others). All relevant post reports were reviewed for Vancouver Barracks (Sept. 1849-Dec. 1892) as well as Camp Harney, Fort Lapwai, and Fort Klamath – all forts that were under the command of Vancouver Barracks officers and sometimes sent Indian prisoners to the barracks as well. Relevant congressional documents were reviewed, as well as Indian Agency reports for all of the agencies with jurisdiction in southwest Washington and northwest Oregon.

Using the information we gathered from these sources, we sought to understand the experiences of Native American peoples who were connected to the Fort, so as to place

the question of tribal affiliation in a larger historical and cultural context. We also attempted to trace the histories of these various tribal populations into the 20th century so that we might better illuminate the connections between peoples mentioned at the historical fort and identifiable American Indian tribes and other Native American groups today. This information is presented thematically in the pages that follow. As an NPS “overview and assessment” document, the report seeks to illuminate the identity and post-contact history of peoples traditionally associated with Fort Vancouver in a manner that refers to existing documentation, but expands upon it through a thematic overview and analysis. Biographical sketches of individual Fort Vancouver residents and employees were not attempted, though biographical information was gathered regarding some individuals in the course of this research. Some preliminary efforts have been made in this direction by other researchers as well (e.g., Beechert n.d., York n.d.); a separate research effort, involving the gathering of such biographical information, may be worth pursuing.

Certainly, defining the tribal affiliations of particular individuals or groups is not always a simple matter. Early chroniclers’ use of tribal terminology was often inexact. Names like “Chinook” might be used indiscriminately for peoples encountered on the lower Columbia; “Klickitat” for upland groups, “Shasta” for slaves, even when the actual provenience of these tribes was unclear. A number of observers comment on how difficult it is to differentiate tribal groups based on appearance, and most observers scarcely attempted to draw distinctions. Ambiguities in affiliation are noted where appropriate in the document, and we have made efforts to clarify these ambiguities through the cross-referencing of diverse source materials.

One of the goals of this effort has been to provide NPS staff and tribes with ample original source material that can be used in the management and interpretation of Fort Vancouver’s Native American history. Toward this end, original sources have been quoted extensively in this document and extended quotations on certain themes are provided in endnotes to this report. It is hoped that these quotations from original sources will be of use to readers who wish to follow up on specific themes, and that these extended quotations can be used by tribes and NPS staff alike in assessing particular details of Fort Vancouver history. However, a word of warning: containing extensive excerpts from 19th century writers, this document contains quotations that reveal the original authors’ racist and ethnocentric statements regarding indigenous peoples; as these statements are revealing of the nature of the cross-cultural encounter on the lower Columbia River, some potentially offensive language was not expunged or sanitized.

Another goal of this project has been to assist the National Park Service in updating the list of American Indian tribes, tribal organizations, Native Hawaiians and Canadian First Nations who should be contacted in the course of NAGPRA compliance and other consultation activities by the NPS. Upon final NPS review and approval of this report,

Dr. Deur collaborated with the NPS Pacific West Regional Anthropologist and FOVA staff to compile an up-to-date contact list of tribal executive and cultural resource staff among these tribal organizations.

It is our sincere hope that this document will be of use to all parties who wish to better understand the rich and often complex history of tribal relationships with Fort Vancouver. This document is not assumed to be the 'final word' on Native American relationships with Fort Vancouver, but to be a valuable tool in understanding the larger context of these relationships. The complexity of the fort's history insures that no one account might tell the whole story, to the satisfaction of all parties with a stake in that history. Certain gaps in the current document are inevitable, and should be acknowledged in advance. In order to achieve the limited goals of this study, the research undertaken in this document has been ethnohistorical in orientation, and has relied almost exclusively on the written record addressing American Indian ties to Fort Vancouver. Regrettably, the voices of American Indian people are largely silent in this written record. Almost all of the written accounts of native peoples were produced by explorers, HBC officers, and fort visitors and, later, by professional anthropologists and historians. No doubt, many of these authors spoke at length with native peoples regarding their experiences at the fort, but their fidelity to native perspectives remains unclear. In the course of this research, it has become clear that a number of families, in a number of tribes, have a strong sense of attachment to Fort Vancouver and can still recall stories of their family's experiences in association with the fort. Their knowledge and perspectives would certainly add much to our understanding of the Fort's human history, and expand the story beyond what we have been able to present in the pages that follow. If these families and tribes were interested, a follow-up research effort focusing on the oral history of the fort might be advised. The resulting research would be a welcome complement to the report that follows, and would no doubt change the way we might think about the role of Fort Vancouver in the history of American Indian peoples in the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

Before the Hudson's Bay Company

The reach of the Columbia River fronting the eventual site of Fort Vancouver has long served as a multi-tribal locus. Archaeologically, this reach is clearly a place close to cultural boundaries, where elements found near the Cascades, with strong Plateau and Northwest Coast influences, give way to clearly "Northwest Coast" patterns of the lower river; evidence of pre-contact inter-tribal trade abounds in this general area (Pettigrew 1990). And certainly, from the earliest written records from eyewitnesses, this reach is depicted as being in a densely settled region, positioned between the dense populations and rich resources of the Columbia Cascades upstream and the Willamette confluence and Sauvie Island below. The density and diversity of the population were remarkable. Like other authors of his time, HBC Governor George Simpson spoke of the area as almost one, unbroken settlement:

"The population on the banks of the Columbia River is much greater than in any other part of North America that I have visited as from the upper Lake to the Coast it may be said that the shores are actually lined with Indian Lodges; this I account for by the River affording an abundant provision at little trouble for a great part of the year and as they do not turn their attention to Hunting the whole of the Interior population flock to its banks at the Fishing Season" (Simpson 1931: 94).

Yet, by most accounts, the future site of Fort Vancouver sat largely vacant. In fact, its vacancy seems to be what sets it apart on the landscape. The future location of the fort, proper, was not a reported village site, though there were villages sitting across the Columbia and on the alluvial islands nearby, as will be discussed below.² Instead, the future site of Fort Vancouver was often mentioned in early explorers' accounts as being unique - an attractive and apparently uninhabited meadow clearing that was named "Jolie Prairie" or "Belle Vue Point" by early fur traders in light of its amenities. In July of 1811 Alexander Ross (1849: 105) reported passing "Namowit Village, Bellevue Point, and Johnson's Island" on his party's journey from the mouth of the Willamette to a campsite at the mouth of the Washougal River. Passing the vicinity of what would become Fort Vancouver, Ross (1849: 106) noted

"Bellevue Point on the right-hand [north] side of the river, although but low, presents a scene of great beauty, compared to what we had yet seen during the voyage: here the eye is occasionally relieved from the monotonous gloomy aspects of dense woods, by the sight of green spots, clumps of trees, small lakes, and meadows alternately" (Ross 1849: 108).

The site made a logical campsite and transshipment point, as upstream from here, Ross noted, it was often true that “the influence of the tide was not perceptible on the current” (Ross 1849: 108).

We know from later written accounts, as well as from floral and archaeological evidence, that the meadow at the future fort site abounded in the staple root food, camas (*Camassia quamash* and *C. leichtlinii*). As Paul Kane noted, when staying at the fort,

“The only vegetables in use among [the resident Indians] are the camas and wappatoo. The camas is a bulbous root, much resembling the onion in outward appearance, but is more like the potato when cooked, and is very good eating... They are found in immense quantities in the plains in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, and in the spring of the year present a most curious and beautiful appearance, the whole surface presenting an uninterrupted sheet of bright ultra-marine blue, from the innumerable blossoms of these plants” (Kane 1859: 186).³

A number of other authors such as Scouler (1905: 174) likewise reported women and children gathering camas in the meadow surrounding the fort in late spring. Floral and archaeological evidence suggests that this camas prairie was not a solely natural phenomenon, but was likely the outcome of anthropogenic burning at the future fort site to enhance culturally preferred plant species (Bob Cromwell, pers. comm., 2008). Ironically, as was often the case throughout the region, the careful and repeated management of this landscape by American Indian communities produced clearings that were actively sought out by Europeans and commonly became the first points of Euro-American resettlement. Fort Vancouver, apparently, was no exception.

The place name evidence is also not especially revealing as to the human history of the site, though it is descriptive of the site’s unique significance as a relatively level waterfront prairie, of potentially anthropogenic origin. Paul Kane (1859: 171) indicated that the name of the location of Fort Vancouver bore the name of “*Katchutequa*,” apparently a Chinookan term meaning “the Plain,” though he did not provide detail regarding the context or origin of this information. Simultaneously, Tolmie (1884) gives what appears to be the same name, or a close cognate, for the fort site, “*Skit-so-toho*” in Chinook, while also noting that the location was called “*As-si-kas*” or “place of the mud turtles,” apparently in Klickitat. Strong (1959: 33) reported a village called “*Sketcu’txat*” – again, apparently the same term – a short distance away from Fort Vancouver, at the location of the Vancouver shipyard. This term has been repeated, albeit with very different pronunciations and orthographies, in modern sources, such as in the park’s Cultural Landscape Report, which noted that “The site of Fort Vancouver, called Jolie Prairie, was located near a Chinook Indian village named *Ske-chew-twa*” (Taylor and

Erigeron 1992).⁴ It is unclear if the site so named was a year-round village or an encampment named with reference to the open, relatively level prairie found there, but the latter seems more plausible based on written accounts. The name does not appear consistently in general studies of Chinookan settlement and so, if it was a year-round settlement, it was probably not especially large or prominent (e.g., Saleeby 1983).

At resource procurement sites such as camas prairies, sitting at some distance from major village sites, it was typical to have seasonal encampments where families – women especially, in the case of plant-gathering sites – lived, processed food products, and socialized during the harvest. Kane was among the writers who briefly described these types of camps in the area:

“During the season the Chinooks are engaged in gathering camas and fishing, they live in lodges constructed by means of a few poles covered with mats made of rushes, which can be easily moved from place to place, but in the villages they build permanent huts of split cedar boards” (Kane 1859: 187-188).

Whether such camps might have existed at the fort site is unclear from the written record, but the ethnographic record suggests that it would be reasonable to expect the presence of such camps on the camas prairie later occupied by the fort. Among the other functions of clearings along the lower Columbia were burial sites; some have hinted that there may have been pre-contact burials at the fort site, but the origins of this claim remain unclear.⁵ Certainly, burial sites were numerous in the Portland Basin and were often found in nearby association with human settlements.

Not only were resident peoples numerous on this reach of the Columbia River, but visiting tribes passed through these territories almost constantly during peak resource harvesting times. As Duflot de Mofras observed,

“During fine weather, Indian flotillas travel 300 to 400 miles to fish for salmon that swarm along this river and its tributaries. The great canoes used by Indians on this voyage are actually nothing more than pine logs hollowed out by fire, and are less than 2 feet deep, 4 feet wide, and 25 or 30 feet long” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 59).

Numerous authors, such as deSmet, make similar claims: “Indians linger on the Columbia as long as a salmon can be caught” (deSmet 1847: 285). This reach was a place of great seasonal mobility, with people moving up and down the river to fish for salmon, sturgeon, eulachon and other fish, as well as to hunt elk, deer, waterfowl and other game, and to gather wapato, camas and other staple plant foods (Saleeby 1983).

Most significantly, the fort site was situated between the great salmon fishing stations of the Columbia Cascades and the vast quantities of the edible root, wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), and other marsh resources found at the Willamette-Columbia confluence (Darby 2005). Downriver people, from as far away as the outer coasts of Oregon and Washington, paddled each year past the fort site en route to the salmon fishery at the Cascades,⁶ while upriver people often moved downstream past the fort site in search of game and “marsh resources” such as wapato: “Roots were gathered largely along the flats of the Columbia, the cascades people going downstream for wappato to the sloughs and flats opposite Vancouver, Washington” (Suphan 1974b: 48). People from outside the immediate area passed through the vicinity of the Fort Vancouver site on extended journeys, while resident peoples may have only taken short trips between resource sites in the Portland Basin; Saleeby (1983) notes that the people of the Portland Basin were quantitatively and qualitatively different than those found in other portions of the Chinookan realm, with a number of “fully sedentary villages” situated to areas of such resource abundance that the need for seasonal migrations to places outside of the Portland Basin was limited. The fort site was thus located close to permanent, resident populations, yet was situated in an area that served as a magnet to tribal peoples from throughout northwestern Oregon and southwestern Washington.

Accordingly, studies of resource use and demographics suggest that the population of the Columbia River shoreline in this general area expanded dramatically during peak resource harvests at these locations – up to three or four times its annual population. The population increase was especially pronounced in spring, when salmon runs were at their peak and camas was being harvested (Boyd and Hajda 1985; Saleeby 1983).⁷ It is likely that some, though not all, of these visitors possessed kinship ties to resident villages. By any estimate, the seasonal traffic offshore from Fort Vancouver must have been intense. No doubt, clearings of the sort found at the fort site were appealing campsites for groups moving upriver and down, perhaps representing another potential use of the Fort Vancouver site prior to European occupation.

The resident people are of most immediate concern, however, and it is to their identity that the narrative now turns. In order to better understand the identity of the people who lived in closest proximity to the Fort Vancouver site, we must revisit the early accounts of explorers who passed through this area. In these earliest accounts, the one large, permanent village consistently identified in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver is located just across the Columbia River. The village is sometimes identified as Neerchokioo. Apparently consisting of both a permanent longhouse and a number of temporary structures, the early accounts suggest that there was both a permanent population and a temporary settlement for large number of Chinookans and maybe other tribal groups, especially from upriver locations, who gathered in the Portland Basin for seasonal food procurement tasks (Boyd and Hajda 1987). The earliest written records of travels along the Columbia River provide surprisingly rich detail regarding the tribal communities encountered in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, generally, and

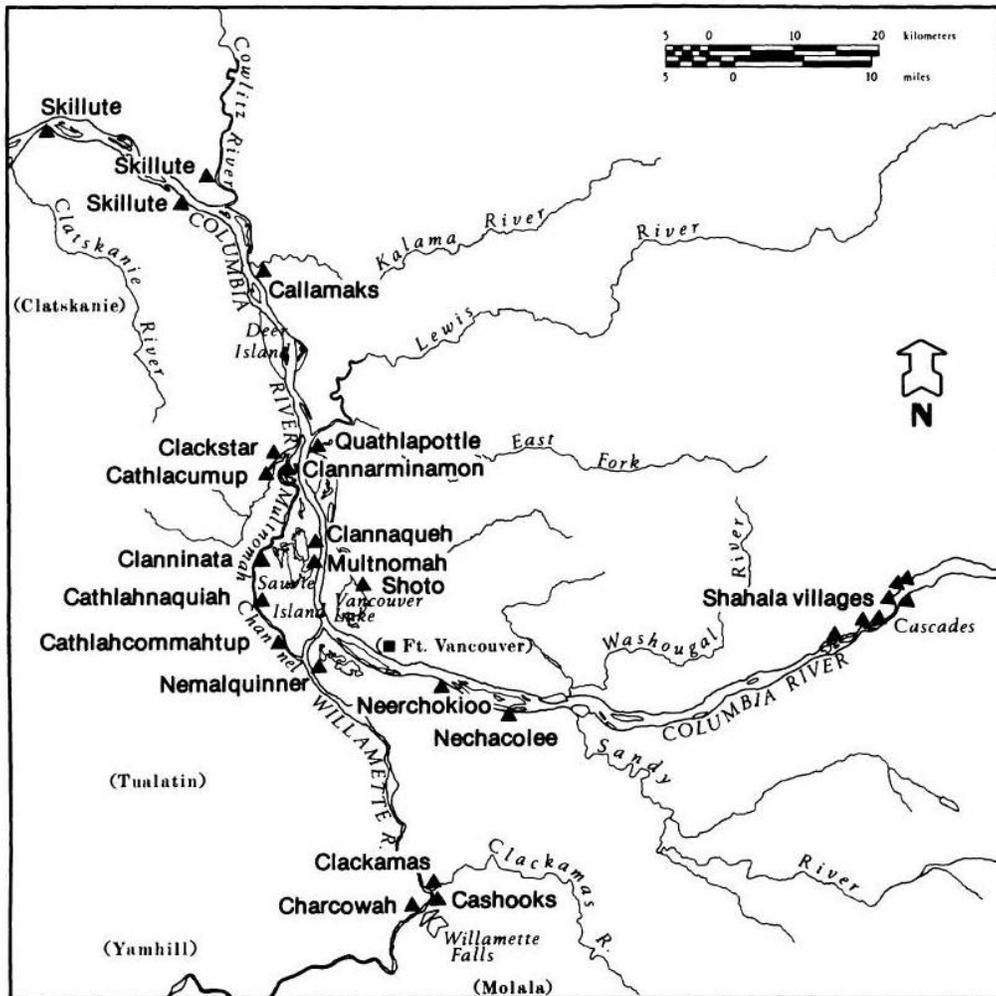
Neerchokioo specifically. These accounts are presented here as a prelude to a broader discussion of the tribal affiliations of the residents of the communities at the time of contact.

During Vancouver's 1792 visit to the mouth of the Columbia River, European observers made their first recorded visit to the Fort Vancouver site. As Vancouver stayed with his ship, the *Discovery*, at anchor in the Columbia River estuary near modern-day Astoria, a longboat crew led by Lieutenant Broughton paddled upstream as far as Point Vancouver, roughly four miles upstream from modern-day Washougal. The principal Indian protagonist in Broughton's journal account of this journey was a chief from Neerchokioo village. On October 26th of that year, as the Chatham crew proceeded upstream near the Cowlitz River confluence, they determined that they were being followed by a party of Indians, led by a man whom Broughton would later refer to as the "friendly old chief." This old man was, according to Broughton, an "elderly chief, who in the most civil and friendly manner had accompanied them from the first, and had a village still farther up the river" from their point of first contact (in Vancouver 1984: 758). This group traveled with Broughton as far as Point Vancouver. The "friendly old Chief" urged the party to visit his village, which sat opposite the Columbia River from the future site of Fort Vancouver – close to the western end of the modern site of the Portland Airport. Importantly, Broughton was able to ascertain that the residents of this village also had villages at the base of the Columbia Cascades. As Barry noted, this was the village "called by Lewis and Clark the 'Neer-chee-ki-oo Village.' ... The tribe which occupied it resided also near Bonneville, Oregon" (Barry 1926: 404). Broughton named the village "Old Chief's Village" in his notes, and named the reach of the river fronting the village as "Friendly Reach" in honor of his hosts. The people encountered at this village were clearly well-integrated into tribal trade networks centered on the Columbia Cascades and The Dalles, and moved freely up and down much of the lower Columbia River. As summarized in the Manby journals,

"An old man who appeared of some consequence kept company with them five days and became particularly attached to the Capt. He supplied them with fish and many other things, as he led the way in his canoe and had sufficient authority to demand part of the sport every hunter or fisherman had met with... They regretted returning as they found the Indians well inclined to friendship and had every reason to believe another day or two would have brought them to [the Columbia River's] source. At the most distant part they were at they visited a few huts and were civilly treated by the tribe who gave them a goose and a basket of very fine cranberries, offered them oil, and in short, every thing their habitations afforded. In the possession of their people were seen a remarkable tomahawk, exactly similar to those used by the Canadian Indians. Signs were made that they had procured it from the eastward, as well as a few little ornaments of brass they had at their ears. If their signs

were rightly interpreted, by pursuing the river higher up you would meet with a fall of water” (Manby 1992: 198-200).⁸

On October 31st, the old chief and his people bid farewell to Broughton and his crew, apparently just offshore from the present site of Fort Vancouver at modern day Ryan Point, which he named “Parting Point” in his journals to commemorate the event (Mockford 2005; Vancouver 1984; Barry 1926: 408).



*Approximate Locations of Villages of the Portland Basin, with Fort Vancouver site Indicated
From Boyd and Hajda (1987)*

The next detailed journal accounts of this area - those of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark - provides considerable detail regarding the same village, as well as tribal

occupation along this general reach of the Columbia. Passing the vicinity of the future Fort Vancouver site, the members of the Corps of Discovery encountered the same large village, Neerchokioo, which Broughton had encountered opposite the river from the fort site. William Clark reported visiting Neerchokioo on November 4, 1805,

“On the main larboard [south] shore a short distance below the last island we landed at a village of twenty-five houses. Twenty-four of those houses were thatched with straw, and covered with bark. The other house is built of boards in the form of those above, except that it is above ground and about 50 feet in length and covered with broad split boards... I counted 52 canoes on the bank in front of this village, many of them very large and raised in bow” (in Coues 1897: 248).

Clark identified the inhabitants of this village as including roughly “200 men of the Skiloot [or “Skillute”] nation” (Coues 1897: 248). Similar to Broughton, he noted that the residents were connected to those Indians that they had encountered upstream from this site, near the Columbia Cascades. Yet, while Lewis and Clark associated the population of this area with the residents of the Columbia Cascades, they also noted differences that indicated their arrival on the outer edges of the Portland Basin. The edible corms of the wapato plant, abundant in the wetlands of the Sauvie Island area especially, were presented to them as food.⁹ Moreover, at Neerchokioo, the members of the Corps of Discovery encountered something that they had seen little of on their cross-country journey: an abundance of trade goods, obtained from the maritime fur trade, including “scarlet & blue blankets, sailor's jackets, overalls, shirts and hats independent of their usual dress... muskets or pistols, and tin flasks to hold their powder” (in Coues 1897: 248).¹⁰ After proceeding on, the Lewis and Clark journals make reference to encounters with a number of people in the vicinity of Hayden Island:

“We proceeded on, met a large & a small canoe from below with 12 men. The large canoe was ornamented with images carved in wood, the figures of (man &) a bear in front & a man in stern, painted & fixed very neatly on the (bow & stern) of the canoe, rising to near the height of a man. Two Indians very finely dressed & with hats on was in this canoe. Passed the lower point of the island [Hayden Island] which is nine miles in length, having passed 2 islands on the starboard side of this large island, three small islands at its lower point. The Indians make signs that a village is situated back of those islands on the larboard [south] side and I believe that a channel is still on the larboard side, as a canoe passed in between the small islands, and made signs that way, probably to traffic with some of the natives living on another channel. The Indians which we have passed of the Skiloot nation in their language from those near & about the long narrows of the Che-luc-it-te-quar or E-chee-lute. Their dress differs

but little, except they have more of the articles procured from the white traders. They all have flattened heads, both men and women, live principally on fish and Wapato roots. They also kill some few elk and deer. During the short time I remained in their village they brought in three deer which they had killed with their bow & arrows" (in Coues 1897: 248-49).

When Lewis and Clark returned the following spring, they observed numerous villages a short distance downstream from the future site of Fort Vancouver – apparently all Chinookan villages, but of ambiguous tribal affiliation. Lewis and Clark allude to encountering "Clanaminamums," "Clahnaquah," "Cathlacumups" and "Claxtars" a few miles downstream from the future fort site on March 31st, 1806; Coues interprets the three to be Multnomah village groups and the final name to be the Clatskanie, probably correct assumptions (1897: 915-16). Just beyond these villages were the "Shotos" of Vancouver Lake, as noted by Clark:

"As we proceeded we were joined by other Indians and on coming opposite the Clahnaquah village were shown another village about two miles from the river on the northeast side, and behind a pond running parallel with it [Vancouver Lake]. Here they said the tribe called Shotos resided. About four o'clock the Indians all left us. Their chief object in accompanying us appeared to be to gratify curiosity; but though they behaved in the most friendly manner, most of them were prepared with their instruments of war"

That evening, the members of the Corps of Discovery camped in a prairie along the waterfront – a prairie located at, or very near to, the future site of Fort Vancouver. Quoting Clark,

"About sunset we reached a beautiful prairie, opposite the middle of what we had [on November 4th, 1805] called Image-canoe island, and having made 23 miles, camped for the night. In the prairie is a large pond or lake, and an open grove of oak borders the back part. There are many deer and elk in the neighborhood, but they are very shy; and the annual fern, which is now abundant and dry, makes such a rustling as the hunters pass through it that they could not come within reach of the game, and we obtained nothing but a single duck" (in Coues 1897: 917).¹¹

As was probably true with many Native peoples who passed along this reach of the Columbia, the unoccupied clearing beckoned to the members of the Corps of Discovery,

providing an inviting campsite on their travels up the river. Had Lewis and Clark arrived a few weeks later, it seems likely that they would have found a meadow that was not unoccupied, but bustling with camas harvesters or the camps of travelers moving along the Columbia en route to the spring salmon harvest. However, the written record allows little more than speculation on this point.

When Lewis and Clark passed Neerchokioo, they found that the village was much less populated than was the case during their November visit, and were informed that the Cascades people had left the area and returned upriver. Their presence there in the fall appears to have been related to hunting in the area for deer and elk, as well as the gathering of wapato (Coues 1897: 918 ff.; Moulton 1991; Barry 1927b). On the basis of this evidence, Saleeby (1983) suggests that the village may have been only seasonally occupied, during the spring and fall minimally, with possible occupation during other times of the year. Whether the remaining residents were also from this Cascades group, or were from a distinct resident group that hosted these Cascades peoples, is unclear in the written record.

“From the River’s Mouth to the Rapids”: Questions of Tribal Affiliation in the Chinookan Realm

While these early written accounts are illuminating, and provide a number of aboriginal names for places and populations, they still tell us relatively little about the identity of the people living near the Fort Vancouver site at the time of contact. In order to better understand the identity of these peoples, and to comprehend their experiences in the wake of European contact, a more detailed review of the ethnographic and historical literature is required. And, even a casual review of this literature will lead us to a simple, perhaps deceptively simple, conclusion: at the time of first European contact, the people of the Fort Vancouver area were clearly “Chinook.”¹² The people referred to by this general term lined the banks of the Columbia River, and possessed a shared language (dialects of the language often called “Chinook”), interconnected kinship networks and economies, and shared customs and beliefs. They were prominent, powerful, and a number of observers depict the Chinookan-speaking peoples as being a relatively unified cultural and demographic unit “from the mouth to the falls” (Franchère 1967: 109-24; Ross 1849). Early writers, such as George Simpson, assert that the Chinook were a “tribe,” the most prominent in the region, occupying the entire Columbia from the sea to the Cascades: “The Chinook tribe is the most powerful” (Simpson 1931: 95-96). Commenting on the Chinooks encountered at Fort Vancouver, Father Blanchet explained that

“The Chinooks are scattered along the Columbia from this fort to the Pacific Ocean. Before the year 1830 they formed the most numerous as well as the richest nation of this entire part of the continent, which did not contribute a little to make them proud and haughty toward other tribes” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 18).

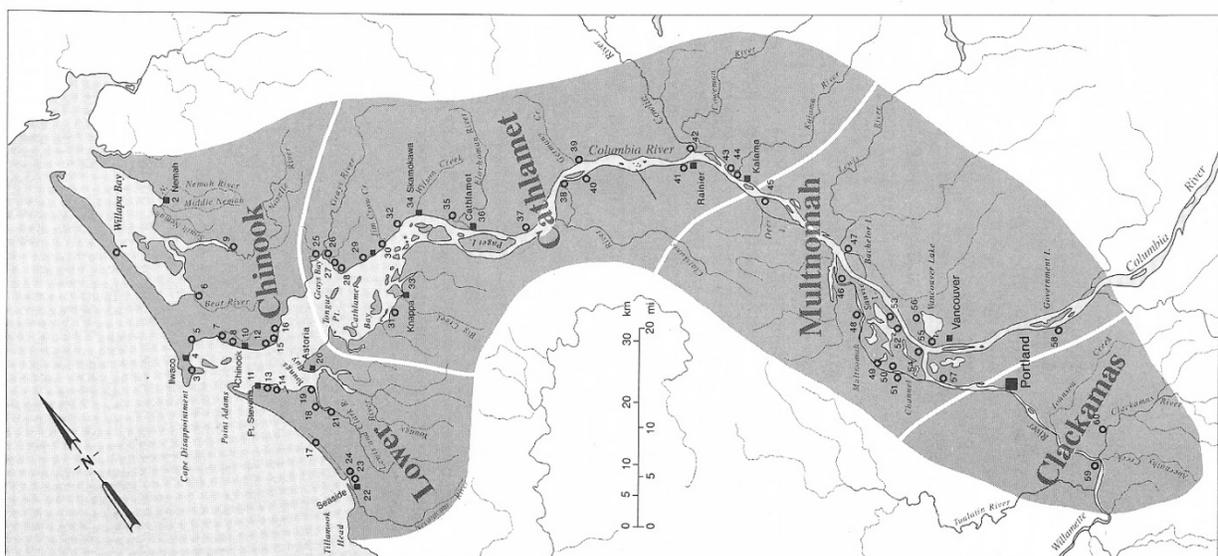
Innumerable examples of this usage of the term “Chinook” could be assembled from the writings of early travelers, explorers, missionaries, and traders. Yet, the Chinook are chronically misrepresented in the anthropological and historical literatures, an outcome of their early visibility and prominence along the lower Columbia. Especially in the early travel writing, there is considerable exaggeration, embellishment, and misinterpretation of Chinookan identities and cultural practices. When investigating the land claims of the nearby Tillamook, Herbert Taylor expressed relief that, contrary to the Chinook, they

“were far enough away from the Hudson’s Bay forts and American settlements so that they do not receive inaccurate mention in the memoirs or sketches of every early globe-trotting tourist. In this regard, the investigator is considerably better off than he would be with the Chinook, concerning whom thousands of pages of the sheerest balderdash have been written” (Taylor 1974b: 77).

Clearly, a meaningful delineation of Chinook population has been a challenge to researchers, who have had to rely on inferences from vague explorers’ accounts and relatively little coherent ethnographic literature on the subject:

“the historical literature following Lewis and Clark tends to be inexact and/or vague with regard to village and tribal locales. Added to these difficulties is the fact that the Superintendent of Indian Affairs had very little information about the Indians under his jurisdiction until the latter part of the 1800s...By the time ethnographers were asking questions about tribal boundaries, the areas had become so de-populated by disease that there remained only a handful of Chinook informants” (Saleeby 1983: 19-20).

The terminology employed for various Chinook populations, accordingly, is often inexact and contradictory – perhaps more so in the Portland Basin than in locations upstream and downstream.¹³



Map of the Chinookan realm from Smithsonian's Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 7: Northwest Coast. Though the band territories shown in this map are well-researched, they are depicted differently in a variety of sources and continue to be the subject of debate. *From Silverstein 1990.*

Still, casting aside the balderdash and the major contradictions, most sources concur on certain key points regarding the Chinook – some of these points being so widely asserted that they scarcely warrant mention here (Silverstein 1990; Ruby and Brown 1976; Ray 1938). Reputable sources agree the Chinook were skilled traders, generally serving as the middlemen in trade networks centered on the lower Columbia River that linked the outer coast to the Northwest interior.¹⁴ As HBC Governor, George Simpson, noted “they are without exception the...most acute and finished bargain Makers I have fallen in with” – a claim that was echoed by almost every fur trader to work on the lower Columbia (Simpson 1931: 96). A culturally-rooted preoccupation with, and expertise in, trade is widely reported in both historical and anthropological literatures.¹⁵ Trade gatherings associated with the major villages on the Chinookan world appear to have brought together people from tribes throughout the region – not only for commerce, but for a variety of social events, competitive gaming, ceremonial activities and other proceedings that accompanied the exchange of goods.¹⁶ With highly flexible leadership and a culturally rooted preoccupation with trade, the Chinook lands proved fertile ground for the mercantile ambitions of the Hudson's Bay Company, as will be demonstrated in later pages of this document.

These sources on the Chinook agree that, as Franchère noted, the “Chinook language is spoken by all the native tribes from the river’s mouth to the rapids,” though most also note that the language was divided into different dialects and that the principal population of the falls differed linguistically from that of the communities of the lower river (Franchère 1967: 121). These sources also concur on the point that the Chinook lived in large, multi-family or extended-family households, in longhouse structures made of split planks from the western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*).¹⁷ Their expert woodworking skills were also applied to the production of large dugout cedar canoes, which plied the lower Columbia and adjacent waterways, each capable of carrying large crews and freight. Visitors to the region typically noted the apparent similarity in the physical appearance and material culture of Chinookan speakers in the communities from the mouth of the Columbia to the vicinity of the Columbia Falls as well: “These Indians of the lower country resemble each other in person and manners, and, with some slight exceptions, in dress also, and the exceptions must be *very slight*” (Lee and Frost 1844: 101).

Populations were generally dense along the lower Columbia – perhaps some of the densest populations in Native North America north of the urban cultures of the desert southwest and Mexico.¹⁸ Most anthropological sources generally agree that each village had its own chief, and that these chiefs were the principal directors of food procurement, trade, and other activities that affected the collective well-being of their people. While individual chiefs rose to prominence as great traders and became regionally influential at the time of European contact, chiefs did not possess political authority over neighboring villages.¹⁹ Without an overarching political structure, individual Chinook villages could make alliances, or go to war with neighboring Chinook villages, depending on the interests of the village:

“Since all the villages form so many little sovereignties, differences often arise among them, whether among the chiefs or among the peoples. These disputes usually are resolved by payments equivalent to the injuries. However, when the offense is grave, as in the case of murder (which is pretty rare) or the stealing of a woman (and this is common enough), the injured parties, assured of the help of a number of young men, prepare for war” (Franchère 1967: 115).

As will be discussed in later sections of this document, Chinookan peoples acquired slaves from throughout the region, sometimes through raiding but especially through the expenditure of their considerable trade wealth. Head-flattening, carried out through the application of pressure on cradle boards in infancy, was the standard among free-born Chinooks and provided emblematic distinction from the population of slaves: “none but the wretched Slaves have round heads” (Simpson 1931: 96).²⁰

The Chinook were also “exogamous,” with a clear cultural preference for marrying outside of one’s own community – especially if this conferred trade advantages to the communities linked by the new union. Particularly among the elites of tribal society, a “good” marriage was a marriage to someone from another village. Marriage was ordinarily sanctified by an exchange of property in Chinookan societies, formalizing these connections between families and between communities. A man of especially high standing might demonstrate his high standing by having numerous wives, ideally hailing from several different tribes so as to produce the widest spectrum of familial alliances (Franchère 1967: 117-19).²¹ As HBC Governor, George Simpson noted of the Chinooks,

“in order to strengthen their commercial relations men of consequence or extensive traders have sometimes as many as half a Doz Wives selected from among the best Families of the Neighbouring tribes and each of those is entrusted with a small Outfit and sent on trading excursions to Her Friends & relatives and this is her constant employment” (Simpson 1931: 98).

Yet, simultaneously, women held considerable decision-making authority within their communities and, as Simpson’s account suggests, considerable influence over the economic fortunes of her household and community.²² In addition to being exogamous, Chinook villages were generally patrilocal, with women usually moving to their husband’s village at the time of marriage; the women marrying into a particular village might speak a variety of languages from their communities of origin, including but not limited to Chinook, while the husband’s village generally shared one “father language” shared by male kin. Multi-lingual communities, with a female population of diverse origin, were probably the norm among the Chinook – an important precedent for what would later develop at the Fort Vancouver community.

This, then, is a most cursory view of pre-contact life among the Chinook. Yet the name “Chinook” is deceptively simple for a variety of reasons. Firstly, the name is so prominent in the early history of the Northwest that it has taken on something of a life of its own, with myriad meanings. As Herbert Taylor lamented when attempting to summarize Chinook materials for the Indian Claims Commission,

“The name Chinook has been widely and variously employed. Among other things, it denotes a warm wind, a game salmon and a *lingua franca* of the Northwest coast. It has also been used to denominate the people who lived on the north bank of the Columbia at its mouth, the people who lived along the lower Columbia generally, and the people who lived on the Columbia from the Dalles to its mouth. It has also been utilized as a

name for a linguistic stock and as a generic term for Northwest coast Indian" (Taylor 1974a: 119).

Clearly, many early writers used the term Chinook inexactly and without much attention to formal conventions - to denote any Indian of the region, or any Indian encountered on the Columbia River, for example. Similarly, contemporary claims to "Chinook" affiliation are complex, sometimes denoting ties to the estuarine community of Chinooks or "Chinook, proper," enrollment in the federally unrecognized "Chinook Nation" with a membership descended from certain lower river populations, descent from Chinookan speakers of the larger Columbia River region, and so on (Hajda 1984; McChesney 1969). The use of the term "Chinook" without some degree of clarification or qualification generates as much potential confusion as it might resolve. This confusion is reflected in the academic literatures that address tribal relationships in this area, which abound in qualifying statements when referencing the Chinook; Salleby (1983), for example, depicts the entire Portland Basin as "Chinook" based on their language, but inserts qualifications that this population was socially and geographically distinct from the "Chinook proper" of the river's estuary - an accurate if awkward distinction used by many scholarly writers.

Secondly, and more importantly, the peoples conventionally designated as Chinook were not a single and uniform population, but instead represented a diverse number of populations, with variegated dialects, loyalties, and territories, lining the Columbia River from the Dalles to the sea. They can be, and often have been, "subdivided on the basis of linguistics, geography, and environment" (Saleeby 1983: 17). As suggested by the description of chiefly and village autonomy, above, Chinookan peoples typically had the strongest sense of attachment to the village level and political authority. Allegiances and political structure more closely resembled the "city-states" of Europe than they resembled the "nation states" of Europe.²³ Likewise, references to competition and conflict between individual "Chinook" communities in the 19th century are widespread. Though each village was linked to constellations of other villages by kinship, economic, and ceremonial relationships, an overarching sense of "national" affiliation - grouping the Chinook together as a singular entity from the Cascades to the sea - appears to have been largely absent at the time of European contact (Silverstein 1990; Hajda 1984; Kardas 1971; Jacobs 1959).

Many historical sources have attempted to lend clarity to this situation by subdividing the population living along the Columbia River into multiple Chinook "tribes" or "nations." Lewis and Clark initiated this practice within the written literature on the region, acting on U.S. President Thomas Jefferson's instructions to identify tribal nations; they reported encounters with eleven Chinook "nations" including the Echeloot, the Chilluckittequaw, the Shahala, the Skillute, the Wackkiacums, the Cathlamahs, the Chinook proper, the Clatsops, the Clarkamus, the Cushooks, and the

Charcowah. The historical writings that followed applied any number of alternative delineations of national identity, subdividing the larger Chinook world into conjectured polities to satisfy a very Western desire for organization and the placement of Native peoples in discrete categories, often in spite of ambiguous supporting evidence. Alternatively, some authors, such as Irving (1836: 85) refer to each of the Chinookan groups around the Columbia River estuary as “clans” of the same people, rather than as distinct tribes. Often lacking a clear empirical basis for these subdivisions, this literature resulted in a number of contending tribal rosters that only compounded confusion regarding the identity of tribal populations along the lower Columbia.²⁴ The basis for these tribal divisions was usually unclear and unstated, but appears to have reflected each author’s evaluation of what appeared to be natural groupings of apparently associated villages; the designation of these “nations,” then, was more a function of geographical proximity more than any demonstrated social or political affiliation. Certainly, one can sympathize with the difficulties encountered by those authors who attempted to define “tribes” in this cultural context. Inter-village political authority was negotiated through kinship and socioeconomic alliances, rather than fixed political arrangements, while intervillage marriages were so ubiquitous in these exogamous societies that discerning finite social boundaries of any proposed “tribe” was nearly impossible. In an early HBC census of the area, attempted shortly after the founding of Fort Vancouver, the compiler was required to ascertain the “Number of Indians and Tribes” in the area; under this heading, the compiler proclaimed simply “It is impossible to ascertain this” (Hudson’s Bay Company 1826a).²⁵

In response to the challenges of defining the Chinook on political or “tribal” grounds, some anthropologists and historians have advanced a critique of those literatures that seek to define discrete Chinook nations. Indeed, a number of authors have suggested that the term “Chinook” is principally a linguistic designation and that the term “tribe” does not apply to the Chinook or any of the Chinook subdivisions due principally to the absence of a central political structure that would unify individual Chinook-speaking villages (Silverstein 1990; Barry 1927a, 1927b). Indeed, Hajda (1984) suggested that “the “tribes” of the area were created by whites – by explorers and fur traders, government officials (especially in treaty-making), and anthropologists” (Hajda 1984: 15). Similar claims were made by the Indian Claims Commission, when reviewing evidence of Chinook internal organization at the time of European contact.²⁶ Questioning the classification of all Chinookan speakers as part of a single unified Chinook population, Hajda (1984) challenged the “reification of language” in assuming a unity of the Chinookan realm and asserted that

“There is simply no evidence that members of linguistic groupings in this region tended (before 1830, at any rate) to behave differently with regard to each other or to share as a group different understandings that they did to those with languages distinct from their own” (Hajda 1984: 275).

While this might overstate the case slightly, the point is well taken and represents an important corrective to two centuries of speculation as to the tribal affiliation of individual Chinook populations. In light of this critique, recent scholarly attempts to define Chinookan populations have commonly utilized local and village-level data, or have ultimately resorted to dividing the population based on linguistic subdivisions (Silverstein 1990; Kardas 1971).²⁷ As such, when discussing all of the Chinook-speaking peoples from the Cascades to the sea, it may be more appropriate to use the general linguistic term “Chinookan,” emphasizing their shared language as an indicator of their cultural associations with one another; this terminology is used where appropriate in the pages that follow.

Seeking to categorize the constituent populations of the Chinook speakers more generally, a number of sources present the Chinooks as being organized into “Upper” and “Lower” divisions. The exact geographical configuration of these divisions varies between authors, though it is clear that there were dialectical differences between the groups and that the estuarine population was in the “Lower” category and the Cascades population was in the “Upper.” An early popularizer of this bipartite division, George Gibbs, for example, noted that

“there were, properly speaking, two nations – the Upper and Lower Chinooks; the former extending from the Dalles nearly to the Cowlitz river; the latter from thence to the ocean... Besides the small party at the Cascades... there are, of the upper nation, but five bands, living at different points on the Washington side of the river, and one at the mouth of Dog river, in Oregon. They number about two hundred” (Gibbs 1854: 447).

Lower Chinooks, he noted, were concentrated around Willapa Bay and in small tracts around the Columbia estuary. While this distinction has persisted in the literature, most contemporary researchers accept this division as being more linguistic than sociopolitical. As Suphan stated in the course of Indian Claims Commission research,

“although the Lower Chinook and Upper Chinook have long been used in the literature, they have uniformly been applied solely in a linguistic sense. Nowhere have they been applied to any individual social or political body that could be designated a tribe” (Suphan 1974a: 202).

Meanwhile, other authors noted that, instead of subdividing the Chinook, it might be more appropriate to designate the Chinook as being a subdivision of a larger, regional tribal entity that embraced other ethnolinguistic groups. Many early authors wishing to

characterize the tribes of the lower Columbia region centered on the theme of personal aesthetics and adornment, especially the practice of head-flattening, which some have depicted as emblematic of a larger Chinookan regional identity, if not a tribal identity per se (Hajda 1984). Some early avocational and popular writers used the term “Flatheads” almost interchangeable with “Chinook” (e.g. Duflot de Mofras 1937; Kane 1859).²⁸ However, these outward similarities were also shared by a number of neighboring groups that made them an awkward basis for tribal differentiation; Townsend (1839: 127), for example, observed that head-flattening was practiced by the “Klikatats, Kalapooyahs, and Multnomahs, of the Wallammet, and its vicinity; the Chinooks, Klatsaps, Klatstonis, Kowalitsks, Katlammets, Killemooks, and Chekalis of the lower Columbia River and its tributaries, and probably by others both north and south.” Thus, some attempts to define a discrete Chinook population based on superficial markers such as dress, mannerisms, and head-flattening resulted in the inclusion of groups that were clearly distinct, linguistically and geographically, from the core Chinookan population, despite a degree of intermarriage and social connection – frequently including adjacent Salish speakers (such as Cowlitz, Chehalis, and Tillamook) and occasionally Sahaptin speakers (principally Klickitat).²⁹

Recognizing that these cultural similarities extended beyond the Chinook-speaking realm, and that all of the tribal groups sharing these similarities were, to some degree, connected – culturally socially and economically – some recent authors have revisited these early claims and sought to group together a regional, super-national population defined by the networks of inter-village connections. Most prominently and influentially, Hajda (1984) has proposed that individual lower Columbia tribal populations should be best defined as part of the “Greater Lower Columbia Region.” Within this region, as Hajda (1984) suggests, tribal communities were so socially integrated with one-another as to make fine-grained distinctions as to tribal identity rather meaningless. Based on shared genealogy and cultural practices (and in spite of considerable environmental variability) she suggests an outer limit of this region as extending from the Dalles to the sea along the Columbia River, as well as along the outer coast from the Alsea River in Oregon to the Quinault River in Washington. Within this region, influence and affluence was greatest at the core: those at the mouth of the Columbia were especially high ranked as they “largely controlled the flow of goods and people,” while status generally decreased (in some cases precipitously) with distance from the Columbia River estuary, with the Columbia Cascades being a place of growing influence through the contact period (Hajda 1984: 280).

The implications of these observations are numerous. Clearly, placing the tribal population of the Fort Vancouver area into a broadly-defined “Greater Lower Columbia Region,” which contained numerous tribal populations will tell us little about the identities of residents occupying the immediate vicinity of the fort at contact. Simultaneously, this observation serves as an important reminder that, even if we can define the specific identities of the fort site’s early residents, they were interconnected

into a web of tribal relationships – relationships that give each of the tribes within this larger region, “Chinook” and otherwise, some degree of affiliation with the community that lived near the fort.

If it is not appropriate to identify discrete “tribes” in this social context, how then may we speak of subgroups of the larger Chinookan population that seem unified on the basis of linguistic similarity, kinship, or geographical proximity? The precise meanings of such commonly used terms as “Clackamas,” “Multnomah” and “Cascades” as tribal designations is somewhat unclear, but they are still of value. These terms might be considered references to particular dialects of the Chinook language, but these terms might also be thought of as references to certain geographical groupings or clusters of villages.³⁰ It is unlikely that there was a perfect correspondence between the dialect area and these “geographical groupings” despite some clear correlations. These terms, when applied to the large populations centered at the Clackamas-Willamette River confluence, the Columbia-Willamette River confluence, and the lower end of the Columbia Cascades respectively, give us insights into the identities of the people who occupied these areas and the networks of villages that they may have occupied. These terms also gain validity in the 19th century, as they are increasingly used to designate and administer remaining tribal populations. As such, they are valuable tools in our efforts to understand tribal affiliation. It is to a consideration of these regional designations that we now turn.

The Cascades

Somewhat like the term “Chinook,” the term “Cascades” is problematic, as it is a geographical term with multiple potential interpretations. The Columbia Cascades, where the Columbia River runs the gap between the rugged volcanic geology of the Cascade Range and Columbia Gorge, extended at least from The Dalles to below Bonneville. Within this range are the traditional homelands of people generally referred to as the Wasco, Wishram, White Salmon (Klickitat), Hood River and Cascades proper. Typically, anthropologists and historians use the term Cascades in reference to the last population, but early writers and travelers sometimes applied the term more casually to peoples from any of these people as far upstream as The Dalles. The Cascades people, proper, are usually designated as those living at the western end of these geological features, and are the population of greatest interest in the study of Fort Vancouver history.

The Cascades, proper, are often referred to as the Watlala. Following Lewis and Clark, many sources use the term Shahala interchangeably for this population – a derivation of the Chinookan “*Saxala*,” or “*Saxli*” meaning “above” or “upstream” in reference to their

upstream provenience relative to most lower Chinookans.³¹ Hodge defines the Watlala as follows:

“A division of the Chinookan family formerly living at the cascades of Columbia r. and, at least in later times, on Dog (now Hood) r. about halfway between the cascades and the Dalles, in Wasco co., Ore. Early writers mention several tribes at or near the cascades, but as the population of that region was very changeable from the fact of its being a much frequented fishing resort, and as many of the so-called tribes were merely villages, often of small size, it is now impossible to identify them with certainty” (Hodge 1910: 922).

Hodge adds detail to this account in a separate description of the Shahala:

“A name given by Lewis and Clark to the Chinookan tribes living on Columbia r. from Sauvie id. to the Cascades in Oregon. They estimated the number at 2,800, in 62 houses, and mention the following tribes: Neerchokioon, Clahclallah, Wahclallah, and Yehuh. Katlagakya was the native name for the Indians of this region. See Wutlala” (Hodge 1910: 519).

Note that the village population of Neerchokioo, on the opposite bank of the Columbia River from Fort Vancouver, is identified as a distinct Shahala “tribe” in this interpretation. This is similar to Barry (1927a: 54), who designates the Neerchokioo and the Cath-lath-la-las as two distinct sub-populations of the “Sha-ha-la.” The classification of Neerchokioo village is significant, for it is depicted as the permanent village most proximate to Fort Vancouver in most written accounts, with one wooden house and 24 straw houses, as well as roughly 200 men occupying the site at the time of Lewis and Clark.

The ties between the Cascades people and the Columbia River in the vicinity of Vancouver are a subject of debate. Certainly, the accounts of Broughton and the Lewis and Clark Expedition lend some support to the interpretation that this population was at least related to the people living at the Columbia Cascades. In his uniquely detailed analysis of Oregon tribal distribution, Berreman (1937) differs with Spier, placing Fort Vancouver in the aboriginal territory of the “Cascade” or “Watlala” Indians.³² Summarizing data presented by Frederick Hodge, Franz Boas, Leslie Spier, Edward Sapir, and the journals of Lewis and Clark, Berreman (1937: 18-19) described the Cascade or “Watlala” Indians as follows:

“Under this head have been included all the villages from the mouth of the Willamette to and including the Cascades. This is the “Shahala nation” of Lewis and Clark, most of

the villages on the south bank, one eight miles and the other thirteen miles below the mouth of the Sandy River. The first consisted of one house and twenty-four temporary lodges. The lodges, they were informed, were occupied by “relatives” of the occupants of the house, whose permanent homes were at the Cascades. They had come there only to hunt. Here were also 200 Skilloots probably on a trip up or down the river to trade. The second village was small, and reported as belonging to the “Nechacokee,” [Neerchokioo] a band of the “Echeloot nation,” which is the term by which they designated the Wasco and Wishram at the Dalles” (Berreman 1937: 18).

Other writers, such as Hodge (1910), Barry (1927a), and Hajda (1984) seem to confirm this interpretation of a largely contiguous Cascade occupation at least as far west as Neerchokioo.³³ Hajda (1984: 63, 119) classifies Neerchokioo as being “Shahala” or Cascades in tribal affiliation, and “upper Chinookan” in language - the “furthest downriver Shahala village.”³⁴ This position is not universal, however.

While researchers have varied in their interpretation of the Fort Vancouver area - especially on the point of whether this area is within the contiguous territory of the Cascades people - most sources agree that the Cascades people were a significant presence in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver and used it seasonally for hunting and other subsistence tasks. Most sources concur that they “covered considerable distances in their seasonal movements” (Hajda 1984: 67). In the Lewis and Clark journals, “Shahala” encountered in the vicinity of what became Fort Vancouver are described going to Willamette Falls and Sauvie Island to participate in resource procurement tasks with extended family there (Moulton 1991). Similarly, when visiting Cascades people near Bonneville on a mission to that place in September of 1843, Father Blanchet noted that “They leave the summer encampments and move to winter on the Vancouver islands [the river islands above Fort Vancouver], where the cold is less rigorous and hunting more abundant” (in Munnick 1972: A-13). French and French identify Neerchokioo, the village immediately across the Columbia River from Fort Vancouver as an “Area of [Cascades] overlap with Multnomahs” and something of an isolated non-contiguous outpost of Cascades occupation (French and French 1998).

No doubt, this picture is complicated by the dramatic depopulation of the tribes living at the Cascades during the time of Fort Vancouver’s operations. As Hodge notes,

“After the epidemic of 1829, the Watlala seem to have been the only remaining tribe, the remnants of the others probably having united under that name, though they commonly were called Cascades Indians by the whites...The names given by different writers to the tribes living at or near the cascades, which may have been the Watlala or later have been included under them, are Cathlakaheckit, Cathlathlala, Cathlayackty, Clahclellah, Katlagakya, Yehuh” (Hodge 1910: 922).

Accordingly, such tribal names as Cathlakaheckit, Cathlathlala, Cathlayackty, Clahclellah, Katlagakya, and Yehuh are sometimes used as synonyms with Watlala, while some sources allude to all Upper Chinookan speakers as Watlala (Ruby and Brown 1976: 265). This integration of remnant populations may have brought a degree of tribal unity to the survivors being so designated: in the early 1840s, accounts sometimes refer to a more or less cohesive “people at the Falls, the Dalles, and the Cascades, who are scattered along the banks of the Columbia from Fort Wallawalla to Fort Vancouver” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 18).

One of the names that is frequently used in reference to these populations, Cathlathlala, appears in later HBC documents as one of the principal tribal groups living in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver in 1838 (HBC 1838). Ethnographic sources are consistent in indicating that “Cath-lal-thlalah” were a population of Chinookan “Watlala,” originally living “just below the cascades” of the Columbia River (Swanton 1953; Hodge 1910). Ross indicates that they were the principal Cascades group (Ross 1849). Morse (1820: 368) reported some 500 “Cathlathlas” living “60 m. from the mouth of the Wallaumut, on the E. side” shortly before the construction of Fort Vancouver. Stuart refers to the Cath-lath-las as well, indicating that they lived east of the confluence of the Willamette and the Columbia: “a little farther up on an Easterly Branch live the Cath-lath-las of 80 men, and along the River” (Stuart 1930: 33). Of them, Spier notes, “Three villages of theirs are known on the north bank, the lowest about half a mile below the upper Castle Rock. The location of settlements on the south bank is little known” (Spier 1936: 21). They were probably among the Cascades people who occupied Neerchiokoo village, either seasonally or year-round.

Clackamas

The Clackamas are another Chinookan population that is often identified in the ethnographic and historical literature. Their most prominent village, according to most sources, sat on the confluence of the Clackamas and Willamette Rivers in what is now southeastern Portland (at the boundary between modern Gladstone and Oregon City). People identified as Clackamas occupied a constellation of villages and encampments along the lower Willamette River, perhaps the Columbia River near its Willamette River confluence, and adjacent inland areas in what is today east Portland and vicinity – including much of the Oregon county that now bears the tribe’s name.

Authors vary as to whether the Clackamas were found on the north bank of the Columbia River. However, a number of early authors, including (and possibly following) George Gibbs (1877), placed Fort Vancouver in Clackamas territory. Also, a number of researchers who do not attempt to specify tribal areas but nonetheless define linguistic boundaries have placed Fort Vancouver within the Clackamas dialect area of

the larger territory occupied by Chinookan speakers (e.g., Kardas 1971: 212). Others imply that the Fort Vancouver area was in the Clackamas domain, such as Ruby and Brown (1986) who note that the Clackamas “occupied about twelve villages, which were located mainly on the south bank of the lower Columbia River downstream from present-day Troutdale, Oregon” (Ruby and Brown 1986: 25). In his overarching analysis of tribal distribution in the state of Washington, Spier (1936) also places Fort Vancouver in the aboriginal territory of the Clackamas, but acknowledges that the dividing line between Cascades and Clackamas areas was difficult to discern in this area. Summarizing data presented by Edward Curtis, Franz Boas, Frederick Hodge, and Michel laFramboise, Spier (1936: 21) described the Clackamas as follows:

“This may be the collective name for a group of related tribes rather than a true tribal name. Properly the Clackamas were on Clackamas River in Oregon but both groups of them seem to have been on both sides of the Columbia roughly from Troutdale down to Kalama, where they adjoined the Kathlamet... Linguistically Clackamas seems to be very close to Kathlamet, if not identical with it.”

On the Washington side of the river, Spier (1936: 21) identified major “Clackamas” settlements both above and below Fort Vancouver, noting that they might not necessarily be appropriately designated as part of a Clackamas tribe, but that “Possibly they should be given rank as separate tribe.” These separate populations included the “...Cathlapotle (Gā’Lap!ōlx, “people of the Lewis [Nā’p!ōlx’] River”)...” on the lower part of the Lewis river [“for five miles above its mouth”] and on the southwest side of the Columbia river in Clarke county, Washington” and the “Gahlawashúgwal (wacu’Xwal), at Washougal, Washington.” He also alludes to a population called “Wakanasisi on the north side (whose tribal name was Gā’L!akanasisi) nearly opposite the mouth of the Willamette” but he is unclear on whether these would appropriately be termed Clackamas (Spier 1936: 21).

A number of sources allude to the Washougal population some ten miles upstream from Fort Vancouver, at the confluence of the Washougal and Columbia Rivers (between modern-day Camas and Washougal, Washington). However, there is little consensus on their affiliation, and Spier is somewhat unique in assigning them to Clackamas. Curtis (1911: 38) alludes to a battle between men from Alaśhíkaśh at the “site of Vancouver, Washington” in coalition with the Waśhúhwal or “Washougal” band of Chinooks against a village at the Columbia Cascades, but the relevance of this statement is unclear.

The famous chief Casino was often identified as Clackamas, though he is often described as being from a village near the modern-day town of Kalama, Washington, as well as from a village close to the Willamette-Columbia River confluence; the latter

village was just south of Vancouver Lake (Saleeby 1983). Casino and some of the survivors from his community were among those tribal members who reoccupied Neerchokioo village across from the fort following the epidemics of the 1830s. Casino was apparently married to a Cascades woman, which might have allowed him to make this move readily (Coues 1897: 797-802). Similarly, the Clackamas leader Poh-poh was primarily associated with the village at the Clackamas-Willamette confluence 15 miles south of Fort Vancouver, but in some Church records, it is suggested that Chief Poh-poh's village was "in the environs of Vancouver" as a result of either a seasonal or permanent relocation (Munnick 1972). These facts suggest that people conventionally designated as Clackamas minimally had the option of occupying village sites in close proximity to Fort Vancouver during the period when epidemics dramatically depopulated this area. Whether this option existed, or was so freely exercised, prior to these epidemics is unclear from the documents consulted for this project.

Multnomah

The people conventionally designated as Multnomah occupied a dense constellation of villages from the Portland area downstream to a point below Lewis River, Washington. From the beginnings of the ethnographic and historical record for the Portland Basin, the Multnomah play a prominent role, and the Oregon county now occupied by much of Portland bears the name of this group. Their demographic core was on the island at the confluence of the Willamette and the Columbia Rivers now called Sauvie Island, but historically referred to by such names as "Wapato" or "Multnomah Island." As described by Parker in the early 1840s,

"This island is about eighteen miles long, and five miles wide, formed by a part of the Multnomah, branching off about six miles up the main river, running in a westerly and north-westerly direction, and uniting with the Columbia eighteen miles below the main branch. The branch which flows around and forms the island, is about fifteen rods wide, and of sufficient depth for small shipping, most of the year" (Parker 1841: 150).

In the heart of Multnomah territory, the mouth of the Multnomah Channel of the Willamette, Ross (1849: 105) reported "the Indians appeared very numerous in several villages" prior to the development of Fort Vancouver.³⁵ The villages in and around Sauvie Island were large and may have been unusually sedentary due in part to an abundance of marsh resources - including the edible root, wapato - alongside riverine and upland resources that were available to most of their surrounding kin. The original name "Wapato Island" was "so called from a nutritive root [wapato] found in the small lakes in the interior, which is much sought for by Indians as an article of food" and was

found here in concentrations unlike anywhere else in the region (Parker 1841: 150; Darby 2005).

While the sources mentioned previously associate the Fort Vancouver area with Cascades and Clackamas Chinook communities, many contemporary writers associate the area with Multnomah occupation. In doing so, they often follow the lead of the Smithsonian's Handbook of North American Indians, which places the fort within the traditional territories of the Multnomah Chinook on grounds that appear to be largely linguistic (Silverstein 1990). Lang (2008: 86), also reviewing the data on linguistic grounds, identifies Fort Vancouver as being in the Multnomah dialect area. Complicating matters somewhat, Silverstein (1990: 534) identifies Neerchokioo as "the easternmost non-Cascades village on the Columbia." He also interprets its original name as being *ničáqʷli*, or "stand of pines" in Multnomah Chinook. Simultaneously, it is important to note that Chief Casino is sometimes depicted as a Multnomah chief (e.g., Ray 1966: B-7).

The reference to a "Shoto" village on Vancouver Lake and vicinity - principally but not exclusively in the journals of Lewis and Clark - is interpreted variously by some sources. Some depict this population as being distinct from surrounding Skillute, Multnomah and/or Clackamas populations, while others depict it as being a Clackamas or Multnomah village.³⁶

Skillute

Simultaneously, a population of Chinookan speakers commonly called the "Skillute" or "Caloot" principally occupied lands on the lower Columbia River downstream from the Multnomah.³⁷ Their traditional homelands are sometimes described as being on both sides of the Columbia in the vicinity of Cowlitz River. They are frequently mentioned in the vicinity of Oak Point and at the village at the mouth of the Cowlitz (Ray 1966; Parker 1841). Despite demographic changes over the fur trade era, this group continued to occupy sites and claim this area into the early 1850s:

"The *Calooit* tribe claims the county about the Cathlamet tribe to Oak Point, on the Columbia River [while] the *Wackamucks* [Multnomah] claim the country from Oak Point to the mouth of the Willamette" (Lane 1850: 130).

The name first appears in Lewis and Clark's journals as "Skil-lute" and was spelled as "Calooit," "Caloait," "Caloort," "Chilook," "Kreulit," "Skillutts," "Skilloot," and otherwise in 19th century accounts (Hodge 1910: 591). This population would have

spoken a dialect of Cathlamet Chinook, and some authors appear to use the name interchangeably with what some later authors would call Cathlamet. A few authors suggest instead that they were a geographically distinct population of Clackamas speakers and, indeed, it is possible that "Skillutes" was a misnomer, applied to what was simply a geographic cluster of Chinook villages lacking clear cultural distinction from their neighbors.³⁸

While the core of Skillute territory was presumably downstream from the Portland Basin, these people are frequently mentioned as a presence in this area. Multnomah and Skillute areas of occupation appear to have overlapped somewhat, especially in that zone north and east of Sauvie Island (Saleeby 1983). Skillutes are commonly reported at least as close to Fort Vancouver as Lake River, the outlet of Vancouver Lake, approximately 8 miles downstream on the Columbia River (Hajda 1984; Saleeby 1983). HBC trading lists from the 1840s identify the main tribe "near Fort Vancouver" as "Tribe Kalats," with a population of 500 people (Taylor 1974b: 59; Taylor 1974a: 123, 131). While the precise identity of this tribal designation remains unclear, the rendering of this name is similar to those used by other authors for the Skillute. Certainly, it is conceivable that this population was a significant presence at the fort during certain periods of time; however, it is just as conceivable that this term was being applied relatively indiscriminately to Chinookan speakers of the Portland Basin.

Cowlitz, Klickitat, and other Area Tribes

Unlike the other tribal populations described so far, the Cowlitz spoke a Salish language without a direct relationship to Chinook. The presence of the Cowlitz in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver prior to European contact has been a source of some debate. Most sources place Cowlitz traditional territory somewhat west and north of the fort, and off of the Columbia riverfront. Early accounts note that they lived on the Cowlitz River a short distance upstream from its confluence with the Columbia River, and that Chinookans occupied this confluence; later accounts suggest that the Cowlitz occupied the riverfront following the epidemics of the 1830s (Ray 1966). Fitzpatrick (1986), in her dissertation on Cowlitz tribal identity, for example, summarized the findings of earlier studies by placing Cowlitz territory north of Lewis River, extending eastward from that point into the Cascade Range. More will be provided on Cowlitz territorial boundaries in the pages that follow. Simultaneously, references to Cowlitz traveling by canoe along the Columbia River in the general vicinity of Fort Vancouver are numerous in early journal accounts. Apparently the Cowlitz also passed through the area by land regularly as well. For example, in 1830, George Simpson reported a Cowlitz population led by a chief named "Schannaway" (Scanewa) "whose track from the borders of Puget Sound strikes on the Columbia near to Belle vue Point" adjacent to Fort Vancouver (in Simpson 1931: 86). Relations between the Cowlitz and the Chinookans

at contact appear to have often been hostile, especially with Multnomah villages, though intermarriages were not infrequent too. Certainly, the Cowlitz spoke a Coast Salish language very different than the language of their Chinookan neighbors and certain cultural differences existed between the two groups. It appears that, in some cases, poorly informed travelers along the lower Columbia referred to Cowlitz people as “Chinook” (cf. Hajda 1984, Ray 1966, 1938; Curtis 1913; McChesney 1913; Scouler 1905; Ross 1849; Henry 1992; Franchère 1967: 48-49).

The Klickitat also appear frequently in reference to Fort Vancouver. Closely related to the Yakama, the Klickitat originated just east of the Cascade Range and spoke a Sahaptin language. They traditionally joined other tribes fishing on the Columbia Cascades in the vicinity of White Salmon River and had a reputation for high mobility – apparently aided by their early and enthusiastic adoption of horses. Their association with the Fort Vancouver area prior to European contact is unclear, but it appears likely that they were seasonal visitors to the area at the time of the fort’s construction:

“The Click-a-tats are a large and powerful tribe, inhabiting the country east of the Cascade range. Great numbers of them, however, as soon as the snow melts from the mountains in the spring, come over to this side of the mountains, where they frequently spend the summer, trading and gambling with the different tribes, exchanging horses for money and hyagua – a shell they are fond of decorating themselves with...Two of the most powerful chiefs were here this summer. From them I learned that the tribe is divided into five different bands; in all amounting to some two or three thousand souls” (Starling 1852: 171).

As will be discussed in later sections of this document, the Klickitat presence intensified and they became permanent residents of the Fort Vancouver area during the period of HBC occupation.

Ties between the Klickitat and the Cowlitz have been strong historically. As a result of contact and intermarriage with the Klickitat from east of the Cascades, certain Cowlitz communities appear to have spoken a Sahaptin dialect, even as the tribe was conventionally designated as linguistically Coast Salish and exhibited clear cultural ties to other Coast Salish communities (Ray 1966, Jacobs 1937). The Cowlitz speaking this dialect were sometimes designated as “Taidnapam.” Some Cowlitz indicate that this pattern of intermarriage predated European contact, but it is clear that this connection intensified considerably following the epidemics of the 1830s; these trends will be discussed in subsequent sections of this report.

Simultaneously, Kalapuya of the Willamette Valley are notably scarce in records addressing the fort community, considering the proximity of their Willamette Valley

homeland. There were a number of social distinctions that set them apart, and early in the fur trade era they tended to avoid interaction with non-Indians.³⁹ There is some suggestion that they resisted participation in the fur trade generally (Jette 2008). There is also some evidence that they were more socially isolated from the Chinookan population prior to European contact than would have been assumed based on general patterns of intertribal exogamy.⁴⁰ Their population also was much lower than the Chinookans, yet experienced epidemic-induced mortalities at similar rates. As Blanchet and Demers commented in their Notice from January 1840:

“These native, called Kalapoaya [Calapooia], were very numerous some years ago; but the fevers, which have been fatal to the Chinooks, not having spared them, they now find themselves reduced to a very small population threatening to decline more and more” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 20).

This resulted in a very low total Kalaupyan population in the northern Willamette Valley during the period of Fort Vancouver’s prominence. While information on Kalapuya visitation to the fort was encountered and documented in the course of this study, this population is surprisingly invisible in most of the written record regarding the fort.⁴¹

“A Sort of Communal Range”: A Case for Overlapping Claims

In the end, it may not be especially constructive to attempt to sharply define tribal affiliation in this contact point between so many different tribal groups. Fort Vancouver sat at the interface between Chinookan “Cascades,” “Multnomah” and “Clackamas” populations, while also, over the life of the HBC operation, being in close proximity to interior groups, most notably the Klickitat and their close kin the Cowlitz. Resource use areas, and even settlements, were interdigitated along their boundaries, with fishing, hunting, and plant gathering stations sometimes being shared or extending into what would be considered adjacent territories (Saleeby 1983; Suphan 1974a, 1974b). It is fair to assume that the prairie later occupied by Fort Vancouver was probably used, at minimum, for temporary encampments and plant gathering by residents of the Sauvie Island, Columbia Cascades, and possibly Clackamas and Skillute village clusters (Saleeby 1983). These groups spoke mutually intelligible languages, were intermarried extensively, and probably lacked a sense of exclusive claims on, or interest in, this area.⁴² Yet, there is some justification for the claim that these were not neatly bounded populations, but that social and kinship patterns, shaped by generations of exogamous intermarriage, resulted in a blurring of the boundaries between each of these communities. There is also considerable evidence of the chiefs of

record in the Portland Basin – such as Cassino or Lal-bick - being variously recognized as leaders of more than one of these populations. Rather than being the result of factual errors, as is often assumed, this may instead reflect the fact that the authority of these leaders was acknowledged by multiple tribal groups within the larger Portland Basin.⁴³

Accounts of Cascade resource procurement and settlement in the Fort Vancouver area are credible, but it is also clear that Multnomah and Clackamas populations also had interests in the area and this river reach was a border zone. This has been suggested by past investigations of the tribal geography of the Portland Basin. Hajda (1984), for example, places Fort Vancouver roughly equidistant between the Shoto villages at Vancouver Lake (ambiguously but probably Multnomah), Nermalquinner near the Willamette-Columbia confluence (also Multnomah), and the village of Neerchokioo (identified as a Cascades village) on the south bank of the Columbia. Meanwhile, Saleeby's analysis of traditional resource procurement territories defined certain "catchment areas" used by each major village complex in the Portland Basin. The site of Fort Vancouver is located on the northeastern edge of the "boundary of catchment" of the Multnomah village complex on Sauvie Island, where the Sauvie Island resource use area approaches the vaguely defined catchment areas of groups living upstream on the Willamette and Columbia River (Saleeby 1983). Saleeby also identifies Neerchokioo as the most proximate village to Fort Vancouver, and attributes the area to "Multnomahs, Skillutes and Clackamas" (Saleeby 1983: 52). In other research venues, Indian Claims Commission studies make it clear that boundary definition within the area was problematic, and boundaries may not have been defined by its contact-period inhabitants in a way that has achieved broad consensus.

In general, reviewing all of the available evidence, we receive an impression of an area that is principally, but by no means exclusively, occupied by people associated with the Cascades. Our conclusions are similar to what was proposed for the area by Berreman in his overarching study of tribal distribution in Oregon:

"There is...a singular lack of settlement south of the Columbia from the Cascades to the mouth of the Willamette. For the region above Troutdale it is easily explained by the rugged nature of the country, which is more pronounced and extends farther west on the south than on the north bank of the river. Below the mouth of Sandy River, however, the country spreads out to form a broad, fertile, and wooded area extending to the Willamette; yet in this entire area are reported only the two small bands mentioned above [both Cascades], and one house, previously referred to, which was temporarily occupied by Nermalquinner from the Willamette Falls...

"Geographically this territory would seem to belong with that of the Multnomah or Clackamas, but the report of the explorers leads one to believe that it was claimed as hunting territory by the tribes at the

Cascades; if indeed it was not a sort of communal range of several tribes for hunting and other food gathering. The latter is suggested by the presence there of an "Echeloot" village (the tribe at the Dalles), a camp of Cascades, 200 men of the Skilloot nation, and a temporary house of Nermalquinner from higher up the Willamette. It may best be considered, however, as primarily the range of the Cascades bands, as was claimed by Lewis and Clark, who also noted scattered settlements of the same "Shahala nation" on the adjacent north bank.

"After the epidemic of 1829 there was only a single band of this entire tribe remaining. They were known as Watlala, which is probably the "Wahclellah" band of Lewis and Clark. They lived at the Cascades, from which circumstance has come their common designation of Cascade Indians. Boas does not state in which dialectic division this group falls, but it is classed by Sapir as transitional between that of the Wasco and Wishram above and the Clackamas below" (Berreman 1937: 18-19).

As this account implies, the population in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver was in rapid transition between the early- and mid-19th century. Newly arrived peoples, HBC officers among them, made efforts to identify and occasionally quantify tribal population in the vicinity of the fort. As will be discussed later, there were two principal censuses of tribal population in the vicinity of the fort, carried out by the HBC in 1838 and 1845. The first census identifies three tribal populations in close proximity to the fort; these appear to be Klickitat, Multnomah and/or Clackamas Chinook (37 people at "Cathlacanasese Village...10 Miles below Vancouver"), and Cascades Chinook ("Cath-lal-thlalah Tribe - summer village columbia Cascades winter village Banks of the columbia opposite Vancouver") (HBC 1838). This coincides with other tribal lists from the period, which suggest a large Cascades and Klickitat presence, with remnant populations of the Multnomah in particular (Gairdner 1841).⁴⁴ The 1845 census, compiled by Warre and Vavasour with the assistance of fort staff, identifies Klickitat as the primary tribe in the vicinity of the Fort (Warre and Vavasour 1909). The omission of the Chinookans from the second census was perhaps an overgeneralization at the part of its compilers, but reflected the demographic reality of a rapidly shrinking Chinookan population on the lower Columbia at this time. If the people of the Portland Basin perceived intertribal or intervillage boundaries in the vicinity of the Fort Vancouver site prior to European contact, these boundaries were in rapid transition during the fort's operation as entire tribal populations collapsed or migrated through the region. The story of these riveting demographic changes along the river, as well as the concurrent rise of Fort Vancouver as a strategic center and multiethnic community, is the focus of the pages that follow.

The Configuration of the Fort Vancouver Community

In 1778, Captain James Cook first sailed along the Northwest Coast, where he traded with coastal tribes, and learned that furs could be exchanged in China for spices, silks, teas, and other goods that sold at a premium in the European and American markets. Since receiving reports of this voyage, the European world had been in a rush to make claims to the resource wealth of the Northwest Coast of North America. Perhaps no entity was as well prepared to enter the Northwest and profit from its fur wealth than the Hudson's Bay Company. The arrival of the HBC on this coast was the realization of roughly 150 years of Company ambition, initiated when the Company was incorporated under a British royal charter in 1670 as "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay," with the aim of bringing the furs of North America to European markets for a considerable profit. Since its inception, the Company's operations had spread across the expanding frontiers of British North America. Their arrival on the legendarily fur-rich Northwest Coast was a move of great strategic importance to the Company. Optimism about the Company's future abounded, and the value of shares in the Company soared in the early years of Fort Vancouver's operations.⁴⁵ The rise of the Company's fortunes in this distant corner of North America temporarily gave credibility to British territorial claims to the Oregon country and gave hope to those who envisioned British colonization of the region. For both of these ambitions – pecuniary and nationalistic – to be realized, however, the Crown and the Company recognized that they would have to proceed cautiously and strategically with the large resident population of Indians living there. Certainly, a century and a half of experience on the commercial frontiers of North America had well prepared the HBC for this task of entering the Northwest and exploiting the region's fur wealth and Native labor.

Yet, the resident peoples of the Pacific Northwest, with perhaps millennia of experience as traders, were also well equipped for the encounter in many respects. The very earliest accounts of explorers entering the lower Columbia mention an active trade and estimable skills of negotiation among the river's indigenous peoples. Arriving in 1792, the crews of George Vancouver's ship were astonished to find themselves in the presence of such skilled traders:

"One very large Canoe with about five & twenty Indians in her, (the second we saw since we entered the River) came along side and brought some Salmon which we eagerly bought of them on reasonable terms; they also brought two or 3 Otter Skins for sale and seem'd to know the value of them very well" (Bell 1932: 39).

Almost every ship that followed attracted large flotillas of canoes bearing furs and other items that were eagerly exchanged for the trade goods of the European world.

Arriving on the lower Columbia, the Hudson's Bay Company recognized that - in order for their enterprise to succeed - the Company would require not only a peaceful coexistence with the Indians of the Northwest, but also the active involvement of these Indians in all aspects of their organization. Certainly, the Company was a formidable presence; at its peak, Eugene Duflot de Mofras would marvel that "this powerful organization controls throughout its vast territories in North America 200 forts or posts, 12,000 white inhabitants, nineteen-twentieths of whom are French-Canadians, and 200,000 Indians" (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 90). Yet, when the Company arrived in the Northwest in the 1820s, it was as a small and strategically disadvantaged minority in a densely settled corner of the continent. Their efforts to achieve "a complete control over the Indians" in their commercial operations were understood to be a practical impossibility (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 240). Instead, the Company sought to employ a combination of incentives and punishments, calculated to open the pathways of commerce by securing the loyalties of the Indians and reducing their strategic threat. Foremost among the strategies employed toward this end was the development of commercial operations that created economic incentives for Indian trade and, in time, a growing Indian dependence on trade goods. As Fort Vancouver's Chief Factor John McLoughlin acknowledged, "it is proved by experience, that the only way to gain the confidence of Indians and influence over them, is by having Establishments on their lands" (McLoughlin 1844: 19). The HBC had arrived in remote frontiers and developed trade relationships numerous times throughout North America, and in the Pacific Northwest they applied their considerable experience to good effect. Also key to the establishment of the Company's influence among the Indians was a policy of encouraging intermarriage of its employees with Native women, thus giving the Company, in essence, a type of kinship status with the region's tribes that insured preferential treatment and eliminated barriers to trade - a point that will be given considerably more attention in the pages that follow.

The multi-ethnic fur trading frontier had been moving ever westward for roughly a century and a half prior to its arrival on the Northwest Coast. Moreover, the fur trade was already transforming the region long before the construction of Fort Vancouver. By the time Fort Vancouver was operating, the Indians of the lower Columbia River had roughly 33 years of trading experience with non-Indians, including almost 15 years of operations at Fort George on the Columbia River estuary. Fort George, established by New York-based tycoon John Jacob Astor in 1811, was in the management of the Montreal-based North West Company from 1813 until 1821, when that Company was acquired in a merger with the Hudson's Bay Company and its assets absorbed into HBC operations. The acquisition of the North West Company not long before the construction of Fort Vancouver had a number of effects on HBC operations; the North

West Company, with its roots in Francophone North America, arguably had a more egalitarian and decentralized management style than the British-based HBC, with the former's employees freely intermarrying with Native women and making inroads within a wide constellation of Indian communities throughout the region. When the Hudson's Bay Company consolidated with, and effectively absorbed, the operations of the North West Company, they inherited the legacy of the North West Company's relationships with tribes throughout the Northwest. Fortunately for the HBC, in its brief time in the region, the North West Company had maintained positive relationships with tribes throughout a wide trade network, including coastal tribes as well as some of the vast tribes, such as the Yakama, who effectively controlled access to vast portions of the Northwestern interior. Though there was a certain clash of styles apparent at the early Fort Vancouver resulting from the integration of the two companies, the North West Company's considerable effectiveness at building inroads in the region would yield great dividends to the HBC in the Fort Vancouver years.⁴⁶

Still, the arrival of the HBC heralded a time of significant change in the Pacific Northwest fur trade. Certainly, the Hudson's Bay Company's decision to move its operations from Fort George, on the Columbia River estuary, to Fort Vancouver – roughly 100 river miles inland – was not made lightly. The changing geography of the fur trade, and the changing relationships with area tribes, were critical to the decision to make this move. The HBC was undertaking a restructuring of the Columbia Department following Governor George Simpson's tour of the region in 1824-25, in order to make operations more efficient and to adapt to the changing realities of the Northwestern fur trade (Simpson 1931). The considerable effort required to relocate from the existing facilities at Fort George, on the Columbia estuary, to construct a fort anew at the inland site of Fort Vancouver in 1824-25, suggests the importance of this move in achieving the larger goals of the HBC as part of this restructuring. Critical among these goals, the situation of Fort Vancouver was chosen for its strategic location relative to the developing fur trade of the Northwestern interior. By 1824, the sea otter population of the outer coast had been largely exhausted, and the supply of locally available terrestrial furbearers on the Columbia estuary and adjacent coastline was in abrupt decline. The land-based fur trade was quickly eclipsing the ship-based maritime fur trade and the HBC leadership looked eagerly toward the Northwestern interior as a source of beaver and other furs.⁴⁷ The Snake Country expeditions, being initiated concurrently with the planning for the new fort, suggested the potentials of the interior trade to HBC officers.⁴⁸ The shift from a sea-based to a land-based fur trade brought a significant increase in the extent of interaction between white traders and the resident tribal communities; interethnic fur trade relationships became more constant, and much hastened the pace of cultural, economic, and demographic transformation within those communities. By necessity, the HBC expanded its commercial operations into a widening sphere of trade networks into the Northwestern interior, and Fort Vancouver sat at an advantageous intersection of the principal avenues of tribal trade running east-

west along the Columbia River and north-south along the Willamette Valley and Puget-Cowlitz Lowland.

The location of the fort also, no doubt, took into consideration the geographic distribution of area tribes.⁴⁹ There were clear advantages to being located in a boundary zone, in a place that was densely settled yet a site that was, itself, largely unoccupied. The absence of a major village in this attractive site was noteworthy, and perhaps reflects the absence of especially accessible fishing or marsh resource procurement areas in the immediate vicinity of the fort. Yet this neighborhood had an abundance of large villages, their residents by and large eager to participate in the fur trade as intermediaries to the larger network of Pacific Northwest tribes. The situation of the fort was conducive to the expanding ambitions of the HBC within the region and served the Company very well in the decades that followed.

Simultaneously, the fort site clearly was chosen for its agricultural potential. At Fort George, traders had been largely dependent on Indian trade to acquire the bulk of their food supply. This created dependence on local tribes, particularly the Chinook proper and Clatsop, thus undercutting not only the fort's security, but also the negotiating power of its traders who bargained with these tribes for each pelt arriving at the fort. At Fort Vancouver, in contrast, the land was relatively level, cleared by an apparently long history of aboriginal burning, and made fertile by the combined effects of burning and freshets along the Columbia River. With its verdant fields and its southern exposure, the site had agricultural potentials unsurpassed, arguably, along the entire lower Columbia River shoreline. Certainly, the site had other virtues: access to deep water for the mooring of ships, and defensive potentials afforded by its commanding views, though these this could be found in a number of other locations; so too, the fort was located on the north bank of the river, based on expectations that the south side of the river might fall into American control.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the agricultural value of this land was perhaps the site's most distinctive strategic asset and set it apart from other sites along the river.

During the period of HBC occupation, there were arguably three primary tribal communities to be found around this site. The first consisted of the resident tribes living near the fort, while the second consisted of visiting tribes and tribal members who gathered at the fort to trade and socialize. The third consisted of the resident community living in the fort and the "Village" community that sat just outside its palisades; this diverse population consisted of men from throughout the HBC sphere of influence – Iroquois, Métis, Native Hawaiian, French-Canadian, British, and otherwise – who were married to Indian and Métis women from throughout northern and western North America, mostly from Pacific Northwest tribes.⁵¹ This three-part division of the Native peoples associated with the fort serves mostly as a way of organizing our thinking about the fort's relationships with Native communities, but in reality these categories were indefinite; each group appears to have blurred somewhat into the other,

with kinship networks uniting the residents of the Village with neighboring tribes, and uniting both of these populations with the steady progression of tribal visitors from more distant locations. The HBC relationships with each of these three populations were critical to the success of the enterprise at Fort Vancouver, and each shall be discussed in the pages that follow.

Navigating Trade Networks and Mutual Interests

The Native peoples of the lower Columbia region already possessed a sprawling and highly successful trade network when the fort was constructed in 1824. Rather than attempting to supplant it, the Hudson's Bay Company determined to work their way into these existing networks as the foundation of their fur trading enterprise.⁵² Such an approach was typical of HBC operations throughout North America and, in fact, was common to many British chartered corporations operating in colonial contexts worldwide. Hiring Chinookan and Cowlitz peoples in their traditional roles as middlemen, the Company almost immediately gained access to the full spectrum of tribal trading partners, extending for hundreds of miles, north, south, and east of the fort. The Chinook and Cowlitz were not only willing, but downright enthusiastic participants in this arrangement. As many authors have noted, this only served to augment the existing wealth and importance of lower Columbia peoples: "The Chinook tried to secure trade with the posts themselves and forced the interior Indians to bring their furs to them instead of carrying them directly to the post" (Bagley 1915: 67).⁵³ They worked hard to maintain their monopolistic relationship with the fort. As George Simpson observed in 1830,

"Nearly all the furs got now at this place pass through the hands of three chiefs or principal Indians viz. Concomely King or Chief of the Chinooks at Point George, Casseno Chief of a tribe or band settled nearly opposite Belle Vue Point and Schannaway (Scanewa) the Cowlitch Chief whose track from the borders of Puget Sound strikes on the Columbia near to Belle vue Point; the first is much attached to us and will follow wherever we go...The Chinooks [are] keen traders and through their hands nearly the whole of our Furs pass, indeed so tenacious are they of this Monopoly that their jealousy would carry them the length of pillaging or even murdering strangers who come to the Establishment if we did not protect them. To the other tribes on the Coast they represent us as Cannibals and every thing that is bad in order to deter them from visiting the Fort" (Simpson 1931: 86, 98).

Yet this monopoly of Chinookan and Cowlitz leaders over access to the fort could be a problem for the Company. In its early years, the HBC had a nagging dependence on Indians for many of the necessities of their operation, such as Nez Perce horses, Chinook canoes, and – prior to relocating to Fort Vancouver – food.⁵⁴ Also, in these early years, the HBC was still dependant on the Indian community for a tremendous amount of geographical knowledge, regarding the distribution of tribal territories, fur bearing animals, waterways and land routes, and so on. Beyond these matters, of course, the Chinook and Cowlitz control over access to furs gave them significant influence over the pricing of furs and other merchandise through the 1820s. Many of the major initiatives undertaken in the early years of Fort Vancouver that might seem peripheral to the immediacies of the fur trade – such as the development of major agricultural, boatbuilding, and milling facilities in association with the fort – might be interpreted as efforts to overcome dependence on the tribal monopolies of the lower Columbia Indians. Over time, as the Company became more established, it worked to overcome the monopolies of these lower Columbia tribal leaders by hiring groups from farther afield as guides and laborers, and seems to have sometimes worked to exasperate existing divisions between tribal groups so as to keep fur prices competitive.⁵⁵

In fact, the HBC and the Indian communities of the lower Columbia River seem to have jockeyed to maintain monopolistic control over one-another's trade interests through the 1820s. The HBC sought to regulate Indians' access to outside, non-Native interests, just as Indians sought to regulate HBC contact with interior tribes – both seeking to monopolize the commercial interests of the other side. The HBC was very eager to maintain its own monopolistic control on the trade with European and American interests. American vessels and traders were a constant source of annoyance to Fort Vancouver officers. (However, HBC rapport with tribes, developed through mutually beneficial trade as well as extensive intermarriage, gave them a distinct advantage compared to their loosely organized American counterparts – especially in interior areas such as the 'Snake Country' where Americans seldom succeeded in making inroads.) Still, the constant presence of a modest number of competitors, principally American ship-borne traders, and later land-based operations, kept trade competitive and seems to have often resulted in a higher price for furs paid by the HBC (McLoughlin 1829g).⁵⁶ The correspondence of the Company also makes reference to having to lower prices and include cheap goods to compete with traders operating outside of the fort.⁵⁷ As McLoughlin often noted in his correspondence, strict controls also were maintained over even the smallest transactions between Indians and British subjects in the region: "No British subject could trade with the Indians without a License...no person in the service was allowed to trade or even receive presents from Indians" (McLoughlin 1829d). Using cautionary tales of Indian visits to ships gone awry, McLoughlin attempted to keep even the crews of his own ships from having

exchanges of any kind with the tribes that might route goods around the fort and undermine the Company's competitive position.⁵⁸

The hub of this trade was the Indian Trade Shop. This shop, located within the fort's palisades, served as a storehouse for furs being purchased from local tribes, as well as a storehouse of goods – from beads to tools to rifles – that were used in exchange for these furs. The building was also commonly called the “Indian Hall,” the “Indian Shop,” the “Indian Store,” the “Fur House,” and other variations in Company records. It was also sometimes called the “Missionary Store” as the missionaries were allowed to store their property there, and a hospital and dispensary were sometimes operated out of the same building, occasionally servicing Indian visitors in addition to Company employees. More than one structure served this function over the life of the fort, but the store appears to have consistently been located within the palisades (Taylor and Erigero 1993; Hussey 1957). Apparently observing the Indian Store on September 16th, 1834, John Kirk Townsend wrote,

“Here the Indians assemble with their multifarious articles of trade, beaver, otter, venison, and various other game, and here, once a week, several scores of Canadians are employed, beating the furs which have been collected, in order to free them from dust and vermin” (Townsend 1839: 123).

In 1841 Dufлот de Mofras marveled at the efficiency of the store and its employees:

“Fort Vancouver has become the center of a flourishing commerce, for to this point come wares from all other forts in this territory and from this fort trains and groups of all porters also depart to distribute merchandise to all inland stations. Thus Fort Vancouver, which outwardly appears to resemble a large farm surrounded by agricultural buildings, is in reality nothing more than a supply and accounting house for the city of London.

“About 15 clerks spend their time trading with the Indians, selling goods, or keeping books. They arrive at their offices punctually at seven o'clock and work until nine at night, except for time required for meals which are served in a common dining room, presided over by the head agent” (Dufлот de Mofras 1937: 99).⁵⁹

Indians were often employed at the Indian Store, and it appears that employees were chosen for this store with strategic attention to how these individuals – and their tribal affiliations – would be perceived by visiting Indian traders (McLoughlin 1829h).

There, they engaged in a lively exchange in such items as beads and other adornments, Hudson's Bay Company blankets, fabric, metal tools, guns and ammunition – all priced so as to retrieve a consistent and predictable profit.⁶⁰ Trade goods fit nicely into preexisting patterns of trade in goods within the lower Columbia region, which had long been a center of exchange for exotic merchandise from throughout western North America. Yet, for those tribal communities that were well connected to the fort, trade goods rapidly transformed the material culture of the lower Columbia, and brought new efficiencies to hunting, wood carving, and other traditional tasks.⁶¹

Yet the presence of the fort transformed much more than the material culture of the lower Columbia region. The trade introduced by the fort was highly lucrative and transformed relationships within and between tribes in profound ways. There was good reason for the Chinooks and Cowlitz wishing to maintain their trade monopolies with the fort. The wealth and status of chiefs along the Lower Columbia in the early years of the fort was elevated by the HBC policy of seeking to work through leaders rather than through larger groups to organize fur trade exchanges. Through the 1820s, there was a consolidation of village sites and wealth along the Columbia River, as a small number of chiefs – buoyed by their control over fur trade wealth – ascended to newly elevated roles in the region. Chiefs such as Concomly, Casino, and Scanewa became regionally dominant in a way that may have been difficult to achieve only a generation before. The Lower Chinook chief, Concomly, was perhaps the most widely celebrated beneficiary of these relationships. During Concomly's visits to Fort Vancouver, he was reported to be preceded by 300 slaves and, as reported by deSmet, "he used to carpet the ground that he had to traverse, from the main entrance of the fort to the governor's door, several hundred feet, with beaver and otter skins" (deSmet 1905: 443). This demonstration of his tremendous wealth and power had multiple audiences, both Native and non-Native – helping to inspire loyalty among his own people and commercial enthusiasms among the Company officers, thereby to insure the continued expansion of his influence. While such rising affluence sometimes had destabilizing effects in the balance of power between Indian communities, which the HBC sometimes sought to counterbalance, it was generally in the Company's interest to have these leaders maintaining positions of great prominence.⁶²

The fort and the lower Columbia tribal leadership quickly became mutually interdependent. So strong were the bonds between the fort and the neighboring tribal communities that the one attempted attack on the fort – precipitated, incidentally, by Wascos protesting HBC proposals to remove a trading post out of their territory – was repelled principally through the strategic intervention of Chief Casino. (Indeed, relocating a fur trading post generally was considered dangerous by the HBC to be due to potentially violent protests from the tribes from whose territory the fort was to be removed and among whom the fort had fostered commercial interdependence.)⁶³ When a fire threatened to burn down Fort Vancouver in the 1840s, it was the immediate response of Indian people living nearby who were critical to saving the fort.⁶⁴ The

protection of the fort was absolutely in the interests of the Chinook and Cowlitz leaders who had the strongest commercial ties there. By forging mutual economic bonds, the HBC had effectively insured the fort's security.

Trade at Fort Vancouver had demographic consequences through the 1820s as well, bringing a growing number of Indians to settlements in close proximity to the fort. The attraction of the fort in its first few years of operation was apparently sufficient that the permanent populations of these villages grew noticeably.⁶⁵ In some cases, populations with scattered territorial associations, including the Multnomah, Cascades, and Clackamas, moved within their traditional use areas to be situated more closely to the fort. These longstanding villages close to the fort hosted many of the temporary tribal visitors to the fort, while others stayed in temporary encampments along the river. Blanchet and Demers reported seeing these encampments upon their arrival at the fort:

“This post is only a short distance from the Columbia River, on a plain made valuable in its entirety by agriculture. The engagés of the Company have their habitations on this plain, toward the river, whose bank is lined with the huts of natives who come there from every direction to trade the fruits of their hunting” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 26).

Those who had relations in the Village of employees and their families sitting just beyond the palisades might stay in their homes or camp near the Village too.⁶⁶ While the written record is sometimes unclear on this point, it appears that the multi-tribal gatherings in villages and encampments by the fort provided opportunities for social activities, gambling, horse racing and other activities.⁶⁷ Ceremonial activities are also described, taking place in encampments a short distance from the fort.⁶⁸

Thus, many observers noted of Fort Vancouver that “It was a place of great activity, surrounded by many tribes who spoke different languages” (Bushnell 1938: 13). While echoing traditional multi-tribal gatherings that predated the fort, these gatherings brought together a novel breadth of tribes, and facilitated the expansion of social, economic, cultural, and kinship ties that linked tribes from throughout the Pacific Northwest. Quickly becoming the center node of a trade network spanning the entire region, with Company employees hailing from throughout British North America, the fort thus became perhaps the foremost center of linguistic and cultural diversity in the Northwest. Horatio Hale's brief comments on the languages used in the fort are illuminating in this regard:

“At this establishment five languages are spoken by about five hundred persons, - namely, the English, the Canadian French, the Tshinuk, the Cree, of Knisteneau, and the Hawaiian...the Cree is the language spoken in the families of many officers and men belonging to the Hudson's Bay

Company, who have married half-breed wives at the posts east of the Rocky Mountains. The Hawaiian is in use among about a hundred natives of the Sandwich Islands who are employed as laborours about the fort. Besides these five languages, there are many others, - the Tsihailish [Chehalis], Walawala [Walla Walla], Kalapuya, Naskwale [Nisqually], &c. - which are daily heard from natives who visit the fort for the purpose of trading" (Hale 1846: 644).

Hale mentions only nine languages in this passage, but his list easily could have been expanded to perhaps thirty or more languages that were frequently heard among the traders of Fort Vancouver. The fact that Fort Vancouver was such a gathering place for tribal people originating throughout the Pacific Northwest made it an especially rich venue for the observation of tribes and their customs. Writing in 1841, Samuel Parker noted that he was able to record considerable detail about the tribes of the region while simply staying at the fort:

"As this is the principal trading post of the company, west of the Rocky Mountains, it may be expected, that many Indians from different parts of the country for considerable distance around, will be seen here during the winter, and more information may be obtained of their character and condition than in any other course I could pursue. Here also traders from different stations west of the mountains will come in for new supplies, of whose personal acquaintance with Indians I may avail myself" (Parker 1841: 169).

Many famous early authors on Pacific Norwest tribal history, from George Gibbs to Paul Kane, seem to have followed this example and used the fort as a base of operations for their investigations of the region's many Native peoples.

Yet the Chinook and Cowlitz traders were by no means the only groups to work at the fort in its early years. For example, the diversity of the Fort Vancouver workforce was augmented considerably by its proximity to both the Columbia Cascades and Willamette Falls. While the former was much larger, both of these natural features were significant multi-tribal fishing stations, where villages and temporary encampments housed both resident peoples and numerous visiting tribal populations in season. The visitors to these fishing stations arrived from numerous territories, from both inland and downstream locations, so that during the peak fishing season these falls became sprawling multi-lingual, multi-tribal encampments. From a time before the construction of Fort Vancouver, fur traders had recruited labor from these two gathering sites - a practice that was continued through the early 1850s by the HBC. They included not only Clackamas, Multnomah, Skillute, Cathlamet, Cascades, Chinook

proper, and Clatsop Chinookans, but also Kalapuya, Molalla, Klickitat, Yakama, Wasco, Wishram, Umatilla, Tillamook, and many others. These many different peoples who fished and otherwise gathered at these falls were well-represented among the Indian labor at the fort as well as among the wives of its employees.

As in all matters, the Company's use of labor from different tribes was strategic, and as time passed the HBC recruited Indian labor from an ever expanding field of tribes from throughout the Northwest. There are innumerable references to Indians, often Chinookan peoples or their Indian slaves, serving as canoemen (e.g. Frost 1934; Work 1912; Wyeth 1899). Others – Chinook, Cowlitz and others – served as river pilots, as did the Iroquois, Native Hawaiian, and Métis employees of the Company.⁶⁹ Travelers also routinely recruited guides and boatmen from the villages sitting most proximate to the fort.⁷⁰ The fort's gardens were overseen especially by the Native Hawaiians and French Canadians, with occasional Klickitat and Iroquois participation.⁷¹ “All the salmon caught in the river [were] caught by the natives” for the HBC commercial salmon operations that sent barrels of preserved fish to Hawaii and other destinations (Sylvester 1933: 360).⁷² As will be discussed elsewhere in this report, Indian labor from numerous tribes labored alongside Hawaiian, Métis, and French-Canadian men working in the HBC lumber mill and stock raising enterprises.⁷³ On the margins of the formal economy of the fort, women from diverse tribal backgrounds sometimes could acquire work independently, sewing for men in the fort and performing other tasks. Other informal economies were to be found; Warre and Vavasour (1909), for example, note Indians gathering driftwood along the banks of the Columbia and selling the wood or trading it for goods with the residents of the Fort. Indian and Métis labor could be found everywhere in association with the fort's daily operations: shipping and loading, blacksmithing and horse care, cooking and cleaning. Only perhaps in clerical and administrative functions were the Indians, and to a lesser degree, the Métis not fully participating members of the fort economy.

Simultaneously, the HBC employed Indian men locally at their forts throughout the Northwestern interior, such as Fort Spokane, Kalispell House, Fort Colville, and Fort Okanogan. In these posts, smaller and more isolated from the principal currents of shipborne trade, security and labor shortages were persistent issues and the recruitment of local tribal members was essential to their success.⁷⁴ In the course of their duties, these employees often found their way to Fort Vancouver, either as visitors or as temporary residents, so that Spokane, Pend d'Oriettes, Okanogan, Shushwap, and other interior groups were often well-represented at Fort Vancouver. Simultaneously, the later development of Fort Nisqually, Fort Langley, Fort Victoria, and the Puget Sound Agricultural Company had a similar effect, bringing a diverse assortment of men from Chehalis, interior Cowlitz, Klallam, Nisqually, Snohomish, and other western Washington tribes to the fort as short-term or long-term visitors (Kardas 1971). Almost every part of the region was represented through these connections to their most proximate forts.⁷⁵ Likewise, Fort Vancouver's British, French-Canadian, Native

Hawaiian and Iroquois employees often moved between these forts; soon, as will be discussed later, these men married into the tribes of these areas and often brought their wives back with them to reside at the fort. The mixture of tribal affiliations was truly remarkable and, despite longstanding traditions of intertribal marriage, probably without precedent in the region.

Men were recruited from these numerous tribes to serve as hunters, trappers, scouts, guards, and general labor throughout the Company's sphere of influence in the Northwest – especially in the Northwestern interior among such tribes as the Nez Perce, Walla Walla, Cayuse, Umatilla, Okanagan, and Pend d'Oriettes. By hiring these men, HBC brigades gained access into prime trapping and trading territories heretofore inaccessible to outside parties. They passed through Fort Vancouver in numerous capacities (McLeod 1934). Company and missionary correspondence makes reference to Indian couriers who traveled between Fort Vancouver and the many other HBC posts and other settlements throughout the Oregon Territory (e.g., Frost 1934: 161). Many of these individuals appear to have been recruited from the tribal communities living proximate to HBC outposts, so that – for example – Walla Walla couriers were reported making the trek between Fort Vancouver and Fort Walla Walla (McLoughlin 1830d). Moreover, numerous Indian interpreters passed through Fort Vancouver, from tribes such as the Spokane and Nez Perce (Ruby and Brown 2006).

As will be discussed in detail within the pages that follow, this situation was by no means static, but changed dramatically over the course of HBC occupation at Fort Vancouver. Increasingly, Fort Vancouver served as

“the peace-keeping and dispute-settling authority for whites and those Indians involved with them...By 1830...the region itself had altered in scope and organization. The post (Ft. George, later Ft. Vancouver), had started to become the central place for an enlarged social region including both whites and Indians” (Hajda 1984: 272-73).

This social region united a growing network of tribal communities from the interior and even outlying places along the coast, all centered on Fort Vancouver. The fort was a place for meetings and negotiations between the various tribal communities, and the principal nexus of exchanges between the Indian and white worlds.⁷⁶ Fort Vancouver also had the distinction of being an outpost of European culture and custom – the largest from San Francisco Bay to Sitka – drawing most non-Indian visitors to the region into its halls. ⁷⁷ For no less than 25 years, the fort would play a central role in almost every aspect of the region's larger history.

Defense and Punishment on the Northwestern Frontier

Simultaneously, the initial relationships with Pacific Northwest tribes presented a variety of unique challenges. The HBC had a keen interest in developing binding relationships with the tribes as a means to economic ends, and yet was also wracked, in the early years of Fort Vancouver, by a sense of vulnerability and dependence on the tribes. In navigating these relationships, the HBC consistently made ethical judgments based in no small part on the anticipated economic outcomes to the Company - providing punishments and incentives for Indian compliance with Company objectives. It is inappropriate to attempt to generalize HBC relationships with the Indians as being characterized by benevolence or brutality. Instances of both appear in the historical record. Instead, all of their actions were strategic, meant to facilitate the fiduciary objectives of the fur trading enterprise. If, as the HBC motto "*Pro Pelle Cutem*" is often interpreted, the Company officers were willing to "risk their skins" for pelts, they were certainly willing to adapt their values a bit toward similar ends.

Clearly, the threat of violent attacks from the Indians was a source of great concern to HBC officers in the early years of Fort Vancouver. The example of the 1811 *Tonquin* disaster - in which the ship that carried the Astorians to the Columbia was attacked by Nuuchah-nulth ("Nootka") villagers on the coast of Vancouver Island, killing all but one member of the crew - was still fresh in the minds of Fort Vancouver employees. Prominent among them was John McLoughlin, whose wife had been widowed when her first husband, Alexander McKay, was killed in that incident.⁷⁸ So too, the early fur traders had encountered on the eastern fringes of the Columbia District, groups including the Blackfeet, who attacked the small bands of fur traders passing through their territory without hesitation.⁷⁹ From Puget Sound northward, the large, well-organized, and sometimes hostile tribes of the Northwest Coast initially limited HBC expansion: "In the north, must be constantly armed to the teeth as the Indians are dangerous" (Tolmie 1963: 175).

As Fort Vancouver was constructed, defense was a critical concern, and the location of the fort, as well as the construction of palisades, cannon bastions, and other structural elements clearly had defensive purposes (Emmons 1925: 269).⁸⁰ While the HBC invited Indian communities in close mutual association, encouraging trade inside the gates and even the intermarriage of its employees with Indians from throughout the region, they simultaneously kept the Indians at a certain distance, fearing that this intimacy might ultimately prove to be a source of vulnerability. Gates were closed and guarded at appropriate times, at nights and at times of interethnic tensions; the mixed-race population of the Village, with its large cohort of Indian wives, was conspicuously kept on the outside of these gates most nights. Whatever advantages these marriages conferred to the Company, there were strong incentives to not fully embrace this largely Indian community within the walls of the fort, but rather to keep them at a certain "arm's length."

Trade could be adversely affected by violent conflict in many ways, threatening the security of fort staff, facilities, and shipping, while creating myriad problems with Indian laborers. Even as McLoughlin first arrived to assume command of Fort Vancouver, the threat of warfare between lower Chinookan villages all but brought commerce on the Columbia to a halt.⁸¹ Peace, McLoughlin clearly perceived, was good for business.⁸²

Recognizing that even the perception of Indian troubles was a threat to their enterprise the HBC employed in the early years of their Fort Vancouver operations a policy of what we might today term “massive retaliation,” responding severely to any hostile acts by the region’s tribes in order to make a highly visible example of them. It is clear that attacking and razing entire villages was a retaliatory tactic employed by Hudson’s Bay Company employees throughout the Columbia District (McLoughlin 1843b). When the Klallam killed Alexander McKenzie and four other HBC employees in 1828, McLoughlin dispatched a ship that burned the village of the offenders to the ground near modern-day Port Townsend.⁸³ He did so, as he noted in a letter to the Governor and Committee of the HBC, written July 10th, 1828, as a way of managing the perceptions of all Pacific Northwest tribes:

“To pass over such an outrage would lower us in the opinion of the Indians, induce them to act in the same way, and when an opportunity offered kill any of our people, & when it is considered the Natives are at least an hundred Men to one of us it will be conceived how absolutely necessary it is for our personal security that we should be respected by them, & nothing could make us more contemptible in their eyes than allowing such a cold blooded assassination of our People to pass unpunished, & every one acquainted with the character of the Indians of the North West Coast will allow they can only be restrained from Committing acts of atrocity & violence by the dread of retaliation” (McLoughlin 1828a: 57).⁸⁴

He also sought a large ship to be used as a regular deterrent to tribes of the Puget Sound who might, at some time in the future, consider additional hostile acts against the HBC: “the dread of the Vessel paying them a hostile visit & destroying their habitations would make them more peaceable in their conduct” (McLoughlin 1828a: 59).

A few months later, when the ship, the *William and Ann*, carrying HBC cargo and crews foundered in the surf at the mouth of the Columbia in 1828 and sank, killing all aboard, the Clatsop salvaged the cargo along the shoreline, as was their custom. Rumors surfaced that the Clatsop had killed survivors and John McLoughlin dispatched a team from Fort Vancouver to recover property and to make an example of the Clatsop; they

shelled the Clatsop's largest village near modern day Hammond, Oregon, and burned it to the ground.⁸⁵ While McLoughlin indicated in official correspondence that four Indians were killed, tribal oral tradition suggests that the attack killed many more residents of this village, as well as guests from other tribes.⁸⁶ Only later did McLoughlin determine that there was no evidence of Clatsop murdering the crew of the *William and Ann*. Still, McLoughlin depicted this action as a strategic necessity. In his letter to the Governor and Committee of the HBC, dated August 13th, 1829, he explained his actions, noting that,

“the Indians considered the [salvaged] property as ours...if we had not made a demand of it we would have fallen so much in Indians Estimation that whenever an opportunity offered our safety would have been endangered... our people [had] no alternative but to attack the Indians and act towards them in the manner they did” (McLoughlin 1829e: 41).⁸⁷

Through the early 1830s, the correspondence of Fort Vancouver's officers makes frequent references to such attacks, each made in order to fix a formidable image of the HBC in the minds of Northwest tribes. McLoughlin organized a retaliatory expedition to recover the property of the ill-fated American expedition led by Jedediah Smith, killed by Lower Umpqua Indians in 1829. In explaining his actions, he noted that he was “most anxious to see peace and quietness restored in the Umqua Country - its then troubled State after the murder of Smiths party had entirely put a Stop to our trade with these Indians” (McLoughlin 1830a: 79), and noting that

“as the facility with which the natives had destroyed this party if allowed to pass unchecked all whites being the same Kind of people in the eyes of Indians would lower us in their estimation induce other Indians to follow their example and endanger our personal security all over the Country” (McLoughlin 1829i: 77).⁸⁸

Elsewhere, McLoughlin describes his orchestration of an 1830 attack when one of the employees' wives ran off with another man⁸⁹ noting that if the man went unpunished, “it would have lowered the Whites in their Estimation” (McLoughlin 1831b: 185). In April, 1832, McLoughlin organized a retaliatory attack on the Tillamook of the Oregon coast, killing six of their men for the reported killing of two HBC employees.⁹⁰ Similar tactics were employed with Indians at the Columbia Cascades who sometimes raided fur trapping parties portaging around the falls.⁹¹ Only in the mid-1830s, as epidemics ravaged many of the tribes west of the Cascade Range and the security landscape shifted permanently in the HBC's favor, would references to these kinds of retaliatory expeditions cease.

In each case of conflict, one of McLoughlin's principal objectives was the reclamation of property taken by Indians.⁹² Beyond trying to avoid appearing weak on matters of personal defense, McLoughlin sought to instill in the region's tribes an understanding of the extent of the force with which the Company would defend their private property rights – an essential ingredient in the success of their frontier capitalist enterprise. Indeed, the HBC sought to assert the significance of private property rights to the Indians of the region in a variety of ways. There is some evidence that the HBC, unsatisfied with the absence of formal punishments for property crimes especially, pressured some tribes to develop structured “courts” and to designate floggers who meted out punishment (Stern 1997: 2-27).

The Company got involved in policing Indian actions in a variety of other forms. Fort officers appear to have sometimes punished intertribal murders, to the point of imprisoning and hanging offenders.⁹³ Though the officers were often careful to not get pulled into intertribal conflicts, they also sometimes helped mediate intertribal disputes as well.⁹⁴ Also, importantly, the officers punished their own employees, sometimes severely, if they committed any act that was likely to antagonize Indian communities in a way that would jeopardize the security of the fort or its commercial interests.⁹⁵

The Company placed limitations on the distribution of ammunition and alcohol as well. The sale of rifles was critical to the development of congenial trade relationships, and Indian dependence on the fort for ammunition was a significant source of repeat business for the Indian store. Simultaneously, the HBC supply of arms to Indians had major destabilizing effects, even far from lower Columbia, where they increasingly played a decisive role in intertribal conflicts.⁹⁶ Limits on the distribution of ammunition was depicted as a sound strategic choice, and also insured regular and repeated visits from the many Indian communities who were relying increasingly on firearms. To the extent that liquor consumption reduced the efficiency of Indians working for the Company or raised the potential for unpredictably rowdy behavior, it was a threat to the profitability of the Company. Liquor sales to the Indians were generally restricted. However, this policy seems to have vacillated over time, being reversed whenever strategic considerations intervened – such as the potential of losing HBC business to competitors who would sell alcohol.⁹⁷

This intervention in Indian affairs took gentler, more benign forms too. The fort officers seem to have taken in orphans, abandoned women, and widows from time to time.⁹⁸ The fort also took in Indian children to educate from outside of the fort community when requested by their parents.⁹⁹ Orphans and other displaced children, and sometimes the children of prominent tribal leaders, were sometimes sent east for formal educations – especially to the HBC settlements of the Red River region – the outcome of an 1822 Company policy established to minimize the burden of orphan and abandoned children of Company employees upon fort settlements. When women were abandoned by their husbands or, as sometimes happened, fort officers learned that a man married

to local Indian woman had another wife elsewhere, McLoughlin often stepped in to punish the husband, house the wife, and even find a suitable new husband for her from the Company ranks.¹⁰⁰

A number of authors have suggested that the general strategy employed by McLoughlin and the other officers of the HBC appears to have been effective in retrospect. Certainly, the region was relatively peaceful after the early-1830s and former combatants, such as the Clatsop, Tillamook, and Klallam, later accepted an HBC presence without open conflict – though it is likely that there were multiple causes for these developments that did not relate to HBC policy.¹⁰¹ The situation at the fort also suggested a significant relaxing of concerns about Indian attacks in its later years of operation. Though Fort Vancouver was still stockaded, its position had been decreasingly defensive.¹⁰² As Warre and Vavasour noted in their reconnaissance to assess the defensibility of HBC assets in the region, by 1845,

“The fort was formerly situated on a rising ground in the rear of its present position, but was removed on account of the inconvenient distance from the river, for the conveyance of stores, provisions, etc. The present site is ill-adapted for defense, being commanded by the ground in the rear” (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 46).

In later years, McLoughlin and the other officers of the fort would later come under harsh criticism, especially by their American competitors, for reportedly incessant human rights violations against area tribes. Incidents such as those involving the Klallam and Clatsop were often cited, as were innumerable cases that appear to have been pure fabrications. McLoughlin was often called upon to refute these claims in his correspondence with the Company’s leadership in London.¹⁰³ In his correspondence, he would cite what he viewed as the successes of the policy. In a memo written on November 15th, 1843, McLoughlin notes:

“on the first Settlement of this Country, the Columbia Indians were exceedingly troublesome, and in fact until 1834, it was not considered safe to travel up or down this river with less than 60 men, armed with muskets and fixed bayonets. Now even strangers can come down the River from the Snake Country by twos and threes...Is it not self evident we will manage our business with more economy by being on good terms with Indians than if at variance. We trade furs, none can hunt fur bearing animals or afford to sell them cheaper, than Indians. It is therefore clearly our interest, as it is unquestionably our duty to be on good terms with them and the Indians of the Columbia are not such poltroons as to suffer themselves to be ill treated, particularly when the disparity of numbers is

so great as to show but one white man to 200 Indians" (McLoughlin 1843a: 118).¹⁰⁴

The dramatic attacks on Indian communities, much like the intermarriage of employees with Indian communities, were devices intended to insure HBC a profitable and uninterrupted flow of trade in what was a densely settled and potentially hostile social landscape. Whatever contradictions might seem apparent in HBC policies that attempted to embrace the Indians with one hand and punish them severely with the other – balancing their fortunes between the poles of affection and aggression – these were conceived by the Company as two parts of a single coherent strategy to stabilize relations with the region's numerous Native peoples and to maximize the wealth flowing out of the Northwest and into the hands of their investors. "Giving their skin for a pelt" in this manner, the Company's officers and employees had dramatic impacts on the tribes of the region - some positive, some negative, and many of them with enduring consequences that still are reflected among the tribes of today.

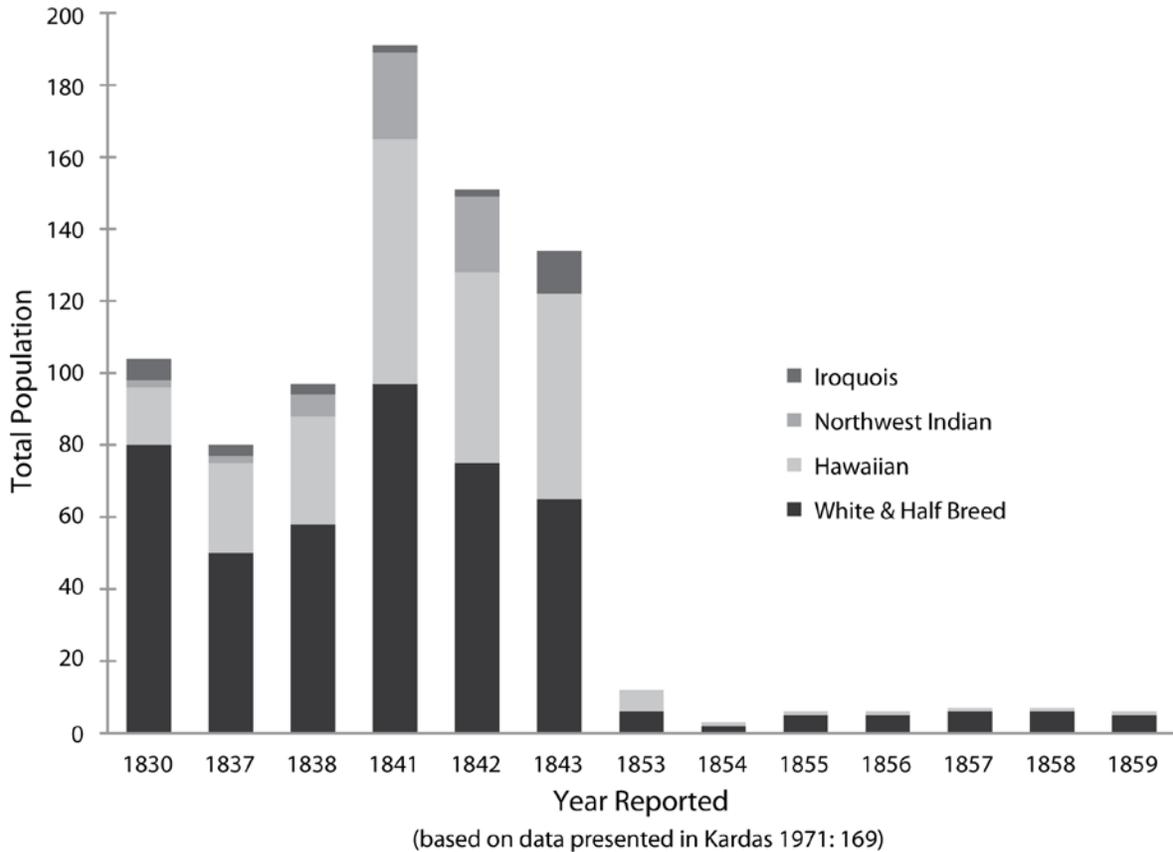
Society and Structure in the Fort Vancouver Community

The social structure of Fort Vancouver was very similar to that found at other HBC posts throughout northern North America.¹⁰⁵ Especially in its management echelons, the fort maintained a social structure that facilitated order, as well as mobility and interchangeability with other fort communities despite the diversity of the fur trade community. Rigidly hierarchical in its management, the Company maintained a monolithic economic authority over its employees that was termed "feudal" by some observers.¹⁰⁶

In the early years of the HBC, most of the European employees were Scottish, and most of these were from the Orkney Islands; over time, the Company had evolved, with an English and Scottish managerial staff and a mixed employee population of lower-class British and French-Canadian men. To some degree, the organization of the Company recapitulated the class structure of contemporaneous British society. French influences continued to grow, however. By 1800, the fur trade was increasingly centered on Montreal and Quebec, with the North West Company employing English or Scottish managers and French-Canadian voyageurs serving as the principal field staff. In the consolidated Hudson's Bay Company, the administrative culture was decidedly British: duties and status were differentiated by race, while administrative positions, divided among white employees, were shaped by preexisting class distinctions to no small degree.¹⁰⁷ In this new Company, the men of the British Isles were disproportionately represented in the fort's Officers and clerks. These men commonly married Indian or

Métis “half-breed” women. The lower-status “employees” or “servants” of the fort were more commonly French Canadian or Métis, often descended from previous generations of fur trade employees “Laborers” or “canoemen” who were temporarily employed for specific tasks often consisted of local Indians, Iroquois and other eastern Indians, French Canadian, Métis and – by the time Fort Vancouver was founded – Native Hawaiians.¹⁰⁸ While the hierarchical organization of the Company thus still recapitulated British society, it did so within an increasingly multicultural milieu, with race and class clearly defining one’s position and one’s potentials within the Company in a way that arguably trumped the merits of individual employees. It is clear that the Company officers maintained strict control over some aspects of daily life and often punished transgressions of lower-status employees severely, in a manner that reflected not only employment relations, but the larger relations of race and class which served as the context of Company employment.¹⁰⁹

HBC Employees Reported at Fort Vancouver, by Race



The hiring of Métis¹¹⁰, Iroquois¹¹¹, Cree, Native Hawaiian and other men was part of a larger pattern of labor recruitment within the HBC. Each of these different populations brought different skills to bear on the fur trade enterprise, and each had their own distinctive history in association with the fur trade – a point that will be discussed in detail within later sections of this document. In addition to bringing these unique skills, of course, these men were preferred over local Indian labor for a variety of reasons. Men from outside of the region had few competing local loyalties, and limited family or tribal attachments that might compete with their loyalties to the Company mission. Bringing needed skills and lacking competing loyalties, these men were in high demand; the considerable expense of shipping men from far corners of the North American continent or the middle of the Pacific Ocean was apparently justified. It is likely that Hudson’s Bay Company records underreport the number of local Indian men who worked as employees, as they typically worked on limited tasks, without contracts. Nonetheless, these men represented a comparative minority among the population of employees, of whom the “imported” laborers represented the enduring core.

Upon their arrival in the Northwest, these men began to meet and marry women from a wide range of circumstances – often with the active involvement of Company officers who sought to make strategic matches, as will be discussed in later sections of this document. These men married women from a diverse range of Pacific Northwest tribes – predominantly but by no means exclusively Chinookan. This multi-ethnic community was also clearly multi-lingual. The majority of the European or Euro-American individuals present at the fort were French speakers, but employees spoke other languages, and the languages of the women were especially numerous – a situation that was especially challenging in the large and diverse Village community. While some families spoke French, within the mixed-race households of the Village, Chinook Jargon or “Chinuk Wawa” appears to have been the primary language of everyday use.¹¹²

While the mixed-race wives and children of officers generally lived within the palisades of the fort, the families of the employees – representing the majority of the total fort population – lived in the “Village.” The village that built up just outside the Fort Vancouver palisades is variously reported as the “Servants’ Houses,” the “Employee Village” and, especially after the mid-1830s, “Kanaka Village.” The Village began to accrete around the fort early in its history, though the exact date of its first emergence has been a point of some uncertainty.¹¹³ As summarized by Bancroft,

“Between the fort and the river on the smooth sloping plain, lay a village consisting of thirty or forty log houses, ranged along a single street, and occupied by the servants of the company, Canadians, half-breeds, and Hawaiians, with a few from the Orkney Island. In every house an Indian woman presided as mistress, and the street swarmed with children of

mixed blood. Nothing offensive met the eye; everywhere cleanliness and decorum prevailed" (Bancroft 1890a: 9).

In 1845-46, Joel Palmer made repeat visits to Fort Vancouver and – like many observers of the Village - described the structures and inhabitants of the Village as being a *mélange* of all the fort's cultural influences:

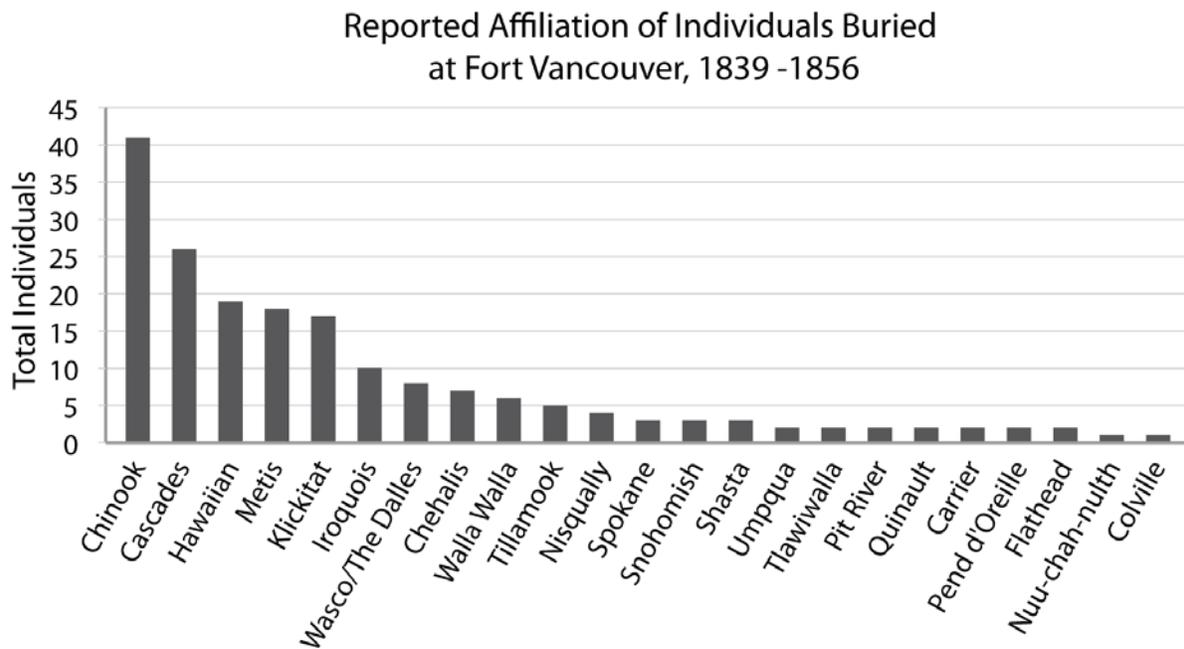
"Below the fort, and extending from the river for half a mile north, is the village; the inhabitants of which are a mongrel race, consisting of English, French, Canadians, Indians of different nations, and half breeds, all in the employ of the company. The buildings are as various in form, as are the characteristics of their inmates" (Palmer 1906: 210).

The village features prominently, if briefly, in so many travelers' narratives that space prohibits the presentation of these accounts in all of their variety.¹¹⁴ Some generalizations can be made, however. Estimates of the number of houses in the Village vary from roughly 30 to 50 in written accounts (Kardas 1971: 214). So far as can be determined, the Company did not assist in the development of these structures, but men constructed homes for themselves and their families in the Village on their days off of work. Thin partitions were constructed between rooms in the Village homes, similar in many respects to the partitions used in lower Columbia River longhouses. These homes were often nuclear family households, but there is evidence to suggest that two or three nuclear families might live together in a single house and there is also some suggestion that female kin might live in the same house or group of adjacent houses (Slacum 1837; Hussey 1957). Archaeological investigations of the Village, which continue at the time of this writing, have hinted at the relative cultural diversity of the village, as well as class and cultural distinctions between the officers within the fort and the village community (Cromwell 2006; Bray 1984; Thomas and Hibbs 1984; Kardas 1971).

While the HBC was cautious not to meddle in the internal affairs of tribes, HBC policy demanded that District chiefs provide opportunities to missionize mixed-race children of Company employees, an effort that especially focused on the Village population. The officers were required to "encourage industry, repress vice, and inculcate morality" through the prohibition of liquor, providing Sunday religious services for employees' families and Indians, providing for language instruction of Indian wives and children of Company employees, and pursuing other actions that might contribute to the moral instruction of these individuals (Rich 1940: 125-26, 135-36). The Company undertook a number of initiatives to meet these goals, including the establishment of a school in 1832, "for two dozen half-breed Indian children of the HBC employees. These children ranged in age from six to sixteen years and talked the Cree, Nez Percé, Chinook,

Klickitat and other Indian languages” (Hussey 1957: 80). Some effort was expended in this school to expunge Indian languages and cultural traditions in order to prepare the students for apprenticeship and ultimately employment by the Company and other commercial interests (Woolworth 2003).¹¹⁵

While we do not know all of the names of the individuals who lived in the Village, we do have surprisingly good records of the identity of specific employees through HBC records, and the identities of some of the employees’ wives and children through church and other records (Munnick 1972; Kardas 1971; York n.d.).¹¹⁶



(based on data reported in Mannick (1972) and York (n.d.))

The identities of these individuals are significant to the larger goals of this document, as the Village – while not being the sole origin of individuals who died and were buried at Fort Vancouver historically – contributed disproportionately to the total population interred at the fort. Some 23 different Native ethnicities are described in the available church burial records aggregated by Munnick (1972) and York (n.d.). Those reported to be buried at Fort Vancouver include the populations of imported HBC laborers – Iroquois, Métis, and Hawaiian. Chinookan peoples are especially numerous, and constitute a majority of the total population - including “Chinook,” Cascades, and Wasco individuals. The remaining 17 groups represent tribal populations ranging from the Nuu-chah-nulth of the British Columbia coast in the north, to the Pit River and Shasta of northern California in the south, to the Flathead of western Montana in the east - a population with origins that truly spanned the full extent of the HBC’s

Columbia District. The stories of these Indian communities, and their relationships with the Fort Vancouver community, will be discussed in turn within the pages ahead.

“She is Particularly Useful to her Husband”: Strategic Marriages Between HBC Employees and Native Women

When considering the tribal associations with Fort Vancouver during the period of HBC occupation, one of the most important but overlooked dimensions of this issue is the role of Native women at the fort. Records and journal accounts suggest that nearly all of the men working as officers and employees at the fort had families, and almost all of these families were of mixed ethnicity, with American Indian or Métis wives (Hussey 1991; Simpson 1931). Indeed, women made up almost half of the total population of the Fort at the apex of its operations and, if enumerated together with their children, this segment of the fort community appears to have comprised more than two-thirds of its population. Yet, despite their clear importance, the largely Native female population of the fort community was almost invisible in the official records of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Written information regarding this population is elusive, appearing only in reminiscences and diaries, certain church records, and a smattering of other documents. What follows is a summary of the role of interethnic marriages at Fort Vancouver as suggested by these sources.

Interethnic marriages were part of the fur trading experience from long before the arrival of Europeans on the lower Columbia River. The success of fur trading operations was often contingent in no small part by the alliances created by fur traders’ marriage of Indian women. Certainly, this would prove to be the case at Fort Vancouver. Kinship allowed traders to pass from “outsider” status to “insider” status almost instantaneously. Marriages into tribal families, especially the families of prominent leaders, opened up a world of trade opportunities to the HBC in this ethnographic context, in which familial ties insured an “inside track” when trading with the woman’s home community. (Thus, many - though by no means all, or even a majority - of the women who married into the fort community were from high-status families; Lang suggests that “daughters of the Chinookan nobility were the exceptions rather than the rule among Native wives of this generation” [Lang 2008: 109]).¹¹⁷ Visiting the territories of the women’s tribes to seek furs, the HBC could receive special dispensation, the hospitality afforded esteemed guests, and preferential treatment relative to any HBC competitors who might seek to trade there. Native women, with their knowledge of tribal languages and territory, were an indispensable source of information to HBC traders, and the fort’s trappers appear to have followed a kind of seasonal movement between the fort and outlying territories, their paths much influenced by wives’ tribal affiliation.¹¹⁸ With women married into the HBC community, there was a greater opportunity for diplomatic relationships with the

woman's home community, and a reduced chance of violent attacks from her countrymen both at the fort and while on trading expeditions.¹¹⁹

Interethnic marriages were clearly the norm at Fort Vancouver. Fort Vancouver was a multilingual and multiethnic community, but the households were effectively multiethnic and multilingual as well. Written accounts suggest that these women often carved out an acceptable life for themselves at Fort Vancouver, despite the sometimes shocking transition from the life of tribal communities to the life of the fort. Despite this, life at the fort also provided a source of security in an otherwise insecure environment, characterized by abrupt and generally horrifying demographic, social, and economic changes that reshaped tribal life in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. Certainly, as Lang (2008: 106) has noted, the women of the fort "had matured during a period of breathtaking social change." Simultaneously, these marriages gave the HBC remarkable control over the personal lives of its employees and the women they married, even long after the marriage was official. As these were strategic associations, the HBC officers also sought to place tight restrictions on its employees' relationships with their spouses, prohibiting infidelity and attempting to regulate spousal abuse to some degree, fearing the consequences of such actions on Company security and profitability.¹²⁰ Indeed, the Company sometimes issued severe punishments on any man whose amorous relationships put HBC trade at risk.¹²¹ The effects of these policies on the lives of Native women were clearly complex, with outcomes for their quality of life that were arguably both positive and negative.

The children of these marriages helped solidify these kinship bonds, while many of them later became labor for the Company.¹²² The many Métis men who arrived at Fort Vancouver were themselves the product of such marriages, made at other HBC and North West Company posts a generation earlier. Arriving from posts throughout northern North America, these men were descended in part from numerous First Nations from throughout eastern and central Canada – many being identified by the general ethnonym of "Cree." Born into the fort life of their fathers and employed from youth in Company operations, few appear to have ultimately returned from the Pacific Northwest to the tribal communities of their maternal line.

The record of the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as the North West Company, make it clear that these companies recognized the advantages of interethnic marriage as being essential to the success of their operations. Indeed, the records of these companies show considerable evidence that employees were encouraged to marry into tribes for strategic advantages (Faragher 1988). The North West Company, with its foundations in Francophone Canada, had been quite comfortably encouraging such intermarriage in the decades prior to the establishment of Fort Vancouver; the Hudson's Bay Company, with its English roots, held a somewhat more complex view of these interethnic marriages, and Company policies on the matter could sometimes be contradictory. HBC officials in London seem to have been reluctant to condone interracial or "common-

law” marriages, generally, even as their field officers recognized them as essential to the success and profitability of the Company. Amidst this internal struggle, the HBC had introduced a standardized marriage contract for use by some of its employees by 1821, representing a sort of compromise between the priggishness of London society and the practical demands of the Company’s field operations; in this contract, it was declared that the field marriage of Native women was lawful, but that the Company expected its employees to provide financial support for their spouses and to eventually “remarry” in the event that clergy became available. In the years that followed, through the time of fort construction in 1824, the HBC made a number of subsequent proclamations reaffirming this general approach to “country marriages” Apparently under pressure from the HBC Committee in London, Governor George Simpson briefly attempted to keep women without children from following their husbands when they were reassigned from post to post in the 1820s, but this policy does not appear to be upheld by McLoughlin; indeed, it is unlikely that Simpson viewed this as a realistic directive (Hussey 1991, n.d.).

Despite this, marriages were sometimes arranged under considerable pressure from HBC superiors, in response to specific market opportunities or strategic objectives perceived by the Company’s leadership. Orders of this type came from as high up the hierarchy as Governor George Simpson, himself, who seems to have made a few recommendations to John McLoughlin on strategic marriages that should be encouraged among fort employees. Writing in April of 1825, for example, Governor George Simpson advised John McLoughlin to pressure one of his employees, John Work, to marry the daughter of a prominent chief of the Cayuse, indicating that the costs of such a union would be borne by the Company as a business expense in light of the strategic value of such a marriage. There was no indication that Work had personal interests in the daughter, but the Company made this request of him simply because Work was single and the Company needed to make inroads in their trade with the Cayuse. Simpson proposed that Work would then make frequent visits to Cayuse territory with his new wife, thus providing support to HBC brigades who were hoping to travel, safely and profitably, in Cayuse territory. It is unclear whether Work complied with the request, but Cayuse trade did intensify after this event (Lamb 1941: lvii). Still, it is clear that Indian wives of the fort were sometimes paraded along with HBC caravans, on prominent display, in order to broadcast the Company’s association with area tribes as a means of both facilitating trade and insuring the security of trading parties.¹²³ The symbolic and practical value of these marriages in Native communities clearly was not lost on the officers of the HBC.

Simultaneously, the HBC seems to have appreciated that these interethnic marriages also gave them great leverage in negotiating terms of employment with its laborers. Charles Wilkes perceived the marriage of Company employees to Native women as grounds for an enduring ‘vassal’ relationship with the HBC after their employment was ended:

“not unfrequently, at the expiration of their engagement, they have become attached, or married, to some Indian woman or half-breed, and have children, on which account they find themselves unable to leave, and continue attached to the Company's service, and in all respects under the same engagement as before. If they desire to remain and cultivate land, they are assigned a certain portion, but are still dependent on the Company for many of the necessaries of life, clothing, &c. This causes them to become a sort of vassal, and compels them to execute the will of the Company” (Wilkes 1845: 330).

The women seldom wanted to relocate, while there was little place in Euro-Canadian society for such multiracial families. The HBC was thus assured a certain number of laborers who had little choice but to continue working for the Company under whatever terms it might choose to dictate.

The advantages of interethnic marriages went both ways, however. As before European contact, outmarriage helped tribes to expand their kinship and trade networks, bringing prestige and commercial opportunities (Walker 1997). The marriage of a daughter into the Fort Vancouver community was strategically advantageous for tribal communities hoping to forge trade relationships, insure their own security, and enhance the status of the village. There are a number of references to Indian families attempting to marry their daughters to prominent men associated with the fort, in an effort to obtain some of these advantages.¹²⁴ Even when young women may not have had a strong interest in marrying into the community, some evidence suggests that – like the men of the Company – they were under considerable pressure from their own people to marry and thus forge these alliances.¹²⁵ Chinookan peoples’ wealth and status within their own communities and region seems to have been enhanced by having a daughter married into the fort community.¹²⁶ In fact, the prominence that some villages apparently attained through their new affinal ties with the fort sometimes became a destabilizing influence that the HBC sought to mediate, as certain villages gained almost monopolistic control over trade with the forts. George Simpson noted that, “when married or allied to the Whites they are under little restraint and in most cases gain such an ascendancy that they give law to their Lords” (Simpson 1931: 99).¹²⁷

While written records on the point are elusive, there is abundant evidence to demonstrate that the American Indian communities of the Pacific Northwest viewed these marriages as being an extension of traditional tribal social conventions surrounding marriage. These were exogamous, patrilocal marriages, after all, with women marrying into a polyglot community in a way that served to extend social and trade relationships. All of these elements were quite familiar to the peoples of the lower Columbia region. The tribes of the region seem to have treated the Company, or at least

the Fort, as a sort of *de facto* village or tribe, with which they sought formal ties; with the exception of not having its own population of women to provide reciprocal outmarriages, Fort Vancouver, fit neatly into this pattern. As Hajda similarly suggested, when marriages occurred between the fort employees and Native women, “The Indians did not gain a corresponding set of affinal relations, but the whites were considered by Indians to be all more or less related” (Hajda 1984: 266). Interethnic marriage customs commonly defaulted to the customs of the women’s people: “Marriage was a family matter, and fur-trade marriages were Indian marriages with such formalities and obligations as the particular tribe required” (Hussey 1991: 267).

Also consistent with traditional social relationships, a small number of non-Native trappers appear to have sometimes married more than one woman, with goals ostensibly similar to those of polygamous Native men. For example, Charles Wilkes wrote of encounters with Michel La Framboise, a prominent French employee of the HBC, who had arrived on the Tonquin as part of the Astoria party: “He has travelled in all parts of the country, and says that he has a wife of high rank in every tribe, by which means he has insured his safety” (Wilkes 1845: 349). These multiple marriages were possible in the absence of church or civil oversight among the European population of the fort, and probably conferred numerous benefits to the HBC. Yet, the practice of multiple marriages was far beyond the tolerance of the Company officials in London, and no mention of these practices was found in the written reports of field officers. This may be the subtext of Bancroft’s claim regarding Fort Vancouver’s employees: “They all had Indian women, never more than one. Old Doctor McLoughlin would hang them if they had more than one” (in Bancroft 1890a: 28). McLoughlin may not have objected strenuously to the practice, but he was also in no position to have the practice come to the attention of his supervisors.

The journals and reports of the time suggest that women played numerous important roles in Fort Vancouver life. Women often participated in fur trapping expeditions, often serving in such capacities as fur dressing and food gathering and preparation. On June 29th, 1836, John Kirk Townsend wrote a vaguely hyperbolic summary of native women married to Fort employees:

“She is particularly useful to her husband. As he is becoming rather infirm, she can protect him most admirably. If he wishes to cross a stream in travelling without horses or boats, she plunges in without hesitation, takes him upon her back, and lands him safely and expeditiously upon the opposite bank. She can also kill and dress an elk, run down and shoot a buffalo, or spear a salmon for her husband’s breakfast in the morning, as well as any man-servant he could employ. Added to all this, she has, in several instances, saved his life in skirmishes with Indians, at the imminent risk of her own, so that he has some reason to be proud of her” (Townsend 1839: 179).

Not wanting to eliminate this essentially free source of labor to the HBC, fort supervisors seldom seem to have discouraged the practice. Yet, close to home, women also played a critical role in the Village community, in a way that echoed both Native and European customs.¹²⁸ The women of this community were responsible for much of the Village cleaning and upkeep, the preparation of food, and the rearing of children. Women's gathering of traditional foods in the vicinity of the fort sometimes provided important supplementation to the meager diet afforded by the wages of the fort's lower-status employees. Post records indicate that Native women acquired fabric from the fort for the sewing of clothing. Their roles were as diverse as any women of their time and perhaps, being uniquely situated as they were at a cross-cultural nexus, even more so.

As is widely acknowledged in the historical literature, women were sequestered from many of the formal operations and affairs of the fort. Women were not present in the dining hall and the wives of the gentlemen were generally kept away from the view of visitors. Bancroft noted that "It was a rule of the company that the Indian wives and offspring of the officers should live in the seclusion of their own apartments, which left the officers' mess-room to themselves and their guests" (Bancroft 1890a: 10). Yet, the wives of officers held special standing in the fort, overseeing the organization of certain social events and, from the late 1830s onward, helping to host women visiting the fort. Many of these officers' wives were Cree or Canadian Métis, arriving in the Northwest from other places within the HBC range of operations, while the employees seem to have disproportionately married local tribes. The daughters of high-ranking HBC officers and their Indian wives from elsewhere in the HBC sphere - children of an earlier era in HBC policy regarding interracial marriages - were considered especially desirable marriage partners to the ambitious young officers of the day. John McLoughlin's wife Marguerite and James Douglas' wife Amelia were both part Cree - Amelia being the daughter of a Chief Factor and a Cree wife; Marguerite and Amelia in many respects set the standard for Native wives at the fort, being long-term partners to their husbands, gracious hosts to visitors, and the public face of some of the officers' charitable efforts within the Village community.¹²⁹

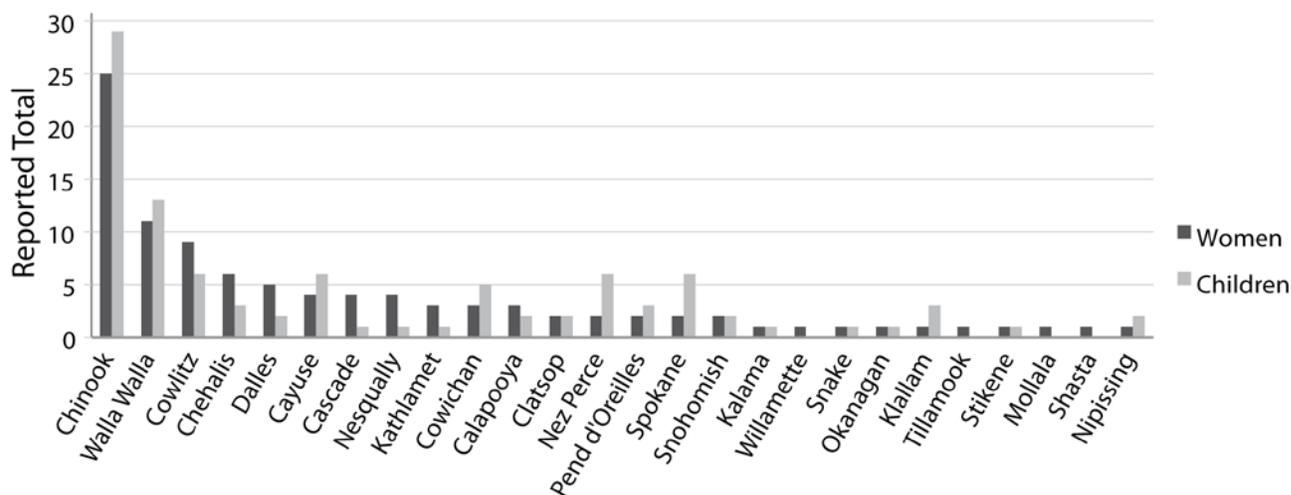
There were sharp social divides between the "ladies inside the pallisade" and the women of the Village (Hussey 1991: 291). The officers' wives were often groomed for patrician lives, being tutored in French and English, and taught social graces considered desirable in British-American communities of the day. They were widely admired for their politeness and their attention to Anglophone values; a number of chroniclers noted that "instances of improper conduct are rare among them" (Cox 1832: 343). The "gentlemen's wives" had to perform relatively little manual labor, though many of them were originally born into circumstances no more affluent than those of the women living in the Village. Indeed, some sources suggest that the rank of the husband

appears to have had more bearing on the status of individual women at the fort than the degree of Indian ancestry, tribal affiliation, or other ethnic and racial indicators. Class appears to have been more salient than race in many respects, within the social organization of the Fort Vancouver community.¹³⁰

The exact identity of these women is somewhat difficult to reconstruct. This is because reliable information on the tribal affiliation of women who were part of the fort community is elusive in the written record. Church records of marriages might provide one of the few written sources of information on this point (though it is likely that tribal oral traditions may still record the affiliations of some women married at the fort). Consulting the church records is problematic, as only a minority of the fort population sought church-sanctioned marriages. "Country marriages" do not appear in available records and are very difficult to quantify. Records do suggest that marriages gradually became more church-based over the course of the 1830s and 1840s; by the 1850s, there is little reference to any further marriages of this type. Of those who did marry in church-sanctioned ceremonies, only a few identified their tribal affiliation at the time of their marriage (Munnick 1972, 1974). For example, church records demonstrate that Iroquois men were married in some 10 or 11 church-sanctioned marriages to local Native women at the fort. Yet, of these women, no more than 40% identified their tribal affiliation in a way that can be reconstructed today; in the case of the Iroquois men's wives, the women included two Chinooks, one Kalapuya, and one Walla Walla, while the remainder do not have recorded tribal affiliations (Kardas 1971: 204). The same issues confound the use of church baptismal records. Despite these challenges, no fewer than 26 tribal affiliations are reported for marriage and baptismal records for the Indian wives and their children at the fort. These were assembled by Kardas (1971) and this list has been slightly updated and revised in the current research. The results are presented in graph form below.

A clear majority, if not a plurality, of the wives at the Fort were Chinookan. The women identified in the records as Dalles, Cascade, Kathlamet, Clatsop, and Kalama could have been included within the general term "Chinook" by some chroniclers' standards, and their individual listings demonstrate that the use of the term Chinook was probably inexact. Simultaneously, the term "Chinook" appears to have denoted women from a variety of tribal communities from the coast to The Dalles, presumably with a large proportion of those women hailing from communities from the Portland Basin to the "Chinook proper" of the Columbia mouth. As was typical at this time, the term "Chinook" occasionally may have been applied to women that were not, in fact, from Chinookan communities even if they were from the greater Lower Columbia region. Other tribes represented on the list of women from this region, as it is defined by Hajda (1984) would include the Salish-speaking Cowlitz, Chehalis, and Tillamook – together, these women appear to have represented a sizeable minority within the Village population. Still, it appears that these kinds of issues within the records cancel one-another out, so that we are left with an unambiguous conclusion: Chinookan women

Women and Children in Marriage and Baptismal Records at Fort Vancouver with Recorded Tribal Affiliation



(based on data presented in Kardas 1971: 208)

and children represented the majority of the fort resident women and children who appear in church records from 1839 through the 1850s. Indeed, recognizing that Chinookan demographics were in steep decline during this period, and that most sources agree that women were being found in increasingly interior tribes at this time, it is likely that the proportion of women at the fort hailing from Chinookan communities was actually larger in the period from 1824 through 1838 than it was during the period for which church records exist.

Again, especially following the decline of the Chinookan population, many Indian wives appear to be from tribes associated with the interior posts at Fort Colville and Fort Walla Walla; a growing number of wives were also sought from interior tribes who were strategically positioned relative to the interior fur trade of the HBC's Columbia District.¹³¹ Similarly, HBC employees from these inland posts often sought marriages of women from interior tribes - Couer d'Alene, Pend d'Oreille, Spokane, Shuswap, and others - who later passed through Fort Vancouver - some eventually moving thence to Champoeg (Munnick 1972). The result of these interior ties can be seen in the numerous Indian wives and children in church records affiliated with these interior tribes: Walla Walla, Cayuse, Pend d'Orieilles, Spokane, Snake, and Okanagan. The family affiliated with the Stikine, from northern interior British Columbia, is probably a similar case, as the Stikine played a critical role in the interior trapping operations of Fort Stikine, Fort Simpson, Fort St. James, and others. Similarly, the presence of women from the tribal communities of the Puget Sound, including the Nisqually, Snohomish,

and Klallam, as well as the Cowichan of what is now British Columbia – all of them Coast Salish speaking groups – were connected to the HBC through the Company’s many operations in the region; this included Forts Nisqually (est. 1833), Langley (est. 1827) and Victoria (est. 1843), as well as the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (est. 1840), which frequently recruited Native labor to assist in food production for HBC employees. All of these tribes were within the Columbia District, for which Fort Vancouver served as the administrative hub, and members of these many tribal populations passed through Fort Vancouver in the course of their work for the Company.

A few women of Calapooya and “Willamette” affiliation (presumably the same population) as well as the Molala resided close to the fort and were probably a small but persistent component of the pool of Native labor and important allies in fur trading efforts in western Oregon. A few of the Calapooya women who arrived at the fort may have been slave women originally, as was the case with some Shasta, though it is unclear whether this was the case with the specific women and children identified in church records. The last remaining group identified in these church records, the Nipissing, is a regional outlier, being an Algonquin population from Ontario. By the early 1700s, a portion of the Nipissing population had left their homeland and lived at the Oka mission among the larger Iroquois community there – a community from which some of the fort’s men apparently hailed. It is likely that Nipissing women arrived through this Oka connection, though it is also true that the HBC had operations in Nipissing territory as well.

Despite the apparent harmony of these interethnic marriages, they were not without troubles. Anxiety over potential abandonment seems to have plagued many of the women of the fort. Desertions of women and children were relatively commonplace, in light of the mobility of fur traders and the regular expiration of their contracts. Men were frequently reassigned to other HBC posts, sometimes leaving their wives behind. Especially in the late 1830s and 1840s, some officers began to remarry wives from Scotland and eastern Canada, abandoning their families at that time. Governor George Simpson and Chief Trader McTavish both abandoned their half-Indian wives for British women in 1830, an event that apparently received much attention in the forts of the Company and may have inspired similar actions among lower officers (Hussey 1991: 291-92). There is also some evidence to suggest that the absence of a church-sanctioned marriage was preferred by the European and Euro-Canadian men as it allowed them to disentangle themselves and return to their home communities at the end of their service to the Company with few legal ties to bind them.¹³² The position of the HBC on these abandonments was mixed, but McLoughlin was especially rigorous in his attempts to dissuade his employees from abandoning their wives. The HBC often allowed men to bring their mixed-race families along with them when transferred to a new post, and generally placed pressure on employees to make provisions for the care of their families in the event that they did not bring them along. The HBC did not generally subsidize

the moving of family, but McLoughlin sometimes helped facilitate the moving of families between HBC posts, or arranged for abandoned women to receive payments for their support. The fort sometimes grudgingly supplied women abandoned or widowed by their employees with rations, at McLoughlin's orders. McLoughlin went so far as to publicly flog a few individuals who refused to care for their mixed-race children and abandoned them in questionable circumstances (Hussey 1991: 276). Moreover, marriages were sometimes arranged – in many cases by John McLoughlin himself – between women who were abandoned or widowed by company employees and single men working for the Company (Kardas 1971). Oral traditions of such marriages appear to be found among the progeny of these marriages in some Northwest tribes today.

Simultaneously, most of the men - including not only British and French-Canadian men, but also the Iroquois, Hawaiian, and Métis – widely objected to the custom of head-flattening among their wives from the lower Columbia region. As many authors have noted, “the men were universally firm on one point: they did not wish their offspring to be “disfigured” by having their heads flattened, as was the Chinook custom” (Hussey 1991: 288). There are reports of abortion and infanticide by Chinookan mothers wishing to avoid conferring the stigma of the round head (Van Kirk 1980: 88; Simpson 1931: 101).¹³³

As a place where young, single women met young, single men for potential marriages, some accounts of Fort Vancouver describe the fort as a place of considerable sexual tension.¹³⁴ This reputation, alongside the widely scorned practice of interracial marriage, would later be used by the HBC's American and missionary critics as evidence of a general culture of licentiousness, a charge that Fort officers sometimes had to counter in their official correspondence.¹³⁵ Stopping these liaisons, however, was nearly impossible and the fort's officers seem to have been somewhat resigned to romantic relationships developing that were beyond their control. Efforts to restrict contact between the employees and Native women sometimes went very badly. Indeed, there is some suggestion that the murder of John McLoughlin's son at the HBC's Fort Stikine was precipitated by the younger McLoughlin's efforts to forcibly contain amorous liaisons between Fort employees with Native women.¹³⁶

For much of the fort's history, Native women represented the sole female presence. Jedediah Smith (Smith et al. 1830) noted that “no English or white women was at the fort, but a great number of mixed-blood Indian extraction, such as belong to the British fur trading establishments, who were treated as wives, and the families of children taken care of accordingly.” At Fort Vancouver, as late as 1834, “no white ladies [had] yet set foot within these precincts” (Bancroft 1890a: 10). Some visitors to the fort suggest that the Native Hawaiian men were married to a number of Native Hawaiian women, but on closer examination several of these marriages were, in fact, to American Indian women who had been misidentified; only a small number of Native Hawaiian

women appear to have made the journey to the Pacific Northwest. Various sources suggest that the arrival of white women represented a symbolic break in the tradition of interracial marriage, undermining the longstanding customs of the fur trade and throwing into doubt the validity of mixed-race marriages. As Hussey asserted, "when pure-blooded European women, long feared, actually arrived to take up residence...for the first time, as far as available records show - racial prejudices became a disturbing factor in Fort Vancouver society" (Hussey 1991: 292). The first non-Native women appear to have arrived to reside at the fort in 1836; most notable among them was Jane Beaver, the wife of Anglican minister Herbert Beaver - a woman who vocally disapproved of the mixed-race community and referred to the Indians as "dirty brutes" during her 27 month stay at the fort (Beaver 1959: xiv). American women, part of missionary expeditions, began arriving at around the same period; anticipating a life lived among indigenous people on what they considered a remote corner of the continent, these women were often pleasantly surprised by the amenities of the fort, even as they sometimes expressed distaste for multiracial families and especially the Native wives.

Still, the role of white women, specifically, in this transformation has probably been overstated. As will be described in more detail later in this document, the rise of a large non-Native community in the Pacific Northwest - a community of largely American men, women, and children who did not share the fort community's values toward, nor dependence on, Native communities - truly brought the end to the free intermarriage between American Indian women and the fort's men. Increasingly, as this American community grew, the men of the HBC encountered disapproval for their marriage to Native women, and mixed-race families were stigmatized.¹³⁷ Minto, still assigning disproportionate blame on white women, summarized this situation: "Such marriages soon ceased after the American homebuilder assumed domination over Oregon, the white mother thus arriving being strongly against inter-racial contracts" (Minto 1900: 313).

Through the 1840s, the Hudson's Bay Company's support for these marriages wavered. Beyond the matter of race, increasing publicity in London of the prevalence of "country marriages," unsanctioned by the church, placed the Company on the defensive. The fort's only Anglican minister, Herbert Beaver - a bitter rival of John McLoughlin and critic of all country marriages - had been a particularly vexing source of bad publicity; nearing the conclusion of his duties at the fort, Beaver undertook a public campaign seeking to convince the Company that marriages not sanctioned by the church be punished by withholding medical attention and other critical services by fort personnel - a proposal that was soundly rejected by the Company's leadership. Yet, under rising and vocal criticism of interethnic marriages from the American opponents of HBC interests into the early 1840s, the demand for change would not cease. Pressures mounted, within missionary and Company ranks, for men married in "country marriages" to "remarry" even long-term spouses with the involvement of clergy. While

some complied, a number of Company officers and employees very publicly refused requests to undertake remarriage ceremonies with their Native wives. Prominently, Peter Skene Ogden – who worked under McLoughlin since early in the fort’s history and served as its Chief Factor from 1849 through 1854 - refused to remarry his Nez Perce wife, Julia, considering his original marriage to be sufficient. McLoughlin complied, but did so quietly and almost clandestinely. The resistance of pressures to sanctify existing marriages by these prominent men was probably influential among the employees of the fort.

Shortly before McLoughlin’s departure, the HBC began to discourage interethnic marriages altogether. McLoughlin protested to the Directors of the HBC “I would wish to know...how we can prevent it in such a place as this, where the men at their work in the fields, are surrounded by Indian women” (quoted in Hussey 1991: 277). By the 1850s, American settlers and legal institutions were generally hostile toward multiracial couples and their offspring, while “country marriages” no longer had the legal standing that they had enjoyed under HBC jurisdictions. Ironically, following the death of Peter Skene Ogden, his wife and children found themselves socially ostracized in the region Ogden had helped settle, and – lacking both white skin or a marriage contract - were long unable to make claim to the late Ogden’s estate.

Still, the history of Fort Vancouver makes it clear: for almost the first quarter of the Pacific Northwest’s Euro-American history, the free intermarriage between white and Native people was not only tolerated, but was actively encouraged by Indian and non-Indian communities alike. This condition contradicts widely held public understandings of regional history, and stands in stark contrast to the racial and ethnic segregation that would follow the arrival of permanent American settlers. However, it is important to recall that the land-based fur trade had lasted for several decades before this segregation occurred. The mixed-race community was not only well-established, but it had become multi-generational. The men of these fur trade marriages were, in the first generation, European, French Canadian, Canadian Métis, Native Hawaiian or Iroquois, while the women were from a variety of Pacific Northwest tribes. As the resident mixed-race population grew, subsequent generations of fort resident adults were considered “mixed-breed” or Métis. Emerging from this multiethnic context, second-generation children of these marriages had diverse experiences. As Bancroft noted, “The daughters often marry whites, the sons seldom” (Bancroft 1890a: 27, note 1). While there were many variations, the sons from these interethnic families often married back into tribal communities during the mid-19th century, while women – considered marriageable by men on the fur trade frontier - very commonly did not. The pigmentation of each individual seems to have been influential in the path they might take. With succeeding generations, and growing pressure from American settlers to divide communities racially, some branches of these families (especially the maternal lines) often became effectively “non-Indian” in identity, even as their relations became

integrated into numerous tribes and identified themselves with as members of those tribes in succeeding generations (Van Kirk 1980; Pollard 1990; Jackson 2007).

At the conclusion of exclusive HBC occupation at Fort Vancouver in the late 1840s, interethnic marriages also fostered the outmigration of many Chinookan women and their families, as their husbands were transferred between other HBC forts – especially Forts Victoria and Langley, in modern-day British Columbia.¹³⁸ Here too, some mixed-race fur trade families appear to have been integrated into the Anglo-Canadian mainstream, while others became integrated into Canadian First Nations principally through intermarriage with these groups. As will be discussed in later sections of this document, the Métis who did not integrate into the non-Native communities of the Northwest or move elsewhere eventually found their way into a number of tribes within the region through the mid-19th century. The exact pathways that they took were numerous, and reflect a diverse range of life experiences as individuals and families tried to find their place in a region in which multiracial peoples increasingly did not “fit”; only a detailed biographical effort would be able to tell these stories satisfactorily.

The Unique Roles of Iroquois and Cree Employees

Throughout the journals, correspondence, and other chronicles of life at Fort Vancouver, there are innumerable passing references to both Cree and Iroquois residents and employees of the fort. The paths by which the two populations arrived at Fort Vancouver were very different, yet both played critical roles in HBC operations. To understand how both of these native peoples of Canada arrived at the fort, one must consider the history of both the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company.

The Cree people are inextricable from the history of the Hudson’s Bay Company. From the beginnings of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s operations in North America in 1670, it operated within Cree territory. The shoreline of Hudson Bay proper consisted significantly of Cree territory, as did adjacent lands of the Canadian interior east and west of the bay. Indeed, the term “Cree” is generally applied to Algonquian-speaking people whose traditional territories have ranged from Atlantic Canada to the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains in Canada. The Cree traded actively with the HBC beginning very early in that Company’s history, and gradually took on roles as trappers for the Company. Simultaneously, for well over a century prior to the development of Fort Vancouver, the policy of encouraging intermarriage with native communities had been tested and developed squarely within the heart of traditional Cree territory. By the time that the HBC had ventured into the Pacific Northwest, the Company employees included a population of Cree descendents who were, in some cases, more

than fourth-generation descendents of the original cross-cultural marriages between Cree and Euro-Canadian Company employees. New Cree employees were being recruited constantly throughout much of the Company's operations north of the 49th parallel in the early 19th century, and some portion of this population was recruited to assist in the early development of operations in the Columbia District. Often, these individuals were among the most experienced fur traders available to the Company. Certain areas, such as James Bay and York Factory were places of active recruitment during this period, but innumerable small forts and posts dotted Cree territory and recruitment appears to have been restricted to no one portion of the HBC domain. Accordingly, the "Cree" of Fort Vancouver originated from HBC posts from throughout Canada - especially though not exclusively those of the Laurentian Plateau.

Individuals of Cree ancestry are mentioned frequently if parenthetically in fort records, though they are not generally discussed as a discrete population by early writers - probably reflecting their integration into the ranks of HBC employees to a degree that was distinctive among its native cohort. Many of these employees appear to have been among the undifferentiated population of "mixed-blood" or "Canadian" Métis reported in association with the fort, and it is unclear whether many of these individuals would have considered themselves "Cree" or some alternative designation. Cree and part-Cree individuals are mentioned in Catholic church records, and "Cree" children were among those reported at the Fort Vancouver school in the 1830s (Munnick 1972; Woolworth 2003). Cree was among the languages recorded by visitors at Fort Vancouver, though remarkably little is said about its users, while a few Cree elements, documented within Chinook Jargon, suggest the historical use of this language at the fort (Hale 1846; Lang 2008). Those Cree men who worked at the fort sometimes stayed in the region after retirement, though it appears that many Cree employees moved to Canada after the dissolution of Fort Vancouver. The modern Cree are composed of numerous constituent First Nations, spread from the Atlantic coast of Canada to the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, in the provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Alberta as well as the Northwest Territories (Hanks 1982). In this context, the documentation of "tribal affiliation" for any individual of Cree ancestry associated with Fort Vancouver would require detailed biographical research. The Chippewa Cree Tribe, located on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in Montana, is a federally recognized tribe in the United States and might be an entry-point into Cree communities on the other side of the border.

The Iroquois arrived by a different path, and in response to different pressures. As the North West Company advanced into new portions of North America, it encountered frequent difficulties in recruiting local native labor. Local Indians generally possessed loyalties to their villages, tribes, and families that trumped their loyalties to the Company; moreover, they were often pulled away from Company duties to aid their communities in hunting and fishing, ceremonies, and other activities that competed with Company goals. In response, the North West Company established a practice of

recruiting native labor from elsewhere within its operations. The lower Columbia, with its large, hierarchical tribal communities, each skilled in trade and negotiation, was as challenging a case as any that the Company had previously encountered. Within less than two years of trading from Fort George, Company staff determined that outside native labor was needed. Beginning in 1815, the North West Company began recruiting Iroquois labor with trapping, hunting, and boating experience from the vicinity of its headquarters in Montreal and sending them to their operations on the lower Columbia River (Mackie 1997). The HBC had also been recruiting a modest number of Iroquois employees previous to the construction of Fort Vancouver, though by no means on the scale of its Montreal-based competitor. By the time that the HBC and the North West Company merged in 1821, both companies had been actively recruiting Iroquois labor for their work in the Columbia District.

The reasons for recruiting Iroquois labor, specifically, among the pool of potential outside native laborers were numerous. The Iroquois had themselves experienced the effects of the fur trade in their homeland generations before arriving in the Pacific Northwest, including many of the fur trade's corrosive effects, but had been integrated into the fur trade economy and were now enlisted as its agents in distant lands. Iroquois labor had been an effective vanguard of the North West Company as it expanded its operations in the Canadian Shield and Canadian Prairies. The Iroquois were accomplished boatmen, hunters, and were noted as early masters at the use of steel traps for Beaver and other fur-bearers (Jackson 2007). Many early writers seem impressed by the strength, courage, and frontier competence of the Iroquois that they encountered working for Fort Vancouver. David Douglas (1914), for example, made reference to Iroquois working as capable hunters, guides, and boatmen in the region.¹³⁹ Iroquois were often depicted as intrepid field men, being numerous among the first fur trapping expeditions into the Snake Country, Willamette Valley, and southern Oregon.

The Iroquois were also intended to reach out to the tribes of the Columbia River region to aid in their recruitment into the fur trade as labor, and to aid in teaching them the skills of commercial trapping - challenging tasks, at which the Iroquois men had mixed success. Efforts at Iroquois outreach to resident tribes were often unsuccessful, and conflicts between Iroquois employees and resident tribes are reported in the journals at least as much as successful interactions.¹⁴⁰ Still, a few sources attribute some of the successes of Catholic missionization of Columbia basin Indians on the presence of the largely Catholic Iroquois as role models (Chance 1973; Rauffer 1966).

As a large and ethnically distinct component of the HBC employee population - ostensibly the largest discrete tribal community within the ranks of the HBC's core group of employees - the Iroquois were a source of concern to many of the Company's Anglo-Canadian leadership. They often operated under different assumptions than the HBC leadership, and maintained a sense of internal loyalty that sometimes appears to have trumped their loyalties to the Company and its Anglo-Canadian leadership.

Within the correspondence of John McLoughlin and other Company employees, there is a suggestion that certain Iroquois employees held resentment for Company management and that there was fear of potential mutiny (e.g., McLoughlin 1842a, Simpson 1843). Alexander Ross claimed that "The Iroquois were good hunters, but plotting and faithless" (Ross 1855: 6). McLoughlin suggested that "...the Iroquois...in General are always Ready for mischief" (McLoughlin 1842a: 47). The HBC leadership made efforts to monitor and punish what they perceived as infractions, and almost never organized major operations in a manner that success was contingent on strict Iroquois adherence to Company plans. The HBC made occasional efforts to cap Iroquois numbers in the Columbia Department, but their effectiveness as trappers, hunters, boatmen and guides still placed them in high demand and they were therefore a persistent and major component of the HBC workforce on the Lower Columbia from the 1810s through the late 1840s.

Discerning the identity of modern Iroquois descendants tied to the Fort Vancouver community is challenging. Iroquois men intermarried with Cree and Métis extensively prior to moving into the Pacific Northwest, while French voyageurs had married Iroquois women occasionally too; the children of these unions often took positions in the fur trade and were categorized as Iroquois, Métis, or other designations - often depending on the predilections of the individual chronicler. Moreover, many Iroquois working for the Company took on the surname "Iroquois" apparently due to the fact that their supervisors could not pronounce their Iroquois names (Jackson 2007).

Simultaneously, little specific information regarding the precise origins of the Iroquois men at Fort Vancouver can be found in written accounts from the fort. The men first arriving on the lower Columbia, according to Alexander Ross (1855: 85) were "chiefly men from the vicinity of Montreal," and Kardas (1971: 128) depicts the Iroquois of this region as being "Iroquoian speaking Indians from the St. Lawrence area" while providing few specifics. To understand the origin of these men, one must instead look into the broader history of the North West Company and, to a lesser degree, the HBC. The North West Company, at the time of the establishment of their Columbia basin operations, recruited labor most actively in a handful of Indian communities in close proximity to their Montreal headquarters. Many of the Iroquois recruits appear to have been associated with the Caughnawaga area, immediately across the Saint Lawrence River from Montreal. There is much evidence to suggest that the Iroquois employed in the Northwest were in some manner associated with the Jesuit Caughnawaga Mission at that location.¹⁴¹ Other Iroquois populations that were frequently recruited into western ventures were the Oka and St. Regis communities, sitting a few kilometers' distance east and south of Montreal respectively (Jennings 1885: 71; Mackie 1997; Nicks 1980). Other Iroquois communities may have contributed a few individuals to the fur trade efforts on the Pacific coast, but the few communities listed above appear to have been the principal source for the vast majority of Iroquois labor during the period of active recruitment to the Columbia District.

Recent sources suggest that the Iroquois of the lower Columbia were derived “from peoples now confined to the Kahnawaké, Kanesataké, and Akwesasne reserves and reservations in present-day Quebec and New York State” (Lang 2008: 91). This claim appears to match the historical evidence found in older sources. Kahnawaké – or more properly the Kahnawaké Mohawk Territory – is located at the site of the Caughnawaga Mission near Montreal. Kanesataké – or more properly the Kanesataké First Nation – is centered near the Oka settlement, also near Montreal. Akwesasne – or, more properly, the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne – is associated with the St. Regis community south of Montreal, and has a traditional territory that straddles the international boundary; their “St. Regis Mohawk Reservation” is located in far northern New York state while their “Mohawk Council of Akwesasne” is located across the international boundary in Quebec. All three of these communities are participants in the traditional governing body, the Mohawk Nation Council of Chiefs, which is itself a member organization of the Iroquois League or “Haudenosaunee.” For United States agencies seeking an American tribe for consultation purposes, St. Regis is perhaps the most appropriate point of first contact with these historically associated communities.¹⁴²

Simultaneously, it is important to note that many of the Iroquois working on the lower Columbia River did not return home to eastern Canada. While single men often moved on to other HBC posts after the dissolution of Fort Vancouver, a significant number of the Iroquois working in the fort married into native or Métis families. Many of the frontier Iroquois labor ultimately found “homes in Métis settlements on Indian reservations established in the United States from 1856 onward” (Lang 2008: 93). Many of these families ultimately stayed in the Pacific Northwest (Nicks 1980). Individuals of Iroquois descendent found their way to Pacific Northwest reservation communities, such as the Grand Ronde Reservation; following the 1850s, some Métis of Iroquois ancestry were ultimately absorbed by the larger Anglo-American community of the Pacific Northwest.

“The Greater Part of their Riches”: Slaves at Fort Vancouver

Slavery – the holding of captives who performed labor for the villages and households of their captors – was widespread throughout the lower Columbia Region.

Ethnographic and early historical accounts uniformly describe slavery as a central institution within the societies and economies of the region. Even the very earliest accounts of the region mention slaves and slave raiding. In the winter of 1795-96 – a full decade before the arrival of Lewis and Clark – Captain Charles Bishop recorded an account of a slave raid far into the interior Northwest by Chinooks of the lower river:

“These People carry their wars, sometimes, to a great distance from their home. About six years ago, the Chinook tribes united, went with 100 large War Cannoes, and near 100 Smaller ones, twenty days travel up that River, when they came to some great Water fall, up which they Dragged their Cannoes into a lake, over which they Paddled ten days more and in the night came unawares on a large tribe inhabiting the farther shores of this lake. The men were totally destroyed, and the Women and Children made Slaves and brought to Chinook in Triumph” (Bishop 1967: 127).¹⁴³

The practice of slavery brought a pronounced diversity of tribal members, arriving through a vast slave raiding and trading network, into close proximity to the Fort Vancouver site, both before and during its operation as a Hudson’s Bay Company post. After the fort was established and its employees began marrying into Chinookan families, slaves became a significant portion of the fort community and slave ownership became commonplace among the Company’s employees.

To understand the implications of slavery for the Fort Vancouver community, however, it is important to review the practice of slavery generally within the region. While the slaves of the lower Columbia were sometimes obtained through raiding, most were acquired through trade with other tribes who had obtained their slaves through raiding and warfare. Slaves were sometimes exchanged as part of the bride price for high status marriages; a person also might become a slave to settle a large debt, though this was comparatively uncommon (Franchère 1967: 117).¹⁴⁴ The children of slaves also became part of the pool of slave labor within a community, inheriting the status of their parents.¹⁴⁵ Slavery, as it was practiced in Northwestern North America, operated somewhat different than might be commonly perceived based on the American experience with African slavery, as contemporary tribal members commonly assert. In the absence of racial distinctions, slaves had a degree of social mobility, and shared the households of their captors. As Samuel Parker noted somewhat sanguinely in the early 1840s, “They are generally treated with kindness; live in the same dwelling with their masters, and [might] intermarry with those who are free” (Parker 1841: 197). Simpson, more critical, suggested that “they feed in common with the Family of their proprietors and intermarry with their own class, but lead a life of misery, indeed I conceive a Columbia Slave to be the most unfortunate Wretch in existence” (Simpson 1931: 101).

Most, though probably not all, slaves were distinguished from the free people of the Columbia by the absence of a flattened head. Many early writers noted that “The slaves... are not allowed to enjoy the benefit of this strange deformity; consequently their heads are left in their natural state” (Lee and Frost 1844: 102). Parker commented that slaves “are exempt from one cruel practice which their masters inflict upon their own children, the flattening of their heads. The reason, which those who possess slaves assign for flattening their own heads, is, that they may be distinguished from their

slaves who have round heads" (Parker 1841: 197). Indeed, the symbolic value of the flattened head as an emblem of free birth was a powerful incentive for the continuation of this practice after European contact.¹⁴⁶

The slaves of the lower Columbia region clearly made major contributions to the well-being of their captors through their physical labor, such as paddling canoes, hunting, fishing, and plant-gathering, the gathering of firewood, and the like (Ames 2008). Pierre deSmet noted that "Most of the work among these savages is performed by slaves" (deSmet 1847: 124). George Simpson noted that "they are made to Fish, hunt, draw Wood & Water in short all the drudgery falls on them" (Simpson 1931: 101). Some also served as personal attendants to the chiefly nobility of the Columbia River tribes. Alexander Ross, for example, commented on the women that he saw arriving to trade in the early days of Fort George:

"Slaves do all the laborious work; and a Chinooke matron is constantly attended by two, three, or more slaves, who are on all occasions obsequious to her will. In trade and barter the women are as actively employed as the men, and it is common to see the wife, followed by a train of slaves, trading at the factory, as her husband" (Ross 1849: 92).

A number of early writers also note that the owners of female slaves sometimes employed them as prostitutes: "they have female slaves who they hire at a price to the first who asks them" (Blanchet 1878: 58).¹⁴⁷ Travelers along the lower Columbia suggest that the treatment of a slave by their masters was contingent on the slave's ability to be of practical utility to the community: "They treat them well enough as long as their services are useful; when old and unable to work, they are neglected and left to die in misery" (Franchère 1967: 110).¹⁴⁸ Yet, slaves were also potent emblems of chiefly status for the people of the lower Columbia, and their value clearly was not restricted to their value as household labor. The ownership of slaves denoted wealth: as Simpson noted, "Slaves form the principal article of traffick on the whole of this Coast and constitute the greater part of their Riches" (Simpson 1931: 101).

Studies of slavery on the lower Columbia have estimated that, on average, roughly 20 to 25% of the total population of the region consisted of slaves during the period of European contact (Donald 1997; Mitchell 1985; Hajda 1984). In some villages, the figures could be quite high. In one instance, in villages along the lower Columbia in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, slaves were reported to represent up to 47% of the total population. The considerable variability in the total slave ownership figures seems to have reflected the differing rank and wealth of the individual villages and chiefs in possession of these slaves (Hajda 2005; HBC 1838).

While the Chinookan peoples of the lower Columbia sometimes raided for slaves, they seem to have been able to largely acquire slaves through trade with other tribes – an apparent outcome of their relative affluence. As such, slaves were “imported goods,” with the prestige associated with remote provenience. For those tribes raiding slaves, the geographical limitations of slave raiding were generally placed “outside the area where relatives might be found” (Hajda 1984: 264; Donald 1997). (Though some dramatic traveler’s accounts accused tribes of placing members of their own family in slavery, these accounts were probably fictitious or overstated.)¹⁴⁹ The preferential acquisition of slaves from remote peoples and places had several advantages: it minimized the potential for unsettling internal conflicts, for example, as well as reducing the potential for retaliation for slave raids, or the easy escape of slaves to their home communities.

The early records associated with the lower Columbia region suggest that slaves arrived from coastal routes as well as through interior trade. A portion of the coastal trade involved trade in captives taken by the people of the British Columbia and northwestern Washington coasts (Donald 1997). Alexander Ross reported that “Slaves are the fruits of war and of trade among the tribes along the seacoast far to the north, and are regularly bought and sold in the same manner as any other article of property” (Ross 1849: 92). The Quinault, Quileute, Makah, and Nuu-chah-nulth were often sources, or intermediary traders, in the exchange of the slaves from these northern reaches. In some cases, a few of these northern coastal groups, such as the Quileute, were themselves the target of slave raids from such groups as the Tillamook. The Tillamook were also critical slave raiders and intermediaries in the exchange of Coos, Yaquina, Alsea, and other coastal groups from the south, along the Oregon coast (Donald 1997; E. Jacobs n.d.). As Lee and Frost note of the Chinookan peoples’ slaves,

“Their slaves are such as are taken prisoners in time of war, or, perhaps, more properly, such as are stolen from other tribes. For instance, a band of Killemoos go to the south, and falling in with a weaker clan of their southern neighbours, they make no further ado, but fall upon them, gun and knife in hand; some they kill, the remainder they take prisoners, and convey them to the north, and sell them to their Clatsop, Chenook, or Checalish [Chehalis] neighbours, when they become slaves for life, and their children after them. What they call a good man slave is worth as much as a horse, that is, from ten to twelve blankets, and so on, according to their size and qualifications. The female slaves are worth less, from the fact that they are not able to perform so much drudgery” (Lee and Frost 1844: 103).

Slave acquisition from interior tribes was also reported at the beginning of the fur trade. As Franchère noted in 1811-12, “The natives get their slaves from neighboring tribes

and from the interior, giving beads, beaver skins, and other things in exchange” (Franchère 1967: 110). In some cases, Kalapuya slaves were obtained by Chinookan communities through trade and perhaps through debt repayments.¹⁵⁰ Perhaps more commonly, even at this early date, the Klamath and Modoc of south-central Oregon supplied slaves raided from their neighboring tribes to the people of the lower Columbia. Slaves hailing from other Plateau tribes are sometimes reported, albeit infrequently, along the lower Columbia.

However, the circumstances of the fur trade significantly changed this geography. The focus of the slave trade quickly shifted away from the coast, increasingly relying on interior tribes to supply demand for slaves among the Chinooks. The ‘center of gravity’ for the lower Columbia slave trade moved from the western end to the eastern end of the Chinookan domain. Though the major trading center at The Dalles was apparently not a slave market at the time of first European contact, it quickly became the region’s premier slave trading venue during the 1820s and 1830s, as the Klamath and Modoc, emboldened by their growing access to horses and guns, began raiding their neighbors with unprecedented intensity (Donald 1997: 141-45). As Hajda notes, “It was apparently not until the Klamaths from southern Oregon acquired horses...and started bringing captives to the Dalles for sale that the place became known for slave-trading” (Hajda 2005: 575).

Klamath and Modoc slave raiding is well-documented among those tribes. Leslie Spier, who conducted ethnographic research among the Klamath, reported that,

“Most slaves (*loks*) are from Pit River (Achomawi and Atsugewi); others are Northern Paiute and Shasta, with a few Upland Takelma from the Rogue river drainage. A few of these Takelma are known to have been made captive on a raid into Klamath territory. The Klamath sporadically raid the Pit river people in the spring or summer when the latter are scattered. Young children, women, and even men are taken...They are as quickly sold at Warm Springs and the Dalles as are foreign captives... [with children] there is an advantage in immediately disposing of them, that they do not grow up to carry back to their own people precise knowledge of the habits and topography of the Klamath world” (Spier 1930: 40, 27).

Accordingly, Kane noted that the slaves of the Chinooks “are usually procured from the Chastay [Shasta] tribe” (Kane 1859: 181; Kane 1855: 276). Spier and Sapir (1930: 221) mention that the slaves being purchased along the middle Columbia River through the Dalles were largely Achomawi and Atsugewi (or “Pit River Indians”), Shastas, and northern Paiutes, with a few Upland Takelma from the Rogue River Basin; all were brought to the Dalles principally by the Klamath and Modoc, who raided these tribes

for slaves. The Klamath and Modoc raided the Shasta and Pit River so frequently that the latter tribes built fortifications of stone to retreat to during raids and by some accounts exhibited a degree of resignation to the reality of raids (Kniffen 1928).¹⁵¹ Shasta slaves, in particular, appear to have been so common that a few sources seem to use the term “Shasta slave” or “Chastay slave” as a general term for a Native American slave regardless of stated tribal affiliation (e.g. Kane 1855, 1857).

Slaves represented a remarkably large proportion of the total tribal population living close to Fort Vancouver in the period from 1824 through 1849. Roughly 24% of the population documented in the 1838 HBC census of nearby tribes consisted of slaves (HBC 1838). Meanwhile, Hajda (1984) interprets an HBC census of 1824-25 to indicate that 47% of the population close to the fort consisted of slaves.

Simultaneously, slaves became an increasingly important part of the larger resident population of Fort Vancouver. Both officers and employees’ families had slaves, though it appears that the number of slaves may have been proportionately greater in the employees’ quarters, reflecting disproportionate intermarriage with Chinookan women (Beaver 1959). The European employees were not alone in the ownership of slaves. Even native labor recruited outside of the region, including Iroquois and Hawaiian employees with wives from Northwest Indian tribes, held slaves. In a few accounts, Fort Vancouver is even mentioned as slave trading center, where tribal members converged and exchanged goods for slaves taken from tribes throughout the region.¹⁵²

Slavery, as it was practiced at Fort Vancouver, continued what were largely pre-contact tribal traditions. In some cases the integration of slavery into what were essentially European-style nuclear family households was a unique development. Many homes in the fort consisted of a husband, wife, children, and slaves. However, especially in the Village, slaves found themselves as residents of multi-family households similar in structure to the traditional longhouse. As Slacum reported of the Village,

“The laborers and mechanics live outside the fort in good log cabins – two or three families generally under one roof, and as nearly every man has a wife, or lives with an Indian or half-breed woman, and as each family has from two to five slaves, the whole number of persons about Vancouver may be estimated at 750 to 800 souls” (Slacum 1912: 186).

In many respects the slaves living in the Village especially, operated in much the same way that they had in Chinookan villages at the time of contact. In some families, especially among the officers of the Company, slaves gradually took on roles that were comparable to those of European serfs or servants within the nuclear family households of their masters. As was the case prior to European occupation, the slaves in the homes of HBC employees contributed to the well-being of individual households through their

physical labor. Slacum noted that “The slaves are generally employed to cut wood, hunt and fish, for the families of the men employed by the Hudson’s Bay Company and are ready for any extra work” (Slacum 1912: 192). Summarizing a number of written accounts, Bancroft reported that “The Indian servants of the Indian wives hunted and fished for additional supplies” (Bancroft 1890a: 8). Some fort employees’ families ostensibly kept female slaves as prostitutes to earn their owners access to trade goods. Governor George Simpson noted of some Company employees’ Chinookan wives that

“Several of the Flat Head Women at the Establishment keep Female Slaves and it was the practice to allow them to be let out among the newly arrived Servants for the purpose of prostitution” and that efforts to stop the practice had met with resistance as it deprived them of a very important source of revenue” (Simpson 1931: 101).

Especially in the years after the epidemics of the early 1830s, men from the fort sought wives from tribes in the interior Northwest. Sometimes these men were reported to purchase female slaves as *de facto* wives, leading observers such as Duflot de Mofras to comment that “The majority of white colonists are married to Indian slaves whom they have purchased” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 185). (Such claims should be taken with caution, however, as they sometimes manifested the author’s misunderstanding of the exchange of goods at the time of marriage, as was done to sanctify marriages in many Pacific Northwest tribal traditions.)

In the records associated with Fort Vancouver, slaves were commonly called by the name of their tribal origin, a practice that was later applied to surnames (Ray 1938: 53). Families by the name of Sasseté or Sasté appear in the records of Fort Vancouver, for example – a name that has been interpreted as being indicative of Shasta individuals, probably slaves (Lang 2008; Munnick 1972).¹⁵³ It is telling that the Pit River individuals who appear in the burial records at Fort Vancouver are identified by tribal affiliation, but not by the tribal names commonly used by themselves or Euro-Americans to designate the tribe, such as “Achomawi.” Instead, they are designated by the name “Moatwas” – the Klamath/Modoc name for the tribe (Munnick 1972). Literally meaning “southerner” the name alludes to the fact that the Pit River territory was immediately south of Klamath and Modoc territories (Curtis 1924: 128). Even in death, these individuals bore the appellations applied to them by their Klamath captors.

In many cases the nationality of a slave in service to HBC employees was largely forgotten, especially when the slave had not reached adulthood in their home territory. For example, writing in October 17th, 1826, David Douglas reported:

“Baptist Mackay has given me one of his Indian hunters, a young man about eighteen years old, as a guide; of what nation he belongs to he does

not know, but tells me he was brought from the south by a war party when a child and kept as a slave until Mackay took him: he is very fond of this sort of life and has no wish of returning to his Indian relations. He speaks a few words of the Umpqua tongue and understands the Chenook, so I will have no difficulty in conversing with this, my only companion" (Douglas 1914: 224).

While the HBC expressed opposition to slaveholding by its employees in their formal correspondence, there is little evidence that they exerted much effort to restrict these practices. Critics of the HBC pointed out correctly that the use of slaves on fur trading expeditions saved the Company considerable wages. As William Slacum noted,

"Each man of the trapping parties has from two to three slaves, who assist to hunt and take care of the horses and camp: they thereby save the company the expense of employing at least double the number of men that would otherwise be required on these excursions" (Slacum 1912: 192).

While McLoughlin and fort officers sometimes intervened on the behalf of slaves, they were eager to not antagonize their tribal trading partners by overt efforts to curb the effects of slavery. Even when confronted with evidence of the murder of a Shasta slave, McLoughlin urged the source of this information "to make allowance for their manner of thinking" and to "leave it to the Almighty who will punish the Murderer" rather than to involve the Company in potentially damaging intervention (McLoughlin 1832a).¹⁵⁴ This position left the HBC vulnerable to criticism. One especially vocal source of that criticism came from Herbert Beaver, who was briefly assigned as missionary for the fort community. Beaver complained very publicly after his return to London that the Company was complicit in the continued use of slave labor and the abuses of slaves by their masters. He also expressed hope that the removal of slaves from the fort community would cause an exodus of Indian wives from the fort, thus ending the interracial marriages of which he so disapproved:

"While traffic is carried on in the persons of these wretched outcasts, and authority assumed over them by servants of the Honorable Company, it is a vain excuse to say, that they belong to the Indian women, who are living with their Masters, and to whom the custom of the country concedes the right of retaining them in slavery. That they should not be so retained by the Company or their servants, admits of no question; but I maintain farther, that not even women, so living, ought to be allowed so to retain them; nor should they be suffered to reside in any of your houses, over which, at least, as belonging to yourselves, you can exercise whatever control you please. Your men should be strictly forbidden to make use of

their services in any way; and they should, by every practical method, be kept away from your establishment and its environs. Nor am I without some idea, that the prevention of this evil would work the partial cure of another; I believe, that not a few of the women, who have been accustomed to their services, would, when deprived of these, take their departure from them" (Beaver 1959: 132-133).

Beaver made various estimates of the number of slaves being held by Company employees, with results ranging from forty "held in actual bondage" in November 1836, to 32 in January 1837 – eight belonging to officers and 24 belonging to employees (Beaver 1959: 20, 31).¹⁵⁵

Criticism from Beaver, Slacum, and others in the late 1830s placed John McLoughlin on the defensive for much of his remaining tenure as Chief Factor. His correspondence from 1839 onward abounds in explanations of his policy toward slavery. One especially detailed letter to the HBC Governors and Committee repeats some of the recurring themes of his defense:

"It is incorrect that we encourage Slavery and on the reverse we avail ourselves of every opportunity to discourage it. Tho' we cannot prevent Indians having Slaves We tell the Masters it is very improper to keep their fellow beings in Slavery: moreover we have redeemed several and sent them back to their own Country this very season...You know your honors have sent us Instructions positively to prohibit any of the Companys servants having slaves, and prior to the receipt of your instructions my predecessors had opposed it...We disapprove of any one have Slaves and consider every one about the Establishment as free" (McLoughlin 1839: 275).¹⁵⁶

Despite the HBC's limited efforts to curb slavery under these pressures, and despite the demographic contractions within the Chinookan world, the institution was remarkably persistent. Writers in the 1840s and early 1850s noted with some astonishment that "the Chinooks, considering how much they themselves have been reduced, still retain a large number of slaves" (Kane 1855: 276). Not until the Chinookan peoples were removed to reservation communities and placed under the direct influence of Indian agents and missionaries in the 1850s would the institution of slavery begin to fade.

Changing Fortunes: the 1830s and 1840s

Demographic Contractions on the Lower Columbia

Even before the first arrival of Europeans on the lower Columbia River, epidemics of introduced diseases had made their way to the vicinity of Fort Vancouver through tribal social and trade networks. Signs of smallpox were abundant upon the first arrival of Europeans on the lower Columbia River, and early journals make frequent reference to evidence of diminished villages and individuals bearing smallpox scars (Boyd 1999; Moulton 1990; Howay 1990). Though a variety of infectious diseases had passed through the lower Columbia communities in the early 19th century, Fort Vancouver had not witnessed an especially lethal epidemic over the course of its first five years of operation. The fur trading community seemed to have not recognized the potentials for devastating epidemics and early traders sometimes commented on the general health of the tribal population.¹⁵⁷

However, fur trading posts generally, and Fort Vancouver specifically, were gathering places for people traveling long distances by land and by sea. As such, these forts were important vectors of disease transmission. As Boyd notes, "At permanently occupied trading posts, tuberculosis and venereal diseases took hold, and minor respiratory ailments, introduced by fur brigades or by sea contacts with densely populated areas, appeared regularly" (Boyd 1994: 8).¹⁵⁸ With ship traffic arriving regularly, originating from ports in Asia, the Pacific Islands, coastlines throughout the Americas and the British Isles, it was perhaps just a question of time before a major epidemic would arrive at this bustling trading center.

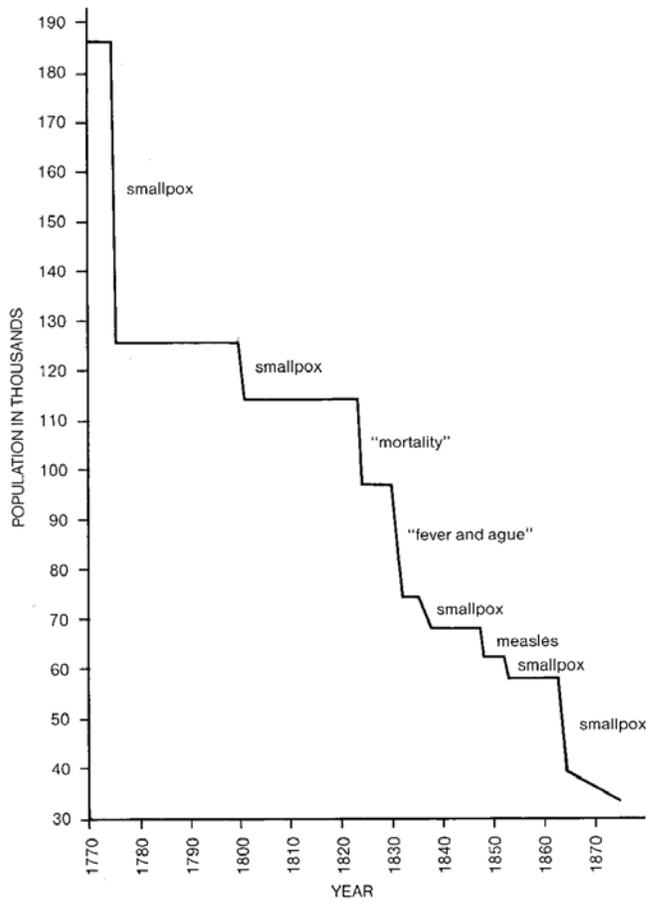
In the year 1830, that major epidemic arrived. This year brought a devastating epidemic to the lower Columbia River, which would radically and permanently change the demographics of the region. The "fever and ague" or "intermittent fever," as it was often called in the journals of the time is first reported at Fort Vancouver in 1830 – the first major epidemic witnessed directly by non-Indians. Most sources concur that the disease was, in fact, malaria, and that Fort Vancouver was at the epicenter of the disease's spread. While the specific path of introduction remains unclear, most sources acknowledge that the fort was probably its first point of arrival in the region. The American ship *Owyhee* is sometimes implicated in historical sources, though some authors have suggested that the rumor of this ship's responsibility might have been broadcast by HBC employees to undermine tribal communities' confidence in their American competitors (Cook 1955: 38-39; Boyd 1999, 1990: 85-88, 1985: 112-145; Salleeby 1983).

The epidemic spread through the region from its lower Columbia core, ultimately appearing in the interior of Oregon and well into central California. Despite its geographically wide influence, the epidemic's effects were most lethal on the densely settled Columbia River. The epidemic continued to plague the lower Columbia for much of the decade, with rebounding outbreaks each year – typically in the summer, when mosquitoes rapidly spread the sickness along the marshy margins of the Columbia. The epidemic returned to the Fort Vancouver area in the summer of 1831 with a proportional effect equal to the previous year.¹⁵⁹ A somewhat reduced epidemic returned in the summer of 1832.¹⁶⁰ A few cases were reported in 1833 and 1834, but the annual mortality rate appears to have been much lower in these years. Journal accounts suggest a few additional cases in the following summers through the remainder of the decade (Rich 1941, 1943). As deSmet explained, “The fever...made its appearance annually, though in a less malignant form” (deSmet 1847: 123). As Parker similarly suggested, “The mortality, after one or two seasons, abated, partly from the want of subjects, and partly from medical assistance obtained from the hospital at Fort Vancouver” (Parker 1841: 191-192). However, as the malaria epidemic came to an end, new diseases such as smallpox arrived, so that the effects of the initial epidemic were compounded through the remainder of the fort's operations. The demographic consequences of malaria on the operations of Fort Vancouver stand alone, however, and it is therefore the primary focus of the discussion of epidemic disease that follows.¹⁶¹

While Indians and non-Indians may have been infected equally by malaria, the disease proved to be alarmingly lethal among the Indian population alone. As John McLoughlin reported in a letter to the HBC Governor Deputy Governor and Committee, dated October 11th, 1830,

“The intermittent fever (for the first time since the Trade of this Department was established) has appeared at this place and carried off three fourths of the Indian population in our vicinity at present there are fifty-two of our People on the sick list. In which number is Mr Ogden but thanks be to God for his great Mercies all of our People are on the convalescent list” (McLoughlin 1830f: 139).

The estimate of “three fourths” of the native population dying is remarkable, for this was only the first year of several that this epidemic surged through the communities of the region. Over the course of this multi-year epidemic, contemporary sources now estimate a decline of roughly 90% of the lower Columbia population between the time of Lewis and Clark (1805-06) and the early 1840s – most of this contraction occurring during the malaria epidemics of the 1830s (Boyd 1999, 1990). McLoughlin himself, witnessing the full course of the epidemic, estimated that nine-tenths of the population from the Columbia estuary to the Cascades had died by the mid-1830s (Boyd 1999: 99).



Graph produced by Robert Boyd, depicting declining population of the Northwest Coast of North America in the century spanning the years between 1770 and 1870 as a result of epidemic disease. Rates of decline were proportional on the lower Columbia River. From Boyd 1990.

Some sources, both historical and contemporary, suggest that this estimate may have been conservative, and that the Chinookan population has been reduced to less than five percent of its early 19th century total, leaving only a few hundred survivors from the thousands who had lived along the lower Columbia only a few years before.¹⁶² Moreover, the effects of this mortality were enhanced by the fact that the epidemics along the lower Columbia appear to have reduced the fertility of survivors by causing mechanical damage to the reproductive tract and often causing hormonal changes in surviving women; as a result, survivors often had few or no children after contracting malaria and other epidemic diseases.

In the Fort Vancouver community, the effects of the epidemic were felt especially in the Village, where many Native women and some of their children, lacking immunity to

the disease, fell ill and died. In a letter to Mr. Donald Manson, dated November 15th, 1830, McLoughlin noted,

“I would have answered [your letter] before now, if an opportunity had offered, and we had so many men on the sick list (at one time there were seventy exclusive of women and children in the Hospital) I could not spare any to send with a letter to you. But praise be to God for his great mercies only one of our men Big Pierre [Karaganyate] died, though I am sorry to say nine of the women, two children, and several of the Indians about the place, are gone to that bourne whence no traveler returns...the Intermittent Fever is making a dreadful havoc among the Natives and at this place half of our people are laid up with it” (McLoughlin 1830d: 153).¹⁶³

The non-Native fort employees and many of their multi-ethnic children had disproportionately high survival rates. As George Simpson noted toward the end of these epidemics,

“Most of the men are married to aboriginal or half-breed women; and the swarms of children in the little village already mentioned, present a strongly suggestive contrast with the scantiness of the rising generation, in almost every native village on the Lower Columbia” (Simpson 1847: 142).

Other authors arriving after these epidemics comment on how the Village was “swarming with children,” which was an otherwise rare sight along the lower Columbia.¹⁶⁴

As suggested above, while the fort’s medical facilities were available to the Indian and Métis members of the fort community, the tribal communities of the lower Columbia sometimes sought assistance from the fort as well (Carley 1981). During this epidemic, and those that followed into the 1840s, HBC medical staff, including Dr. Forbes Barclay and Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, treated Indian patients suffering from epidemic diseases – indeed, William Tolmie appears to have scarcely gotten settled at the fort before having to attend to Indians sickened by the malaria epidemic in 1833. Medical attention may have given brief comfort, though it is unclear whether it significantly reduced the horrible scale of tribal mortality, especially in the first years of the epidemic.¹⁶⁵ (While it is unclear, this growing reliance on the fort’s medical staff may have strained traditional social relationships, as shamans found their authority tested by this new arrangement.¹⁶⁶) Many Indians residing nearby, fearing that they would die without someone to look after their interment, gathered in large numbers around the fort until

McLoughlin ordered them to disperse. In a letter to the HBC Governor Deputy Governor and Committee, dated November 24th, 1830, McLoughlin reported,

“...I had to attend the sick who were about fifty in number we had to Pack the furs to attend to the Indian Trade and to the Indians who frightened at the mortality amongst them came in numbers to camp alongside of us giving us as a reason that if they died they Knew we would bury them. Most reluctantly on our part we were obliged to drive them away, and I must add to this the other urgent work of the place so that in fact I was as well as my assistants Messers James Douglas [Francis] Ermatinger and [James] Birnie were Kept constantly employed from day light to eleven at night” (McLoughlin 1830g: 166)

The journals of HBC officers make it clear that these men perceived the epidemic as what we might today call “a humanitarian crisis” but, predictably, their stated concerns centered at least as much on its adverse commercial effects. With so many employees and tribal traders ill, the epidemic proved to be a temporary threat to the commercial viability of the fort. The sickness of 1830-1831 slowed the distribution of goods between Forts, so that inventories ran low and fur trading opportunities were sometimes missed. The epidemic also caused the temporary postponement of the development of a new establishment of a fort on the Nass River – the fort that eventually became Fort Simpson – for want of labor (McLoughlin 1830h, 1830f).¹⁶⁷ McLoughlin’s decision to provide medical aid to local Indians may have been influenced by humanitarian concerns, yet the journals hint that there were other motivations; medical assistance had the potential to rehabilitate the Native labor pool and had clear “public relations” value with local tribes, which McLoughlin hoped might yield dividends in the future.

Lacking information on the causes of the epidemic and its modes of transmission, Indian and non-Indian communities speculated wildly about the causes of the disease. Some written accounts suggest that the disease may have emerged from the soil after its first ploughing by HBC employees at the Fort Vancouver farm, while others suggested that the disease might be divine retribution against Native idolatry.¹⁶⁸ The Native community, meanwhile, had noticed a correlation between the arrival of ships and the spread of disease, some reportedly attributing the origins of the disease to conflicts between the HBC and its American competitors.¹⁶⁹ The Indians’ growing fear of ships was becoming an impediment to trade, and the HBC and ship captains made special efforts to overcome their generally correct perception of ships as vectors of disease. Writing in November 5th, 1834, John Kirk Townsend noted,

“Captain Lambert informs me that on his first landing here the Indians studiously avoided his vessel, and all intercourse with his crew, from the

supposition, (which they have since acknowledged) that the malady which they dread so much was thus conveyed. As in a short time, it became desirable, on account of procuring supplies of provision, to remove this impression, some pains were taken to convince the Indians of their error, and they soon visited the ship without fear" (Townsend 1839: 129-130).

Such efforts may not have compounded the effects of malaria, which by this time was already well established in the region and borne by mosquitoes, but may have contributed to the unchecked diffusion of new diseases in the years that followed.

Chinookan Collapses and Relocations

The demographic consequences of the epidemic for the Chinookan peoples of the lower Columbia were severe, while the personal, social and cultural consequences for tribal communities was clearly horrific – a point on which there is regrettably little record reflecting the contemporaneous perspectives of the Native people, themselves. Clearly, the loss of roughly 90% of the population from the ranks of any society would be apocalyptic and cause contractions and transformations throughout every aspect of community life. Written accounts suggest a growing fatalism among some tribal members as their numbers continued to decline.¹⁷⁰

Among the major consequences of the epidemic was an almost immediate change in the relative size and influence of individual Chinook populations. Importantly, the epidemics had disproportionately severe effects on the lower river, from the Portland Basin, downstream. Tribal populations in the vicinity of The Dalles apparently did not experience the same devastating levels of mortality.¹⁷¹ Accordingly, the lower river Chinooks – once the largest and most prosperous population in the region – were abruptly eclipsed in their scale and regional significance by the Chinookan speakers associated with The Dalles and vicinity. As Eugene Dufлот de Mofras observed,

"The Chinooks are divided into two clans: the Upper Chinooks who live above the Dalles of the Columbia River, and the Lower Chinooks who dwell along the banks of the river from Fort Vancouver to the sea. The Upper Chinooks still number about 1,000 individuals. However, the Lower Chinooks, who a few years ago had nearly 100 huts, today do not exceed 300 persons. Malignant fevers have decimated entire villages" (Dufлот de Mofras 1937: 182).

The Chinookan peoples on the Columbia estuary, the Clatsop and Chinook proper, experienced a sudden and dramatic loss of population. In 1830, Francis Ermatinger reported of these lower river populations that

“we were visited by a most malignant intermittent fever some time ago, and of which we are not totally recovered yet. It carried off King Concomly with most of his subjects and those of the tribes about him. It is no unusual thing to see two or three dead bodies, in a short excursion along the river. Some of the villages were entirely depopulated” (in McDonald 1980: 140).

With the death of Concomly, the prominent chief of the estuarine Chinooks, along with many of his villagers and slaves, the Chinookan position in the fur trade was forever transformed. To many, Concomly’s death to malaria symbolically marked the “end of Indian social dominance on the Greater Lower Columbia,” and reduced the lower Chinook villages to a position of relatively little influence on the economic and social life of the fort community (Hajda 1984: 46).

The villages that appear to have been most severely impacted, though, were those in the Portland Basin, in close proximity to Fort Vancouver. As Peter Skene Ogden noted in his journals, when returning to Fort Vancouver in 1830, he found every village being almost entirely depopulated:

“In close contiguity with our clearances was a village containing about sixty families of Indians; a few miles lower down was a second, of at least equal population...All, all was changed. Silence reigned where erst the din of population resounded loud and lively” (Ogden 1933: 68-69).¹⁷²

Most sources on the topic seem to concur on the point that almost all of the Chinookan villages of the Portland Basin were depopulated to the point that they were no longer viable as independent communities (Boyd 1999; Saleeby 1983; Wuerch 1979). Accounts of the destruction of the Multnomah villages on and around Sauvie Island suggest an almost complete collapse of the Multnomah at this time. The mortality levels were so high, and the deaths came so quickly, there were sometimes insufficient people to dispose of the dead and entire villages were burned and the bodies cremated therewith.¹⁷³ There are multiple accounts of tribal members disposing of the dead at Sauvie Island villages, sometimes apparently with the assistance of Fort Vancouver employees. It appears to be among the Multnomahs of Sauvie Island that Blanchet refers to when noting that “It was found necessary to burn a whole village where the dead bodies were piled one upon another; for the survivors were not capable of burying their dead” (Blanchet 1878: 57-58). Similarly, Kane noted that

“On Soveys [Sauvie] Island there were formerly four villages but now there scarcely remains a lodge. They died of this disease in such numbers that their bodies lay unburied on the river’s banks, and many were to be met with floating down the stream” (Kane 1855: 21).

Travelers passing the Sauvie Island area by 1836 depict the island as being devoid of tribal communities but covered in burials and evidence of former settlements; many sources indicate from this point forward that the Multnomah, as a population, became extinct (Ruby and Brown 1986: 142; Hajda 1984; Tolmie 1963; into 1900; Parker 1841).¹⁷⁴

While it is true that most of the conventionally-defined Multnomah areas were depopulated at this time, along with many other portions of the Portland Basin, not all of the descendents of these communities became extinct. Hardest hit by the epidemic, the geographical heart of the Chinookan world was nearly depopulated while larger Chinookan populations persisted to the west, east, and south. Many survivors of the epidemics in the Portland Basin appear to have regrouped in a number of tribal communities.¹⁷⁵ As Parker noted, “Whole and large villages were depopulated; and some entire tribes have disappeared, but where there were any remaining persons, they united with other tribes” (Parker 1841: 193). A few survivors of the epidemics seem to have regrouped with Clackamas survivors at the Clackamas-Willamette River confluence. Others appear to have moved downstream to live among survivors in the Oak Point area and perhaps as far west as the estuarine Chinook and Clatsop (Wuerch 1979). In some instances, remnant populations regrouped in a small number of Portland Basin villages; this was the case with some of the Multnomah and possibly Clackamas populations:

“The *Wackamucks*, *Namanamin*, and *Namoit* are bands and parts of bands that claim the country from Oak Point to the mouth of the Willamette...They have become so reduced that they have united, and now live together or near each other” (Lane 1850: 130).

This, combined with the epidemics, nearly depopulated the Multnomah territories. Some of these Chinookan families continued to revisit sites within the traditional Multnomah territories seasonally for specific resource procurement tasks. As Hajda noted, “Traditionally, primary identity was with a particular village, but the population decline resulting from the [malaria] epidemic led to new groupings of remnant village populations” (Hajda 1984: 273). The concentration of residents from multiple communities in composite villages perhaps contributed to the tendency to use the general term “Chinook” in reference to the resident population, rather than local tribal or village terms, as local and village-level associations broke down. By the end of the

decade, the Portland Basin's surviving Native population had moved away from many of the larger villages and the area had also been largely stripped of its fur wealth.¹⁷⁶ The HBC increasingly looked elsewhere for labor, trade opportunities, and furs. The work force and tribal affiliations of Fort Vancouver gradually transitioned from lower Chinookan to upper Chinookan peoples, as the former people persisted in greater numbers and the economic interests of the HBC shifted inland. Increasingly, the Hudson's Bay Company recruited labor from the major intertribal gathering areas, particularly the people who still fished at Columbia River cascades fishing stations, giving the Fort expanded access to upriver peoples and trade networks. Increasingly, lower Chinookan peoples became peripheral to the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company and a minority on the social and economic margins of their own homeland.

Native Hawaiians at Fort Vancouver

Native Hawaiians – sometimes identified in the historical literature as Owyhees, Sandwich Islanders, and Kanakas (a general term for “man” in the language of Hawaiian Polynesia) – were an enduring and important portion of the Fort Vancouver workforce. The continued loss of American Indian labor beginning in 1830 and continuing through the 1840s, placed pressure on HBC operations in the Columbia District. By this time, there was a growing labor shortage on the Columbia River, much complicated by the collapse of the Chinookan population. There are a variety of passing references to what appear to be labor shortages in the journals of the time, especially involving those occupations such as canoe piloting that were originally the domain of the Chinook.¹⁷⁷ While Native Hawaiians played a critical role in fort operations prior to the epidemics, demographic contractions in the greater Lower Columbia region placed them in a position of augmented importance that persisted for the remainder of the fort's operating life (Rich 1943).¹⁷⁸ HBC employment records, which probably underreported the total Native Hawaiian population, show 16 Hawaiians at Fort Vancouver in 1830-31 and a peak number of 68 in 1841-42, reflecting this shift in emphasis to Native Hawaiian labor (Kardas 1971: 117; Wilson 2011,).

Native Hawaiians had played a role in the Northwestern fur trade from the inception of this enterprise. Captain Cook famously visited Hawaii in 1778 during his third voyage - the same voyage that would take him to the Northwest Coast of North America and reveal to the world the potentials for trade in Northwest furs in the markets of China. Detours to the Hawaiian islands were commonplace at the beginnings of the fur trade, as a resupply point and minor trade outpost visited during the monumental ship journeys between the Northwest, Asia, and eastern North America (Corney 1932; Bishop 1967). Within a decade, Native Hawaiian laborers were being recruited as labor on ships, both British and American, traveling on fur trading expeditions between the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and China. Thus it came to be that Native Hawaiians,

including the young chief named Attoo from the island of Niihau, was on board Robert Gray's ship the *Columbia*, when this ship made history as the first foreign vessel to enter the lower Columbia – effectively “discovering” the river from the perspective of the European world and bestowing the ship's name to the river (Bona 1972).

Roughly one-dozen Native Hawaiians were among the Astorians who arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River in 1811 aboard the *Tonquin* and contributed to the construction of Fort Astoria. A small group of Native Hawaiians were involved in fur trade from this outpost, becoming important to the North West Company operations throughout the region. The men who were employed on the lower Columbia at this time included a few of the men who had arrived on the *Tonquin* in 1811, including John Cox¹⁷⁹ and Paul Poah. They also included James Coah, who had arrived at Astoria in 1812, and Jimo, Frank Kanah (or Kanak) and Henry Bell Noah who arrived in 1814. The remainder appears to have arrived on a voyage of the *Beaver* in 1813 or aboard the *Columbia* in 1817 – the latter ship bringing a reported 60 Hawaiian laborers to the lower Columbia (Barman and Watson 2006: 62; Bona 1972: 166).

The Hawaiian men were widely admired as members of boat crews working in support of fur trade operations. Many fur trade journals make passing reference to highly competent boat crews of Native Hawaiians. For example, John Kirk Townsend noted traveling the Columbia with “a good crew of fine, robust sailors... the copper-colored islanders, - or Kanakas as they are called, - did their duty with great alacrity and good will” (Townsend 1839: 125). Born into a life of waterborne travel on the islands, the Native Hawaiians who arrived in the Northwest would work paddling canoes and York boats along the lower Columbia for decades to come. Alexander Ross quipped that, on “water...they are as active and expert as the reverse on dry land” (Ross 1855: 193).

Simultaneously, these Hawaiian men were also seen as being essential to the early defense of the fort and fur trading brigades – especially in the early years of the land-based fur trade, when new tribal territories were being explored and relationships with many Indian communities was still tentative and uncertain. These Native Hawaiian men were often brought along on voyages to serve as guards or paramilitaries in support of fur trade operations. As Ross noted,

“They are submissive to their masters, honest and trustworthy and willingly perform as much duty as lies in their power...They are not wanting in courage; particularly against the Indians, for whom they entertain a very cordial contempt. And if they are let loose against them, they rush upon them like tigers. The principal purpose for which they were useful on Columbia was as an array of numbers in the view of the natives especially in the frequent voyages up and down the communication...on every occasion they testify a fidelity and zeal for

their master's welfare and service...It was from this people that captains, in their coasting trade, augmented their crews in steering among the dangerous natives from Columbia River to Behring's Straits" (Ross 1855: 193-94, 293).

Governor Simpson noted that these men were especially useful in opening new territories due to their fearlessness in the face of aggression from Indians (Simpson 1931: 91). Similar claims appear in a number of written accounts from the period.¹⁸⁰

When the Hudson's Bay Company merged with the North West Company in 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company took on the employees of the North West Company, including some three-dozen Native Hawaiians; "up to this time the HBC had no Hawaiians among its workforce" (Barman and Watson 2006: 61). Very quickly, the HBC came to appreciate the value of these men, who were fast becoming an integral part of HBC operations. Efforts were made to retain these men's services as they became more proficient in their work skills and began to comprehend the nuances of commercial fur trade operations. Prior to 1823, payment of Native Hawaiians laborers consisted largely of room, board and clothing; after 1823, payment generally included cash in addition to these necessities, reflecting these changes (Barman and Watson 2006: 63-64; Sampson 1973a).¹⁸¹ By 1824, when taking inventory of operations in the Columbia District, George Simpson determined that more Native Hawaiians would be an asset to fledgling HBC efforts, and recommended adding to the number already obtained through the merger with the North West Company:

"There are about 35 of them now on this side of the mountain but we can employ 15 more to advantage if the trade is extended and in that case I would beg to recommend their being taken on board as the Vessel intended for the China trade passes Owyhee on her passage thither from England" (Simpson 1931: 91).

That year, Native Hawaiians were involved with the construction of Fort Vancouver as well as the transport of goods between Fort George and Fort Vancouver at this time.

By 1825, in response to Simpson's recommendations, two ships, the *William and Ann* and the *Cadboro* brought Native Hawaiian men across the Pacific to support HBC operations. As noted elsewhere in this report, the *William and Ann* wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia on this voyage and all Hawaiian men on board died with the crew. The *Cadboro* entered the river successfully, though, and delivered these new workers to Fort Vancouver (Barman and Watson 2006: 67). The *Cardboro* and the *Isabella* together delivered the next large groups of Native Hawaiians in 1829 and 1830 respectively.

Shortly after this time, McLoughlin had penned a draft letter indicating to the HBC agent in Honolulu that they had enough Hawaiians on staff and that he should disregard any further requests from the HBC for more laborers; in sharp contrast, the final letter, sent to Honolulu, requested that they send “as many as possible of them” – apparently a response to the precipitous loss of American Indian labor in the 1830 epidemic. From 1830 through the end of his tenure as Chief Factor, McLoughlin encountered frequent labor shortages, due in part to the demise of the Chinookans and the uncertain availability of labor from other sources. In response, he often made requests for more Native Hawaiian men. As he noted during later epidemics,

“We find ourselves weak, for our work, and it is this makes the duty of the place, so hard to the men here, and the number of men sent us...is so small, that I must send to the Sandwich Islands for Islanders to make up the number of hands we require, or else we cannot go on with our work, at present I cannot say how many” (McLoughlin 1843e: 162).

Kardas (1971: 105) estimates the Native Hawaiian population as being roughly one-third of the total labor force at Fort Vancouver from the epidemics of the early 1830s through the mid-1840s. The name “Kanaka Village” came into currency as a result of this transition, as Native Hawaiians and their families became an increasingly visible component of the larger Village population on the margins of Fort Vancouver.

In order to support both labor recruitment and trade needs in Hawaii, the Hudson’s Bay Company maintained a lead agent, stationed in Honolulu, through much of the time that Fort Vancouver was active. A British consulate was established in Honolulu in 1825 and the British consul there – a man named Richard Charlton – was given authority to function as a *de facto* agent for the HBC. His efforts appear to have centered on the coordination of trade with Hawaiian interests as well as the recruitment of Native labor to sail to the Pacific Northwest as part of HBC enterprises. American merchant sailors were numerous in Hawaii as well at this time, often working to oppose HBC efforts on the islands, sometimes effectively undermining labor recruitment, and the sale of HBC goods. Needing a full-time agent to represent their interests in this context, the HBC determined to establish a permanent agent on the Company payroll by 1828, “to act on its behalf to sell timber and salmon and to find men and cargo to take away” to the Northwest (Barman and Watson 2006: 67). This Hawaiian agent, stationed in Honolulu, reported directly to the Columbia Department, where most of the HBC’s Native Hawaiian labor was sent and from which most of the goods sold locally in Hawaii were obtained. There was some degree of cooperation between the HBC agent and the Hawaiian monarchy and the island governors in the recruitment of Native Hawaiian labor at the time, with contracts being approved by the monarch in a number of cases. In some cases, the HBC agent established labor contracts directly with

the island governors; HBC agent George Pelly, for example, established a contract with the governor of Oahu in 1840, permitting 60 men to go to the Northwest for three year terms of service (Bona 1972; Duncan 1972; Thrum 1911). Enduring relationships with the British consulate were also critical to the success of the HBC into the mid-19th century, though these relationships were occasionally strained by consuls who might put other British interests ahead of those of the Company.¹⁸²

The importance of the Hawaiian trade to the Company was no small matter. In addition to being a critical stopover and reprovisioning point on the circum-Pacific trade, Honolulu became a thriving nexus for international trade, with cargoes from around the world passing through its port, its population tripling through the 1820s and 1830s.¹⁸³ Within this rapidly growing community, the HBC sought a more structured venue for the sale of goods locally. In 1834, the HBC opened a store in Honolulu, and stationed their agent at the time, George Pelly, at this store with the dual tasks of overseeing store operations and organizing labor recruitment. In roughly 1840, Pelly was joined by agent George Allen, who continued to work at this store into the following decade (Thrum 1911). Fort Vancouver maintained an apparently lively and enduring trade selling barreled salmon in Hawaii, in addition to lumber (McLoughlin 1829e, 1841a; Martin 2006). The fort also shipped wheat, pork, beef, flour and other goods to Hawaii – most of it grown at the fort or on the Puget Sound Agricultural Company farms in what is now Washington state.

As the role of Native Hawaiians evolved at the fort, they took on a widening range of duties. Frequently, Hawaiians were assigned agricultural duties by the HBC. In addition to assisting at the Fort Vancouver garden, Native Hawaiian men also oversaw herding duties for the Puget Sound Agricultural Company farms. John Cox became the principal swineherd at Fort Vancouver, overseeing the “piggery” on the Lower Plain, approximately two miles west of the fort (Bona 1972: 169).

The HBC sawmill, constructed in 1828 a few miles east of the fort, was critical not only to HBC operations in the Northwest, but also in a fledgling timber trade: “the lumber from this mill was the first ever exported from North America to the Hawaiian Islands” (Bona 1972: 170). By 1831, McLoughlin requested of Richard Charlton that he send as many laborers as possible, mentioning not only the epidemics of the lower Columbia, but also the growing need for labor to support their lumber cutting and shipping operation (Duncan 1972). By 1836, there were 28 Hawaiians working there alongside Métis and French Canadians, cutting and shipping lumber to Hawaii especially. Observing this mill in 1841, Charles Wilkes noted that

“The boards are shipped to the Sandwich Islands, and we here found the brig Wave taking in a cargo of lumber. These boards sell at Oahu for eighty dollars per thousand. I could not ascertain their cost here. About

twenty men (Canadians and Sandwich Islanders) are employed at the mill" (Wilkes 1841: 335-36).

Two years later, Thomas Jefferson Farnham provided an evocative description of the timber operations at this mill:

"The saw mill...is a scene of constant toil. Thirty or forty Sandwich Islanders are felling the pines and dragging them to the mill; sets of hands are plying two gangs of saws by night and day. Three thousand feet of lumber per day; nine hundred thousand feet per annum; are constantly being shipped to foreign ports" (Farnham 1843: 65).

The lumber from this mill effectively helped build the structures of Hawaii through its mid-19th century building boom. When not working at the mill or the fort farm. These Hawaiian men continued to work as boatmen, cooks, carpenters, and in many other capacities (Kardas 1971: 116). A number of Hawaiian families were stationed away from the fort for extended periods, at the mill and other field operations.¹⁸⁴ Their role as guards or paramilitaries gradually faded as relationships with area tribes stabilized and fur trading networks became well-established.

Like Iroquois employees, the Native Hawaiians were extremely effective as employees of the Company, yet sometimes exhibited loyalties to Company interests that fell somewhat short of HBC wishes. Hawaiians – recruited independently by American ships or at the close of their employment for the HBC – sometimes aided the American competition of the Hudson's Bay Company.¹⁸⁵ Hawaiians' transmission of local trade knowledge to the American competition was a source of considerable dread to HBC officers (McLoughlin 1829g). Some sources allude to occasional desertion – temporary or permanent - by Native Hawaiians (e.g., Townsend 1839: 130).¹⁸⁶

Despite early efforts to convert the Hawaiian men to Christianity, the missionaries found some portion of this community remarkably resistant.¹⁸⁷ Despite efforts to master "the Sandwichian tongue" for use in religious rites, there was little success (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 133). Still, missionaries often made use of Hawaiian labor; for example, representatives of the Methodist Church (such as Jason Lee) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreigners Missions sometimes recruited Hawaiians to help construct the first missions of the region (Duncan 1972: 11).¹⁸⁸ In time, the Company decided that a Native Hawaiian clergyman would help to facilitate religious conversion, in addition to assisting in the education of Hawaiian families at the fort. Such clergymen might also help "keep the Hawaiians in line," seeking to inculcate certain values and to monitor and proscribe behavior that the Company viewed as detracting from their larger enterprise. In 1844, the HBC recruited William

Kaulehelehe - also known as “Kanaka William” or “Kanaka Billy” – to serve in this role for the Native Hawaiian community, and to exercise a “salutory influence” over his countrymen (Bona 1972: 172). He lived in Kanaka village until its demise in 1860 and preached in a church structure inside the fort gate.

As was true of all other groups of men who worked at the fort, the Hawaiian men often married into the tribes of the region. Roughly eight church-sanctioned marriages are reported in Fort Vancouver church records between Native Hawaiian men and Indian women. Of these women, only two have discernible tribal affiliation, one being Chinook, the other identified as “Tchallis” – possibly Chehalis (Munnick 1972). The only documented marriages between Hawaiians and Indians in the fort’s church records appear to have occurred within Kanaka Village, but there is little historical record of such marriages outside of the Village community (Kardas 1971: 117). The available records also note that some Native Hawaiians ultimately had American Indian slaves, though this is largely reported in multi-ethnic households in which Native Hawaiian men (such as John Cox) married American Indian women from the lower Columbia region (Barman and Watson 2006: 240-41). References to the presence of Native Hawaiian women occasionally appear in the records of the time, and it is clear that a small number of Hawaiian women did accompany their husbands at Fort Vancouver, especially during the later years of the fort’s operations. There is some suggestion that the families who came to the Northwest together moved there with the intention of becoming permanent settlers in the region (Bona 1972).

Establishing the precise affiliations of the men of Fort Vancouver to particular Native Hawaiian communities is challenging without recourse to detailed biographical investigations of individual men (Philips 2008; Kauanui 2007; Bona 1972).¹⁸⁹ Native Hawaiians from every populated island appear to have been involved in the Pacific Northwest fur trade, but some islands are better represented than others. The Hawaiians who were part of the original Astorian party were primarily from Honolulu, but some appear to have been from elsewhere - notably John Cox hailed from the Kona coast of the island of Hawai’i. Following the establishment of the British consulate in 1825 in the community of Honolulu, the recruitment of labor seems disproportionately centered in Oahu.¹⁹⁰

On the eve of American occupation, the Native Hawaiians continued to be a prominent and visible component of the overall population of fort employees, even as the Indian community was declining steadily. In the testimony of Peter Crawford, he described his observations in 1848, as American settlers arrived at the fort:

“There was immediately around the Hudson’s Bay Company’s fort on the 14th day of August, 1848, two carpenters and families, two coopers, two blacksmiths, three clerks in the store, school teacher, Dr. Barclay and his assistant, and a lot of Kanakas and Canadian Frenchmen who lived in at

least 20 houses in Kanaka Town. The Frenchmen were generally married to Indian women and the Kanakas lived with Kanaka women. They had regular Hudson's Bay marriage service. They had regular rules to make them live with their own wives. The Hudson's Bay Company was supreme ruler of the land all around here...

"The Kanakas were from the Sandwich Islands and were Hudson's Bay servants. The Canadian Frenchmen and Kanakas were what might be called the understrappers for the company, hauling wood, water and other drudgery, packing pelts and moving pelts and moving goods from the ships to the stores, as at least one ship came from London every year bringing goods and supplies and carrying away furs and pelts" (Bona 1972: 171).¹⁹¹

During the consolidation of HBC operations in British Columbia during the period between 1849 and 1860, a number of Hawaiians returned to Hawaii, while others relocated to posts in Canada - especially in British Columbia. With employees rapidly moving away from the fort at the beginning of the American appear, very few employees remained. Only 6 Native Hawaiian employees were reported at the fort in 1854 and, from 1855 through 1860, only one Hawaiian - William Kaulehelehe or "Kanaka William" - was reported. Indeed, Kaulehelehe was there to the last, he and his wife standing nearby when the U.S. military demolished their home in 1860. The HBC closed its Hawaii agency almost concurrently with the close of their operations at Fort Vancouver, and it is likely that the two events were connected. The HBC announced the closure of its Honolulu operation in November 26, 1859, apparently to the considerable surprise of Hawaiians not in the Company's employment (Thrum 1911: 49).

Assessing certain records regarding Hawaiian employees' dispersal, Kardas (1971: 115) concluded that "all of the Kanakas [from Fort Vancouver] either returned to the Hawaiian Islands or were removed to other posts by the Company." Similarly, Sampson reports that

"By 1850, when the first census was taken in Oregon Territory, there were fifty Sandwich Islanders resident in the Pacific Northwest. However, few of the Owyhees became permanent residents, for the contracts for their labor stipulated that they were to be returned to the Islands at the end of a specified number of years" (Sampson 1973a: 111-112).

However, it is incorrect to say that no Hawaiians remained in the region. As Clark (1934: 31) concluded, "the Hawaiian strain...quickly disappeared after the period of [American] settlement had begun in earnest and left few traces. Some intermarried with

Indians, cast their lot with them, and were assimilated by them." After a detailed historical review, Bona likewise correctly notes,

"Many who came to the mainland chose not to return, despite weather and brutal treatment... Today... there are many Indians living in the Pacific Northwest who have Hawaiian blood and many individuals in the general population who can trace their ancestry back to Hudson's Bay times" (Bona 1972: 161).

A quick review of the biographical information regarding individual Native Hawaiians seems to confirm this point. Of the original Hawaiian crew at the fort, some – including John Cox, James Coah, and possibly Paul Poah – appear to have married American Indian women, had families in the lower Columbia region, and settled and died locally. Henry Bell Noah died at Fort Vancouver; so did Jimo, who served as a fort cook from 1824 through 1827. Of the original Hawaiian men named at the beginning of this section, only Frank Kanah appears to have permanently returned home – in his case, to Oahu (Barman and Watson 2006). The ultimate destinations of the Hawaiian men at the fort, then, seem to have been influenced significantly by their family circumstances. Many of those who married local Indian women chose to settle and stay; as visible minorities on the burgeoning American frontier, many of these families appear to have found their way into reservation communities, especially polyglot reservation communities such as Grand Ronde. Certainly, some American Indian families today – from various Northwest tribes – report some Native Hawaiian ancestry emanating from these lineages. Those Native Hawaiian men who did not possess such local ties almost always moved on – going back home to Hawaii, or migrating to Canada with their HBC employers as Fort Vancouver's operations came to an end.

The Expansion of Inland Tribes: Klickitats and Cowlitz

The abrupt decline of the Chinookan peoples did not represent the last of the major demographic changes to reshape the lower Columbia River during the HBC period. This demographic collapse created opportunities for other populations, principally tribes of the interior, to move into the Lower Columbia, largely uncontested. The Cowlitz and the Klickitat, in particular, quickly became relatively visible along the lower Columbia (Parker 1841: 167). The lower Columbia was thus lined by an increasingly diffuse pattern of settlement, with remnant Chinookans living alongside a growing population of Cowlitz and Klickitat. Traveling upstream from the Lower Chinook of the Columbia estuary by the late 1830s, for example, missionaries Lee and Frost noted that "The Cawalitz are the next to be met with on the north side of the river,

and between them and the Dalls it is inhabited by scattering bands of Chenooks and Clickatats" (Lee and Frost 1844: 99).

The Cowlitz increasingly occupied lands downstream from, and to the north of Fort Vancouver. On the lower Columbia, from below Sauvie Island to a short distance above the estuary, Ray reports that the shoreline became predominantly Cowlitz:

"In the 1830's the Chinookans lost this portion of the Columbia River, just as they did the segment immediately upriver. The Cowlitz moved in, to the exclusion of all other Indians, and maintained their possession from that time forward. Indeed, from the time they settled in this strip, there was no contest for possession until the disruption by the whites. The Cowlitz rapidly built up villages at and near the river mouths and by the 1840's these were among their largest settlements" (Ray 1966: A-2).

Some former Chinook villages of importance, such as Cathlapotle, were occupied by remnant Cowlitz. The Cowlitz also seem to have expanded into adjacent upland areas as well – all places where they had previously been occasional but probably not resident users, they became dominant, including upper portions of the Lewis River drainage.¹⁹²

Over time, some portion of these two populations – Klickitat and Cowlitz – became so integrated that it becomes difficult to differentiate the two. Yet it is clear that a population usually termed "Klickitat" probably consisting of principally Klickitat peoples with significant Cowlitz admixture, lived in close association with Fort Vancouver. The advance of the Klickitat was perhaps most remarkable of the tribe's territorial expansions in western Washington, and is of particularly direct relevance to the mid-19th century history of Fort Vancouver. This Sahaptin-speaking people rapidly moved into Chinookan and Kalapuya areas even as the epidemics raged and, by the late 1830s, were well established in a number of these tribes' former settlement sites (Boyd 1990: 147). As Curtis (1911) noted,

"The Klickitat soon possessed themselves of Chinookan territory, overspreading the uplands and mountain slopes from Klickitat creek westward to Lewis river, and northward to Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams, which later became known to the Yakima bands as the Mountain of the Klickitat...about the third decade of the eighteenth century began a movement across the Columbia at the mouth of the Willamette, in Oregon, and they soon dispossessed the weak tribes in the lower portion of that valley" (Curtis 1911: 37-38).

Teit (1928: 99) indicates that the Klickitat moved in large numbers into the valleys of southwest Washington beginning as early as 1829, responding almost immediately to the vacuum created by the epidemics. Occupying the Columbia and its tributaries only seasonally at first, their presence became increasingly settled.

Prior to their expansion, the Klickitat traditionally fished for salmon alongside upper Chinookan peoples at the Columbia Cascades. Similarities between the oral traditions of the two populations, as well as linguistic borrowing between the two populations, suggests a potentially long period of cultural connection (Gibbs 1955-56; Jacobs 1937).¹⁹³ There are some accounts that they had sometimes made alliances with the Cascades Chinookans and joined in battles on the Cascade peoples' side in conflicts between the Cascades and both downriver Chinookans and interior Shoshones.¹⁹⁴ It is almost certain that they were involved in trade and had social connections to lower Columbia River communities prior to European contact. Their familiarity with this territory, and seasonal visits to it, set the stage for their later occupation as nearly year-round residents in the 19th century.

Most sources depict the Klickitat as being closely allied with the Yakama (Schuster 1998). The Klickitat are commonly depicted as being, in essence, a mobile mountain-dwelling band of the Yakama that differed only subtly from the larger Yakama population. As Curtis noted, "As in language, so in material culture and religious practices, the Klickitat did not differ appreciably from the bands of the Yakima valley" (Curtis 1911: 39). So too, George Gibbs noted,

"The Klikatats and Yakimas, in all essential peculiarities of character, are identical, and their intercourse is constant; but the former, though a mountain tribe, are much more unsettled in their habits than their brethren. This fact is probably due, in the first place, to their having been driven from their homes, many years ago, by the Cayuses, with whom they were at war. They thus became acquainted with other parts of the country, as well as with the advantage to be derived from trade. It was not, however, until about 1839 that they crossed the Columbia, when they overran the Willamette valley, attracted by the game with which it abounded, and which they destroyed in defiance of the weak and indolent Callapooyas. They still boast that they taught the latter to ride and to hunt" (Gibbs 1854: 403).¹⁹⁵

So close are these associations, that the term 'Klickitat' was sometimes applied indiscriminately to Yakamas, Kittitas, and various Cowlitz populations (Ray 1966; Fitzpatrick 1986).

Simultaneously, as indicated above, the Klickitat had intermarried with the Cowlitz to a degree that simple differentiation between the two populations was sometimes difficult. Most sources suggest that this intermarriage occurred during and after the epidemics on the lower Columbia, as these two populations expanded into overlapping ranges within former Chinookan areas. As noted in the works of George Gibbs,

“After the depopulation of the Columbia tribes by congestive fever...many of that tribe made their way down the Kathlaputl (Lewis River), and a part of them settled along the course of that river...The present generation, for the most part, look upon the Kathlaputl as their proper country, more especially as they are intermarried with the remnant of the original proprietors” (in Gibbs 1877: 170).

Or, as Ray summarizes,

“Among the Klikitat trading parties which passed through the Lewis River country there were individuals who got well acquainted with their [Cowlitz] hosts, found the people and the habitat to their liking, and settled down...The number of intermarriages was relatively few in any year but they did lead to an expansion of members for the Lewis River Cowlitz. This explains why visiting by the interior Klikitat was frequent in later years; it was the visiting of relatives. This gives meaning to observations of early Indian service officials to the effect that these intermarried Klikitat came to think of the Lewis River country as their proper home. Indeed they did! They had ceased being Klikitat and had become Cowlitz” (Ray 1966: A-9).

However, considerable oral history evidence within the Cowlitz tribe suggests that this pattern of intermarriage predated the 1830s, reflecting a shared history of long-distance travel and trade linking the two tribes along the Lewis River corridor especially (Fitzpatrick 2004, 1986: 30).¹⁹⁶ Sometimes, the use of the terms “Cowlitz” and “Klicikitat” appears to be confused in historical writings, suggesting the close association of the two. When visiting the Puget Sound Agricultural Company’s Cowlitz Farm, for example, Charles Wilkes noted of the interior SW Washington tribes, “The Indians belong to the Klackatack tribe, though they have obtained the general name of the Cowlitz Indians” (Wilkes 1845: 316).¹⁹⁷ The term Klickitat was sometimes applied very generally to the interior tribes by lowland groups, so that the term Klickitat was sometimes applied to all Yakamas as well.¹⁹⁸ The name Taítnapūm or Whulwhaipum are sometimes used in reference to the Klickitat, but is used by some writers as a term for that portion of the Klickitat that was most integrated with the Cowlitz.¹⁹⁹ “Upper Cowlitz” is often equated with the Sahaptin-speaking Taidnapam or “Yakima Cowlitz,” while the “Lower Cowlitz” is usually associated with the Salish Speaking peoples in the

lower river drainages (Fitzpatrick 1986). The Taidnapam population is sometimes reported to live in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver in the mid-19th century (Tolmie and Dawson 1884: 124).

During, and presumably before, the fur trade period, the Klickitat accessed the Fort Vancouver area over the "Klickitat Trail." The Klickitat Trail was widely mentioned during the 19th century as the principal route of travel through the Cascade Range, allowing for travel when the Columbia River flooded the riparian zone east of Fort Vancouver ((Norton, Boyd & Hunn 1983; Ray 1966). Summer encampments and use areas frequented by the Klickitat lined this trail from the Yakama region to Vancouver.²⁰⁰

The expansion of the Klickitat in the 1830s was truly remarkable. By 1834, they were already becoming well established in the vicinity of the fort, and had become the principal occupants of some portion of the Columbia Cascades, where they had been seasonal visitors only a few years before.²⁰¹ In villages that were still habitable but partially or wholly abandoned by the Chinooks, Klickitats began to appear as part-time residents. By 1837, the Klickitat were reported to be settled and constructing farms just a few miles north of the fort, with crops and other assistance from Fort Vancouver. An account by Herbert Beaver of this new community is quoted at length here:

"Nearly two hundred of the Klickitack Tribe of Indians have congregated, for agricultural purposes, on a large plain about fourteen miles distant from the Fort, during the last summer, when I have paid them several visits, on one of which, with the assistance of a youth, who accompanied me, I vaccinated about an hundred and twenty of them, the rest having undergone the operation at the hands of your medical officer. Their language is quite different from the Chinook, and, I think, of easier acquisition, being less guttural, and more harmonious... They live principally by hunting, and on wild roots, their first attempt at cultivation being made, this year, with potatoes, Indian corn, and peas, furnished them by Chief Factor McLoughlin. Having no place, in which to store it, they have brought hither several bushels of the last named produce to be reserved for seed till next year. Their little gardens are well fenced, and altogether do them great credit. Indeed I was surprised at the regularity and cleanness of their potatoe rows; and I cannot help thinking, that much good might be done among them by encouraging their praiseworthy efforts, in continuing a supply of various seeds, and in providing them with a few agricultural implements, particularly a plough and a harrow, which they already possess horses to draw. I also think, that a school for their children might be established at their lodges, attended with a very insignificant expense, by means of stationing there one of our half-breed Boys, of whom there are several, who might ere long be qualified for the

task, and my going out once or twice a week to superintend his labours... I am not over sanguine as to its success yet it could be easily tried, and its failure could involve no evil. In addition to it...some of their children might be admitted to our school" (Beaver 1959: 58-59).

The Klickitat, Beaver suggests elsewhere, were considered a prime target for missionary efforts and, by several accounts, were receptive to participating in Christian teaching and rituals.²⁰²

The Klickitat had long been effective traders and middlemen of the interior, as the Chinook had been on the lower Columbia River and the adjacent coastline. George Gibbs noted of the Klickitat "manifest a peculiar aptitude for trading, and have become to the neighboring tribes what the Yankees were to the once Western States, the travelling retailers of notions; purchasing from the whites feathers, beads, cloth, and other articles prized by Indians, and exchanging them for horses, which in turn they sell in the settlements" (Gibbs 1854: 403). Like the Chinook who they partially supplanted, the Klickitat became central to the fur trade of the 1830s and 1840s, and partially assumed the Chinooks' middleman role at the fort. They were a regular presence at the fort as they traded horses and other items for goods of European manufacture. Indeed, it was this interest in trade that no doubt contributed to their decision to congregate in large numbers near the fort. As Verne Ray noted,

"in the first half of the nineteenth century, the "Roving Klikitats" started moving into the lower Columbia valley and Oregon. Most of these Klikitats were traders who were eager to get to Fort Vancouver, the Willamette valley, and other places where the goods brought by the whites – great riches to the Indians – were available. They wanted the goods for themselves, yes, but even more so for purposes of trade. The Klikitat had long had a modest reputation as a tribe of "traders"; with the coming of the whites they became quite famous as middlemen. They bought goods at the trading posts of the fur companies and from itinerant supply ships, carried their purchases to the sedentary tribes and sold them at a handsome profit...When the "Roving Klikitat" left their homeland, south of Mt. Adams in eastern Washington, on one of their ventures their first object was to get to a trading post as quickly as possible. This normally meant Fort Vancouver, and it normally meant traveling down the Columbia River to that post" (Ray 1966: A-8-9).

Expanding rapidly into southwestern Washington along preexisting trade routes, and aided considerably by their use of horses, the Klickitat also became regular visitors and

traders on southern Puget Sound. In the process, they became the principal Indian traders operating throughout southwestern Washington.²⁰³

Yet, unlike the Chinook who they supplanted, these people never became part of the resident Fort Vancouver community. Significantly, the Klickitat were reluctant to intermarry with men from the fort, and never became a significant presence in the Village community: “instances of their women living, either temporarily or permanently, with white men are exceedingly rare” (Beaver 1959: 130).

From the mid-1830s until the late 1840s, many observers depict that Chinook and Klickitat as the two tribes associated with the fort.²⁰⁴ Accounts suggest a joint occupation of the region, with Klickitat being numerically dominant rather quickly:

“The Klickitat developed into hardy mountaineers, daring warriors, and excellent hunters. They never became firmly established on the Columbia to the exclusion of others, but they mingled freely with the Chinookan villagers already there, and fished in the great river” (Curtis 1911: 37).

Beyond the joint occupation of this territory, there is some evidence of the joint occupation of individual villages by Klickitats and Chinookan people. Occasional 1840s references to the apparently Chinookan leader Casino as “the chief of the Klackatack tribe” and other references to Casino living among Klickitat at the Neerchokioo village near Vancouver seem to suggest that the Klickitat may have become numerically dominant in villages of mixed ethnicity (Wilkes 1845: 369-70). Similar suggestions have been made about the community at Willamette Falls, where the Klickitat became a significant presence concurrently with their move into the Fort Vancouver area. By the late 1840s, the Klickitat are sometimes mentioned to the exclusion of the Chinook in fort correspondence, and general accounts of “Indians” by fort visitors sometimes seem to be referencing specifically Klickitat customs (Warre and Vavasour 1846).²⁰⁵ Sources from this time sometimes depict the area as being Chinook territory, while others depict the area as principally Klickitat.²⁰⁶ A few observers at the time attributed the decline of the Chinook to predatory warfare by the Klickitat, but there is little evidence to support this assertion.²⁰⁷ Raiding and attacks on tribes of Oregon and Washington, however, were not unheard of and these territories were taken by some degree of force.²⁰⁸

These people were numerous and accessible near the Fort, and so increasingly took on roles once held by Chinookans. Their reputed animosity toward lowland tribes and their reputation as warriors was seen by some fort visitors as a particular advantage when having to travel through hostile or unfamiliar tribes’ territories, and Klickitat men became welcome guides and guards (Winthrop 1913).²⁰⁹ Also, through the late 1830s and early 1840s, the Klickitat increasingly were employed as agricultural labor. They were among the principal tribal populations to work on the Fort Vancouver gardens –

perhaps the most important of the Northwestern tribes to take on this role. Using the skills learned at the fort, they quickly found themselves in high demand among the American settlers of the Willamette Valley, who attempted to carve homesteads out of the landscape but often lacked the manpower to undertake this task independently. Indian Agent, J. Ross Browne noted,

“they found it profitable, during particular seasons, to work as farm laborers, and soon became well skilled in the arts of husbandry. Their services were regarded as more valuable than those of any other class of Indians...They had become familiar with the people of the valley, and were esteemed as a superior tribe; nor were their repeated proffers of friendship without effect” (Browne 1858: 7-9).

Unsatisfied with merely occupying southwestern Washington, however, some Klickitat continued to push southward through the 1840s and early 1850s, occupying lands of numerous other tribes that had been weakened by epidemic diseases and – in southwestern Oregon - warfare with American emigrants. By the beginning of the 1850s, a number of writers noted that they had become established not only into the southern Willamette Valley, but as far south as the Umpqua and Rogue River basins, some 200 miles south of Fort Vancouver.²¹⁰ In the Willamette Valley they ostensibly had become the largest single tribal population. As noted by Browne,

“At the time the treaties of Shampoag [Champoeg] were negotiated (April, 1851) the valley of the Willamette was the main resort of the Klickitats, a powerful and warlike tribe from the country west of the Simcoe, in the Cascade mountains. This tribe has well been compared to the Arab merchants of the east. Bold, adventurous, and cunning, they had gradually acquired an influence over nearly all the Indians of Oregon as far south as Rogue river...Rich valleys and fine hunting grounds existed there [in the Willamette Valley], of which they had heard traditionary reports. At this time, the Clackamas, Moleallies, Yamhills, Santiams, and the other tribes of the Wilammete valley, had become greatly reduced by diseases introduced among them by the whites” (Browne 1858: 7-8). Small-pox, measles, and venereal had swept them off by thousands. They were wholly unprepared to resist the encroachments of their warlike and formidable neighbors. From time to time, as opportunity occurred, the Klickitats crossed over, made inroads upon them, and finally entirely subdued all the tribes of the Willamette, whom they caused to pay tribute...They opened an extensive trade with the southern tribes in furs and peltries, and crossed the mountains at various intervals during the year. The valley of the Willamette was their public highway to the north,

and their depot during the greater part of the year, where they left their property and families" (Browne 1858: 7-8).

As will be discussed later in this document, the expansion of the Klickitat would become a source of grave concern to American civil and military authorities in the 1850s, as Indian wars and a policy of Indian removal from Western Oregon collided with Klickitat expansionism. Indian agents also found themselves in a bureaucratic muddle when trying to assign the Klickitat to a particular agency, owing to their vast and diffuse tribal distribution.²¹¹ Oregon Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Joel Palmer and military authorities made appeals to U.S. Congress for their support for Klickitat removal (Wool, Palmer, et al. 1856). Despite their generally congenial relations with whites, Palmer convened a council to expel them from the region. As summarized by Curtis,

"in 1854 General Joel Palmer, Indian agent for Oregon Territory, called a council of their chief men and ordered them to leave this land, which they had forcibly taken from the Klaputa, the Klackamas, and the Yamhill, and to return to Washington. The order was obeyed, but the expulsion of the Klickitat caused much discontent among them...In the following year they were parties to the treaty which Governor Stevens made with the Yakima, and there can be no doubt that the report of their (to them) unjust expulsion and of the Government's failure to carry out its treaty obligations to the tribes of western Oregon played an important part in shaping the minds of the Indians and in determining their hostile stand" (Curtis 1911: 38-39).

Some of these displaced Klickitat, with an apparently keen sense of betrayal, soon were fighting alongside their Yakama kin in the Yakama War of 1855-56.²¹² During these hostilities, as shall be discussed in considerably more length later in this document, the Klickitat living in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver were temporarily placed in military custody at the new Vancouver Barracks, at Fort Vancouver. From there, they were moved to a temporary reservation at White Salmon, Washington, on the Columbia Cascades, and by 1858, most were relocated permanently to the Yakama Reservation. A few families at Yakama, with both Cowlitz and Klickitat ancestry, later joined the rolls at Cowlitz, but Yakama remained the principal home of the Fort Vancouver Klickitat. Scattered reports of Klickitats remaining in western Washington persist after this time, and it is not until roughly 1900 that almost all families being designated as Klickitat in the official correspondence had removed to join tribal communities at Cowlitz and, more commonly, Yakama.²¹³

Champoeg as a Daughter Community

The history of the Champoeg community, sitting in the Willamette Valley some 30 miles south of Fort Vancouver, is critical in understanding the numerous paths taken by former fort residents as they assimilated into other communities in the mid-19th century. Champoeg was the first Euro-American agricultural settlement of the Willamette Valley. The community began as a settlement for retired fort employees on some of the most fertile agricultural land to be found in the Willamette Valley. As Bancroft notes, "As their terms of contract expired, the Hudson's Bay Company began to retire its servants, giving them choice lands not too far removed from its benign rule. This was the origin of the French Canadian settlements in the beautiful Valley Willamette" (Bancroft 1890a: 70).²¹⁴ Though McLoughlin originally opposed the settlement, he later consented and gave it a degree of support. Original settlers included former Company employees Louis LaBonte Sr., Joseph Gervais, Etienne Lucier, Pierre Bellique, Jean Baptiste Desportes McKay, William Cannon, Alexander Carson and a man by the name of Dubruy, along with their native wives.²¹⁵ Established in 1830, Champoeg was, in most senses of the word, a transplant of the Village community. With supplies obtained from Fort Vancouver they built their houses, while their orchards were planted with trees from the Fort Vancouver garden (Lyman 1900: 171-72). By 1835, the residents of Champoeg consisted of roughly 20 families, with their mixed-race children - most of French Canadian fathers and Northwest Indian mothers. The children were schooled by American emigrants, including Solomon Smith, husband of the Clatsop "princess" Celiast, who was sister to the wives of both Joseph Gervais and Louis LaBonte (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 65).²¹⁶

The wives of these early settlers have been tentatively identified by tribal affiliation. For the period from 1830 through 1833, the wives ethnicities have been reported as follows: Clatsop and Chehalis (two women reported for each), and Chinook, Clackamas, Kalapuyan, Shushuwap, Okanagan, and Metis (all with one woman reported for each tribe). One additional woman, Etienne Lucier's wife Josette Nouette, does not have a clearly reported tribal affiliation.²¹⁷ As at the fort, the women consisted of both local and immigrant tribes, being divided into those from the greater Lower Columbia region and those from primarily interior British Columbia. The husbands of these women, meanwhile, were mostly Quebec-born French Canadians (Jetté 2007b; Munnick 1972; Lyman 1900).

The list of Indian wives who lived at Champoeg, of course, did not stop here. The community continued to grow and to thrive through the early 1840s, and numerous families arrived during this period. As Blanchet reported

“Some old servants of the Hudson Bay Co., being discharged from further services, went over to them and increased their number. The good and generous Dr. McLaughlin encouraged the colony and helped it all in his power. It continued to grow up every year” (Blanchet 1878: 75).

Descriptions of the community are reminiscent of contemporaneous accounts of the Fort Vancouver Village, from which many of these families had arrived. What differentiated Champoeg, perhaps was the fact that – as an agrarian retirement community - there was little economic activity and plenty of room for small farms. As Bancroft described the early settlement,

“They lived in log houses, with large fireplaces, after the manner of pioneers of other countries; had considerable land under cultivation; owned horses of the native stock, not remarkable for beauty, but tough and fleet; and had the use of such cattle as the fur company chose to lend them. Numerous half-breed children played about their doors; they had no cares of church or state; no aspiration beyond a comfortable subsistence, which was theirs; and being on good terms with their only neighbors, the natives, they passed their lives in peaceful monotony” (Bancroft 1890a: 15-16).

Like the Village at Fort Vancouver, this tiny settlement was a cross-cultural nexus of remarkable diversity.²¹⁸ The community served as a gathering place for the tribes of the region, especially those with kinship ties to the community of women; tribal social gatherings, marriages, and other social events are reported to have been common there. The few trustworthy oral history sources suggest that a number of tribal populations interacted freely there and engaged in exchanges of goods and ideas (Lyman 1900). In addition to the French Canadian and British men who moved there, church records indicate that Metis and some Iroquois or part-Iroquois men moved to Champoeg with their wives (Munnick 1972). In truth, almost all of the diversity represented in the fort community was transposed to the Champoeg community in abbreviated form, even if a few populations such as Native Hawaiians may not have been especially well represented there.

Most of the social institutions of the fort were transported here along with the community, including slavery.²¹⁹ In 1841, Charles Wilkes and his party were hosted by a Mr. Johnson at Champoeg:

“Mr. Johnson was formerly a trapper in the Hudson Bay Company's service, but has begun to farm here. He invited us to take up our quarters with him, and although they were not very pleasant in appearance, we

thought it better to accept the invitation than to pitch our tents on the wet ground in the rain...The house had little the appearance of belonging to a white man, but his welcome made amends for many things. [following his military service, Mr. Johnson had] determined to adopt the business of trapping. In this he was engaged until the last few years, when he had settled himself down here, and taken an Indian girl for his wife, by whom he had several children. To the latter he said he was desirous of giving a good education, and for this purpose he had engaged old Mr. Moore, from Illinois, to pass several months with him. Johnson had all the easy and independent character of a trapper; yet I could still perceive that he had hanging about him somewhat of the feeling of discipline that he had acquired in the service. His Indian wife is extremely useful in making every thing, besides taking care of the household concerns, and is rather pretty. Johnson's estimate of her was that she was worth "half a dozen civilized wives." There is little cleanliness, however, about his house, and many of the duties are left to two young male slaves, of Indian blood, but of what tribe I did not learn" (Wilkes 1845: 347-48).

Champoeg became the center of a rapidly expanding agricultural region of the Willamette Valley, sometimes termed "French Prairie," as additional HBC employees moved to the area - most of the men being French Canadian, they divided the land into "long lots" fronting the Willamette and other Rivers, in a manner common to other parts of Francophone America. Soon, however, the American reoccupation of the Willamette Valley would quickly surround the mixed-race population of Champoeg with new settlers that were not especially sympathetic to interracial marriage or British loyalties. In May 1843, men from the growing American population converged at Champoeg for a meeting to determine the fate of the Oregon Territory. At question was whether to declare Oregon an American territory and establish a territorial government - a motion that passed by only two votes, with former HBC men representing a significant source of opposition. By 1845, Oregon Trail settlers had all but engulfed Champoeg within contiguous settlement and the residents of the community represented only a small minority of the Willamette Valley population.²²⁰

By 1851, roughly 1,200 French-Canadians, Métis and Indians were reported to be living together at Champoeg, but the community at that time was being "rapidly assimilated into the American melting pot" (U.S. Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1986: 28). A number of families - principally those in which the patriarch possessed little physically apparent Native ancestry - took donation land claims in the central and northern Willamette Valley. A large proportion of the population intermarried with the American settlers and simply disappeared into the larger social fabric of frontier Oregon. Experiences seem to have varied considerably, as with the fort community, depending on whether one was male or female, and young women of mixed race

appear, based on a brief review of biographical records, to have been more likely to marry into non-Native families than young men. Anecdotally, it appears that a number of their descendents do not identify as Indian today, or do not meet the blood quantum thresholds for membership in federally recognized tribes.

However, for many families or individuals – particularly those who were unambiguously Indian in appearance – the pressures to relocate during the American period rose sharply in the 1850s. Some families migrated, in whole or in part, to the home communities of the wives, though with sometimes mixed outcomes. As the Grand Ronde Reservation was the reservation of record for all of the Willamette Valley treaty tribes, some Indian families found themselves under pressure to move to Grand Ronde on the basis of their Willamette Valley provenience. The men of these families, most of them not hailing from Pacific Northwest tribes, seem to have resisted this move; meanwhile, women from French Prairie appear to have sometimes moved to the Grand Ronde Reservation without their non-Native husbands after abandonment by, or the death of, the husband (Munnick 1972, Jetté 2010; Hussey 1967; Palmer n.d.). Meanwhile, a number of the younger members of the community took part in the California gold rush or sought employment elsewhere in the region. Simply moving out of the freshly resettled Willamette Valley seemed a top priority for many of these people, to whom distant or reservation communities may have seemed an appealing alternative. A reconnaissance review of the genealogies of certain Champoeg families into the present day reveals a number of modern tribal affiliations – including, but by no means limited to Grand Ronde. Those individuals who are part of these modern tribes typically have diverse Indian ancestry, not limited to the tribal identities of their Champoeg ancestors.

A great flood of the Willamette River largely washed away the remnants of the original Champoeg community in 1861. By this time, most of the original families had moved on. Their paths were sufficiently diverse that individual biographies would be required to do their stories justice. Yet, as Champoeg served as a popular point of departure for mixed-race families formerly residing at Fort Vancouver, these paths are critical to an understanding of the fate of Fort Vancouver's American Indian occupants during the 19th century. More will be said of Champoeg and its fate in the pages that follow.

Fort Vancouver as a Base for Missionary Efforts

As a regional center of social, economic, and cultural exchanges, Fort Vancouver served as a stopover point for some of the earliest missionary efforts in the Pacific Northwest, and quickly grew into a missionary center of vast regional importance. If there were already many tribal communities represented at Fort Vancouver for purposes of trade

and employment, missionaries' efforts added immensely to the ethnolinguistic variety of the fort. The missions forged new or expanded linkages with a network of tribal communities expanding throughout the region, and fostered an almost continuous movement of tribal people between these communities and the fort.

Missionary accounts of the early years of Fort Vancouver abound, most alluding to brief stays at the fort while en route to other places within the region. A number of these early missionaries attempted to organize temporary congregations and preach to Fort Vancouver's residents, who lived without a resident chaplain for many years. Most found the community's cultural and linguistic diversity to be an imposing barrier to their success. While at Fort Vancouver in September of 1834, for example, missionary Jason Lee reported that he

“assayed to preach to a mixed congregation – English, French, Scotch, Irish, Indians, Americans, half breeds, Japanese, &c., some of whom did not understand 5 words of English. Found it extremely difficult to collect my thoughts or find language to express them but am thankful that I have been permitted to plead the cause of God on this side of the Rocky Mountains where the banners of Christ were never before unfurled” (Lee 1916: 399).

The challenges encountered and lessons learned by these early missionaries at Fort Vancouver contributed to their rapid adoption of the Fort's interethnic *lingua franca*, Chinook Jargon (or 'Chinuk wawa') as their principal vehicle for communication with Indian communities beyond the fort. In time, prayers, catechisms, and other elements of church liturgy were translated into this language to foster their comprehension and dissemination within the Indian communities of the Northwest.

As these missionaries passed through Fort Vancouver, however, many complained to their home congregations, and sometimes to the HBC, regarding the absence of a resident chaplain at Fort Vancouver; rumors of licentiousness and Godlessness at the Fort were much overblown in these accounts, apparently to accentuate the need for reform. Under this pressure, HBC leadership - McLoughlin among them - began to explore options for a clergyman to be stationed at the Fort. By 1836, the HBC assigned ordained Anglican priest, Herbert Beaver, to serve as the first chaplain to the Fort Vancouver community. Beaver, despite his surname, was a notoriously bad fit for a well-established fur trading community the likes of Fort Vancouver. Arriving in September of 1836, Beaver was shocked by the conditions of frontier life. He was unabashedly bigoted and deeply contemptuous of the sizable portion of his congregation that were Indian or of Indian ancestry. Writing to Benjamin Harrison on March 10, 1837, Beaver said of his Indian congregation living at the Fort,

“it is impossible to conceive any descendants of that being, who was originally created in the image of God, to be sunk lower in the scale of humanity, of which, if I may so describe them, the[y] are the very excrement. Squalid and indolent, they would starve and go naked, both which they are frequently on the verge of doing, and would suffer famine and nakedness, were it not for the resources in the stores of the Company” (Beaver 1959: 40).

Racist and priggish, Beaver was clearly troubled by any marriages of non-Indian company employees to women who were not of pure European ancestry. Nonetheless, he doggedly pressured those employees who had engaged in “country marriages” or civil ceremonies, by choice or by frontier necessity, to remarry through Anglican religious ceremonies. He was noted for being “narrowly doctrinaire” during his slightly over two years in the role of Fort chaplain, being openly hostile toward the Roman Catholicism of the Francophone work force and making efforts, overtly and covertly, to convert the mixed-ethnicity schoolchildren to Anglicanism. He also began to petition the HBC to employ a meticulous moral and religious screening process to potential laborers before recruiting any more Native labor from Hawaii or other reaches of the HBC domain, so as to avoid importing “iniquity” to Northwestern shores.²²¹ His scope of his reformist zeal was vast and ambitious.

McLoughlin himself became a focus of Beaver’s reform efforts. John McLoughlin refused Beaver’s requests that he and his wife, Marguerite, undergo a formal church wedding ceremony so as to set an example for the fort’s employees – in part due to his deep dissatisfaction with Beaver, Beaver’s protestant faith, and Beaver’s views of fur trade marriages. McLoughlin later came to blows with the reverend when Beaver denounced Marguerite McLoughlin in correspondence as a “female of notoriously loose character,” due to the fact that their marriage had not been sanctioned or sanctified by the church (though, a number of years later, John and Marguerite McLoughlin sought out the assistance of friend and colleague James Douglas to oversee a civil remarriage, in Douglas’ role as a Justice of the Peace) (Hussey 1991; Sampson 1973a: 124-26).

The Fort Vancouver community was largely unified in opposition to Beaver’s heavy-handed tactics, and he made few inroads into the social and religious life of his reluctant flock. Beaver was quick to place blame on the immorality and ignorance of the Fort residents. In his report to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, dated October 10, 1837, Herbert Beaver complained,

“It will thus be seen, that little improvement has taken place, since my arrival among them, in the religious state of my people, and I have with regret to observe, that as little in their moral, especially as regards the besetting sin of the community, is in progress. I have solemnized only one

marriage between two persons of the lower order, the man being a Canadian, and the woman half-bred between an Iroquois and native woman; and although I have as yet no reason to suppose, that this will turn out otherwise than well, still, in the present deplorable and almost hopeless state of female vice and ignorance, I have no desire to unite more couples. If called upon to do so, I shall execute my office with reluctance, through the fear that the ceremony may be brought into contempt and disrepute by the woman's subsequent misbehaviour, and thereby be rendered nugatory as to the beneficial consequences, of which the much wanted due observances of the marriage vow must in this infant Colony be productive" (Beaver 1959: 54).

Even after Beaver's departure in 1838 - a move heartily supported by McLoughlin, HBC leadership, and presumably some large proportion of the resident Fort community - he continued a public campaign to condemn what he perceived as the vices of the Fort Vancouver community, to lobby for its aggressive reform, and to lament his ill treatment by the Fort leadership (Beaver 1959). In the end, Beaver's reform efforts would prove largely unsuccessful, but would move the HBC to foster a new missionary effort, more compatible with the values, religious precedents, and ethnic admixture of the Fort Vancouver community.

Within months of Beaver's departure, Reverend F. N. Blanchet and Reverend Modeste Demers, of the Society of Jesus of the Roman Catholic Faith, established their mission at Fort Vancouver. They did so with the full moral and material support of HBC Governor and Committee.²²² Leaving in the spring of 1838, Blanchet and Demers arrived at the Fort on November 24, 1838. Unlike Beaver, these men exhibited a degree of compassion and compatibility with the unique circumstances of the fur trading post; accordingly, Blanchet, Demers, de Smet, and other clergy tied to their Catholic mission were relatively well received in the Fort community. In the years that followed, they had profound effects on life both at the Fort and within the broad constellation of Indian communities with which it was connected (in Blanchet 1878). In addition to bolstering the Catholic influence among the Fort's rank-and-file employees and providing regular services there, these missionaries used Fort Vancouver as a base of operations for the rapid expansion of Catholic missionary efforts throughout the Oregon Territory. Much as the HBC had utilized preexisting social and trade networks centered on the lower Columbia River to extend tendrils of commerce throughout the region and rapidly establish economic hegemony, so the Catholic church now used these same linkages to make quick inroads into native communities. As one protestant missionary later noted, the Fort was uniquely situated for church expansion efforts, a "centre from which divine light would shine out and illuminate this region of darkness" (Parker 1841: 170).²²³ Aligning itself with the HBC juggernaut, the Catholic mission had a considerable advantage over the handful of other missionaries, most of them

protestant, who were attempting to establish themselves near some of the larger tribes of the Northwest.²²⁴ However, arriving so late in the history of the fort, Catholic missionary efforts played out within an ethnic geography already much transformed since the Fort's original construction. While early traders may have reached out to a densely-settled Chinookan lower Columbia region, many of these communities were in rapid decline; instead, missionaries' early efforts focused on those populations that had recently expanded along the lower Columbia – the Klickitat and Cowlitz – as well as surviving, largely Chinookan populations at those remaining major socioeconomic hubs as Willamette Falls, Clackamas, and the Dalles.

Initially, however, Blanchet and Demers – arriving without detailed knowledge of local tribes, local geography, or of Chinook Jargon – had no choice but to focus their efforts narrowly on the community at the Fort. In a letter from Demers to Reverend C.F. Cazeau, dated March 1st, 1839, he gave some indication of their slow start:

“I will give you an account of my ministry: For the last three months this Fort has, with the Canadians and Indians here, occupied all my time. I have found here some consolation; God has given me the grace to learn the Chinook language in a short time. It is in this jargon that I instruct the women and children of the white settlers, and the savages who come to see me from far and near. I am so busy from morning till night that I can scarcely find time to write the following concerning the savages who are settled on the west of the Rocky Mountains...” (in Blanchet 1878: 54-55).²²⁵

Recognizing the urgency of using Chinook Jargon as the language of religious services and everyday communication, alike, Blanchet and Demers rapidly set to the task of translating their liturgy into the language:

“The Indians were not neglected; they were gathered twice a day, in the forenoon and in the evening. Rev. M. Demers, who had learned the Chinook Jargon in three or four weeks, was their teacher. Later in January, having translated the Sign of the Cross the Lord's prayer and Hail Mary, into that idiom, he taught them to these poor Indians, who were much pleased to learn them. In February, he succeeded in composing some beautiful canticles in the same dialect which the Indians, as well as the men, women and children, chanted in the Church with the greatest delight. Thus by patience and constancy in teaching, the Missionaries were pleased to see that their hard labors were beginning to bear some fruits” (in Blanchet 1878: 67).

Cascade and Klickitat families appear to have been especially well represented at the Fort Vancouver mission services – at once reflecting their growing importance in and around the Fort community, while also demonstrating the mission’s influence in integrating these tribes into the larger social fabric of the Fort. Blanchet and Demers reported that these two groups “regularly attend catechism and evening prayer” at the Fort’s mission - services that these peoples readily comprehended due to their facility with Chinook Jargon.²²⁶ The missionaries began traveling with growing frequency to Cascade and Klickitat villages, reported to be a short distance away from the fort, and developed strong and enduring relationships with these communities (if official mission reports can be believed). Indeed, these communities were so close at hand that Blanchet and Demers could soon turn their attention to more distant populations, for these Cascade and Klickitat communities, although often seasonal, were not expected to fall out of missionary influence due to their sheer proximity. For example, Blanchet noted that, while some tribes might drift away from Catholic teachings to those of other denominations, “The Cascade Indians had a better chance, as their moving yearly, in October, on the left shore of the Columbia, nearly opposite Vancouver, brought them near to the priest” (in Blanchet 1878: 133).

As the mission became established by the end of 1839, Blanchet and Demers began to make visits to the villages of those individuals from the lower Columbia region who had visited the Fort. They recognized that “many of the [lower] Chinook tribe had already seen the blackgown at fort Vancouver, and had had their children baptized; but they had not yet been visited in their own land”; on these grounds, Demers initiated a downriver trip from Fort Vancouver, seeking converts at Cowlitz and then at Fort George and elsewhere on the Columbia estuary (in Blanchet 1878: 114). They also arranged for a Catholic mission outpost to the Willamette Valley tribes and others near what is today St. Paul, Oregon. Still, it quickly became apparent to the missionaries that, if they were to be successful regionally, they would need to focus much of their attention on the large socioeconomic hubs of tribal life on the lower Columbia, including the Chinookan settlements at the Dalles and Willamette Falls. Worse yet, from their perspective, Methodist missionaries had already beaten them to these communities and were making inroads. As Blanchet reported,

“There were three Indian tribes which had been gained to Methodism for over a year, viz: those of Clackamas, Wallamette Fall, and Cascades. The two [Catholic] missionaries had been too busy to visit them before. A door was opened to them this year in the following manner: A chief of the Clackamas tribe called Poh poh, went to St. Paul in February; he saw there the orphan boys in charge of the Catholic mission, some Indian families and other persons, numbering over 15. He assisted at the daily exercises and explanation of the Catholic Ladder. He was a Methodist, and the Corypheus of the sect, but on looking at the Ladder and seeing the crooked road of Protestantism made by men in the 16th century, he at

once, abjured Methodism, to embrace the straight road made by Jesus Christ; and returning home he invited the missionary to visit his tribe" (in Blanchet 1878: 119).²²⁷

Reacting in response to this, the protestant missionaries in the region returned to Pohpoh's village and others, initiating what became an intense competition for the 'hearts and minds' of particular large and influential settlements - especially the Clackamas and Willamette Falls settlements, as well as the settlements throughout the Portland Basin with which they were affiliated. Pohpoh's allegiance was a frequently mentioned objective, apparently due to his regional prominence and influence, which seems to have extended well beyond the conventionally-designated Clackamas region.²²⁸ Missionaries from the competing denominations often visited his village, and sometimes set to the task of tearing down the flags, crosses, Catholic 'ladders,' and other instructional and ceremonial paraphernalia left by the other side; regrettably, the perspectives of Pohpoh and his people, for whom this must have been an odd spectacle, are poorly represented in the written record.²²⁹

By the beginning of the 1840s, most of the non-resident congregation at the Fort's Catholic mission was still reported to consist largely of Cascade and Klickitat origin, and the mission consistently reported strong ties to those populations.²³⁰ The Clackamas, too, were of growing importance as Pohpoh's accounts suggest. Yet, a growing number of lower Columbia River region tribes were beginning to make regular visits to the Fort mission, both to participate in religious services and to coordinate the development of mission outposts in their own territories. Mission records show especially strong missionary ties with the Cowlitz:

"The Indians of Cowlitz love with reverence the missionaries who are established among them. They have a language of their own, different from that of the Chinook Indians. They also speak jargon. They are tolerably numerous but poor. They give us hopes of their conversion. After the visit of the Vicar General, they said to the settlers of Cowlitz: "The priests are going to stay with us; we are poor, and have nothing to give them: Tlahowiam nesaika waik ekita nesaika: We want to do something for them, we will work, make fences, and whatever they wish us to do." Several of them came to see the missionaries at Vancouver, and expressed the most ardent desire to have them come and remain with them" (in Blanchet 1878: 59).

Puget Sound tribes were also making frequent appearances at Fort Vancouver, apparently expressing interest in the development of missionary outposts in their homelands, providing the foundation for the extensive missionization efforts in western

Washington in the years that followed. Simultaneously, such nearby groups as the Kalapuya seem to have avoided the priests initially, and were repelled even more by their efforts to convert them to Catholicism. Blanchet reported that “They wish to keep away from the missionaries as much as the Cowlitz Indians wish to be near them (in Blanchet 1878: 59).²³¹ This may have been one of the many factors contributing to the comparatively small representation of Kalapuya among the Fort’s reported visitors and residents, generally.

Despite his sympathies for the Catholic missionaries, John McLoughlin was characteristically receptive to missionaries of all kinds, receiving and hosting them to a degree that often defied HBC policy. By the early 1840s, Fort Vancouver had become a staging ground place for missionaries of all kinds, with a strikingly nondenominational quality despite the established Catholic mission at the Fort and almost constant friction between some denominations. McLoughlin even allowed for the temporary designation of space within the Fort for ‘competing’ missionaries to perform their services while they stayed as his guests. In 1841, upon arriving at the Fort, Charles Wilkes noted a surfeit of missionaries enjoying McLoughlin’s hospitality:

“I was introduced to several of the missionaries: Mr. and Mrs. Smith, of the American Board of Missions; Mr. and Mrs. Griffith, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, of the Self-supporting Mission; Mr. Waller of the Methodist, and two others. They, for the most part, make Vancouver their home, where they are kindly received and well entertained at no expense to themselves. The liberality and freedom from sectarian principles of Dr. M’Laughlin may be estimated from his being thus hospitable to missionaries of so many Protestant denominations, although he is a professed Catholic, and has a priest of the same faith officiating daily at the chapel. Religious toleration is allowed in its fullest extent. The dining-hall is given up on Sunday to the use of the ritual of the Anglican Church, and Mr. Douglass or a missionary reads the service” (Wilkes 1845: 331).

Yet social divisions between the HBC leadership of the fort and the missionaries are apparent in various sources. Wilkes (1845: 184) notes that the fort leaders and missionaries consistently sat at different tables when eating and McLoughlin maintained an aloof distance from any visiting missionaries in his official correspondence, despite his material aid to their efforts. No doubt, official HBC opposition to the aiding of American expansions within the region – an expansion for which many of these missionaries served as the vanguard – contributed to McLoughlin’s attitude, his own personal views notwithstanding.

Despite varied responses to their mission, Demers, Blanchet, and their fellow missionaries were highly successful in developing a ministry that expanded throughout

the region, aided by the material support and unique advantages of the HBC. Their official reports suggested that, by 1845, “six thousands pagans have been converted” (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 232). Despite the apparent success of these missionary efforts, however, it is important to remember that indigenous ceremonial traditions remained strong in communities throughout the lower Columbia region during this time. In the journals of the missionaries, protestant missionaries especially, there can be found almost incessant complaints about the persistence of indigenous customs and beliefs among the native people of the lower Columbia (e.g., Bolduc 1979; Lee and Frost 1844). In many Indian communities, both Catholic and protestant rites were often adopted into a larger suite of preexisting ritual traditions, with “conversion” being seen by these communities as a way of enhancing their existing ritual capacities rather than – as missionaries often wrongly believed – as a means of replacing one set of religious beliefs and practices wholly with another. “Conversion” was also occurring very unevenly within these tribal communities. As Blanchet lamented in one of his reports, for example, “*Keiinsno* chief of the Indians below Vancouver, said to his people: “Follow the priest if you like, for myself, I am too bad, I am unable to change. I will die the same” (in Blanchet 1878: 121-22). There were strong incentives for missionaries to report to their superiors and supporters accounts of the successful and complete conversion of communities; so too, there were many reasons to question the veracity of their accounts.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the presence of the Catholic mission at Fort Vancouver, as well as the other missions that arose and diffused from this hub, contributed to the great cultural diversity of the Indian community regularly visiting the Fort, and arguably added to the diversity of the resident population as well. Through the 1840s, many missionary accounts mention the Fort as a stopover or as a base of operations, as these missionaries made inroads with Flatheads, Blackfeet, Clatsop, and many others. Under the direction of the Fort Vancouver mission, Catholic missions were developed in Puget Sound, with both missionaries and Sound tribes making frequent journeys between the two places.²³² Fort Vancouver served as the launching point for initial missionary efforts in British Columbia as well, resulting in similar interregional traffic. The reach of these missionary efforts was arguably as extensive as the reach of the Fort, itself, and served to reinforce Fort Vancouver’s role as a gathering place of indigenous peoples from throughout the northwestern portion of North America. While there were many other missionary efforts in the 19th century Northwest, the role of the Fort Vancouver mission was perhaps unique in its scale, scope, and its capacity to bring together peoples from the far corners of the Oregon Territory.

The American Transition, Treaties, and Indian Wars: 1849-1879

Under the treaty of Oregon in 1846, the United States gained control over the Oregon Territory, encompassing the modern states of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. After nearly four decades of fur trade empires on the lower Columbia, the political barriers to American settlement were gone. The American reoccupation of the Northwest commenced with awesome speed. Settlers streamed into the region, quickly followed by military and governmental institutions that sought to place the Oregon territory firmly within American control. While the Hudsons Bay Company was still an economic powerhouse and a geopolitical force north of the Canadian border, the Company was increasingly irrelevant to the burgeoning Anglo-American community of the Portland basin and comparatively powerless to defend its hard-won interests and assets south of the 49th parallel. The strategic and economic prominence that the HBC had so carefully nurtured in its decades-long monopoly was all but lost. Ironically - much as the Hudson's Bay Company had originally entered the Northwest as a strategically disadvantaged outpost within a densely-occupied and potentially hostile region - the venerable Company also exited the American Northwest in much the same manner.

For the American Indians living at the Fort, or anywhere within its former sphere of influence, the transition could not have been more jarring. The beginning of large-scale American immigration brought new actors and new tensions into the region, igniting the Indian wars that McLoughlin and his colleagues had anticipated and had been so cautious to avoid. Treaties and military action sought to accomplish what the HBC would have never considered strategically or economically desirable: the forcible relocation of American Indian communities originating throughout the region to a finite number of reservations, clearing the land of competing claimants in the expansion of the American state and its citizens. Very abruptly, the function of Fort Vancouver changed as well, with the arrival of the U.S. military at Vancouver Barracks. New political, strategic and demographic pressures pushed Indians away from the Fort and pulled them toward other places and communities. From the time of Fort Vancouver's construction until 1849, there had been powerful economic, social, and cultural incentives for American Indian peoples to congregate on the lower Columbia River, generally, and in close proximity to Fort Vancouver, specifically. By the early 1850s, the landscape had shifted, as the U.S. military became established at Vancouver Barracks and began using the fort site as a training ground and prison for Western Indian wars. The Barracks served as the duty station of such widely-known Indian fighters as William Harney, Oliver O. Howard, Patrick E. Conner, and Philip Sheridan, who is credited with the aphorism, "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" - all of whom are still highly controversial figures in some tribal communities for their actions during this

period. Now there were powerful incentives to leave this area, and to do so quickly. A small procession of refugees abandoned the Northwest's fur trading posts and their associated settlements - American Indians and their families often migrating to reservation and other Indian communities, or being taken there by force; mixed-race families fleeing to the same reservations, retreating to Champoeg and other Metis settlements, and - in some special cases - integrating into the Anglo-American communities that sprang up throughout the region. Those with strong and enduring ties to the HBC commonly moved north, to Fort Victoria and other Company posts in Canada, to seek new opportunities and avoid the antipathies of American settlers. No longer would there be open and casual acceptance of multi-ethnic households; British loyalists, Catholics, and Metis were treated with roughly proportional disdain. The ethnic landscape of the Northwest had been radically reshaped in the course of a single generation and, once again, Fort Vancouver sat at the geographical and administrative center of these events.

Native Communities on the Eve of the American Invasion

On the eve of American reoccupation, there were two principal Native communities living in close association with the fort: the residents of Kanaka Village and the residents of tribal villages located nearby. Despite their proximity to one-another, these two communities were living in very different circumstances. The resident tribes living in villages near the fort, but not in Kanaka Village, were experiencing the disastrous consequences of the epidemics, with reduced fertility, continued high mortality and morbidity, rounds of relocation from decimated villages to remnant communities, and every imaginable interruption to tribal social, economic, and cultural traditions. Epidemic diseases continued to decimate these Indian communities at a rate that far exceeded the mortality in Kanaka Village. Dysentery arrived in the mid-1840s, for example, causing horrific suffering and death in those villages still remaining after the epidemics of the 1830s, and bringing Chinooks, Cascades and others to Vancouver in search of medical help.²³³ The years 1847-48 brought yet another major smallpox epidemic that passed through the lower Columbia region. Each epidemic brought similar outcomes, compounding the effects of prior epidemics and increasingly placing the Chinookan peoples of the lower Columbia at a disadvantage relative to other Native and non-Native communities - fur traders, settlers, and Klickitats alike - who sought to make inroads within the Chinookan homeland (Boyd 1994).²³⁴

The American presence at the beginning of the 1840s was negligible. In 1840, the total population of the Oregon territory was estimated to have roughly 35 missionaries and only 36 American settlers, "twenty five of them with Indian wives" (W.H. Gray in Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 79). Within three years, American settlers began streaming into the region in ever increasing numbers. By the time that Americans were arriving in

appreciable numbers, the villages from the Cascades to the sea were truly, as Parker noted, “only the remnants of once numerous and powerful nations” (Parker 1841: 151). Writing in 1845-46, Pierre de Smet attempted to establish revised population estimates for a number of the tribal communities represented at Fort Vancouver and its immediate environs. He found it “extremely difficult to ascertain, with accuracy, the amount of population in the Territory” as “the Indians change to their different abodes as the fishing seasons come round” and had undergone such rapid demographic change (deSmet 1906: 98). Nonetheless, with the assistance of Fort Vancouver staff and the use of Catholic mission records, he was able to arrive at figures that he felt were satisfactory, including the following:

Tribe	Population
Willamette Falls and valley	275
Chenooks	209
At the Cascades	105
At the Dalles	250
Shastys	500
Cowelits or Klakatacks	350

(from deSmet 1906: 98-99)

The tribal population was a mere fragment of what it had been only two decades before and, by this date, included more non-Chinookan people than Chinookans. Cowlitz and Klickitat were well represented; it is perhaps telling that he could not readily differentiate Cowlitz and Klickitat at this date, underscoring the integration of the two tribal populations during the fur trade era. The large number of “Shastys” – presumably Shasta slaves – is remarkable, too, apparently reflecting the enduring importance of slavery to both Kanaka Village residents and those Indian communities, especially Chinookan communities, situated nearby.

During the same period, British agents Warre and Vavasour developed their own census of tribal populations, as part of a larger inventory of strategic assets undertaken in response to the growing American threat in the region. John McLoughlin apparently aided in the development of this tribal census of the Oregon country (McLoughlin 1845c). Their numbers, focusing on the lands along the lower Columbia River and lower Willamette Valley, differed somewhat from deSmet’s, but tell a similar story.²³⁵ The Warre and Vavasour census provided the following results, which, the authors suggested, likely underrepresented the tribes’ actual numbers:

<u>Tribe</u>	<u>Where Situated</u>	<u>Population</u>
Two Tribes	On Cowlitz River (about)	500
Chinooks, Clatsops, etc.	Near mouth of Columbia	429
Klickitats, several tribes	Near Ft. Vancouver	500
Kalapooias	Willamette Valley	300
Clackamas	Willamette Valley	200
Chinooks, Kalapooias, etc. 4 tribes	Along Columbia	800

(from Warre and Vavasour 1909: 61)

Once again, non-Chinookan peoples appear to have become a plurality of those in the Portland Basin. It is perhaps telling that Warre and Vavasour only identified Klickitat as being “Near Ft. Vancouver” by this time. Moreover, the “Two Tribes” noted at the Cowlitz consisted, minimally, of mixed Cowlitz and Klickitat populations with ties to those Klickitat living closer to the Fort. Yet Chinookans were still very much in evidence, with a number of villages still active under the leadership of the chiefly class. Narrative accounts from the same period, incidentally, provide a similar view of Klickitat and remnant Chinookan populations living side-by-side along the lower Columbia; they commonly describe particular concentrations of Klickitat living in Cowlitz and the Fort, and Chinookans more broadly distributed along the river, but with significant numbers living close to the Fort as well. Some sources suggest a growing degree of social integration between these two tribal populations during the 1830s and 1840s as well. Kane, for example, noted the Chinook and the Klickitat as the two primary tribes “in the immediate vicinity of the fort” and suggested that they both deferred to the authority of the Chinookan leader, Casino (Kane 1859: 173). These Indians living nearby continued to play an enduring if small role in the cash economy centered on Fort Vancouver, often being hired as guides, boatmen, and for other services by travelers visited the Fort during this period.²³⁶

By the 1840s, Fort administrators no longer viewed the Indians of the neighborhood as a serious security threat. Indeed, as Bancroft notes, “There were no galleries around the walls for sentries, nor loop-holes for small arms, no appearances, in fact indicating a dangerous neighborhood” (Bancroft 1890a: 7). Visitors of the period sometimes marveled at this fact and mentioned it in their journals, such as Wilkes, who note of the Fort’s entrance that,

“Between the steps are two old cannons on sea-carriages, with a few shot, to speak defiance to the natives, who no doubt look upon them as very formidable weapons of destruction. I mention these, as they are the only warlike instruments to my knowledge that are within the pickets of

Vancouver, which differs from all the other forts in having no bastions, galleries, or loop-holes" (Wilkes 1845: 327).

The Native population around the Fort was simply so small, and on such enduring and congenial terms with the Hudson's Bay Company, that anything more than the stockade and a couple of cannons would have been excessive – not only being an unnecessary expenditure, but also potentially conveying the wrong impression to Indian visitors to the Fort in a manner that might adversely affect trade.²³⁷

In sharp contrast to the remnant, and generally declining tribal populations outside of the Fort, the Kanaka Village community had, to some extent, become a stable and self-sustaining community. Indeed, some accounts are positively idyllic, painting a picture of prosperity and health that stood in stark contrast to the Indian communities living a short distance away. The population of the community had grown considerably over the preceding decades: "The whole number of residents at the place is about eight hundred, of whom a large proportion are Indians or half-breeds" (Greenhow 1840). Accordingly, the village had gotten comparatively large by this period, starting near the Fort's exterior walls and yet "extending to the river" (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 46). As many accounts noted, children abounded in the Village, and McLoughlin had arranged for a school for these children under the tutelage of American Solomon Smith.²³⁸ Thus, in the summer of 1841, Charles Wilkes remarked, "We came in at the back part of the village, which consists of about fifty comfortable log houses, placed in regular order on each side of the road. They are inhabited by the Company's servants, and were swarming with children, whites, half-breeds, and pure Indians" (Wilkes 1845: 326).²³⁹ A short time later, Paul Kane would marvel at the bustling little community, "The men, with their Indian wives, live in log huts near the margin of the river, forming a little village – quite a Babel of languages, as the inhabitants are a mixture of English, French, Iroquois, Sandwich Islanders, Crees and Chinooks" (Kane 1859: 171-172).

At this time, Fort Vancouver still held unparalleled predominance in the trade networks of the Northwest. Warre and Vavasour (1909: 60) estimated that Fort Vancouver was still the largest HBC fort in the District in the years 1845-46, with some 200 employees. The other forts in the District simply did not compare: Fort Victoria was a distant second at 35 employees and Fort Colville was third at 30. The bustling of the Village streets was matched by considerable bustle in the Indian store and warehouses of the Fort. Yet, even before the American invasion, the business interests of the HBC in the American Northwest were at a tipping point. The profitability of the lower Columbia fur trade had long lagged behind other regions, and Fort Vancouver increasingly served more as an administrative hub and transshipment point supporting hinterland forts than it did as a conventional fur trading post. Indeed, much of the District south of Canada was experiencing a slow but noticeable decline. As Samuel Parker noted in 1841,

“The fur business about and west of the Rocky Mountains, is becoming far less lucrative than in years past; for so extensively and constantly have every nook and corner been searched out, that beaver and other valuable fur animals are becoming scarce. It is rational to conclude, that it will not be many years before this business will not be worth pursuing in the prairie country, south of the 50° of north latitude; north of this, in the colder and more densely wooded regions, the business will not vary in any important degree” (Parker 1841: 187-88).

And while the HBC was publicly quiet about the future prospects of the fur trade, their internal correspondence showed a growing awareness of the economic challenges ahead. In a letter from the HBC Governor and Committee to John McLoughlin, dated September 27th, 1843, the Company leadership openly questioned the viability of the Columbia Department:

“This continually decreasing price [of furs], when considered in connexion with a constantly decreasing supply, holds out no very cheering prospect for the future, unless the tide of fashion change, and the consumption of Beaver in the manufacture of hats become more general than it has been for some time past” (HBC Governor and Committee 1843: 306).

In this context, even moderate economic and strategic challenges had the potential to dislodge the HBC from Fort Vancouver to another tidewater administrative center in the region. Soon enough, these pressures arrived on their shores – but pressures of a magnitude that could not have been imagined by McLoughlin and his colleagues during the halcyon days of their Columbia River trade in the early 1840s.

Growing American Interests and Hostilities toward the HBC

The strategic and economic potentials of the Oregon Territory were well known to the United States, and of growing interest, to the restless young nation. To American nationalists, protestant missionaries, and frontier economic opportunists, the regional prominence of Fort Vancouver was seen as a direct and imposing threat to their ambitions. Despite McLoughlin’s legendary hospitality toward non-Native visitors, no matter their religion or national origin, American travelers increasingly complained to the American newspapers and political leadership of what they perceived as McLoughlin’s despotic control over the entire Oregon Territory. These complaints

became a galvanizing force for American hard-liners seeking to take the Oregon Territory from Britain by force in the 1840s, prior to the advent of the Mexican-American War in 1846 - which diverted American military assets elsewhere - and the signing of the Oregon Treaty between the United States and Britain later that year.

During this period, the native people of the Columbia River region found their relationships with the non-Native world being reshaped by vast international conflicts and geopolitical schemes. The Americans brought a very different, and relatively aggressive approach to Indian-white relations that was unfamiliar to the tribes of the region, and brought almost instantaneous reprisals.²⁴⁰ The relative success of Hudsons Bay Company policy toward tribal interests, coupled with the history of cooperation and intermarriage with Indians created great suspicion among arriving Americans who viewed Indians more or less uniformly as a threat and frequently skirmished with them in interior locations along the Oregon Trail. While some of the complaints directed at the Company were clearly rooted in fact - the HBC's economic monopoly in the region, for example, and the Fort's close association with the Catholic Church and numerous Indian tribes within the Pacific Northwest - the reports of HBC excesses grew ever more fantastic as American ambitions for the region blossomed. American interests accused employees of Fort Vancouver of being either murderous, killing Indians wantonly throughout the region, or of being in such close league with the Indians that they were inciting acts of violence against American travelers, thus stifling the development of American enterprise on the Pacific slope. Either scenario placed responsibility for anti-American sentiments among the Indians unambiguously with the HBC. No matter the story, American political and military intervention was more often than not described as the appropriate antidote to these purported humanitarian crises and, parenthetically, to the economic hardships that they might engender on fledgling American interests in the region.

As early as 1840, these American accusations of Fort Vancouver's misdeeds relative to the Indians and resource wealth of the Northwest were becoming commonplace. As American missionary, William Slacum reported to U.S. Congress that year, based on his "observations" during a recent trip to the Oregon Territory,

"Since the year 1828, a party of forty to fifty trappers, (Canadians,) with their women, slaves, &c., generally amounting to 150 to 200 persons and 300 horses, go out from Vancouver, towards the south, as far as 40° north latitude. These parties search every stream, and take every beaver skin they find, regardless of the destruction of the young animals: excesses, too, are unquestionably committed by these hunting parties on the Indians; and every small American party (save one) that has passed through the same country has met defeat and death. The parties being much smaller than those of the Hudson Bay Company, the Indians attack them with success; and the Americans hesitate not to charge the

subordinate agents of the Hudson Bay Company with instigating the Indians to attack all other parties" (Slacum 1837).

The testimony, delivered to Congress, placed added strain on the relationship between the United States and Great Britain. The matter was closely watched by British and HBC representatives. The Hudsons Bay Committee Governor Deputy Director and Committee forwarded Slacum's congressional testimony to McLoughlin for clarification and comment. McLoughlin replied

"I presume, it is unnecessary for me to assure you there is not, the least foundation for such an accusation and leaving the heinousness of such an act as instigating Indians to commit such an offence out of the question I hope I will not be considered an egoist when I say I understand the trade of this country too well ever to encourage Indians to commit an act of this kind" (in Rich 1943: 33).

In McLoughlin's carefully engineered relationships with Northwestern tribes, his delicate strategic and economic balance, there was no advantage to inciting interethnic violence. Clearly, McLoughlin had sometimes used his influence to steer Indian traders away from American commercial interests in favor of his own, but evidence of darker schemes remains lacking.²⁴¹

Upon receiving McLoughlin's reply, the Hudson's Bay Company publicly took the position - probably correctly - that the Americans traveling through the region had neither the connections with regional tribes, nor the interethnic decorum carefully cultivated by McLoughlin and his colleagues, to travel throughout the region unmolested. The comparative lack of success of the Americans at making inroads into the region had "exited in the breasts of those men a spirit of jealousy to the slanderous instigation" (McLoughlin 1840: 32).²⁴² Even the former Fort chaplain Herbert Beaver, no friend to McLoughlin, said of Americans who now targeted the Fort Vancouver leadership that they were being deceitful and ungrateful: "They could never have existed here a day without our assistance (Beaver n.d.). Still, lacking clear evidence to counter such charges, the HBC could do little but restate these arguments, a response that had little effect on the growing tide of resentment in the East.

In 1842, sped along by grand territorial ambitions, and wishing to counterbalance the HBC's relationships with Northwestern tribes, the United States formally assigned a man named Elijah White with the position of Oregon "Sub-Indian Agent." This appointment was approved well before the United States had firm legal claims to the Oregon country, and represented a calculated political gamble during a time when the U.S. relationships with Britain were strained by the question of Oregon territorial claims

(Bancroft 1890a: 253-96). A former missionary, White operated as both missionary and Indian agent in the Oregon Territory from his headquarters at Oregon City. His earliest letters demonstrate that he was attempting to negotiate independent (and arguably “preemptive”) treaties between the U.S. and a number of interior tribes, including the Nez Perce, Cayuse, Walla Walla, Wascocam and “The Dalles Indians” (U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: Roll 607; Rich 1943: 128). Interestingly, White’s few references to tribes in the “lower district” or “lower country” of the Columbia River region refer only to “the Indians” generally, rather than to specific tribes, and White seems to have made little effort to win their support. This lack of attention was likely due to these tribes’ shrinking numbers and their enduring ties with Fort Vancouver. No doubt, the perception of the lower Columbia Chinookans and Klickitats as the natural allies of the Hudson’s Bay Company would later come to undermine the territorial and legal claims of these tribes, as White’s one-man operation evolved into an established Indian agency presence over the next few years, as will be addressed later in this document.

Ironically, though Elijah White’s objectives were shaped in no small part by a desire to undermine HBC hegemony in the region, he – like almost every other non-Native person in the region – found himself in need of supplies and logistical support that only the HBC could provide. McLoughlin was clearly beside himself, as White approached the Company’s posts seeking support for his new “agency.” In a letter to Archibald McKinlay, dated April 14th, 1843, McLoughlin outlined the Company policy toward White and his agendas for Northwestern tribes:

“Dr. White is, I understand, on his way to Walla Walla, you will observe that until our Government has given up its claim to this Country and recognized the rights of the United States, and that we are officially informed of it, we cannot recognize Dr. White as an Indian Agent, and he can only be known to us as a private Individual, and as such, treated with all the courtesy his conduct deserves. But you cannot permit his holding Council with Indians in the Fort, and you will remember, that the Goods sent to you, are to be employed in trade with Indians, but you may of course sell him any or give him on credit such articles as we generally supply Gentlemen on the voyage” (McLoughlin 1843d: 129).

Until roughly 1846, McLoughlin and his staff maintained this aloof relationship, providing White with a modicum of material support but openly seeking to curtail his influence on tribal or Company affairs. Perhaps ironically, American settlers petitioning Congress for the mobilization of U.S. military and government assets into the Oregon Territory cited White’s dependence upon the Fort’s supplies as further proof for the need of intervention to combat the Company’s tyrannical influence.²⁴³

Almost immediately after his arrival, White found himself thrown into controversy. Within a few months of his first attempts to negotiate with the Cayuse and Nez Perce, certain bands from these tribes made threats on the Whitman's Waiilatpu mission and the Lapwai mission respectfully.²⁴⁴ More violence toward the non-Native population of the region was being threatened. The tribal uprisings, rare in the years preceding, were said to be "caused by a report, spread among [the tribes] that Dr. White... gave himself out as Indian Agent for the United States [and] had said, he would take their lands from them" (McLoughlin 1843b: 128).²⁴⁵ Travel and trade in the interior was becoming more dangerous for all non-Indians, American and British alike. American territorial ambitions were already upsetting the delicate peace that McLoughlin had nurtured over the preceding three decades.

Despite White's apparent role in antagonizing the interior tribes of the Northwest, and the arrival of the first large American wagon trains in 1843, American interests would not relent on the point of the Fort Vancouver staff being the source of all "Indian troubles" in the region. An 1843 U.S. Congressional report accused the Fort staff of atrocities against Indians within what was now being depicted as United States territory:

"They [HBC employees] commit every depredation, upon the poor, defenseless and peaceful Indians, living within the defined and acknowledged jurisdiction, of the United States, actually murdering hundreds of them, every year" (in McLoughlin 1843c: 143).

This, Congress suggested, was what precipitated the hostilities encountered by wagon trains traveling through the region in 1843; simultaneously, the Company also was accused of sending those Indians still loyal to them to attack the newly-arriving wagon trains as a deterrent to American settlement. In response to criticism of the Fort brought by the U.S. Congress, McLoughlin protested that "We have done every thing in our power to protect the settlers from being molested by the Indians, and have perfectly succeeded in that object" and that "not one single American has been killed by the Indians of the Columbia River, or in any of the dependant district permanently occupied by the Hudsons Bay Company" (McLoughlin 1843f: 186, 190). Prior to the establishment of the Fort, he noted, certain tribes such as the Snakes were so hostile to any non-Native party that safe travel was impossible; after decades of peaceful trade, he noted, travel through Snake lands by non-Natives was commonplace, no matter their national identity, and almost always occurred without incident.²⁴⁶ His claims were to no avail. In the year that followed, members of the U.S. Senate, including aspiring presidential candidate James Buchanan, made claims before the Senate that HBC employees based at Fort Vancouver had "caused five hundred American Citizens to be murdered by [HBC employees] or by Indians under [HBC] influence" (in McLoughlin

1845a). No matter the evidence, any hostile act by Indians was depicted as the outcome of HBC influence.

Tensions with the arriving settlers mounted, even as McLoughlin continued to provide material support and guidance to the growing number of families arriving along the new Oregon Trail. Settlers began to overrun HBC assets, not the least of which being McLoughlin's private land claim at Willamette Falls; he attempted to negotiate with a growing and unruly camp of squatters, seeking redress by threatening forcible removal but offering clemency to those who conferred with him and relocated or purchased small tracts by a predetermined date. Throughout it all, arriving settlers received considerable care at the fort: "Fort Vancouver was the Mecca to which all turned" (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 255).²⁴⁷

Still, talk of armed reprisals against Fort employees became commonplace in the small American settlements that sprang up near the Fort, and emigrants arrived prepared to take up arms against the Company, even if the ragged and undersupplied American settlers were poorly prepared to act on these threats.²⁴⁸ By the summer of 1844, McLoughlin ordered the restoration of the Fort's defenses, including the construction of a new bastion; while the rising Indian hostilities may have played some role in his decision, it appears that it was not Indians, but American settlers, that he now viewed as the major threat to the Fort's safety.²⁴⁹ Each act of violence by American settlers against Indians, and each act of violence by Indians against American settlers only worsened the situation for the Company, whose position in the region became less tenable with each passing month.²⁵⁰ McLoughlin worked diligently to keep the fragile interethnic peace; this was not necessarily a humanitarian effort for, as McLoughlin knew well, open warfare between the Indian and non-Indian communities would have been costly and much complicated Company objectives in the region.

By early in 1845, there was open talk of war between Britain and the United States over these matters, most of the American position being publicly justified as a response to HBC-Indian relations and their purported effects on American settlement. Both sides began preparations for a possible war in the Northwest. The British sent spies, Henry Warre and Merwin Vavasour, to the region to assess the strategic strengths of the British Crown in the Columbia Department. HBC Governor, George Simpson, wrote to Warre and Vavasour in March 29, 1845, outlining a battle strategy that relied not on Indian support, but on the support of the vast Metis community that had developed in association with Company posts:

"Should the recent proceedings in the Congress of the United States on the Oregon question result in hostilities between the two countries, I think it would be absolutely necessary for the protection of the Company's interests in Hudson's Bay that a small military force should be stationed at Red River. Besides this force I think it would be very desirable that a

company of riflemen should be embodied in the country from our native half caste population, who are admirably adapted for guerilla warfare, being exceedingly active, and, by the constant use of the gun from childhood, good marksmen. It would be necessary, however, to forward from Canada along with the troops a sufficient number of officers to command and discipline this corps...a force of about 200 men, half breeds and Indians, might be collected on both sides of the mountains that could on a short notice be rendered disposable for active service in any part of the Oregon territory" (in Warre and Vavasour 1909: 13-14).

Once in the region, however, Warre and Vavasour determined that the Metis force was not sufficient, and that Pacific Northwest tribes would not be "a very manageable or available force" to the HBC (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 64).²⁵¹ They also noted a number of legislative attempts by American settlers to undermine the Company's interests by specifically targeting the interests of mixed-race and Native Hawaiian residents of the Oregon Territory:

"To show the feeling of the American population against the British subjects, it may be well to inform your Lordship of two measures, which were proposed as laws, but rejected.

1st. For the prevention of the half breed population from holding land or property in the country under the Organic laws...The half breeds, children of the gentlemen and servants of the Company and of the Red River settlers, forming the principal and most numerous portion of Her Majesty's subjects in this country.

2nd. For the taxation of the Sandwich Islanders, employed almost exclusively as servants and laborers, by the H. B. Company, and intended merely to annoy and embarrass the gentlemen in charge of the said company" (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 74).

Their work completed, Warre and Vavasour's reached their final conclusions. In their assessment, they placed considerable blame for the international conflict on John McLoughlin and his colleagues at Fort Vancouver – not for promoting Indian hostilities and interethnic bloodshed, as the Americans had it – but conversely, for being so receptive to all visitors who entered the Fort. As they noted,

"...emigrations left the United States in 1843, 1844 and 1845, and were received in [a] cordial manner. Their numbers have increased so rapidly that the British party are now in the minority, and the gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company have been obliged to join the organization, without any reserve except the mere form of the oath of office. Their lands

are invaded – themselves insulted – and they now require the protection of the British Government against the very people to the introduction of whom they have been more than accessory” (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 82).

Before Warre and Vavasour returned home with their conclusions and recommendations, however, the geopolitical fate of the region had been sealed. The Oregon Treaty between the United States and Britain was signed on June 15, 1846, dividing the two nations’ claims along the 49th parallel. Buchanan, President of the United States by this time, achieved his ambitions in the Northwest, but not without irreparable harm to the HBC’s relationships with settlers and Indians alike. By the end of the year, anticipating the challenges ahead, the 62-year-old McLoughlin retired from his post at Fort Vancouver, leaving the Fort in charge of his trusted second in command, James Douglas.

Even in the wake of the Oregon Treaty and his retirement, McLoughlin was called upon to define and defend his former policies on engagement with the Indian tribes of the region. He continued to write repeated explanations, along with refutations of American claims, to his former supervisors among the HBC Governors and Committee. Witnessing the rapidly deteriorating situation between American settlers and the region’s tribes, McLoughlin also began to reach out to members of the U.S. leadership offering his counsel on how to avert outright war. In one letter, written to William L. Marcy, U.S. Secretary of War on October 21st, 1847, for example, McLoughlin responded to a recent attack on an American wagon train, suggesting a variety of measures drawn from his experience overseeing HBC expeditions through the region:

“Since I did myself the Honor to address you on the 17th Inst a Report reached this that party of Immigrants had been pillaged of their property By the Indians between Walla Walla and the Dalles and Most certainly this would not have happened if the Immigrants had known how to Act and shows the Necessity of the Measure I recommended in my Last as if their [*sic*] had been an Agent at Fort Hall he would have made the Immigrants keep in Numbers Sufficiently Numerous to be Respected By the Indians and placed a Conductor with them who would have prevented the Whites doing any thing which might justly offend the Indians and thus the Whites will be Respected and peace and Harmony Maintained between them and the Natives. It is thus I always Acted in Managing the Hudson Bay Co Business – and Never to send a party through the Country without putting an officer in Charge Who knew how to Conduct any business they might have with the Indians and Who had Authority to keep his Men in Order and in Justice to the Indians I must say I have known Many and Many a White Man as Ready to impose on

the Indians when in their power as Indians in Similar situation to impose on Whites" (McLoughlin 1847a: 69)

Despite McLoughlin's advice, little was done to implement these measures and to stem the tide of interethnic violence, as wagon trains arrived in growing numbers and tribal suspicions of American ambitions – much complicated by Elijah White's treaty-making campaigns – reached new heights.

A little over a month after McLoughlin's letter, these events all finally came to a head at the Whitman mission near modern-day Walla Walla. In late November of 1847, young Cayuse and Umatilla men attacked the Whitman mission, killing 15 members of the mission and taking several more captive – an event later dubbed the "Whitman massacre." On December 11, 1847, less than two weeks after this event - dubbed the "Whitman massacre" - Oregon Territorial Governor George Abernethy assembled a delegation to go to Fort Vancouver to petition the new factor, James Douglas, for a loan to support military reprisals against the Cayuse. Ironically, even the American territorial government was dependent upon HBC support in this matter. Douglas refused, citing Company policy and noting that "a public loan for war against the Indians would prejudice the company's standing with the tribes" (O'Donnell 1991: 67). However, Douglas did agree to make a \$1,000 personal loan to the members of the delegation – fostering the Company's desire to contain native uprisings without adverse consequences to its operations. Peter Skene Ogden, of the Company's Board of Management was dispatched to petition the Cayuse for the release of any prisoners. On December 23rd, Ogden arranged a council with the Cayuse chiefs, who he harangued for not being able to control their own young men, who had perpetrated the attack. Wishing to not jeopardize the Company's commercial ambitions, however, Ogden pledged HBC neutrality in future conflicts between the Americans and the Cayuse, but demanded that the prisoners be exchanged for a sizeable ransom (Bancroft 1890a: 693). The Cayuse leaders consented, citing their long association with Ogden and the Company, probably influenced by past intermarriages between the Cayuse and Company employees. Chief Tiloukaikt was reported to say to Ogden,

"Chief! Your words are weighty – your hairs are grey. We have known you a long time. You have had an unpleasant journey to this place. I cannot, therefore keep the families [hostages] back. I make them over to you, which I would not do to another younger than yourself" (quoted in Bancroft 1890a: 694).

Ogden promised to seek to dissuade the Americans from making war with the Cayuse – an effort that would ultimately fail.

In the wake of the events at Whitman mission, roughly 600 provisional troops were mobilized from among the settlers of the Oregon Territory under Colonel Cornelius Gilliam. The Fort served as a staging ground for volunteers from the Portland area when amassing to fight in the Cayuse War (Bancroft 1890: 9-10). The rapid departure of so many of the working-age men from the Portland Basin resulted in a temporary economic crisis in the area, causing Fort employees to resume such activities as axe and tool manufacturing for both trade and Fort use, instead of relying on purchased goods (Bancroft: 1890b: 9-10, 13). As was characteristic of the American settlers of the time, Colonel Gilliam's dealings with Fort Vancouver were complex. Gilliam was perhaps the most vocal military leader to accuse Fort Vancouver of inciting the Cayuse War because of suspected influence over the interior tribes and their Catholic sympathies; for a time, Gilliam threatened armed retaliation against the Fort, but was too focused on the Cayuse campaign inland to divert his troops toward the Fort. Yet, Gilliam also purchased most of the supplies for his campaign from Fort Vancouver and other HBC outposts (Glassley 1953: 20-32). When Gilliam died in 1848, apparently due to an accidental gunshot, these provisional troops were so overwhelmed by the Cayuse campaign that they did not pose much of a threat to the Fort.

During the Cayuse War that followed from roughly 1848 through 1855 – the first true Indian war of the Pacific Northwest – it is clear that American forces commonly purchased supplies for the war effort from Fort Vancouver; no doubt, HBC goods provisioned both sides of the conflict (O'Donnell 1991). McLoughlin's departure had not changed the Fort's policy of provisioning arriving Americans, even as the Company's foothold in the region began to slip.²⁵² As had happened years before, with the arrival of Elijah White, James Douglas and the employees of the Fort once again found themselves in the ironic position of helping to provision the very same developments – not only American immigration, but now the Indian wars – that would, in time, conspire to permanently dislodge the HBC from the Oregon Territory.

The Emergence of Vancouver Barracks

In August of 1848, largely in response to the “Whitman massacre” and the escalating Cayuse War, Congress hastily completed formal designation of Oregon as a United States Territory and ordered the establishment of a standing military force in the Pacific Northwest. U.S. Secretary of War, W.L. Macy, authorized the development of a central military post in the Northwest in order to protect growing American settlement and to combat warring tribes in the Portland Basin. Once again, with limited assets in the region, the United States found itself looking to Fort Vancouver for assistance. Although the HBC was now a British institution operating in American territory, HBC claims to land and property were still legally protected by the Oregon Treaty of 1846,

with a sunset date for these claims set for June 29th, 1859. Despite this, American land claims already were starting to spring up around Fort Vancouver, sometimes complicating Fort operations (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 248 ff.; Hussey 1957: 97-114).²⁵³ The HBC, many realized, had no more than a decade left before it would abandon its lands and facilities in Vancouver, and might be motivated to leave even sooner. The U.S. government also saw the value of Fort Vancouver's regional centrality, its fortified waterfront position, and its established facilities as potential military assets. A decision was made to create the Northwest's premier military installation from lands leased (and later purchased) from Fort Vancouver – including much of the unenclosed lands surrounding the Fort. As Bancroft summarized, this agreement helped protect the interests of the Company and the military in some ways,

“It was undoubtedly believed at this time by both the Hudson's Bay Company and the officers of the United States in Oregon, that the government would soon purchase the possessory right to the company, which was a reason, in addition to the eligibility of the situation, for beginning an establishment at Vancouver... There being at that time no title to land in any part of the country except the possessory title of the fur company under the treaty of 1846, and the mission lands under the territorial act, Vancouver was in a safer condition, it might be thought, with regard to rights, than any other point; rights which Hathaway respected by leasing the company's lands for a military establishment, while the subject of purchase by the United States government was in abeyance. And Ogden, by inviting him to take possession of the lands claimed by the company, not inclosed, may have believed this the better manner of preventing the encroachments of squatters” (Bancroft 1890b: 85).²⁵⁴

The HBC continued to operate the Fort, but a new military facility – developed to combat Indian insurrections throughout the Pacific Northwest - was now to be built immediately adjacent. On May 13, 1849, Major John S. Hathaway and members of the U.S. First Artillery arrived by ship at Fort Vancouver, and promptly assumed the task of establishing Vancouver Barracks. They were quickly followed by Quartermaster, Captain Rufus Ingalls, who arrived separately by boat with the task of organizing the Fort's construction. When Ingalls arrived, “he found himself at a loss [as] mechanics and laboring men were not to be found in Oregon” (Bancroft 1890b: 83).²⁵⁵ Not only was the area sparsely settled by Americans, generally, but those able-bodied men who might have been available were already deployed to the Cayuse lands, or – more commonly – had just departed for California at the news of spectacular gold discoveries at Sutter's Mill.²⁵⁶ Reluctantly at first, Ingalls found himself having to hire Metis, Indian, and Native Hawaiian labor from Fort Vancouver, and to purchase his materials from the HBC mill and other Company operations. Quickly, this experienced group

worked alongside military forces to construct the new Barracks. As Osborne Cross reported to Major General T. S. Jessup in the months after their arrival,

“Immediately in rear of the fort, and on the rising ground, the company of artillery under Brevet Major Hathaway have put up temporary quarters, and have made themselves very comfortable” (Bushnell 1938: 13).

By October of that year, Colonel William Loring arrived by land from a cross-country mobilization, leading a regiment of mounted riflemen, with 700 horses, 1,200 mules, and 171 supply wagons – a sufficient military force to hold Vancouver Barracks and to execute U.S. military policy throughout the region. In U.S. commanders determined to station the Oregon Territory’s infantry at Fort Vancouver, while the artillery initially was stationed at the mouth of the Columbia River where it could defend United States strategic interests by controlling the arrival and departure of ships (Glassley 1953: 45-46).

In that first year, 1849, the new military installation was christened “Camp Columbia”; the following year, the Army changed the post’s name to “Columbia Barracks.” Three years later, in 1853 the post was renamed “Fort Vancouver” – a name that it retained through the remainder of HBC’s occupation of the adjacent Fort Vancouver trading post. In 1879, the fort was renamed “Vancouver Barracks” – this final term is used throughout this document to minimize confusion and to distinguish the military fort from the HBC fur trading post.²⁵⁷

Meanwhile, in 1849, American settlers also established the Oregon Territorial Legislature. As one of its first acts, the Legislature established “A penalty of not more than two hundred dollars nor less than twenty-five dollars... for each sale or gift of munitions of war to the natives” (Bancroft 1890a: 680-681). Concerns about military security was now shaping territorial Indian policy, while also placing new restrictions on commercial sale of ammunition and guns – a clear imposition on existing HBC trade.

Once established at their new post, the troops at Vancouver Barracks began their mobilization in support of the Cayuse War. The Vancouver Barracks, though far removed from the violent conflicts occurring in the interior Northwest, nonetheless became the primary administrative center, supply depot, and troop mobilization point for the war – setting a precedent that would continue through many future war efforts. Increasingly, the Fort was approached by military leadership as a valuable, if not entirely controllable resource – a conveniently placed supply depot, its staff unusually knowledgeable of local tribes and terrain. Chief Factor Ogden, always a businessman, provided the Barracks leadership with “Indian labor... horse, bateaux, and sloops, at moderate charges” to support their effort (Bancroft 1890b: 84). However, when the war threatened to affect Indian perceptions of, and trade with, the HBC in ways that might

affect its profitability, Fort leadership stepped in with preventative measures. In 1850, for example, some American combatants proposed that Cayuse prisoners from the war be tried in Fort Vancouver as it was neutral and other venues would be prejudiced against the Cayuse, but this plan was rejected by Fort staff, who feared the impacts of a Fort Vancouver trial on their trade relations with interior tribes. Instead, the trial was held in Oregon City amidst hostile crowds; the prisoners, including chief Tiloukaikt who had negotiated with Ogden and sought to resolve the conflict peacefully, were hung after a perfunctory trial, with pioneer Joe Meek serving as hangman (see O'Donnell 1991).

Yet in this region, where Euro-American immigrants had enjoyed considerable freedom, responses to the arriving military were mixed. While some welcomed what they viewed as enhanced protection from possible Indian attack, many reportedly "hated" the military and, as Theodore Talbot, who was stationed at the Barracks reported, the arriving troops were "accused in the vilest language of being leagued with the H[udson's] B[ay] Company and the Papists to defraud the people of their just rights" (Talbot 1972: 119). The Oregon Territorial legislature considered proposals to expel the troops, but to no avail.²⁵⁸

During these early years, the Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks leadership maintained an awkward but general amicable balance.²⁵⁹ Military relationships with the HBC rank-and-file, and the residents of Kanaka Village, were somewhat more problematic. The large number of Native people living just beyond the Fort stockade was alarming to some arriving troops, as was the constellation of Chinookan and Klickitat villages nearby. Yet this population showed no overt hostility toward U.S. troops; moreover, Kanaka Village residents, in particular, were seen as a source of cheap labor that could be tapped in support of military operations at the Barracks and beyond. Some military leaders hired Native Hawaiians and Metis from Kanaka Village as personal assistants, or as labor to support Barracks operations when troops were otherwise engaged.²⁶⁰ Yet, these troops had arrived in the region without the same exposure to interethnic communities, or the same fundamental interests in maintaining interethnic peace, that had so characterized the administrative staff of the HBC. Their attitudes about race and the role of non-European peoples in the new Northwest generally stood in stark contrast to the Fort leadership. No doubt, from the perspective of the Villagers, the first arrival of the troops was, at best, a mixed blessing - often menacing, and yet a source of occasional economic opportunity. Over time, as the military presence and the non-Native population of the region grew, the military relied less and less upon the Native communities at, and very near, Fort Vancouver. As this reliance declines, so too would the amicability of their relationship - a point to be discussed in later sections of this document.

The Coast Reservation and the Extinguishment of Indian Title in the Northern Willamette Valley

As discussed earlier in this document, the dramatic demographic collapse of the 1830s left much of the northern Willamette Valley forever transformed. No less than 90% of the population of the Portland Basin had been lost, while tribal populations regrouped and relocated – often joining together in communities composed of descendants from multiple tribal communities. On the Willamette River, a plummeting Clackamas population had allowed neighboring tribes, such as the Kalapuya and Klickitat to gain a firmer foothold before these groups, too, would be displaced by disease, warfare, and white settlement. By the time that American negotiators arrived in the northern Willamette Valley to secure treaties with these tribes, there was little left of the once sprawling village complexes that lined the shoreline on the lower Willamette. The generally diminished demographic patterns of this region are suggested by the writings of the early 1850s:

“The *Clackamas* Indians live upon a river of that name, which empties into the Willamette, one mile below Oregon city. They number about 60, and are considered industrious...The *Willamette* Indians live upon the east side of the river of that name near the falls. They are an inoffensive people – have but very few arms – and number in all about 20. The Willamette falls affords them a fine fishery” (Lane 1850: 129).

These numbers certainly underestimate the number of survivors from these tribes, who were spread between a number of remnant village sites both within and beyond the Willamette River riparian zone. While much diminished, these communities had stabilized somewhat in intervening years, continuing to fish at their usual stations while also taking on roles as traders and laborers within the context of a rapidly expanding EuroAmerican economy in the northern Willamette Valley.

Still, despite the tribes’ modest numbers and their generally congenial relationships with settler communities, tensions still increased as growing numbers of settlers flooded into the northern Willamette Valley and often crowded near remaining village sites. Some settlers viewed the continued presence of the tribes along the lower Willamette to be a strategic threat – not necessarily because of the behavior of resident peoples, but often due to the traffic in non-resident tribes passing through the area en route to fishing sites and social gatherings at the sites of remaining Clackamas and Kalapuya communities. Moreover, Indian title to the Willamette Valley floor had not been extinguished, complicating efforts to open the land to agricultural settlement. Thus, the U.S. Congress instituted the Willamette Valley Treaty Commission in 1850 - a

Commission led by Joseph Gaines, Alonzo Skinner, and Beverly Allen, with the guidance of Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Anson Dart – which was charged with the task of settling Indian land title issues in the Willamette Valley and thereby open that valley for uncontested white settlement.

In February 1851, a U.S. treaty commission met with Willamette Valley tribes in Champoeg and negotiated the terms of a number of treaties with the Santiam, Tualatin, Yamhill, and Luckiamute bands of Kalapuya Indians, as well as some portion of the Clackamas Chinooks. The Commission originally sought to negotiate for the complete removal of these Willamette Valley peoples to reservations east of the Cascade Range – a centerpiece of early Oregon treaty efforts generally, which sought to divide the state between an agrarian and Anglo-American western region and an arid American Indian interior. The tribes refused these initial proposals, citing their attachments to their homelands, the difficulties of survival east of the Cascades, and their sometimes difficult relationships with the tribes dwelling on the eastern slopes of that mountain range. These tribes countered that they might entertain proposals for the creation of small reserves within their own homelands. Thus, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, H. H. Spalding, reported on March 22, 1851 that

“I find the Indians everywhere willing to sell the larger portion of their countries, if they may be permitted to reserve small, detached portions for future residence. They have an indescribable dread of being removed East of the Cascades” (quoted in Spores 1993: 176).

The Commission returned with a counter-proposal that would create a number of small reservations around the perimeter of the Willamette Valley. The tribes agreed to these terms, and in five weeks, the Commission had successfully negotiated six treaties. Soon thereafter, the Commission began to purchase lands for the creation of these original reservations. However, when these treaties were delivered to Congress, they were not ratified, in part due to objections to the prospect of having any resident Indians in the Willamette Valley (Bancroft 1890b: 212). Especially vocal in expressing these objections was territorial delegate, Joseph Lane, who was opposed to any Indian foothold in western Oregon and who advocated the complete removal of western Oregon Indians to locations, such as the Klamath Basin, east of the Cascades and far from the fledgling agricultural settlements of northwestern Oregon. Also of concern was the fact that these treaties had focused on the longstanding tribes of the Willamette Valley, but essentially ignored the rapidly growing Klickitat population – a population that was quickly expanding throughout the Valley. As J. Ross Browne noted in testimony to Congress a few years later,

“the commissioners of 1851, in their councils at Shampoag, had wholly ignored the claims of the Klickitats to the right of possession over the

Willamette valley. They were notified that it was not their country; that they had no voice in the relinquishment of the Indian title to the lands. That such a right had been asserted, and to some extent maintained by them, can doubtless be seen by reference to the records of the courts” 261 (Browne 1858: 8).

Of equal concern to tribal participants was the fact that the treaties were ambiguous on a number of points, and in some cases did not secure rights of land title to their small remaining holdings beyond the lifetime of treaty signers.²⁶² These provisions reflected prevailing views of these Native people as a “dying race” that would not need lands more than one generation hence, even as the tribes struggled to maintain land claims and access for future generations in perpetuity (Deloria and DeMallie 1999).

The unsuccessful conclusion of the Willamette Valley treaties brought an almost immediate call for a new round of treaty negotiations, as EuroAmerican settlements continued to expand and “Indian troubles” elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest intensified calls for Indian removal from western Oregon. In January 1855, Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Joel Palmer, met with some 88 individuals from several Clackamas Chinook bands, as well as Kalapuya and Molala representatives in what is now Dayton, Oregon. By this time, the leaders of these tribal communities recognized that some type of relocation plan might be their only option for survival; while still adamantly opposed to removal east of the Cascades, they hesitantly entertained a number of options for relocation away from the Willamette River corridor. The tribes at Palmer’s council agreed to cede much of the Valley in exchange for promises of a permanent reservation, various goods and services, and protection from acts of violence by non-Indian settlers. At this Council, negotiators on both sides acknowledged that Chinookan people had associations with the north side of the Columbia River as well – including the Fort Vancouver area – and individuals with personal ties to that area were reported to be in attendance; however, but lands on the north side of the river were not addressed in these negotiations, pending anticipated future negotiations that might address that area separately (Palmer n.d.; Robert Kennta pers. comm., 2010). Thus, in January of 1855, the members of this Council signed the treaty formalizing this arrangement, and ceding the tribes’ territorial claims to Oregon’s Willamette Valley only. This treaty – commonly called the Willamette Valley Treaty or the Kalapuya Treaty of 1855 – was ratified by Congress in March 1855. Ironically, the location of the reservation to which tribes would be removed was not specified in the treaty.

However, the matter of the reservation’s location required almost immediate attention. Rising interethnic hostilities in the region, including the Rogue War in southern Oregon and threats of conflict with Yakamas and other tribes in the Northwest interior, resulted in a call for rapid action on Indian relocation. In 1855, a hastily developed Executive

Order created the Coast Reservation, to house coastal tribes, Willamette Valley tribes, and a number of combatant and non-combatant groups from southwestern Oregon. While this did not remove Indians to locations east of the Cascades, it did push them to the margins of EuroAmerican settlement, in densely forested mountains with little arable land - a landscape not yet coveted by arriving white settlers. This Coast Reservation was later redesignated as the Siletz Reservation.

Over the course of 1855, the removal effort only continued to accelerate. The outbreak of the Yakama War in summer of 1855 – an event discussed in more detail within later sections of this report – brought emergency measures by military and civil authorities to immediately remove all Indians from the Willamette Valley. Yet, the Coast Reservation was scarcely operational at this time. Thus, beginning in the fall of 1855, there was a hasty effort to round up and remove remaining Portland Basin Indians to temporary reservations, as a prelude to their removal to the Coast Reservation. The Willamette Valley treaty provided the grounds for removal on the south side of the river, while U.S. officials sought to justify the removal of their kin on the north side of the River as a strategic necessity – even in the absence of a treaty explicitly addressing this territory and its inhabitants. Under the leadership of Joel Palmer, acting local Indian agents were given responsibility for removing Indians from different portions of the Portland Basin to *ad hoc* reservations. One of these was located on Portland Slough, immediately opposite the Columbia River from Fort Vancouver (Palmer 1856, n.d.). Another similar reserve was created at Milton, Oregon, a mile upstream from St. Helens, which gathered together many of the Chinookans from the region downstream from the Willamette River confluence. William Wuerch has summarized the Indian agency records associated with these events:

“The task of gathering those who had survived began on October 21, 1855. Lot Whitcomb, with the assistance of Joseph Switzler...collected the natives on the lower Willamette and upstream on the Columbia from the Willamette’s mouth. The encampment was located on Columbia Slough on the Oregon side of the Columbia opposite Vancouver, near the present Portland airport. The natives appear to have been living in a number of small, scattered settlements: eleven people were taken from the vicinity of Linn City on the Willamette, four men and several women were found living near the site of the proposed encampment, a few more were found living in a large house downstream. By the 9th of November nearly 100 natives were contained on the Columbia Slough reserve, some of whom were Sahaptan speaking Klickitats [in addition to Chinookans]” (Wuerch 1979: 130).

The authorities on both sides of the river apparently claimed exclusive jurisdictions, so that different encampments were maintained on the Washington and Oregon sides of

the river; local Indian agents made efforts to restrict and even punish attempts to “escape” from one side of the river to the other. Meanwhile, non-Indian response to removal was mixed, with some protesting the loss of cheap native labor that had, until recently, been available to work on farms and homesteads. Many native people escaped the temporary reservations to find work, obtain food, or return to their homes, but were often recaptured and returned to a temporary reservation – not necessarily the same reservations from which they had escaped.

In the winter of 1855-56, Palmer had the residents of some of these temporary reservations taken to Dayton, in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. At Dayton, Palmer identified individuals from tribes with whom he had not yet negotiated treaties; he then attempted to negotiate with representatives of each non-treaty group to “become parties” – apparently as *post hoc* additions - to the January 1855 Kalapuya Treaty (Palmer n.d.). These negotiated arrangements were, at best, informal. As Wuerch (1979: 136) noted,

“This was an unusual arrangement for treating with natives for a number of reasons. There was no description of the land and other rights the native were relinquishing. The agreement...was written as a section of an accounting abstract which was found among some official documents in Palmer’s personal papers. It would seem doubtful, then, whether this information was ever forwarded to Washington. The Palmer Superintendency did, however, regard the document as binding. Some goods were distributed to the natives, and later they were removed to the [Grand Ronde] reservation” (Wuerch 1979: 136-37).

The Milton reservation appears to have been among the largest and earliest populations treated in this manner, signing their agreement in January of 1856. In March of 1856, a violent clash between Cascades Indians and U.S. troops and settlers in the Columbia Gorge brought the Yakama War to Portland’s doorstep; Palmer ordered that further negotiations and removals be expedited, especially for those temporary reservations – such as Portland Slough – that sat closest to the fighting. The remaining residents of the Columbia Slough reservation were among those communities gathered together for a hasty signing of agreements to be parties to the January 1855 treaty, and were quickly sent to Grand Ronde by April of 1856. During that year, the scope of Indian removal expanded in the region so that, by spring and summer of 1856, Klickitat from the Willamette Valley and Santiam Basin were routed onto the Coast Reservation, alongside remnant Chinookan populations from the lower Willamette as well as the Oregon side of the Columbia in the vicinity of Sandy River (O’Donnell 1991: 266). There, these populations were thrown together with other incarcerated tribes, including Molalas, and combatant tribes from the Rogue Indian Wars - Umpquas, Takelmas, and Shastas (Zenk 1990: 551). There was widespread dissatisfaction with early life on the

Grand Ronde reservation, with rampant disease, food shortages, and high rates of mortality. While some Coast Reservation residents could and did sometimes escape, the former tribal residents of the Portland Basin found their homeland largely overrun. There was simply no place left in their traditional territories in which they could easily hide. Several Chinookan families apparently sought to escape the reoccupied lower Columbia region at this time. Some escaped to join populations along the coast, while a very small number relocated to places east of the Cascades, moving to the residences of Indian kin.²⁶³ Some of these outmigrations will be addressed in more detail in the pages that follow.

In 1857, the Grand Ronde Agency was established as a separate jurisdiction within the Coast Reservation, becoming the foundation for what would become the Grand Ronde Reservation. Though some Willamette Valley families on the Coast Reservation stayed with the Siletz Agency, a majority of them were assigned to the Grand Ronde Agency, and were later included in the Grand Ronde Reservation (Spores 1993; Beckham 1990). By the conclusion of the Indian wars and relocations of the 1850s, this Grand Ronde population became the largest single remaining population of Indians from the Oregon side of the Portland Basin to be found in the Pacific Northwest. In the process, Grand Ronde became home to many of the people historically associated with Fort Vancouver. Clearly, though, these individuals did not arrive in one cohesive group, but arrived at this reservation along myriad paths, reflecting the tumultuous circumstances of the 1850s. The multi-tribal community at Grand Ronde was of such diverse linguistic background that they initially lacked a common language other than the Chinook Jargon. For decades, this trade language which had flourished and evolved at Fort Vancouver, became the principal language of many tribal members (Zenk 1984). A number of Grand Ronde families also are reported to have spoken French during the early decades of that reservation, being from mixed French-speaking households associated with Fort Vancouver, Champoeg, and other multiethnic fur-trading strongholds; a few of these reported mixed ancestries including Iroquois and other eastern tribal roots, also attesting to their fur trade origins.²⁶⁴

After an initially high mortality rate owing to hunger, disease, and the stresses of forced relocation and incarceration, the population stabilized; by 1871, there were some 71 Clackamas being reported as enrollees at Grand Ronde. Yet, under federal oversight, living alongside so many other tribal populations, they were quickly integrating and intermarrying into the larger Grand Ronde community. In 1915, a single woman purported to be the “last Clackamas” – being the daughter of a Clackamas woman and a Klickitat man (Ruby and Brown 1986: 26). By the 1920s and 1930s, there were many descendants of the Clackamas and other distinct tribal groups at Grand Ronde, but individuals were increasingly identifying as “Grand Ronde” or by other tribal identities rather than as “Clackamas” by this time. The continued use of Chinook Jargon at Grand Ronde became emblematic of persistent native identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries – not tied to any one historical ethnolinguistic group, but to constituent

tribes' shared experiences in the 19th century. The United States terminated its trust relationship with the tribes of western Oregon – including Grand Ronde – in 1954 under the Western Oregon Termination Act, but Grand Ronde was successfully restored as a tribe in 1983. The tribe retains a strong sense of attachment to its constituent populations' homelands throughout western Oregon, as well as its fur trade era associations with Fort Vancouver and other HBC outposts. In various public documents, Grand Ronde has identified the Fort Vancouver site as being within their “Usual and Accustomed” land use areas, along with many other portions of southwestern Washington, while not identifying the fort site as being within the lands ceded by their treaties. Meanwhile, Chinook Jargon (or “Chinuk Wawa”) – the *lingua franca* of Kanaka Village and Fort Vancouver's larger multiethnic community – continues to thrive in the community through the highly productive Grand Ronde language program (Zenk 1984).

Treaty-Making in Southwest Washington and the Columbia Gorge

While treaty negotiations brought some semblance of administrative structure to the forced relocations of Indians on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, the north side of the River – and indeed all of southwestern Washington – remained in a state of ambiguity that complicate matters of tribal affiliation from the 1850s into the present day. Certainly, a significant and diverse population of Indians continued to reside in southwest Washington in the 1850s, as treaties were being negotiated throughout other portions of the Pacific Northwest. The Cowlitz continued to occupy lands downstream from Fort Vancouver, the Cascades Indians continued to occupy lands upstream from the Fort, and many Lower Chinookans were gradually migrating upstream and downstream in the wake of EuroAmerican resettlement. Indian agency reports from the beginning of the 1850s acknowledge each of these tribal groups, with populations now only in the hundreds, living in diffuse communities that had – as of yet – not taken part in the treaty process.²⁶⁵

Federal and territorial officials considered a variety of options for the placement of these Indians on reservations. By 1850, George Gibbs petitioned the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to develop a reservation that might house the Chinookan peoples of the lower Columbia River near that river's mouth (U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: Roll 607: 688). However, there were few treaty options that were likely to be approved by both federal and territorial officials.

Considerable forces were aligned to prevent the creation of reservations in southwestern Washington. Oregon Territory's first Governor, Joseph Lane, and its first U.S. Congressional delegate, Samuel Thurston, were initially opposed to the development of reservations west of the Cascade Range for security reasons and fought

to avoid the development or ratification of any treaties that made provisions for reservations west of the Cascades. Similarly, Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens was eager to avoid developing reservation communities in southwestern Washington due to a combination of economic and strategic concerns, as well as an apparent antipathy for tribes that had maintained close relationships with the Hudson's Bay Company to the potential exclusion of American interests. Considerable evidence suggests that Stevens worked behind the scenes to prevent the development or ratification of treaties that might set aside lands for Columbia River tribes of southwestern Washington, but instead tried to remove them to other portions of the state. As Boxberger and Taylor note, Isaac Stevens was on record as being "determined to break the ascendancy of the Hudson Bay Company" and, as part of this effort, sought to organize the removal of those few Indians who might still retain strong economic or kinship ties to the Company from the Columbia River region to other portions of what would become Washington state (Boxberger and Taylor n.d.: 14).

Meanwhile, there was also vocal opposition to the complete removal of lower Columbia River Indians, due to their importance as laborers within the fledgling frontier economy. Ironically, while fighting reservation development on the lower Columbia and petitioning for the removal of most western Indians to reservations east of the Cascades, Territorial Governor Joseph Lane nonetheless sought to keep Chinookan peoples of the lower Columbia River from being relocated in order to minimize the economic impacts on non-Indian settlement. Writing during the treaty-making of the mid-1850s, Lane noted,

"The Chinooks [are] a numerous, though well disposed tribe; all of whom are not only peaceable, but industrious. Nearly all of them adopt the habits of the white people; dress as near like them as their means will allow, a very large portion of them act as servants or labourers among the whites, and are becoming very useful in this thinly settled country. I therefore do not believe it is the wish of the people here to have the attempt made to remove them to the east side of the Cascade Mountains - their swift destruction would, I think, be the fruits of such an enterprise" (U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: Roll 607: 688).

Simultaneously, few lower Chinookans were open to suggestions of relocation to reservations east of the Cascades, and Anson Dart encountered strong opposition from interior tribes to the prospect of having coastal tribes relocated among them as well. Thus, from the beginning of the 1850s, the political forces of the region placed the treaty status of the Chinookans of the lower Columbia River, especially those on the Washington side of that river, in an uncomfortable stalemate.

Still, treaty-making efforts moved tentatively forward on the lower Columbia. Almost immediately, U.S. treaty negotiators recognized that they would have difficulties sorting out territorial claims of tribes, owing to the complex ethnic geography of the contact-period Columbia River, coupled with recent upriver and downriver migrations that had combined remaining populations in multi-tribal villages on the mouth and falls of the Columbia. In October of 1850, Joseph Lane, Oregon Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington D.C. about the troubles of defining the territorial claims of the lower Chinooks as a prelude to treaty-making. With personal and kinship ties to the entire lower Chinookan world, those Chinookan people at the mouth of the Columbia were claiming an expansive territory that included much of the lower Chinookan realm. This resulted in complexly overlapping claims with the territories being claimed by other tribal communities. As Lane explained,

“The Chinooks claim all of the country from the mouth of the Columbia to Fort Vancouver on both sides of the river as well as the valley of the Willamette, between the Cascade and Coast ranges of mountains. There are, however, remnants of tribes inhabiting part of the country described, who also lay claim to such portions as they occupy” (Lane in U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: Roll 607: 688).

Complicating matters, reconnaissance within this claimed area led treaty negotiators to conclude that significant portions of the territory had been largely abandoned by Chinooks and, indeed, were now occupied by Klickitats and other tribal populations. Seeking to identify the Indian tribes that he would engage in treaty negotiations along the lower Columbia in 1851, Anson Dart noted Chinooks on the estuary; ironically, the principal tribal population he found between the estuary to the Cascades was the remnant tribal population associated with Fort Vancouver:

“The whole country bordering on the Columbia, as far up as the Dalles, was formerly owned and occupied by [the Chinook; yet] For a distance of about eighty miles from the Cowlitz river to the Cascades, there are now no real owners of the land living. It is occupied by the Vancouver Indians, of whom it will have to be purchased. Their band numbers in all, sixty” (Dart 1851: 214; McChesney 1919).

Clearly, treaty negotiators had a limited understanding of the ethnic geography of the lower Columbia, and only a vague sense of the chronology and geographical expression of the changes that had reshaped this geography in the decades before their arrival; together, this only served to compound confusion surrounding Chinookan claims to the

Portland Basin and to undermine efforts to reflect those claims within a coherent treaty process.

Efforts to define a larger Chinookan homeland that might take in Fort Vancouver and its environs were largely abandoned due to these complexities, in favor of treaties that focused on relatively narrowly defined and verifiable band divisions centered on the Columbia River estuary. In August of 1851, Anson Dart presided over the drafting and signing of 19 treaties at the mouth of the Columbia River with downriver Chinookan bands, including the Lower Chinook, Clatsop, Cathlamet, Wahkiakum and others; tribes of the adjacent outer coast, such as the Nehalem, Tillamook, and Willapa, were also included in these treaties. None of the named bands hailed from the Fort Vancouver area, but most plausibly included Chinookan peoples with historical kinship ties to the Vancouver area - some of these bands having taken in displaced peoples from the Portland Basin not long before. These treaties were delivered to Congress in 1852. These "Tansy Point" treaties were tabled by the Senate on August 31, 1852 and no further action was taken toward their ratification. The reasons for this lack of action were complex (and are still a point of speculation today) but it is clear that Oregon Territory Governor, Joseph Lane, and Territorial Senator Samuel Thurston were opposed to their ratification, employing a variety of strategic and economic arguments to block congressional action.²⁶⁶

The Tansy Point treaties having failed on a number of counts, Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens attempted to hold a second treaty council in 1855 - the Chehalis River Treaty Council - on the shores of Gray's Harbor, Washington near present-day Cosmopolis. In these negotiations, Stevens proposed the relocation of southwestern Washington's Indians to unspecified lands in the north, apparently in reference to lands that would ultimately become the Quinault reservation. Some authors have suggested that this effort to foster a move to the isolated northern Pacific coast of Washington reflected a general policy position held by Stevens that called for the elimination of the Indian presence from the Columbia River region; such an effort moved Indians from a location that was strategically and economically central to one that was peripheral, while also removing Indians with remaining HBC ties and sympathies. Again, quoting Boxberger and Taylor,

"Article 12 or 13 of every Western Washington treaty attests to this [agenda] as well as Stevens's own comments. Moving the Indians to the Quinault area would take them as far from the HBC posts as Fort Vancouver and Cowlitz prairie as could be done" (Boxberger and Taylor n.d.: 14-15).

Chinookan tribal representatives to the Chehalis River Treaty Council fiercely opposed relocation from the lower Columbia region. James Swan, eyewitness to the negotiations,

quoted one of the Chinook leaders, Narkarty, who spoke at the proceedings in response to Stevens' proposal:

"Our fathers, and mothers, and ancestors are buried there and by them we wish to bury our dead and be buried ourselves. We wish, therefore, each to have a place on our own land where we can live, and you may have the rest; but we can't go to the north among the other tribes. We are not friends, and if we went together we should fight, and soon we would all be killed" (in Swan 1857: 345).

Some raised the very real concern that the tribal leadership at the Council were not even in a position to agree to these terms, being neither fully representative of the people Stevens wished to relocate nor necessarily having the authority to coerce their own peoples to move against their will.²⁶⁷ Stevens attempted to push back, redoubling his arguments in favor of relocation and apparently designating band "leaders" among those attendees who he perceived might be sympathetic to his position. The effort backfired, providing Stevens – an accomplished treaty negotiator – with one of his greatest defeats in western Washington. Tribal delegates were enraged by his tactics and Stevens abruptly left the council, possibly for his own safety.²⁶⁸

Still, Stevens continued to pursue other avenues in support of Chinookan consolidation on the north Pacific coast of Washington. The year after his failed council on Grays Harbor, Stevens negotiated a separate treaty, the 1856 Treaty of Olympia, with the Quinai-elt (Quinault) and Quil-leh-ute (Quilleute) Indians, establishing a 10,000 acre reservation centered on the Quinault village of Tahola, facing the open ocean. With broad support from territorial and federal officials, the treaty was promptly ratified. While not explicitly including lower Columbia Chinookans in this treaty language, Stevens had successfully reserved lands that would become the nucleus of the Quinault Reservation. He now had a clearly defined destination for later efforts at the consolidation of western Washington Indian tribes.

By the mid-1850s, Stevens had successfully negotiated treaties for every part of western Washington except its southwestern quarter – including the site of Fort Vancouver – where Indian title remained unextinguished and most tribes remained federally unrecognized (Marino 1990). The Indian agents of the time continued to plead for a solution to this increasingly unmanageable problem. In 1860, Washington Territory Indian Agent, M.T. Simmons noted,

"The Upper and Lower Chehalis, the Cowlitz and Chinook Indians, numbering between seven and eight hundred, are not parties to the existing treaties, and are certainly entitle to the care of government. They are in the immediate neighborhood of the settlements, living in most

instances on the land of white settlers. I have selected a piece of ground adapted to their wants, and upon which I think it will be advisable to settled the Cowlitz and Upper Chehalis tribes. The Chinooks and Lower Chehalis should be located somewhere near the seashore, as their previous habits and mode of living render such a location necessary” (Simmons 1860: 198).

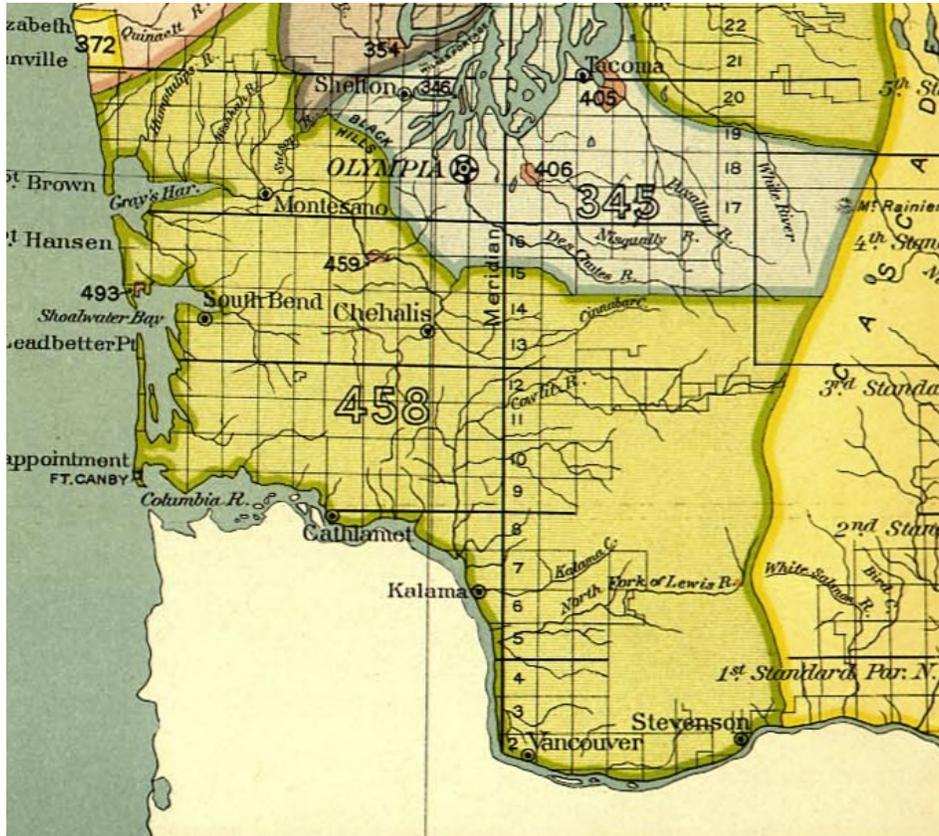
He went on to note that no funds had been set aside to acquire such reservation lands.

Federal authorities investigated various solutions to this problem, but the complex cultural, strategic, economic and political factors that had confounded treaty negotiations at Tansy Point and Chehalis River continued to pose significant obstacles. The Department of the Interior began exploring solutions that would involve the unilateral settlement of remaining Indian title issues, while simultaneously supporting efforts to remove Chinookans and other tribal populations from the lower Columbia region. On July 8, 1864, invoking the authorities of the Treaty of Olympia, U.S. Secretary of the Interior J. P. Usher issued a proclamation creating the Chehalis Indian Reservation as a new home for Chinookans, Cowlitz, as well as Upper and Lower Chehalis (Usher 1864). Though the language authorizing the reservation is at best ambiguous on the point of extinguishing Indian title within those tribes’ lands, the Department of the Interior generally interpreted this action settling the remaining Indian title question in all southwest Washington tribes (Marino 1990; Kappler 1899; Dole 1864). (Only many years later, in 1886, did President Grover Cleveland sign an Executive Order verifying the configuration of the Chehalis Reservation [Cleveland 1886]). The legality of this proclamation as a grounds for extinguishment of tribal land title is a point that a number of tribes, especially the as yet federally unrecognized Chinook, still publically challenge (Beckham 1987). Two years after the creation of the Chehalis Reservation, on September 22, 1866 – also citing the authorities of the Treaty of Olympia – President Johnson signed an Executive Order, establishing the 320 acre Shoalwater Bay Reservation for those Chinooks living on Willapa Bay as well as other tribal people, mostly descended from Salishan-speaking tribes of the area.

Some small number of Chinookans moved to these reservations in the years that followed, but many more did not. The question of Chinookan tribal status and land claims, in practical terms, remained largely unresolved. As Washington Territory Indian Agency Superintendent R.H. Milroy reported

“After years of complaining, the protest against the injustice of this wholesale absorption of their country was so far heeded that in 1860 Superintendent Geary directed to be set apart to them a tract of about 5,000 acres, (out of a country all justly their own,) which constitutes the present Chehalis reservation. The Cowlitz, Chinook, Shoalwater Bay, and Humtolops, have never recognized this reservation as their home, and

refused to come and reside on it; nor have they ever consented to receive a present of any kind from Government, fearing it might be construed into a payment for their lands” (Milroy 1872: 335).



Map of Indian Land Cessions in southwestern Washington state, from the authoritative compilation by Royce (1899). The portion of the map marked as section 458, including the location of Fort Vancouver, is identified by Royce as only being ceded under the Executive Order of July 8, 1864, which created the Chehalis Indian Reservation. While creating the reservation, this Executive Order is ambiguous on the matter of exterminating remaining Indian title in this area – one of several pillars of Chinook and Cowlitz recognition and land claims efforts. Other areas shown include mapped lands to the immediate east (section 364, ceded under the Yakama Treaty of June 1855) and to the immediate north (section 345, ceded under the Treaty of Medicine Creek, December 1854).

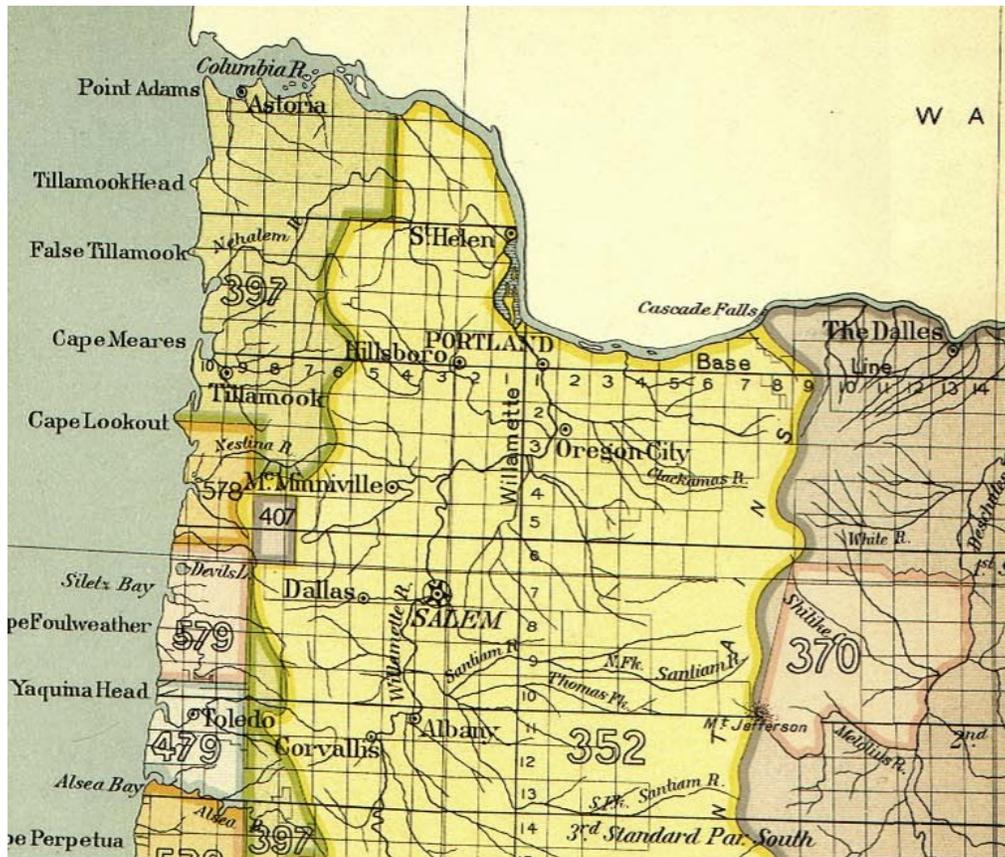
Federal authorities resumed plans to use the Quinault Reservation as a solution to the problems of southwestern Washington Indian title. In November 4, 1873, President U.S. Grant signed an Executive Order expanding the Quinault reservation “for the use of the

Quinault, Quillehute, Hoh, Quit, and other tribes of fish-eating Indians on the Pacific coast" (12 Stat. 971; Grant in Kappler 1904: 923-24). These exceedingly broad parameters for enrollment at Quinault were designed, in many respects, to allow for the relocation of non-reservation Chinooks, Cowlitz, Chehalis, and others. And, indeed, lacking any other options, their homeland increasingly overrun with non-Indian settlement, many Chinookans from communities such as Bay Center, Washington determined to move to Quinault. Beginning in 1905, members of these "fish-eating Indians," including Chinook and Cowlitz, began receiving allotments on this reservation, which served as a basis for formal enrollment in Quinault by a number of Chinook and Cowlitz families; in some cases, Quinault leaders "adopted" individuals of Chinook, Cowlitz and other tribal ancestry to provide another avenue for formal enrollment. This complex process, unfolding over the course of several decades, left many ambiguities, resulting in legal actions and a number of independent efforts for federal acknowledgement by southwest Washington tribes - efforts that have sometimes put these unrecognized tribes at odds with Quinault leadership.²⁶⁹ The 20th century legal history of the Chinookan people on the point of tribal identity and land claims proved to be a very complex one and is well beyond the scope of the current document.

Today, the Chinook Indian Nation continues to seek federal recognition for a membership that includes descendents of five lower Chinook populations: Lower Chinook proper, Clatsop, Cathlamet, Wahkiakum, and Willapa. Defined narrowly, all of these tribes' ancestral territories are situated a considerable distance downriver from Fort Vancouver, but all possess clear and strong historical ties to the fort through trade, intermarriage, and other connections. Some appear to descend from families and individuals displaced from upstream Chinookan communities during the 1830s epidemics. Many continue to claim association with upriver locations, including the Fort Vancouver area, today. Meanwhile, small numbers of Chinookan descendents, many with the same complex attachments to the Fort Vancouver area, may be found on the rolls at Chehalis, Quinault, and Shoalwater Bay - a product of the unique and rocky history of the lower Chinook people, a history that continues to unfold today.

Simultaneously, on the south bank of the Columbia and upstream from Fort Vancouver, the "Watlala" or "Cascades" Indians were under similar pressures to consolidate and relocate off of the River. At the onset of the Yakama War, these Cascades populations were in direct danger; some fought alongside the Yakama and others did not, but all parties were subject to violent reprisals from the United States military and volunteers. In 1855, some Cascades Indians joined as signatories to the Wasco Treaty under the name of the "Ki-gal-twal-la band of the Wascoes" and the "Dog River band of the Wascoes." Under the terms of the treaty, they agreed to relocate from the Columbia River shoreline to the Warm Springs Reservation on the eastern slopes of the Oregon Cascade Range.²⁷⁰ There, they retained a somewhat distinct identity, with between 200 and 300 Watlala being reported on the Warm Springs rolls through the early 20th

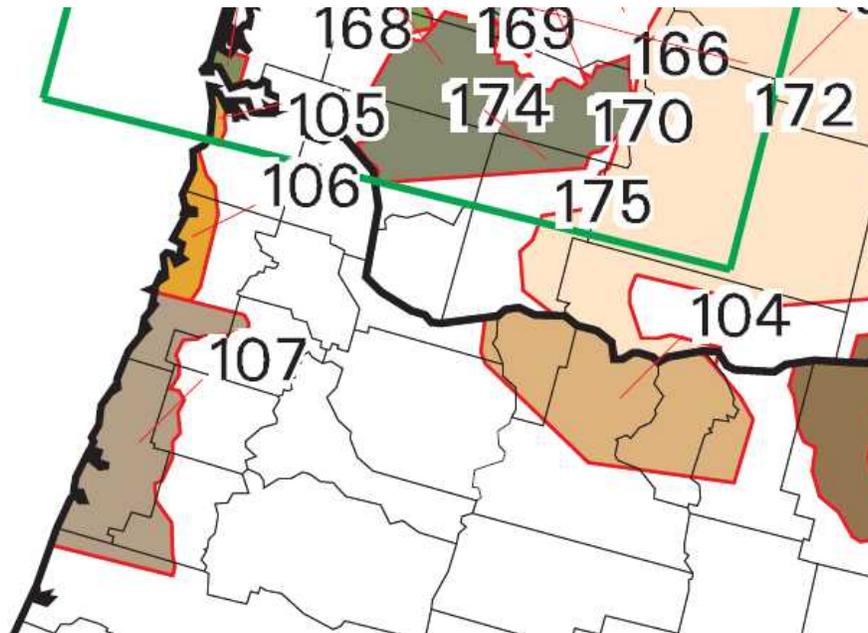
century. As Johnson suggests, “the Watlala...removed to the Warm Springs Reservation, where a portion still remain as a separate people,” still being represented somewhat independently in the modern cultural and political leadership of the tribe (Johnson 1994: 176). Other Cascades Indians were clearly included in Palmer’s Kalapuya Treaty as well as the hasty and informal amendments to that treaty made during the height of the Yakama War in 1855-56. As summarized by Ruby and Brown,



Map of Indian Land Cessions in northwestern Oregon, from the compilation by Royce (1899). The portion of the map marked as section 352, sitting immediately across the Columbia River from Fort Vancouver, is identified as being ceded under the Calapooia Treaty of January 1855 (Stat. L, X: 1143), which resulted in Willamette Valley tribes being relocated principally to the Grand Ronde Indian Reservation. Lands to the immediate east (section 369) were ceded under the Confederated Tribes of Middle Oregon (or “Wasco”) Treaty of June 1855, while the lands to the west of this area were included within the unratified 1851 Anson Dart “Tansy Point” Treaties with the Clatsop, the Nehalem Band of Tillamooks and the Tillamook Band of Tillamooks.

“Under the designation Wahalalas, the Watlalas signed with Kalapuyan tribes a treaty with Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer, on January 22, 1855 (10 Stat. 1143, ratified March 3, 1855), ceding to the United States their lands west of the Middle Cascades of the Columbia. Under the designation “Kigaltwallas,” they ceded their lands east of the Middle Cascades in a treaty of June 25, 1855, that the United State effected with the tribes of “Middle Oregon”” (Ruby and Brown 1986: 265).

Other Cascade Indians were apparently incarcerated at Fort Vancouver and the White Salmon Reservation before being delivered to Yakama, as will be discussed in the pages that follow. Simultaneously, small remnant permanent or seasonal “villages” such as



Map of Indian Claims Commission adjudicated lands (ICC 1978). Sitting in a “black hole” created by a combination of demographic collapse, federal and Territorial opposition to treaty status for southwest Washington Indians, and other factors, the Vancouver area lies outside of all ICC adjudicated lands. The most proximate ICC adjudicated lands include the Cowlitz claim area (map unit 175) to the north and northwest; the Yakima claim area (map unit 98) to the east and northeast; and the Warm Springs claim area (map unit 104) to the east on the south bank of the Columbia. Other claims within the lower Columbia and southwest Washington region include those of the outer coast, including the Chinook, Clatsop, Nehalem Band of Tillamooks and Tillamook Band of Tillamooks - as well as the Upper and Lower Chehalis claim areas within the Chehalis River Basin.

Celilo are widely reported in the historical literature after the treaty period, reflecting the continued profound importance of the Cascades region in the subsistence, social and ceremonial activities of its historical residents and their kin in tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest.

Today, Cascade descendents are found especially at the Warm Springs, Grand Ronde, and Yakama Reservations. A few of these families have continued to maintain allotments along the Columbia River within the Columbia Gorge. Sub-groups within these tribes still have a strong sense of attachment to the Cascades and descendents of Cascades people from Yakama, Warm Springs and – apparently to a lesser extent – Grand Ronde often organize semi-independent activities that suggest enduring Cascade identity within these tribal populations. Accordingly, federally unrecognized Cascades tribal groups still reside full- or part-time in the vicinity of the Columbia Cascades. One group, sometimes called the Cascade Tribes, has been led by Johnny Jackson in recent years, though there is no record of this group petitioning for federal recognition (Fisher 2010).

Vancouver Barracks in the Indian Wars of the 1850s

While Hathaway and his troops had initiated the construction of Vancouver Barracks in direct response to the Cayuse War, it was widely recognized that the soldiers stationed at that barracks would assume a much broader role in the region. From almost the first instant they arrived, settlers, militias, and military authorities petitioned Barracks officers to intercede in Indian conflicts in southern Oregon, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and around Puget Sound (Lane 1850: 125-26). In short order, Vancouver Barracks became the hub of military actions against those tribes of the Northwest that took up arms against American forces and interests. As was true of Fort Vancouver, the Barracks occupied a unique strategic position, sitting in the heart of the region and at the crossroads of major transportation corridors. By the late 1840s, this relative strategic value of the Fort site had only increased, as Euro-American settlement was densest nearby, while the Indian population was comparatively small, having been decimated a single generation before.

Most of the wars administered through the Barracks were located in the eastern (and to a lesser extent, southern) interior of the Pacific Northwest, where tribes had been less impacted by both epidemics and the direct effects of Euro-American settlement than tidewater tribes, where populations often were still quite large and powerful, and where direct Euro-American influence had been fleeting prior to the advent of American settlement. American Indians from combatant tribes were sometimes brought back to the Barracks as prisoners - individually, in family groups, or in entire bands. The larger

campaigns administered by Vancouver Barracks – campaigns where troops stationed at the Barracks fought, and where Indian prisoners were detained there – included the first Rogue River War (1853) the second Rogue River War (1855–1856), the Yakima War (1855–1858), the Modoc War (1872–1873), the Nez Perce War (1877), the Bannock (or “Bannock and Paiute”) War (1878), and the Sheepeater (or “Shoshone”) War (1879). There were also a number of smaller campaigns against the “Snake Indians” (Shoshone and Paiute) between 1862 and 1868, and the Barracks also had an administrative role overseeing certain military operations in the Puget Sound War (1855-56), the Coeur d’Alene War (1858) and a number of other, smaller conflicts.

Major Military Conflicts Administered through the Vancouver Barracks

Conflict	Year	Principal Indian Combatants	Principal Modern Tribes
Cayuse War	1848-55	Cayuse	Umatilla
Rogue River Wars	1853, 1855-58	Takelma, Shasta, Tututni, et al.	Siletz, Grand Ronde, et al.
Snake River War	1855	“Snake Indians”	Ft. Hall, Duck Valley, et al.
Klickitat War	1855	Klickitat, Cascade	Yakama
Puget Sound War	1855-56	Nisqually, Puyallup, Klickitat, Muckleshoot	(various)
Yakima War	1855-58	Yakama, Klickitat	Yakama
Coeur d’Alene War	1858	Spokane, Coeur d’Alene, Paiute, Palouse	(various)
Paiute War	1860	Paiute, Bannock, Shoshone	(various)
Snake War	1864-68	Paiute, Shoshone, Bannock	(various)
Modoc War	1872-73	Modoc	Klamath, Modoc of OK
Nez Perce War	1877	Nez Perce	Nez P., Colville, Umatilla
Bannock War	1878	Bannock, Shoshone, Paiute	(various)
Sheepeater Indian War	1879	Western Shoshone	Fort Hall

By the end of the Sheepeater War in late 1879 – the final major military campaign against Indians in the Pacific Northwest – Vancouver Barracks would be involved in nearly every Indian campaign in the region. As in the fur trade era, operations in and immediately adjacent to Fort Vancouver defined Indian-white relations in a way that set the tone for the entire region; however, during this period, these operations manifested all the interethnic distrust, the violence, and the rapidly shifting allegiances of the times. A diverse range of Indian people from outside of the lower Columbia River region certainly continued to visit Vancouver, but under very different circumstances, and often against their will. Ancestors of the contemporary Yakama, Warm Springs, Colville, Nez Perce, Fort Hall, Umatilla, and a number of other tribal populations passed through the Barracks in numbers and under circumstances very different than in preceding decades. This history considerably expands and complicates the question of American Indian associations with the Fort Vancouver area.

Certainly, Vancouver had been a largely peaceful place for much of the HBC occupation, and even the early Barracks – while fortified – was relatively isolated from

the major military threats of the region. Indeed, while visiting Vancouver in spring of 1853, Theodore Winthrop wrote to his mother of the unexpected lack of defensive structures on either the old Fort or the new Barracks: "When the Indians were numerous and dangerous...stockades were necessary for protection, but now the Indians have dwindled into insignificance" (in Winthrop 1913: 247-48). The conflicts to which the troops responded were more than 200 miles to the south and east, involving Cayuse, Modocs,²⁷¹ and the various tribes of the Rogue River Basin.

The detailed published literature regarding Vancouver Barracks military operations begins, in many respects, with the circumstances of this final "Rogue War." Vancouver Barracks served as a command center and an arms depot for U.S. forces during the Rogue War, beginning as early as 1853 and continuing into 1856 (Glassley 1953: 71).²⁷² Certainly, the HBC and other fur traders had a long history of conflicts with the tribes of the Rogue River region, and the Barracks' involvement in the Rogue Basin preceded formal hostilities.²⁷³ In spring of 1850, a group of miners reported that their gold had been stolen by a Rogue band; troops from the Barracks - roughly half of whom were recruited by Klickitat Indians from near Vancouver - were dispatched to the Rogue Basin under the command of Joseph Lane, subduing a band of the Rogues and taking their chief hostage. The incident ended peacefully and, indeed, the chief is reported to have taken Lane's name as his own, being known thereafter as "Chief Joe." However, news of significant gold strikes drew miners from throughout the West, and interethnic violence erupted throughout the Basin. A treaty, the "Table Rock Treaty," was hastily negotiated in 1853, but events on the ground spiraled out of control prior to congressional approval, and the treaty remained unratified. By late 1853, Vancouver Barracks was put on alert, mobilizing troops in anticipation of a backlash against the treaty's rejection.²⁷⁴ Over the course of the next two and half years, troops from the Barracks played a critical role in the complex campaigns of the Rogue region (Beckham 1971). The "Mounted Riflemen," who undertook a number of violent campaigns against the Rogue River Indians, were occasionally stationed at Fort Vancouver, while troops and artillery were dispatched from the Fort almost continuously throughout the conflict. As the conflict escalated, Klickitats from the vicinity of the Fort once again joined U.S. troops, participating as scouts and combatants against the Rogue Basin tribes - apparently motivated in part by their past conflicts with Rogue Basin tribes as the former had expanded into southwestern Oregon.²⁷⁵ Yet, the Rogue War had a very limited impact upon the composition of the Indian community around the Fort or the ethnic geography of greater Vancouver.

The Yakama War, and the various conflicts relating to that war, however, would radically and permanently reshape the ethnic geography of the Fort Vancouver area. The exact definition of the Yakama War is problematic, as it involved many peoples in addition to the Yakama; moreover, the events of this war were precipitated in part by earlier conflicts, including the Cayuse War, while subsequent conflicts, such as the Coeur d'Alene War were in many ways fostered by the Yakama War. Accordingly,

some sources separate out these conflicts as separately designated “wars” (as is done in the table above) while others tend to group them together into a single extended conflict running from roughly 1848 through 1858, even if the conventionally designated “Yakama War” lasted only perhaps three years, from 1855 through 1858 (Glassley 1953; Bancroft 1890). The Yakama people of the Columbia Plateau had long maintained a congenial relationship with the Hudsons Bay Company, bolstered by trade at Fort Vancouver as well as Fort Okanagan and Fort Walla Walla. The Yakama were also, as noted elsewhere, closely tied to the Klickitat, who were a growing presence around Fort Vancouver into the mid-19th century and played important roles in Company operations there. American incursions within Yakama lands created friction as initial waves of settlers passed alongside their fishing stations on the Columbia, and by the mid-1850s, miners were also traveling through Yakama Basin when traveling to and from gold fields of the Colville region. Even before the instigation of formal hostilities between the United States and the Yakama nation, troops from Vancouver Barracks were being mobilized into Yakama territory in response to reports of isolated hostilities (Glassley 1953: 113).

The perceived strategic threat of the large Yakama tribe, with its Klickitat kin spreading into western Oregon and Washington, intensified efforts by Isaac Stevens and Joel Palmer to consolidating the tribes of the region on large reservations east of the Cascade Range. In May and June of 1855, Stevens and Palmer oversaw the “Walla Walla Council,” a series of negotiations that led to the creation of the Umatilla, Yakama, and Nez Perce Reservations. The second treaty of this council, Stevens specified that some 14 separately named tribal groups, including the Yakama and the Klickitat, were to be removed to the Yakima Reservation – one of numerous consolidation proposals included in that council. Three treaties were successfully negotiated and signed at this council, including the Yakima Treaty, the Treaty of the Walla Walla, Umatilla and Cayuse, and the Nez Perce Treaty. Klickitats also were present, alongside Nez Perce, Walla Walla, Cayuse, Yakima, Flathead, Palouse and Spokane representatives at these negotiations at Walla Walla; both Stevens and Palmer used these negotiations as an opportunity to pressure the Klickitat return to the mountains of south-central Washington from their expanding homelands in western Oregon and Washington (Lavender 1956; Clarke 1905). While these treaties gave the first formal U.S. recognition of these tribes, founding the Yakima and Umatilla reservations, it also called for the removal of Native communities from vast territories in Oregon and Washington, sowing seeds of discontent that would grow into wars with each of these tribes.

Almost concurrently with the signing of the Yakama Treaty, miners discovered gold on lands dedicated for the Yakama Reservation, bringing a new rush of miners into lands reserved for the tribe. Resisting forced removal from other parts of their homeland, their claims to the new Reservation being undermined by miners operating within reserved lands, the Yakama and their allies in other tribes began organizing in opposition to American authorities. These combatants came together under the

leadership of the skilled Yakama chief Kamiakin, who had begun forging security alliances with other key leaders including Walla Walla chief Peo-peo-mox-mox and Nez Perce chief Allalimya Takanin even prior to the Walla Walla Council. By early October of 1855, Kamiakin led the first organized attacks against United States forces near Simcoe Valley, Washington. By October 1855, American troops were overextended, with Indian wars on multiple fronts - spread primarily between the Rogue Indian and Yakima conflicts even as other tribes were suspected of preparing for war. Dispatches were sent to Vancouver Barracks from both the Rogue and Yakama fronts requesting additional troop support. The Yakama dispatch arrived first, and post commanders ordered troops to the Yakama front, leaving the troops in the Rogue campaign without support. Struggling through late 1855 and early 1856, the commanders on the Rogue front continued to send several, sometimes frantic requests to Vancouver for troop support (O'Donnell 1991: 222-52). Only much later, as the Yakama War would begin to wind down and troops returned from that front, were they made available for redeployment to southwest Oregon.

While the Yakama may have made up the largest portion of the Indian combatants in the Yakama War, the Klickitat and Cascades Indians were also among its combatants - sometimes participating in raids into western Oregon and Washington that threatened to undermine the security of comparatively well-established EuroAmerican settlements. Those Klickitats who had been forcibly removed from western Oregon under orders from Joel Palmer during his negotiation of the Kalapooia Treaty were said to be especially well-represented among these warring bands.²⁷⁶ (Simultaneously, it is important to recognize that certain Cascade and Klickitat bands were neutral, or even provided occasional assistance to troops.) Troops based from Vancouver Barracks frequently took part in battles with these tribes and provided logistical support for numerous campaigns. During the Yakima War, the barracks served as a supply depot and quarters for men traveling to and from the conflict (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 161-90).

Of most immediate concern to Barracks personnel, perhaps, were the strategic threats posed by warring tribes' ties to the middle Columbia and Columbia Falls (Glassley 1953: 114). The strategic value of that area, as well as the salmon and other resources obtained there, were widely recognized; the Barracks therefore served as the base of operations for efforts to undermine the Yakama, Walla Walla, Klickitat, and other tribes by restricting their access to fishing stations along the Columbia, especially along the Cascades (Glassley 1953: 131 ff).²⁷⁷ Post reports from Vancouver Barracks report almost constant attempts by volunteers and militias to displace non-reservation Indians settled along the Columbia River, principally along the Cascades and the Dalles. The military also established forts with blockhouses to protect the Columbia River portages, including Fort Cascades (built in September 1855 near modern-day North Bonneville), Fort Rains (built October 1855 just northeast of modern-day Bonneville Dam), and Fort Lugenbeel (built early in 1856 near modern-day Cascade Locks). On March 26, 1856, a

combined force of Yakima and Cascade Indians attacked a number of white settlements along the Columbia cascades, killing perhaps ten settlers. Fort Cascades was burned to the ground, while settlers took refuge at Fort Rains and in a large store owned by Daniel and Putnam Bradford. Military forces from Vancouver Barracks and other smaller posts nearby arrived the next day, while volunteers were also recruited and organized at the Barracks. As hostilities drew closer to the Portland Basin, settlers took refuge inside the palisades of Fort Vancouver - as they would do a number of times before the end of the Yakama War (Hussey 1957: 97; Glassley 1953: 134).²⁷⁸ At around this point, the HBC agreed to rent out Fort Vancouver's hospital to the Barracks' "quartermaster of volunteers" - a role that the HBC hospital continued to play intermittently through these conflicts as well (Hussey 1957: 221). Fighting between American and tribal forces continued through March 28th, when the tribes surrendered; the Yakima escaped but a majority of the Cascade combatants were captured and nine of them were summarily tried and hanged by one of the military commanders, Lieutenant Edward Steptoe (Alley 1883; Coe 1856).²⁷⁹ Acting Washington Territory Governor, C.H. Mason met with commander, Major G.J. Raines at the Barracks and the two agreed to dispatch troops from the Barracks to Yakama, where they were to construct a new fort - Fort Simcoe - in the heart of the Yakama country (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 161-62).

Predictably, noting the strong ties between Fort Vancouver and the Klickitat and Yakama, a number of Americans presumed some degree of HBC complicity in the conflict. According to J. Ross Browne, who shared his conspiracy theories on this point in testimony to the U.S. Congress,

"The Yakimas, in common with other tribes who derived a profitable trade from their connexion with the Hudson's Bay Company, naturally espoused the cause of "King George." Many of their women were married to the company's employés, who in that way cemented the ties of friendship. The company had always encouraged connexions of this kind, and it was rare to find any officer or employé without a family of half-breeds, either Yakimas, Klickitats, Nisquallys, or some other tribe...It required no great effort, therefore, on the part of the company's agents, to spread the feeling of dislike, and to misrepresent the intentions and character of the American people. The Indians, predisposed to hostility, implicitly relied upon all they heard"²⁸⁰ (Browne 1858: 10).

While these claims seem largely unfounded in retrospect, it is true that the large tribal populations dwelling near Fort Vancouver at this time - consisting in no small part of Klickitats - were in an understandably uncomfortable position, with strong ties and loyalties to peoples on both sides of this conflict. In an effort to prevent the recruitment of these local communities by combatant groups, and to simplify the task of

differentiating between friend and foe within a rapidly militarized landscape, military personnel from the Barracks increasingly restricted the movements of these resident peoples, confiscated their property, and made them *de facto* prisoners of the Fort. These non-combatant bands, with longstanding ties to the Fort, were clearly seen by U.S. forces as a potential threat. As explained by Indian Agent A. Townsend, who oversaw this incarceration,

“At the commencement of the war, it became necessary, on account of the fears of the whites, and to prevent intercourse between those who professed friendship and hostile forces, to keep them closely confined on the reserve at Vancouver; during which time a large number of their horses and other property that was left at their old habitations was stolen or destroyed.” (Townsend 1857c: 349).

Townsend’s report makes it clear that a significant number of these individuals were “Indians who have been raised among whites,” and apparently included residents of the Fort Vancouver community alongside those from more distant villages.

While these local peoples were detained at the Barracks, they were by no means alone there. This War was perhaps the first to result in the arrival of significant new tribal populations in and around Fort Vancouver facilities. During the conflict, Vancouver Barracks would detain large numbers of prisoners from combatant tribes – a precedent that the Barracks would later follow in the various Pacific Northwest Indian Wars that were administered through the post. Simultaneously, a significant population of Indian war refugees also gathered near the Fort: military forces induced noncombatant Klickitats, especially those living on the north side of the Columbia River, to relocate to a camp at Vancouver Barracks (Jackson 1996: 52). Some of these Klickitat, seeing that the Barracks was not an especially hospitable refuge and that they were increasingly being treated as captives, attempted to escape the Barracks but were pursued by U.S. troops. A few escaped successfully, but most were caught and brought back to the Barracks by force.²⁸¹ Indians of diverse ethnolinguistic origin, when found outside of approved reservation areas within the Willamette Valley, were also commonly rounded up and shipped to Vancouver Barracks for temporary incarceration with these other noncombatant groups, in response to the fears of non-Indian Valley residents.²⁸² Indeed, in the aggregate, this temporary compound served as a holding place for such a large and diverse tribal population, that it has been termed a Fort Vancouver “reservation” by some historical sources.²⁸³

This period also saw another Indian population – scouts, recruited to assist in battles against other tribes. Ironically, Nez Perce soldiers – including Old Chief Joseph – is reported to have served alongside U.S. forces during the Yakama War in 1855-1856.²⁸⁴ Moreover, some of the mixed-race descendents of fur trade marriages associated with

Fort Vancouver were also among the troops recruited to combat the warring Yakama, Cascades, and Klickitats.²⁸⁵

***The Fate of the “Vancouver Indians”:
The White Salmon Reservation and Relocation to Yakima***

While concentrating large numbers of American Indian peoples near Fort Vancouver, in time the Yakama War would contribute significantly to the end of the multi-ethnic community that had once thrived there. Nobody realistically expected the growing encampment of detainees to become a permanent settlement. The community was overcrowded, impoverished, and cut off from the resources on which its residents had depended. It was also seen as a threat to the security of American settlers, with a growing and discontented Indian population being concentrated in close proximity to the settlements of the larger Portland Basin, southwest Washington, and the Willamette Valley. To make matters even more complex, troops fresh from the Yakama front continued to return to the Barracks regularly through late 1855 and 1856. Their responses to the Yakima’s close kin, the Klickitat, still living and lingering in large numbers near the Barracks no doubt intensified pressures for the removal of these people, even as the Klickitat continued to serve as allies against the tribes of southwestern Oregon and elsewhere. In response to these suspicions, a number of military and political leaders called for their removal. In protest, a handful of supporters attested to the Klickitat’s steadfast loyalty to their American allies. As Indian Agent, A. Townsend would attest to his colleagues,

“The Klikatat tribe, numbering about four hundred fighting men, are known as the best hunters and boldest warriors among all the surrounding tribes...hence, several attempts have been made by the leaders of the [Yakama] war party, during the past winter and spring, to induce them to leave...and rejoin them, but without success. Unless intimidated by superior numbers, I believe they cannot be influenced in the slightest degree prejudicial to the interest of the government”
(Townsend 1857c: 349).

Still, amidst the turmoil and chaos of the early Yakama conflict, the large numbers of Indians – including many with ties to combatant tribes – living in close association with Fort Vancouver began to command the attention of military authorities and Indian agents alike. Military and civilian authorities combined efforts to insure control over the growing and diverse tribal community near the Fort. In 1855, the Indian Agency for the Western District of the Washington Territory Office of Indian Affairs appointed two subagents to the region including John Cain and H. Field, who were assigned to be the

“local agent[s] for the Indians in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver” (Simmons 1855). These agents quickly attempted to bolster peaceful relations with the Indians living near Fort Vancouver through the allocation of resources, including agricultural provisions. As John Cain reported,

“the local agt. would provide for their necessities in the most encouraging manner possible. Always selecting points [locations] that would offer the greatest opportunities for their providing for themselves - Concluding that it was much cheaper for the Government to feed than to fight them. I thus appointed...Mr. Field local Agt. for the Indians in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver” (Cain 1855).

The “Vancouver Indians” - a term often used at this time in reference to the large community of voluntary and involuntary residents near the Fort - were mentioned frequently in the Indian agency correspondence of the day. Still, interestingly, their original tribal identities often remained unmentioned. These individuals were (and still are) often depicted as a singular entity, made up of Klickitat and remnant Chinookan populations.²⁸⁶ Some portion of this larger tribal community consisted of war refugees - Klickitats and even Cascades Indians run out of places along the Columbia Gorge and Willamette Valley who retreated voluntarily to Vancouver (Thompson 1856). Others, of course, were involuntarily taken to the Barracks from these places. Yet a significant portion of this population is depicted as being the resident or semi-resident Klickitat and Chinookans who had lived in association with Fort Vancouver prior to the conflict and continued to reside there peacefully into the Yakama War period.

Still, despite the multiplicity of the “Vancouver Indians” origins, they were increasingly depicted as a singular entity, and a strategic threat that was to be dealt with indelicate uniformity. Arriving in Vancouver in early 1856, Isaac Stevens determined that the bulk of the resident Indian population, except perhaps those assigned to existing Indian reservations or still in the employment of the HBC, would need to be relocated. Isaac Stevens attempted to hold the Klickitat gathered at Fort Vancouver accountable to the terms of the Yakama Treaty, though it was clear that the bands represented at Vancouver had not been meaningfully represented at the Walla Walla Council less than a year beforehand. Key to his approach was the forced removal of these peoples to the new Yakama Reservation.²⁸⁷ According to Stevens’ handwritten notes from this meeting, he spoke to the Klickitats at Fort Vancouver thusly:

“You live here on the Columbia River - you have been somewhat disturbed and troubled - you have not known where it was you should be for your own good...I have as yet made no treaty with you, I have not bought your lands - you still own your lands, but I will advise you to go to the Yackimaw Country - to go to the Simcoe Valley - there does your

friend, your father, advise you to go – go there and try that valley, see if you won't find there a good home, go there and see if you cannot find plenty of salmon, plenty of game and plenty of roots – we will give you powder and ball to shoot your game. I make no treaty with you but wish you to go there...we will assist you if you need it...We want you to go where there will be but soldiers to take care of you, where you can get your provisions...You have conquered this land and it is your own – we treat with you as its conquerors – you have possession and...are the ones we treat with...go there and the hostile Indians won't molest you...As your father, I want you to go there, and I will next spring make arrangements with you about your lands – go there and trust to your white friends... Now my friends, you must act promptly – your position here is not pleasant – you have soldiers guarding you. If you go far from home, you don't know but some difficulty may befall you" (Stevens 1856a).

The Klickitat leader, Yoc-a-towitz²⁸⁸ - apparently speaking on behalf of some portion of the Vancouver Indians - replied that he preferred to go to the country between Yakima and White Salmon Rivers. As he noted, according to Stevens,

"there is plenty of fish, roots, and berries and game, everything they want, it is also their own country, the Clickatat Country...they do not want to go to the Simcoe Valley – he wishes to gather all the Klickitat Indians from Palmers Reserve [the Coast Reserve, predecessor to Grand Ronde and Siletz] in Oregon and wherever they may be scattered and take with him. They were willing to go to White Salmon River, and there and in the adjacent country lay in their stock of winter provision and then they would go to Simcoe and winter" (in Stevens 1856a).

Governor Stevens quickly approved of this plan, "saying to [the chiefs] that this is to be a temporary arrangement merely." Stevens also instructed the group that he wanted "all the Cascade Indians to go with them" to Simcoe Valley. As Stevens reported the situation, the "Indians expressed their general approval by three hearty cheers and council ended" (Stevens 1856a). Stevens ordered that the Vancouver Indians be moved by the end of 1856 to the newly designated White Salmon Reservation. Indian Agent John Cain noted that special financial provisions were made soon thereafter for "transportation of Indians from Vancouver and Cascade, with their stock, &c." (Cain 1857b).

Soon, they were being relocated to White Salmon, on the upper end of the Columbia Gorge near modern-day White Salmon, Washington. The reservation was situated

“between the Klikatat and White Salmon rivers, a distance of fifteen miles along the Columbia river, and extending back to the La Camas prairie about twenty miles, lying in and on the east slope of the Cascade mountains” (Townsend 1857c: 349). Perhaps intentionally, this multi-tribal reservation was located in a place of traditional overlap and interdigitation between the territories of the Klickitat and Upper Chinookans – a place where many of the relocated bands had presumably fished side-by-side in the days before the Yakama War (French and French 1998). Nearby La Camas prairie was widely mentioned by writers of the period as a major inter-tribal gathering place as well; as Townsend noted,

“all the Washington Territory Indians from Vancouver over to the Spokane river annual congregate in the summer season for the purpose of collecting camas, their great staple root, and for racing and trading horses” (Townsend 1857c: 348).

Cumulatively, the White Salmon reservation was reported by Indian agency staff to have “consisted of the Vancouver and Lewis river tribe of Klikatats and the Cascade Indians, who had remained friendly during the war” (Townsend 1857c: 348).²⁸⁹

Before delivering his notes on the Fort Vancouver negotiations to the Washington Territory Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Stevens annotated his notes on the Vancouver council. In these annotations he expressed what might be interpreted as relief that the Vancouver Indians had proposed an intermediate solution. He noted that – due to the circumstances of the War – the Yakama Reservation was simply in too much turmoil for him to send the Vancouver Indians there, but that a temporary reservation at White Salmon would become a temporary holding area for these Indians and other noncombatant groups.²⁹⁰

The Vancouver Indians were removed to White Salmon in the winter of 1856-57. By February of 1857, Isaac Stevens reported to the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs on the status of the reservation in exceedingly positive terms:

“Agent Cain states the steps taken by him to bring the Indians of the Yakima and the Dalles to the White Salmon Reservation to be provided for during the winter and to be in a position removed from the influences of the hostile chiefs. A Block House was erected there for defense and the storage of supplies, and a small garrison established there much to the satisfaction of the Indians” (Stevens 1857).

However, his rosy assessment was a poor reflection of actual conditions on the reservation. Regrettably, the timing for this move was terrible. Forcing the Vancouver

Indians to relocate in the winter, some 800 Indians had arrived at White Salmon all but simultaneously, with almost no winter provisions. In a letter to Indian Agent John Cain, Local Agent A. Townsend reported from White Salmon Reservation in January of 1857,

“The weather has been extremely bad, snow falling to the depth of 4 feet & the river freezing up, cutting off communication entirely, this state of things lasting about three weeks. The Indians have been engaged nearly the whole month in the care of their horses, nonetheless which many have died from cold & starvation. Many of the Vancouver Indians have lost all their horses and are consequently reduced to a state of poverty. I think at least half more likely two-thirds [of] their horses have perished. They seem to bear their losses very well. I hear no complaints or grumbling amongst them” (Townsend 1857a).

The budget for the reservation was exceedingly tight, with most resources being diverted to other parts of the War relocation effort and food being rationed. Hunger appears to have been widespread. During this harsh winter, some apparently found themselves “subsisting on flesh of horses that died” (Townsend 1857c: 1341).

Elsewhere, Townsend noted that these Indians’ prolonged incarceration, the concurrent confiscation of their property, and their inability to hunt, fish, and gather during that period had together contributed significantly to their poverty. This appeared to be disproportionately true among those Indians who had lived with, and worked for, non-Indians prior to the Yakama War – especially those associated with Fort Vancouver. Townsend reported that he

“found the Indians, particularly those from Vancouver and Cascades, owing to their previous close confinement in consequence of the war, in a state of almost complete destitution; many families who were, comparatively, in affluent circumstances before the war, having spent their lives in close proximity to the whites [lost all their possessions]” (Townsend 1857c: 349).²⁹¹

As soon as winter broke, the tribes were eager to go to their traditional fishing grounds, as reservation staff continued to operate without sufficient budget to support the tribes. The Indian agents at White Salmon were all too eager to oblige, despite outside perceptions of the White Salmon Indians as a military threat; they knew better, and also recognized that stability could only be maintained if they could keep starvation at bay. In the spring of 1857, Agent Townsend reported,

“With the remnants [of their possessions] they were then removed to this reservation...About eight hundred persons were subsisted during the winter on the reservation...As spring advanced, their supplies were curtailed as much as possible...In consequence, those to whom it came most natural, soon as the season allowed, took to the mountains and valleys back, in search of roots and game, while many others applied for permission and assistance to farm, which request was complied with...About one hundred persons, mostly heads of families, were supplied with tools, seed, and, as far as practicable, with the assistance of teams, &c...The Cascade tribe request permission to fish at the Cascades, while the Klikatats will operate at Clickatat river and White Salmon...I discharged all employed from the reserve but me” (Townsend 1857c: 349).

This practice of releasing destitute Indian families on chaperoned food quests was employed at a number of impromptu reservations in the Washington territory that year. Indeed, this may have been the only mechanism available to avoid the expansion of hostilities among these incarcerated populations, as the fledgling Indian agency bureaucracy struggled to distribute goods and personnel across a militarized frontier.²⁹²

Yet, for many of the Indian families who had lived in close association with Fort Vancouver, this expedited food quest played out somewhat differently than for other families relocated to the Reservation. These were, in many cases, families that had worked as wage laborers on farms, or in support of Company operations; they were not, at this stage of history, hunter-gatherers - prepared to efficiently procure a living from this raw and unfamiliar landscape. On March 1st of 1847, Townsend wrote of these challenges:

“I find the Indians of the Klickatat tribe who were removed here from Vancouver, and many of the others, have heretofore spent their lives, in the immediate vicinity of the whites, and always been in a great degree dependent on them for their support, and they could always procure an easy subsistence by working for the farmers and others, this precluding the necessity of laying up an amount of provisions for winter consumption, therefore many of them have become well acquainted with farming, while their habits of life of late years has quite unfitted them from depending on the old Indian method as practiced by their fathers” (Townsend 1857d: 1340).

Accordingly, many of these families resisted an abrupt return to aboriginal subsistence practices but rapidly cleared land that first spring in preparation for the planting of

crops. John Cain remarked of these families, "Since locating them on the reservation, they manifest a willingness and desire to cultivate small tracts of ground, and to otherwise employ themselves to make their own living for the future" (Cain 1857a: 346).

While having strong ties to the non-Native families of the Fort Vancouver area, these relocated Vancouver Indians of the White Salmon Reservation also had especially strong ties to the community of Klickitats and other Willamette Valley tribes that had been removed to the Grand Ronde Reservation. Indeed, within some extended families, it was reported that a portion had been removed to Grand Ronde, even as other portions had been removed to White Salmon. This was complicated by the fact, well documented in available sources and outlined in preceding pages of this document, that ethnolinguistic boundaries and kinship networks straddled both banks of the Columbia River in this portion of the Columbia. Thus, as Indian Agent Townsend (1857d) reported:

"another source of dissatisfaction with them is being separated from the balances of their tribe - a portion of them being found on the Oregon side of the River, a short distance above Vancouver. At the time the Indians were collected in that territory were taken through mistake to the Grand Ronde Reservation. Members of the same family were separated down to man & wife in some instances and thus they remain. At the time of removal of these Indians to White Salmon they requested & were promised that their friends should be returned to them & they have never ceased asking when?" (Townsend 1857d).

By late 1857, the White Salmon Reservation seemed to have stabilized somewhat - still characterized by grinding poverty, but with an increasingly settled population, isolated from most major episodes of interethnic violence. The Yakama War seemed to be moving toward its conclusion on the Columbia, where U.S. forces had dug in, even as it continued to rage in the eastern interior of Washington. The reservation population was now quite large: "From the best information I am in possession of, there is at this time at the White Salmon Reservation from 1,000 to 1,200 Indians" (Cain 1857c: 1224). By November of 1857, Indian Agent R.H. Lansdale was placed in charge of the White Salmon reservation and other portions of south-central Washington, with the charge of preparing for an eventual second mobilization of the "Vancouver Indians" to Yakama.

By its end, the Yakama War had spread to engulf additional tribes and additional lands in the interior Northwest. The final moments of the conflict - sometimes alluded to as a separate "Coeur d'Alene War" - came to an end with a series of decisive U.S. victories in eastern Washington near Spokane; the defeated tribes of that inland territory participated in a peace council by September of 1858, in which they agreed to remove to designated reservations. By the following spring, most of the White Salmon

Reservation was remobilized under the direction of Local Indian Agent, R.H. Lansdale, with all people and property being moved to Yakama. Writing to the Washington Superintendent of Indian Affairs from his new post at Yakama Indian Agency that summer, Lansdale reported,

“Just prior to the removal of the troops from this post [at the close of the Yakama War] all public buildings were transferred, by order of General Harney, to the Indian department. Your predecessor ordered me to receive the transfer, and to remove my agency from White Salmon to this place” (Lansdale 1859: 410).

At Yakama, Lansdale oversaw the initiation of agricultural efforts by former White Salmon residents. Though these families had invested considerable labor and supplies in developing agricultural operations at White Salmon, Lansdale confessed to his superiors that those operations had been abandoned, being constructed “previous to it being known that the [Yakama] treaty was ratified” (Lansdale 1859: 411). Once moved to this agency, the “Vancouver Indians,” almost immediately disappeared as a distinct entity being reported in agency records; from this time forward, they were to be lumped together with other reported populations. They appear to be among the general tribal subpopulations reported as “Columbia River” people in Lansdale’s first “approximate census” – at that time, these people numbered some 808 persons and represented the largest enumerated population on the reservation at the time (others included Klickitat [636], Wishram [471], Yakima [667], and Wenatcha [50]) (Lansdale 1859: 412). The Vancouver Indians were effectively absorbed into the Yakama Reservation community at this time. A few eventually rejoined families on the Grand Ronde Reservation and elsewhere, just as some individuals from those distant reservations sometimes rejoined families at Yakama. Over time, the identities of these relocated families often transformed as they became woven into the larger social fabric of the reservation, become largely “Yakama,” while memories of ancestral associations with Fort Vancouver often faded.

Back at Vancouver Barracks, three years of difficult warfare had hardened the resolve of the U.S. Army command; even as the Yakama War came to a close, the Barracks was being retooled to prepare it for prolonged future operations against Northwest tribes. By the end of 1859, the Barracks was placed in the command of General William Harney - a celebrated military leader with a reputation for successful anti-Indian campaigns. As described by Allen and Munro-Fraser, General Harney “had become famous as an Indian fighter, and his name alone inspired awe among the hostile tribes of the plains and the great Northwest...A thorough Indian fighter was required and the Secretary of War had well selected the man for the place” (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 269). General W. S. Harney was in command from 1857 to 1859 during the final years of the Hudson’s Bay Company presence. His successors included other famed Indian fighters

such as Major General Oliver Otis Howard. The Major General commanded the Department of the Columbia from his headquarters at Vancouver Barracks while he oversaw troops elsewhere in many of the final Indian Wars of the Northwest from 1865 to 1884. A small Indian and mixed-race population persisted near Fort Vancouver at the end of the Yakama War, but it was no longer a hospitable place for Indian occupation; few Indians lived there in the decades that followed, except as employees of the HBC or U.S. Army, or as military prisoners, arriving under duress and usually departing to distant reservations or prisons soon thereafter. Though the Fort location had been home to large and diverse Indian communities since the arrival of the HBC in the 1820s, and certainly had maintained such a role well before the fur trade period, this place was now largely avoided by the American Indian tribes of the Pacific Northwest – its function as a home to Indian communities becoming largely a thing of the past.

The Fate of Remaining Klickitats and Cowlitz

The forced relocation of “Klickitats” to the White Salmon and Yakama Reservations in the mid-19th century was not completely effective. Those of mixed Klickitat and Cowlitz ancestry particularly resisted relocation from southwestern Washington, while a number of Lewis River Klickitats still occupied the upper reaches of that river as well. In 1855, the Cowlitz had been among those tribes at the Chehalis River Treaty Council that had refused to sign a treaty ceding their aboriginal lands and relocating to a reservation with the Chehalis. This left their tribal status, as well as the status of their aboriginal lands, still in question. Soon after the 1855 council, Puget Sound District Indian Agent M.T. Simmons reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that

“The Chehalis and Cowlitz Indians, occupying the southern portion of this district, are under the charge of Mr. S.S. Ford. They have never been treated with, and their principal men are expressing great uneasiness upon the subject. The judicious management of Mr. Ford prevented any outbreak during the hostilities; but I wish it to be understood that I consider it an imperative necessity that these Indians...be speedily settled with to their satisfaction” (Simmons 1857: 334).

As late as 1860, Indian Agents continued making efforts to round up and remove the remaining Cowlitz Klickitats from southwestern Washington to Yakama and other reservation communities, but met with little success. Though the Cowlitz persisted, they continued to struggle mightily as their southwest Washington homeland was overrun with new settlers. Lacking federal status and protections, the tribe had few options for recourse.²⁹³ Census reports of the 1870s suggest that these remnant

populations had been pushed away from prime riverfront locations back into the interior of southwestern Washington. This, when taking a census of area tribes, Milroy (1879: 149) specifically referred to a “Cowlitz Klickitat Band,” apparently living a short distance northeast of Vancouver, and depicts this band as being part of the larger number of Cowlitz and Klickitat bands in the interior of southwest Washington that he enumerated in his census.²⁹⁴

Still, the lack of a treaty, or even a successful settlement of southwestern Washington Indian land claims, contributed to the continued migration of nominally “Klickitat” families (including those of mixed Cowlitz or Chinook ancestry) to the Yakima Reservation, especially in the late 19th century. By roughly 1900, most of the remaining Lewis River Klickitat or “Upper Cowlitz” families – encroached upon by EuroAmerican settlement throughout their homeland – finally consented to migrate to the Yakima Reservation. Acknowledging the shared kinship of these Klickitat bands, Yakima magnanimously opened its rolls and made allotments available to members of bands other than those of the original Yakima treaty signatories (Fitzpatrick 1986: 123). This left only the Cowlitz River communities, or “Cowlitz” tribe proper in southwest Washington as a remnant of this once larger population of variously mixed Klickitat and Cowlitz ancestry.²⁹⁵

The remaining Cowlitz continued to push for federal status and the resolution of land claims left uncertain by the absence of a treaty. Indian agents of the period depict the Cowlitz as uniquely positioned to pursue these claims, being one of the only remaining tribes to preserve “their tribal identity without federal recognition” (Fitzpatrick 2004: 118-19). Having maintained traditionally organized leadership through much of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Cowlitz restructured their leadership somewhat in 1912 to facilitate semi-annual meetings with the goal of seeking tribal recognition and redress for lands and resources taken without due process. By the 1920s, this federally unrecognized tribal government advanced a bill for federal recognition. Remarkably, their recognition bill passed congress in 1928, only to be vetoed by President Calvin Coolidge due to their apparent integration into the larger rural communities and economies of southwest Washington (Fitzpatrick 1986). To the extent that the United States government recognized tribal ties to Cowlitz and Klickitat territories in southwestern Washington, these ties were assigned to the Yakama tribe.

The Cowlitz did not relent on land claims in this region, however, initiating a U.S. Court of Claims petition, and then ultimately submitting an Indian Claims Commission petition in 1951. Their ICC efforts were bogged down for over two decades, hindered by their lack of tribal status and other considerations. Yakama too had little success in asserting their associations with Klickitat territories during this period: with the Indian Claims Commission proceedings, Yakima attempted to make claims on Klickitat and Teidnapam lands in western Washington (most of these lands being located east of the Fort Vancouver region) but were not successful (ICC 1963). Meanwhile, the Bureau of

Indian Affairs began to express concerns regarding overlapping claims and enrollments between the Yakama and the Cowlitz in these claims. This was one of several factors that prompted Yakama to review their rolls in the mid- to late-20th century, removing many Cowlitz individuals; similarly Cowlitz made some effort to remove “Yakima Cowlitz” from their rolls. Finally in 1973, with issues of enrollment approaching resolution, the Cowlitz received a one-million dollar settlement for lands taken without treaty or compensation within southwestern Washington. The ICC did not accept the Cowlitz’s assertion of an expansive traditional boundary - encompassing much of southwest Washington as had been proposed by Verne Ray in his assessment of late 19th century Cowlitz and Klickitat territories - but approved a much smaller adjudicated boundary for the tribe. The challenges of developing a formal tribal roll that was acceptable to the BIA, in light of the multi-tribal membership of modern Cowlitz and Yakama Klickitats, significantly delayed the disbursement of ICC judgment funds, contributing to further efforts to eliminate redundancies between the rolls of both tribes (Fitzpatrick 1986: 88 ff).

Still, most Cowlitz who remained unaffiliated with Yakama were not part of any federally recognized tribe. By the 1980s, the Cowlitz still represented a distinct, federally unrecognized subgroup of a larger historical entity - “Klickitat” or “Cowlitz” depending on the source consulted - which had a federally recognized subgroup residing on the Yakama Reservation. As explained by Fitzpatrick in the mid-1980s,

“Cowlitz today are represented by two organizations. These are the Cowlitz Tribe of Indians whose members tend to reside in western Washington and saw the Cowlitz case through the ICC suit during 1951 to 1973. Another group is the Yakima Cowlitz, descendants of Cowlitz Taidnapam speakers who migrated to Yakima, at the turn of the century, in order to enroll with that Nation and obtain reservation land during the allotment period; they are not formally organized and represent a band or ethnic group within the Yakima Nation” (Fitzpatrick 1986: 29).

Cowlitz efforts to seek federal recognition were redoubled during this period, as changing federal policy facilitated the restoration of status to a number of tribes throughout the Pacific Northwest. Some 72 years after the rejection of their original bill for federal recognition, the Cowlitz finally received federal recognition in the year 2000. They maintain varying ties to the community of Klickitat descendents in Yakama into the present day.

The Fate of “Half-Breeds” and Kanaka Village in the New Northwest

Prior to the mid-1840s, EuroAmerican settlements in the Oregon Territory were, in practice, multi-ethnic communities. Interethnic marriage was not only tolerated, but was the norm – bolstered both by the marriage policies of the fur trapping companies as well as the demographic realities introduced by an all-male company workforce. Arguably, if these conditions had persisted, a new and fully integrated ethnic identity may have emerged from the situation – a Pacific Northwest Metis that thought of itself neither as “white” nor “Indian.” Prescient observers, such as early ethnologist, Horatio Hale, made this point when visiting Fort Vancouver in the mid-1840s:

“Could the state of things which now exists there be suffered to remain for a century longer, the result might be the formation of a race and idiom whose affinities would be a puzzle to ethnographers” (Hale 1846: 644).

However, by the late 1840s, everything had begun to change. The concurrent arrival of the United States military and wave upon wave of American settlers – men, women, and their children – radically changed prevailing attitudes regarding mixed-race families. Oregon Trail narratives of the 1840s demonstrate a growing discomfort with the mixed-race community. For these arriving Americans, the prospect of interethnic marriage was reportedly unfathomable, even resulting in modest return migration in the early years of American occupation. As Charles Wilkes noted,

“During my stay at Vancouver, I had a visit from three of a party of eight young Americans, who were desirous of leaving the country, but could not accomplish it in any other way but by building a vessel. They were not dissatisfied with the territory, but they would not settle themselves down in it, because there were no young women to marry, except squaws or half-breeds” (Wilkes 1845: 337).

Not only did interracial unions contradict the mores of these settlers, but were intimately associated with the British and Catholic influences that these arriving American (and largely Protestant) settlers eagerly sought to supplant.

Among these emigrants, a mixture of overt racism, nationalism, and anti-HBC sentiments combined to dramatic effect, providing the foundation for both formal and informal efforts to dislodge the mixed-race community associated with Fort Vancouver. These sentiments had a deeply disquieting effect for the communities at Fort Vancouver, and French Prairie. As McLoughlin noted in his letter to the HBC Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee on March 28th, 1845:

“It is reported that some of the Immigrants last come have said that every man who has an Indian wife ought to be driven out of the Country, and that the half breeds should not be allowed to hold lands. This report was communicated to the Canadians by one of the American trappers who has an Indian wife, and excites great sensation among the Americans and Canadians who have half-breed families” (McLoughlin 1845a: 73).

The arrival of so many American settlers resulted in a reassessment of racial divisions and their meaning within the comfortably integrated Métis community of Fort Vancouver. Certainly, the residents of this community must have realized that the end was very near. Again quoting Horatio Hale,

“The tide of population... which is now turning in that direction, will soon overwhelm and absorb all these scattered fragments of peculiar lineage and speech, leaving no trace behind but such as may exist on the written page” (Hale 1846: 644)

Increasing discrimination against interracial couples and their “half-breed” descendants by Americans was widely noted in the accounts of the period (e.g., Warre and Vavasour 1909: 74). Despite growing pressures, many of these mixed-race families – perhaps most – held fast to their homes and farmsteads in the Willamette Valley and in the vicinity of the Fort. Surrounded by a growing tide of American settlement, their condition steadily declined. The HBC had little success protecting this community’s interests. In 1847, proposals began to emerge to relinquish all property rights of the mixed race community. McLoughlin made an impassioned plea to the United States government to protect the “half-breed” population that had come into being around the fort, stated in racialized terms apparently meant to convince an American readership:

“I would beg also to call the Attention of Government to the situation of the half Breed population now settled in the Willamette Valley... I Encouraged the Old trappers to open farms in the Willamette Valley as it is the Best place to farm a settlement to have a Beneficial Effect on the Whole Country. But as it was Well Known that the Willamette Valley Would Belong to the United States the Canadians Observed that they and their Children would not be allowed the same advantage as American Citizens When the United States Extended Their Jurisdiction over the Country and Wished to be allowed to Reside among the Relations of their Wives in different parts of the Country. But as this would scatter them over the Country and their Children would become Indians I considered it a duty to prevent this and to persuade them to settle in the Willamette

where they could be collected to gather and their Children Instructed in the principles of the Christian Religion and taught to farm And Brought up with the Sympathies And feelings of Whites and throw their influence on the side of the Whites and in fact make them Hostages for the Good Behaviour of their Indian Relatives as Indians Judging of Us By themselves would be afraid if injuries were inflicted on Whites on their Lands that we would Retaliate on their Relations among us. But there is a Report that the Half Breeds will not be allowed to have Claims of Land by the United States Government if such Unfortunately is the Case It will Blast the prospects of these persons and force them with their parents to Retire Among the Indians Where they will Excite disaffection to American Interests When by allowing them to hold their Claims as American Citizens they would facilitate Immensely the settling of the Country by their influence over their Indian Relatives and of which Indulgence they are Worthy as all who know them must admit they are as peaceable orderly and Industrious as any settlers in the Country... "And I am certain it is sufficient to settle this Country to secure them the Justice to Which they Are Entitled as I may say by subduing the Indians they have Been the means of this Country being peaceably settled by the Whites and When its Remote situation and all connected with it taken into Consideration fully as Easily as any other part of America and at Not one hundreth part of the Expencc it would have cost the United States if these Men had not prepared the Way" (McLoughlin 1847a: 70-71).

Despite McLoughlin's efforts, prevailing American attitudes did not change, nor did the United States government make a significant effort to protect the interests of these mixed-race communities, which arguably were perceived as having uncertain ethnic and national loyalties. As the American community became numerically dominant, and began to organize itself politically, there were concerted efforts to expel Catholics from the Oregon country, to eliminate the property rights of half-breeds, and to levy special taxes on Native Hawaiians. In 1848, for example, one of the first items of business to be considered by the new Oregon Territorial Legislature was a petition to expel all Catholics from Oregon Territory, in an attempt to eliminate the HBC and its influence on Indians; this effort ultimately failed, but only narrowly (Glassley 1953: 38).

By the late 1840s and early 1850s, increasingly violent conflicts between American settlers and Pacific Northwest Indians brought a new urgency and force to settlers' efforts. Especially during the early conflicts with the Klickitat, Yakama, Rogue, and other tribal groups with a footing west of the Cascade Range, pressures to remove the remaining American Indian population from the Willamette Valley and Vancouver area became intense. There was considerable distrust - even fear - of the remaining mixed-race community in the settlers' midst, even as the adult "half-breed" population played

a growing role in support of American military efforts. Families and individuals were forced to define racial and ethnic affiliations in ways that had not been done before. This was a period of unprecedented “ethnic cleansing,” with those families who could pass for white often disappearing into the larger non-Native population (Jetté 2010). Certainly, the fate of members of the mixed race community seems to have been shaped in some part by their pigmentation, with families and individuals who could pass for “white” being integrated into the larger community of settlers, and those who looked “Indian” being pushed toward reservation communities and other groups of native kin. A few were able to pass as fully “white” within the new racial calculus of the region; as Parker noted, “It is worthy of notice, how little of the Indian complexion is seen in the half breed children. Generally they have fair skin, often flaxen hair, and blue eyes” (Parker 1841: 171). Many who could cross over into the new and racially uniform American community chose to do so to avoid forced relocation, random and systematic acts of violence, and other outcomes of Native identity that might befall themselves and their families. Thus, a surprisingly large number of the descendents from the Fort’s interethnic marriages were absorbed into the larger Euro-American population of the 19th century Northwest, most gradually dissociating from their American Indian kin (Pollard 1990; Jackson 2007; Brown 1980).²⁹⁶

There is much evidence to suggest that the children of these families –raised close to the Fort and its European social institutions - adopted “white” identities whenever possible, and that the transition to “Indian” status was often uncomfortable and generally resisted. After a thorough review of the biographies of the children born at Fort Vancouver who lived through this period, Pollard summarized:

“On balance, the fur trade children appear to have been drawn more towards the dominant white culture than towards native life on the reservations. This is not surprising...the formal means of educating the fur trade youngsters were aimed at teaching them Christian values and mores of Euro-American society and eradicating their so-called ‘Indian traits.’ The contact that fur trade children had with native people while they were growing up either came through their mothers, who were themselves undergoing an acculturation process to fur trade culture, or through native people employed at the Hudson’s Bay Company forts. In either case, the fort setting does not appear to have been very conducive to schooling the youngsters in traditional native values. For the children born to Chinook mothers, the destruction of the Indians not only meant the loss of grandparents and other relatives, but the loss of the alternate culture they might have adopted as adults. For most fur trade children, the restrictions imposed on the reservations appear to have had less appeal [than] the limited freedoms allowed ‘half-breeds’ in the dominant society” (Pollard 1990: 492-93).

These pressures had complex effects, as families dispersed from Kanaka Village, Champoeg, and other multiracial enclaves associated with the Fort. Certainly, many of these families moved – voluntarily or under duress – to reservation communities. Those families deemed to be “Indian” and living on the north side of the Columbia, as already noted, found themselves being relocated to such places as Yakama, via the White Salmon Reservation, while those living on the south side of the river often were compelled to move to Grand Ronde in the 1850s.²⁹⁷ However, when circumstances allowed, many families dispersed to non-reservation tribal or multiracial communities, or occupied recently abandoned portions of their former tribal territories. This diaspora was critical in the formation of some of today’s federally unrecognized tribes, with members that temporarily, and perhaps by choice, ‘slipped through the cracks’ of federal oversight during this period. Families from the Fort and French Prairie with Chinook roots sometimes moved to join kin in Bay Center and vicinity, joining the ancestors of today’s Chinook Indian Nation; Clatsop descendents – ancestors of modern Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes members – relocated from these HBC enclaves to former village sites on the northern Oregon coast. Some – such as the ancestors of the unrecognized “Tchinouk Tribe of Oregon” even moved to eastern Oregon to place themselves temporarily outside of direct Euro-American influence.²⁹⁸ These are merely examples, and it is reasonable to assume that such outmigration from the Portland Basin was commonplace, redistributing families with Fort Vancouver ties throughout the Pacific Northwest during this period.

Meanwhile, their “white” kin often continued to live and farm in the vicinity of the Fort and French Prairie. Others occupied homesteads in peripheral but promising agricultural settings such as Oregon’s Tualatin Valley, where the HBC had maintained farms prior to American reoccupation. (John McLoughlin’s stepson, Thomas McKay, is often mentioned as a founding father of today’s urban Tualatin Valley, for example, but he worked to downplay his Métis identity and it is scarcely mentioned in popular accounts.)

Those who remained in the racial limbo between “white” and “Indian” in northwestern Oregon and southwestern Washington were increasingly rare, and their circumstances were worse than ever. As George Gibbs wrote in 1850,

“The condition of the half breed is worse than that of the Indian. Many of the...settlers are lawfully married to native women, they have children whom they rear as we do our own, educate to the best of their ability...and yet by the territorial law these children are disenfranchised. They have rights neither as Indians nor as whites. If their parent dies a squatter may dispossess them of their farms and homes and turn them adrift in their own land to become servants or strumpets” (Gibbs in U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: Roll 607: 688).

Various efforts to disenfranchise “half-breeds” persisted through the late 19th century, placing limitations on their employment, educational opportunities, voting rights, and their ability to own land or marry non-Indians (Pollard 1990).²⁹⁹

In time, these pressures effectively eliminated mixed-race identities in the region, so that American Indian roots were often suppressed and intentionally forgotten among superficially “white” descendants of the Fort community. Ironically, many modern Oregon and Washington residents who view themselves as “non-Indian” appear to be descended from some of the same Fort Vancouver families as their distant relatives in American Indian tribes of the present day. As Pollard notes,

“a large number of people in the dominant society of the Pacific Northwest are of Indian ancestry, some of them are descendants of the fur trade children...Most of them are white members of mainstream society, but a few have chosen to call themselves Métis” (Pollard 1990: 439; Jackson 2007).

Perhaps a shared history, intersecting in the multicultural community of Fort Vancouver, might be the foundation of common interests in the history and heritage of the Fort into the modern period.

While this ethnic polarization realigned the identities of families that remained in the United States, those that remained in the employment of the HBC typically relocated to Canada, transporting their multiethnic community and identities with them. As Lang summarized, “Most of the English-speaking sons of HBC traders continued to live in the Northwest [but] Others followed the HBC in its retreat out of the Oregon Territory in 1846” (Lang 2008: 118). The Company had founded Fort Langley on the lower Fraser River by 1827, and founded Fort Victoria on the southern shore of Vancouver Island in 1843. While these forts were mostly of subregional significance during Fort Vancouver’s reign, they became central to HBC regional ambitions in the wake of the Oregon Treaty. Though the terms of the Oregon Treaty granted the HBC continued rights to operate from Fort Vancouver until 1859, the Company began mobilizing resources and staff to other forts – Fort Victoria in particular – almost immediately after the Treaty’s signing. The exact details of the human migration are complex.³⁰⁰ It is perhaps fair to say that a majority of the families that relocated to Canada during this period consisted of men of European or Métis descent and their native or Métis wives; still, a number of families defied this generalization, and some Métis and Native Hawaiian men took part in this relocation. Certainly, British Columbia was a more hospitable environment to continue HBC trade, with both strong British loyalties and an intimate, enduring association with the Company. However, the rise of polite Anglo-Canadian society during this period created social complexities for mixed-race

families that were reminiscent of those they had encountered in America a few years before – albeit somewhat less menacing. Sources generally suggest that, following the late 1840s, the women of mixed ancestry who were married to HBC employees, in particular, were exposed to unprecedented racism and hostility from the growing non-Native, non-HBC sphere of frontier society. Especially the women married to high-ranking officials who moved on to Fort Victoria and other HBC posts “never enjoyed complete social acceptance” (Hussey 1991: 274). Nonetheless, these families in many respects represented the “founding families” of the British Columbia colony, and their names still appear prominently in the written history of that province.

Together, the movement of HBC assets and personnel to Canada, and the rapid dispersal of the resident mixed-race population of former employees and their families, completely undermined the very foundations of Kanaka Village. Almost as soon as the 1846 Oregon Treaty was signed, Kanaka Village began to steadily decline. Company employees began their slow northward migration, while the California gold rush drew many employees and former employees southward. Concurrently, the abundance of cultivable lands around the Fort became a liability, as American settlers continued to flood into the region lands around the Fort were quickly “being covered with squatters, English and American” (Bancroft 1890b: 112).

In May of 1849, Theodore Talbot reported “a village of 40 or 50 houses occupied by servants of the Compy.” at the edge of the Fort (Talbot 1972: 125). The community apparently consisted primarily of Indian, Native Hawaiian and Métis residents, and was in decline, even as it was being encircled by adjacent settlers. Even the Catholic mission was threatened by encroaching squatters at this time; Father Blanchet made a claim on the mission site following the passage of the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 in order to prevent displacement by squatters or competing claimants, but ultimately had to abandon the site to squatters prior to the 1859 deadline for fort abandonment (Bancroft 1890b: 278-79).

By the early 1850s, Kanaka village is widely depicted as being a remnant of its former self, consisting of a small number of occupied structures and a growing surplus of homes, abandoned by the diaspora of employees and their families. The military played a growing role in the community, as it razed some abandoned structures and occupied others. As Hussey noted,

“With the decline of the Company’s business at Vancouver during the 1850’s, the staff of employees was cut, and the number of houses in the village was proportionately diminished. Beginning in 1849, some of the better structures were rented to the Army, chiefly for use as quarters and offices for the Quartermaster Department” (Hussey 1957: 219).

Community life sputtered along, but just barely. Kanaka William (William Kaulehelehe) attempted to hold together the community, officiating at religious services in the “Owyhee Church” until his congregation dwindled in the early 1850s. In 1854, while making preparations for the relocation of Klickitat from the Fort Vancouver area, Isaac Stevens estimated that there were some 20 structures remaining, some of them housing “servants, Kanakas, and Indians” (in Hussey 1957: 219).³⁰¹ In the two years that followed, however, a combination of wars and forced relocations led to the dispersal of a significant portion of the Indian and mixed-race residents of this community; employees at the Fort were increasingly identified as “Kanakas” in the final years of the Fort’s operations (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 153). A few “half-Indian” individuals were able to live at the fort after the forced relocations, but their presence, and their role in Kanaka Village life, was considerably diminished (Hussey 1991: 291).

Following this significant depopulation in the period between 1854 and 1856, the military began to demolish large portions of the Village in earnest – some structures being demolished by organized details and others being gradually scavenged into oblivion for firewood and building materials. Kanaka William’s Owyhee Church was demolished no later than 1858. By early 1860, the 14 remaining Fort employees hastily decommissioned the Fort (Hussey 1991: 278). In February of that year, military authorities decided to raze the remaining structures west and southwest of the Fort; they reported that the nine remaining buildings were “mere shells” and destroyed six of them, retaining three for military use (Hussey 1957: 218-20). Though Kanaka William continued to occupy his home, military personnel burned his house to the ground on March 20, 1860, despite apparent protests from the Company; he and his wife were allowed to briefly live in an old house after the demolition of their home, while the HBC continued removing its goods to Victoria (Hussey 1957: 109, 220). A steamer christened the *Otter* carried the remaining Company supplies, equipment, and merchandise to Victoria in three voyages between May and June of 1860. That summer, the remaining Hawaiian families from Kanaka Village - including Kanaka William and his wife - relocated to Fort Victoria. Once at Fort Victoria, these displaced families apparently occupied that Fort’s “Kanaka Row” settlement – an analogue of Kanaka Village, transplanted to a new setting some 200 miles away (Barman and Watson 2006: 171-72). John McLoughlin had died in 1857; his wife Marguerite, however, passed away in 1860 - only a few weeks before the final departure of Hudsons Bay Company employees from Fort Vancouver. While the Fort site would be incorporated into Vancouver Barracks, and continue to have a complex role in Northwest Indian history, the history of the Hudson’s Bay Company fort in Vancouver was – for all practical purposes – over.³⁰²

The Later Campaigns and Prisoners of Vancouver Barracks

As the Indian wars of the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s came to a close, Vancouver Barracks increasingly served as an administrative hub and prison facility, supporting military actions against American Indian tribes in far corners of the Northwest. Especially for the American Indians of the Northwestern interior, incarceration at the Barracks became perhaps the principal cause for a continued American Indian presence at Fort Vancouver. Bands of Nez Perce, and Shoshonean “Sheepstealers” were incarcerated there during their wars with the United States – sometimes as a temporary measure, to remove them from hostilities or to prepare these bands for relocation to more permanent facilities. Meanwhile, individuals from such communities as the Yakama and Colville Reservations were sometimes brought to the Barracks when they were considered a strategic threat to American interests. Working in cooperation with Indian agents at these reservations, the military especially targeted charismatic spiritual leaders for such incarceration, as the movements they spawned sometimes threatened to spread beyond reservation boundaries and to further galvanize or embolden Indian opposition to American policy on a regional scale. The threat of incarceration seems to have introduced an element of fear to many combatant tribes. In each case, military authorities seem to have understood the policy of incarceration as having a psychological and political value in their conflicts with interior tribes that extended well beyond the short-term practical values of incarceration.

The practice of incarcerating lone anti-American “agitators” at the Barracks was well established as an outcome of the Yakima War. As the Yakima War came to a close, Vancouver Barracks was becoming a holding place for prisoners from that conflict that were deemed by Indian agents and military leadership to be a threat to U.S. interests if they remained with their home communities in Yakama. Spiritual leaders who advocated resistance of American occupation were seen as a particular threat in this case, and were kept at Vancouver as an example to others who might resist relocation to Yakama. In the 1870s, there remained at Vancouver Barracks a prominent Yakama spiritual leader, Skemiah: O.O. Howard reported that “ “Father Wilbur,” [of] the Yakima agency, had previously brought us an insubordinate old chief, Skemiah, and we had him still confined in a guardroom at Fort Vancouver” (Howard 1907: 264). The case of Skemiah was discussed at councils with tribes involved with the “dreamer prophet” movement and other religious movements that were emerging, with an anti-EuroAmerican bent, among the interior tribes. Howard’s correspondence and reports mention his use of Skemiah’s story as a warning to tribes in a number of settings. At once such council with adherents of the dreamer prophet movement, Howard reported,

“I showed them that Skemiah, a dreamer, leader of a small band near Celilo, was already in the guard-house at Fort Vancouver, and that his people had come to the Yakima reservation, and that this would doubtless

be the fortune of any other dreamer leader for non-compliance with government instructions” (Howard 1877: 590).³⁰³

Skemiah was only released in June of 1877, after he agreed to no longer promote hostility toward the United States. News of his apparent acquiescence, too, was broadcast to area tribes in an effort to undermine these resistance movements.

This precedent, and its apparent strategic successes, would shape Indian policy at Vancouver Barracks during the Indian Wars of the same period. The events of the Nez Perce War demonstrate how this focus on incarceration was changing Indian-White relations at Vancouver. An 1855 treaty, negotiated between the Nez Perce and the United States, had guaranteed that tribe a reservation of roughly 7.7 million acres within a portion of their traditional homelands. However, by 1863, under pressure from fledgling mining and ranching interests, the United States negotiated and passed treaty legislation that angered many Nez Perce bands, reducing the size of their reservation to roughly 10% of its former size – from roughly 7.7 million to roughly 780,000 acres. Some Nez Perce leaders abided by U.S. orders to relocate to the much reduced reservation, but many others did not; those leaders who protested this change and refused this relocation were dubbed the “non-treaty” Nez Perce. In June of 1877, General Oliver Otis Howard ordered these “non-treaty” bands onto the reservation, giving those who resisted the order a 30-day ultimatum. During that period, young men from Joseph’s band – already angered by the forced relocation – attacked and killed some white ranchers in retaliation for an incident in which a member of their own family had been killed. With that, General Howard mobilized his troops to take all “non-treaty” bands to the Nez Perce Reservation by force. During the events leading up to the Nez Perce War, the fear of potential of incarceration at Vancouver Barracks shaped Indian-White relations in complex ways, and was reportedly used by some native peoples to agitate for resistance of U.S. forces. Meeting with the Nez Perce, Howard reported,

“They were crossing their hands and stating to every one they met that I was going to make slaves of them, and was going to put them into the “skookum-house,” meaning the guard-house or military prison” (Howard 1907: 264).

Quickly, skirmishes between Howard’s troops and Nez Perce bands escalated to become the Nez Perce War. This agonizing three-month war famously came to its conclusion as the U.S. military chased Joseph’s band and other combatants some 1,300 miles across Northwestern North America, through Montana and almost to Canada before they were captured.

One Nez Perce band in particular would be subject to imprisonment at Vancouver Barracks. At the onset of the Nez Perce War, U.S. infantry and cavalry swept through portions of Idaho, searching for “non-treaty” Nez Perce. On August 6, 1877, troops came upon a noncombatant Nez Perce band, led by Chief Redheart, that was just returning from buffalo hunting in western Montana and may not have been aware of the events unfolding in Idaho. Correspondence from the period makes it clear that this band – which included women and children – surrendered voluntarily to U.S. troops to avoid violent conflict, and was taken captive without incident (U.S. Office of the Adjutant General: 336: 731; Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 336). The prisoners were marched to Lewiston, Idaho, and there they were placed on a steamer down the Columbia River en route to Vancouver. Through the winter of 1877-78 Chief Redheart’s band of Nez Perce, totaling no fewer than 32 men, women and children, were held captive at Vancouver Barracks; they were detained there for a duration of eight months, according to most sources.³⁰⁴ One person – a two-year-old boy – was reported to have died while in captivity and was buried somewhere on the Barracks grounds. Some sources suggest that other Nez Perce bands were stationed at the Barracks for a time. There are occasional references to members of “Joseph’s band” being retained at Vancouver Barracks in September of 1877, though this may be a mistaken reference to Redheart’s Band, as Chief Joseph and most of his band did not surrender to U.S. forces until one month later, in October 5, 1877. However, it is clear that, by the 20th of October, a few individual and strategically important Nez Perce prisoners began arriving at the Barracks without their larger bands, including such leaders as Buffalo Blanket (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 338).

By November of 1877, the military leadership widely acknowledged that Redheart’s Band posed no significant military threat to the United States. Letters exchanged between General William Tecumseh Sherman, General O.O. Howard and U.S. Secretary of War, George W. McCrary seem to concur on the point that the band should be relocated to Lapwai, Idaho for release (U.S. War Department n.d.: 10: 864-66). However, the capture of Joseph’s band, and lingering concern among the Anglo-American public about the threat posed by the Nez Perce, postponed any action regarding Nez Perce prisoners. Redheart’s band continued to be detained at the Barracks. By December, Barracks officers had hired Nez Perce interpreters to facilitate communication between their prisoners and military personnel; prominent among the interpreters was a man named James Reuben, who assisted in communicating with the prisoners, but also seems to have served occasionally, to the extent possible, as their advocate. That winter, when a segment of the military leadership determined that – instead of release in Idaho – Redheart’s band should be sent to Indian Territory in Oklahoma, along with Joseph’s band and other Nez Perce combatants, a number of individuals came forward to their defense, including Reuben. After considerable debate on the matter, the advocates of Redheart’s band successfully petitioned against this course of action, and secured approval for their release in Idaho (U.S. Office of the Adjutant General n.d.: 339: 203-06). By April of 1878, the Nez Perce prisoners from Chief

Redheart's band were sent to Fort Lapwai, where they were released into the custody of the Indian agency.

A few individual Nez Perce prisoners seem to have been retained after this date. For example, O.O. Howard's notes mention the case of a man named Kutz-kutz-saw-my-ohut, variously identified as a Nez Perce or Umatilla leader, who was retained at the Barracks. Noting that this man posed no strategic threat in isolation from the combatant Nez Perce, and had a wife and children that he wished to join on the Umatilla Reservation, Howard interceded for his removal to that reservation: "I think it will be a good thing to grant this request to this Umatilla (Walla Walla) Chief. The man's wife is ill now and cannot go with him to Joseph in the Indian Territory" (U.S. War Department n.d.: 11: 393). In Vancouver Barracks post reports dating through much of 1879, there are references to prisoners being held and released from the Barracks - apparently alluding to Nez Perce captives who were still being retained and gradually released into the custody of Indian agencies. The post reports and other documentation are woefully ambiguous on the specific identities of these captives, however.

Even as these Nez Perce prisoners left Vancouver Barracks, others were taking their place. In 1878, Vancouver troops were reported rounding up Warm Springs and Columbia River Indians who were off-reservation, for example, sometimes holding them temporarily at Vancouver Barracks before they were released into the custody of their respective Indian agencies (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: Reel 11). Meanwhile, the Barracks also administered the Bannock War during the year 1878. In addition to Shoshonean Bannocks and northern "Pi-Utes," combatants included "the Klamaths, some Columbia River Indians, and a small body of Umatillas" (Howard 1907: 400). By most accounts, the initial battles of this war were the result of the scuttling of key tribal gathering areas for camas (*Camassia quamash*) by arriving settlers. Led by Chief Buffalo Horn, who had served as a scout for Otis Howard during the Nez Perce War, the Bannock and their allies began raiding white settlers, principally for food to offset the loss of the camas harvest. In two decisive battles, Howard put down the raids, and the remaining combatants surrendered. While relatively little of the combatant population was routed through the Vancouver Barracks, the Barracks directed the retention and resettlement of prisoners from this conflict at a distance, with prisoners initially being routed to Fort Harney in southeast Oregon, as well as the Yakama Reservation. At the end of hostilities, the captives included "11 ringleaders Bannocks and Piutes" (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 10: 379). These 11 were sent to Vancouver Barracks, while another 543 "Piutes and Bannocks" were sent to Yakama agency for resettlement, arriving there in early February 1879 by forced march, suffering extreme deprivations in the process (J.H. Wilbur in Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 919: 220). Some of these prisoners - including at least three children - died in transit (Howard 1907: 417). By March of 1879, a 12th prisoner, named Sloh-oh-savune, was sent to Vancouver - possibly due to his participation in the "dreamer-prophet" movement of the time rather than direct involvement with the Bannock War (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: Roll 11).³⁰⁵ Several

Bannocks and other Paiute prisoners escaped during their forced removal to Fort Harney, most being captured and routed to Vancouver Barracks for incarceration:

“they were finally captured – a part near Fort Bidwell and a part near the Klamath Agency. These Indians – apparently 31 of them – were sent to these headquarters via the Klamath. Those selected from Harney for detention and these from Klamath, captured, I have kept at Vancouver Barracks constantly employed at hard labor” (Howard 1879: 149; Howard 1999: 660-61).

One of these prisoners apparently died at Vancouver Barracks on June 30, 1879 (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: Roll 11). Vancouver Barracks attempted to relocate more prisoners to Yakama Reservation, but the Yakama agency actively resisted the relocation of additional prisoners to their control, citing their large numbers and potentially destabilizing influence.³⁰⁶ Bannock survivors were ultimately routed to the Fort Hall Reservation, along with populations that had been held temporarily at Yakama and Fort Harney, and many of their descendents still reside at Fort Hall today. Many other Bannocks remained at Yakama, or relocated to join family at Warm Springs and other reservation communities after this date, becoming part of those tribal communities.

The Sheepeater War of 1879 – the last major Indian war in the Pacific Northwest, and the last conflict to result in larger prisoner populations at Vancouver Barracks – was to be the culmination of the Barracks’ incarceration policy, in which almost the entire population of combatants were taken into custody at the Barracks and organized efforts undertaken there to acculturate them while in captivity. The principal Indian combatants in this war were the Sheepeater band of Western Shoshones – so named because of their dependence upon, and considerable skill at hunting, bighorn sheep within their Idaho homelands. The Sheepeater band’s ethnolinguistic affiliations are reported variously, but they typically have been presented as Shoshonean, with an admixture of members and practices reflecting both their extensive intermarriage with adjacent tribes and their possible integration of war refugees from the tribes with which they had kinship ties.

Their strong ties to the many peoples who had already been attacked, subdued, and forcibly relocated by U.S. forces made them suspicious at best of American entreaties for their removal to reservations; the same attachments, along with rumors of their involvement in past skirmishes between U.S. forces and Paiute and Shoshone bands, made them similarly suspect in the eyes of American authorities. As the Paiute and Shoshone hinterland was being populated, they increasingly stood out as a final bastion of resistance to American Indian policy on the Columbia Plateau. Efforts to coerce the Sheepeaters from their lands proved unsuccessful. At the close of the 1870s, on the

basis of settlers' accounts, which ranged from the ambiguous to the blatantly fabricated, the Sheepeater band were being accused of a number of hostilities against individual miners and ranchers in central Idaho. Under the administrative direction of Vancouver Barracks, troops were dispatched from Camp Howard (2nd Infantry) and Boise Barracks (1st Cavalry), while a group of Indian scouts were dispatched from Umatilla Agency (under the command of the 21st infantry). The troops converged near Payette Lake, where they engaged the Sheepeater band in the summer of 1879.

A number of other tribal populations were suspected of being in league with the Sheepeaters, or at least providing them with material support. In response, at the height of hostilities in summer of 1879, General Oliver Otis Howard held a council with a number of bands from different tribes who had been involved, or were believed to be prepared to involve themselves, in hostilities, to take strategic prisoners from each of the suspected combatants:

“Our campaign was not finished until I had returned to Umatilla and had a prolonged council with the different bodies of Indians, - Cayuses, Columbias, Walla Wallas, and Umatillas. The results of the Umatilla council were to send several prominent Indians whose loyalty was suspected to safe forts, there to be kept for a time as hostages for the good behavior of the remainder” (Howard 1907: 416).

Though the terrain was rugged and the troops had considerable difficulty navigating in pursuit of the Sheepeaters, the commanders and Umatilla scouts used their advantages - horses, superior numbers and weapons - to wear down the Shoshones. Through that summer, troops pursued the outnumbered and outgunned Sheepeater band through the rugged Salmon River basin in Idaho. The Sheepeater band had their final stand on the Middle Fork of the Salmon River on or around October 1, 1879:

“After numerous assaults, finally flanking the Indian position and destroying the Indian camp, [Lieutenant Farrow of the 21st infantry] forced the entire band to surrender” (Howard 1907: 430-31).

A number of small parties of these combatants effectively escaped, but were routed far beyond the Sheepeater territory.³⁰⁷ The surrendering band was promptly placed into captivity and prepared for relocation to Vancouver Barracks. Under Farrow's command, the entire band was sent to the Barracks in a forced march that was apparently punitive in nature:

“by sixty-two days of marching through fearful snows over rugged mountains he reached the Columbia River with his captive tribe and

delivered them to me at Vancouver Barracks as prisoners of war...The prisoners were gathered together at Fort Harney and Vancouver Barracks and the whole case submitted to Washington for instructions" (Howard 1907: 430-31, 419).

Food was scarce on this 62-day forced march from Idaho to Vancouver, and the prisoners – including entire families, with limited or no provisions – suffered badly from the journey. While reported numbers vary, and are very difficult to surmise from the post and commanders' records of the time, it appears that no fewer than 65 prisoners took part in this relocation, captured not only in the Salmon River campaign, but in other skirmishes both preceding and following that pivotal battle.³⁰⁸ Additional prisoners were routed to the Barracks from Fort Harney. The exact number of prisoners detained by the conclusion of the Bannock War is difficult to ascertain conclusively from available records, but hundreds of Paiute and Shoshone are reported in Vancouver Barracks post reports from this time (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: Roll 10). The War Department reports of the time allude to no fewer than 51 Sheepeater prisoners being held at Fort Vancouver while they awaited transport for trial to civil authorities in Idaho (U.S. War Department n.d.: 11: 771). The discrepancies between these numbers and those provided by other sources are not easily reconciled, and it is possible that there were unreported (or underreported) deaths among the Sheepeater band during their time in captivity. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Farrow received a brevet commission, signed by President Cleveland, for his service in this campaign, which – in the view from Washington D.C. - effectively brought to a close the "Indian troubles" of the Pacific Northwest.

When the Sheepeater band arrived at Vancouver, they were the focus of unusual attentions by the military personnel stationed there – in part due to their novelty as a tribe relatively untouched by "civilizing" influences and in part due to their status as the last tribe captured in the depopulation of the non-reservation Northwestern hinterland. The writings of General Howard, who received these prisoners, give some glimpse into their unusual treatment by the men of the Barracks:

"Upon arrival at the [Vancouver Barracks] post these Sheep-Eater Indian prisoners were the objects of curious scrutiny. For the most part they were substantially the same as the Bannocks in manners and customs, but dressed in scanty attire of mountain sheep and other skins. The band was composed of Bannocks, Pi-Utes, Snakes, Nez Percés, and Cayuses...

"It was not long before confidence and contentment reigned throughout the encampment. Sarah Winnemucca [a celebrated Paiute "princess" and translator] visited Fort Vancouver about this time, and as an interpreter rendered invaluable service in arriving at a better

understanding of the Indian prisoners and their needs, and instituted a good school for the children and others and began teaching them English.

“Major Kress was the superintendent of our Sunday-school, and Indians, old and young, were gathered into that. In this the ladies of the garrison became teachers, and with Sarah, they had sewing classes and proper instruction in that line. General Morrow set the Indians to work, being delighted at the opportunity to relieve his soldiers from ordinary and extraordinary police duty. The Indians came out of the guard-house to white-wash the fences, make paths, build and improve roads, and to put the whole outer face of things in prime condition.

“I often watched groups of these Indians while they were at work. They never appeared to relax their energy and effort to do everything required of them, and to do it well” (Howard 1907: 432-33).³⁰⁹

Elsewhere, General Oliver Otis Howard recalled the Sheepeater campaign as the “most satisfactory operation in the Northwest,” apparently due to the military’s unusually direct hand in efforts to acculturate the Sheepeater band during their incarceration (Howard 1907: 10). Appropriations for their support flowed comparatively freely, and supply requisition documents show that funds were used to procure food, clothing, and a variety of other supplies for Bannock and Paiute prisoners at Vancouver from July to September of 1879 (MacFeely 1880: 499).

In time, it was determined that the small and unassuming Sheepeater band also did not pose a threat to the national interests of the United States, and the trials and punishments proposed at the beginning of their incarceration did not fully materialize. The Fort Harney prisoners, transported to Vancouver Barracks, were originally scheduled to be sent to Florida for a “few years of probation” as a punitive measure but the war department later determined that the “cost of transportation thither and their necessary return to Oregon...is more than a farce” (in U.S. War Department n.d.: 11: 517). The Division Commander in San Francisco ordered that their “ring-leaders” be sent from Fort Vancouver to Alcatraz; however, before O.O. Howard could act on this order, it was reversed by an order from the Secretary of War in Washington D.C., allowing them instead to be released back to their families contingent on “good behavior” (O.O. Howard in U.S. War Department n.d.: 11: 677; Secretary of War in U.S. Office of the Adjutant General n.d.: 379: 407). The Department of the Interior, in consultation with military leadership at the Barracks, determined that the entire band could be released into the custody of an appropriate Indian reservation. The Sheepeater prisoners were first released into the custody of the Umatilla Reservation (though some sources also reference Warm Springs as a stopover point on their journey) – leaving Vancouver Barracks, they were the last prisoners from a major military engagement to leave the Vancouver stockade. They were subsequently relocated from Umatilla, being released into the oversight of Fort Hall Reservation, where many of their descendents

are still enrolled today (Ruby and Brown 1989; Howard 1907; U.S. War Department n.d.).

The departure of the Sheepeater band did not mark the end of Indian incarcerations at the Barracks, nor the end of the Barracks' relevance in Indian-white relations in the Pacific Northwest. Incarceration was still used as a preventative measure as various conflicts continued to simmer between U.S. forces and interior tribes. In most cases, Vancouver Barracks was a temporary stopover point between the locations of tribal capture and the reservation communities to which they were redicected. In his reports to the U.S. War Department, O.O. Howard, for example, spoke of a band led by a chief named Hiackeny, which had resided at Warm Springs and later the Umatilla Indian Agency.³¹⁰ The band had returned "to their old haunts not far from the mouth of the John Day's River" in north-central Oregon and settlers were threatening violence. In order to avoid another Indian conflict,

"[Captain Boyle, commander] sent Lieutenant Shofner, Twenty-first Infantry, with a small escort, to take the rest of the band to Warm Springs Indian Agency. The Indian prisoners were kept at Vancouver Barracks till the arrival of the other prisoners of war from Fort Harney, when they were sent to the Yakama Agency and transferred to Agent Wilbur" (Howard 1879: 149).

According to Howard, "the principal men...Hiackeny and seven men" were brought to Vancouver Barracks for the duration of this event, before being released to Yakama. Similar captures and releases are mentioned, often only parenthetically, in post reports from this period.

As late as the 1880s, some Vancouver Barracks post reports mention councils being held with what are termed the "Columbia River tribes" that include former prisoners of the barracks. In April 1883, for example, O.O. Howard reported a council that included his old prisoners Skimiah, Hyackeny, and others, where the memory and persisting threat of incarceration at the Barracks still seems to have provided a powerful device in American negotiations. Certainly, incarceration at the Barracks remained a real possibility for any tribal leader who might find themselves publicly at odds with federal, military, or reservation policies. As late as 1889, Indian prisoners were reported being held at Vancouver Barracks, most being individuals accused of agitating Indians against United States and reservation leadership, and awaiting removal to other prison facilities. As before, spiritual leaders from messianic movements were especially targeted for this imprisonment. Skolaskin, an important Sanpoil (Colville) dreamer-prophet, for example, was described in 1889 as "a most dangerous and turbulent element among the Indians" of the Northwest interior, according to Acting Secretary of Interior, George Chandler, who successfully petitioned for Skolaskin's imprisonment. The Second Infantry based at Fort Spokane arrested Skolaskin and he was conveyed by

a Fourth Infantry detachment to Vancouver Barracks. That winter, Skolaskin was transferred from to the military prison on Alcatraz Island, on San Francisco Bay (Ruby and Brown 1989: 179). From this time on, the availability of Alcatraz and other military prisons in the region made the Vancouver Barracks stockade largely obsolete - a mere "holding tank" for Indian prisoners being taken to these more widely-known and notorious military prisons elsewhere in the United States.

Conclusions

This is no typical NAGPRA tribal affiliation study, and its results are certain to give NPS resource managers reason for reflection. As the preceding pages attest, almost every tribe in the Pacific Northwest, and quite a few from beyond the region, may claim that some portion of their historical community visited, lived at, and possibly even died at Fort Vancouver. And every tribe that makes general claims to tribal association with Fort Vancouver is probably correct in doing so. While the veracity of each individual claim has to be judged on its own merits, it is true that perhaps the majority of modern Northwestern tribes have at least some subset of their enrollees whose families have historical ties to the Fort. The degree to which the Fort community was woven into the economic and social life of 19th century Pacific Northwest tribes is simply without parallel. As such, the Fort Vancouver story defies the underlying logic of NAGPRA, which presumes – among other things – that cultural affiliation might be established by the geographical provenience of human remains.

While these challenges emanate especially from the multiethnic and multi-tribal character of Fort Vancouver's population of laborers in the years of approximately 1824 to 1849, even the identity of the indigenous residents of the Fort area is not a simple matter. The closely juxtaposed (and presumably overlapping) interests of the Clackamas, Multnomah, and Cascades Chinooks, followed by the demographic collapse and diaspora of these communities, make the determination of modern tribal affiliations complex at best. So too, the rapid expansion and contraction of the resident Klickitat during the fur trade era complicates this picture. Historical accounts employ the term "Klickitat" indiscriminately to a diverse and variegated population, including interior Klickitat bands, but also those groups such as Cowlitz that were extensively intermarried into these interior populations. Yakama Klickitats clearly resided in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver and apparently Cowlitz "Klickitats" were represented there too. More detailed investigation would be required to connect the "Klickitat" so frequently reported at Fort Vancouver with specific Yakama or Cowlitz bands; tribal oral tradition and genealogical information ultimately may prove the strongest sources of information on this point.

Certainly, while these tribal groups dispersed widely in the mid- to late-19th century, they are still clearly represented by contemporary tribal communities, each containing a number of descendents. Some conventional sources, such as Ruby and Brown (1986) for example, depict the Cascades and Multnomah peoples as extinct, and the Clackamas and Klickitat as nearly so. Yet this overstates and oversimplifies the situation, as there are numerous descendents of each of these groups today; true, most may identify as "Grand Ronde" or "Yakama" or "Warm Springs" or some other modern tribal identity instead of as "Clackamas" or "Multnomah," reflecting the multi-tribal foundations of each of these modern tribes. Still, the numbers of descendents from Portland Basin

tribes have arguably been on the upswing for roughly a century, and some proportion of this population clearly still acknowledges ancestry from, and occasionally identifies with, pre-reservation ethnicities (Williams 2000). Contributing to this phenomenon, descendents of Portland Basin tribes, dispersed to multiple reservation communities, appear to have maintained contact and social connections with one another through a variety of means. Shared labor on farms and ranches, subsistence fishing and social gatherings at places such as Celilo and Willamette Falls, Shaker church events and, recently, powwows and rodeos, have allowed members of these different reservation communities to converge and to maintain some degree of identity that might extend beyond the boundaries of specific federally-recognized tribes (Fisher 2003).

Identifying the full range of tribes with historical ties to Fort Vancouver is no small task, even after a thorough review of available documentation. Still, certain tribes appear more frequently than others in these sources. Evidence suggests that the descendents of the resident peoples, who lived in large numbers within villages close to the fort site before and during the era of HBC operations, are now enrolled in such tribes as Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Yakama, and Cowlitz – perhaps Siletz, Quinault, the federally unrecognized Chinook Tribe, and others.³¹¹ Military records and journals also suggest that the descendents of the prisoners who lived, and sometimes died, at Vancouver Barracks are now enrolled in such tribes as Yakama, Umatilla, Colville, Nez Perce, Fort Hall, Warm Springs, and others – with several Paiute and Shoshone populations who were once incarcerated at the Barracks now being scattered between multiple tribes. The list of American Indian tribes, Canadian First Nations, and Native Hawaiian organizations whose ancestors worked at Fort Vancouver is almost too long to recount. Federally unrecognized tribes would certainly be counted among their number as well.³¹² Certainly, among those who are documented to have been buried at the Fort, certain modern Northwest tribal affiliations stand out prominently in the written record: Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, Umatilla, Yakama, Siletz, Chehalis, and Chinook certainly are well-represented, but so are many other indigenous populations of the United States and Canada – Native Hawaiian and Iroquois especially. It is not clear that the descendants of many of the individuals who were buried at the Fort rejoined their maternal tribes, but instead became part of other populations, Native and non-Native, American and Canadian. To determine their whereabouts would require focused genealogical research. Many other tribes, not mentioned in this conclusion but addressed elsewhere in this report, also have clear ties to the Fort.³¹³

Certain tribes, as well as individual tribal members and their families, continue to maintain a strong sense of attachment to the Fort Vancouver area today. There are continued commemorative efforts by the Nez Perce and other tribal communities whose tribal members lived, died, and were sometimes buried at the Fort. In the course of this research, it has also become clear that there is an impressively robust oral tradition among some tribal families regarding their time at Fort Vancouver or Vancouver Barracks. The place still means something to these tribal peoples – it may not mean the

same thing to each of them, as the American Indian experiences at this site were as diverse as the many different peoples who converged there.

Potentials for Further Research

Like any research report, the current document has its limitations, reflecting the limited scale and scope of the original research effort. The contents of this document are based largely on a review of existing written documentation - most of it written by senior HBC staff, military leaders, U.S. treaty negotiators, explorers, and others. The Native voice, poorly represented in these account, remains largely silent in this report. This might yet be remedied. As noted, in the course of this research, a surprisingly large number of individuals from American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations mentioned that they recalled their families' stories of life at Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks. In light of this fact, it is highly recommended that the NPS consider documenting this oral history through a systematic ethnographic or oral history interviewing process involving interested tribal communities. Such a research effort might also benefit from access to the sometimes vast archival collections of the tribes associated with this area, if they wish to open them or provide selected materials. A research effort of this kind might involve collaboration with tribal cultural resource staff with related expertise from multiple tribes, with the larger research effort being coordinated by NPS specialists or cooperators. Based on the brief discussions of oral history pertaining to the Fort undertaken in the current study, it is almost certain that this kind of effort would yield information that would be of much value to the NPS in consultation, compliance, and interpretive efforts, while also providing opportunities to cooperatively document information and perspectives that are of enduring interest to tribes. This kind of research effort would certainly yield information on topics that were elusive at best within the available written documents, augmenting and improving on what is found in the current report, while expanding well beyond the topical coverage of the current study. A "Traditional Use Study" or an "Oral History Study" - two conventional study types prescribed by the Director's Order 28, the National Park Service's Cultural Resource Management Guideline, might be appropriate in this case. NPS-28 specifies that Traditional Use Studies in particular must "be conducted and periodically updated for all parks having traditional resource users" to facilitate resource management functions as well as interpretation and other park mandates.

Other types of investigations may also be in order. Considering the scale and complexity of the information reviewed in this report, this document did not attempt to provide detailed accounts of the experiences of tribes and reservation communities following their removal from Vancouver. Still, such information may be of value in understanding the context of contemporary tribal concerns, values, and perspectives

related to Fort Vancouver, as well as protocols that might exist within tribes as to cultural resource management. Such a document could be produced with specific objectives, such as facilitating tribal consultation and compliance efforts, that would influence its design and execution.

In light of the challenges of tracking particular populations' movements over time, more detailed biographical research might be warranted that could illuminate the identities of particular populations – such as employees' families – that are associated with Fort Vancouver. Biographical treatments of particular populations, such as the Champoeg community, and the paths they took through the 19th century might be useful in understanding how diffusely the HBC employees' descendents were distributed through the Native and non-Native worlds – possibly demonstrating to contemporary Indian and non-Indian communities alike that they share a common history at Fort Vancouver. Diaries and other accounts in the Oregon Historical Society Research Library would be a good place to embark on such a biographical and genealogical investigation. Similarly, archives in British Columbia not used extensively for the current report – especially the archives of the Royal British Columbia Provincial Museum – may reveal the paths taken by the many HBC employees and officers who arrived at Fort Victoria after their departure from Fort Vancouver. There may also be some value in reviewing information pertaining to specific Native Hawaiian, Iroquois, Cree employees to better ascertain their communities of origin and their paths of departure following employment at Fort Vancouver. Mining the data of the vast HBC collections in Winnipeg and at FOVA, in addition to those already mentioned, may assist in this task. Also, concurrently with the completion of this report, certain new and thorough biographical documents have become available that address the Fort Vancouver community, most notably Bruce Watson's 2010 tome, *Lives Lived West of the Divide*. Reviewing these sources, alongside other published and archival works, may allow Fort Vancouver to state with some certainty the paths taken by individuals and families who were historically associated with the fort as they moved to places such as Fort Victoria, Champoeg, and the larger Indian and Anglo-American communities of the Pacific Northwest. Ethnographic archives, though partially tapped for this report, may yet reveal more information about the identities and pathways taken by resident tribes; the ethnographic notes of Melville Jacobs at the University of Washington Special Collections on the Clackamas and other tribal populations may be beneficial in this regard. In all of these endeavors, the archival collections of modern tribes would be invaluable.

Regardless of what research may follow the current study, it seems important to distribute the information contained within the current document to the visiting public, the tribes, and others who possess an interest in the history of this unique place. Following its review and emendation by NPS reviewers, and presumably by tribal cultural representatives as well, there may be some value in editing the current document, perhaps illustrating it, and printing copies for broader distribution to Fort

Vancouver visitors, so that they might appreciate the rich, complex and multi-ethnic history of the Fort. Interpretive plans or materials, containing some of the contents of the current report, might also be developed in consultation with interested tribes to foster the broader distribution of this historical information in a manner that is culturally appropriate and is backed by NPS research efforts.

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Appendix 1:

Accounts of Burials on the Lower Columbia River

Human remains have been reported within and adjacent to Fort Vancouver National Historical Site - most (though not necessarily all) presumably associated with cemeteries associated with Fort Vancouver and Vancouver Barracks. Accounts of these cemeteries have been provided in great detail in existing reports, including Walker Research Group (2006) and Thomas and Friedenborg (1997), so further analysis of cemetery and burial data is not attempted here.³¹⁴

The situation and topography of Fort Vancouver is not inconsistent with what might be expected at a traditional Chinookan burial site, but detailed accounts of this function are elusive. Robert Hine and Savoie Lottinville, editors of the journals of Theodore Talbot, who was stationed at Vancouver Barracks, make reference to a suggestion that “the post had been built on an Indian graveyard,” though the source of their information is unclear (Talbot 1972: 119). Still, accounts of burials within the Chinookan realm abound in the written accounts of explorers, traders, early anthropologists, and others who traveled the Columbia River in the 19th century. While the value of these references within the larger analysis of Fort Vancouver’s NAGPRA compliance and consultation mandates is uncertain, selected references have been gathered and are presented below in the hope that they might be of use to both NPS staff and park-associated tribes in understanding and protecting the cultural legacy of the lower Columbia Region.

Each passage from the journals or other written accounts of early observers is included below, preceded by the author’s name. Exact locations are generally omitted, in part to protect the integrity of remaining burial sites, but the burials described occur primarily from the vicinity of modern-day Longview, Washington upstream to the vicinity of modern-day Camas, Washington. The methods of burial described below were noted by the earliest non-Native explorers of the Columbia, with accounts describing a consistent canoe burial tradition from the first arrival of Euro-Americans (Broughton in 1792) until the period of active missionization in the 1840s. A few early authors have attributed specific cosmological value to canoe burials, some representing the practice as an assurance of transportation to or within the afterlife (e.g., Beaver 1959: 39-40; Parker 1841: 249).³¹⁵ Canoe burials were especially for the propertied classes; slaves, as is noted in some accounts, did not typically receive canoe burials. Chinookan burials were, and among many Indian communities continue to be, fiercely protected. Kane (1859: 120) reported an account of one of Cassino’s slaves, with the approval of the chief himself, killing another Indian for “robbing sepulcher canoes,” with Cassino noting that, by their traditional laws, “the crime was one of the greatest an Indian could be guilty of.”³¹⁶ Even the Metis population of Fort Vancouver appears to have treated

burials with great caution and avoided direct contact with human remains when possible.³¹⁷

Broughton (1792):

“Sunday, October 28th, [1792...passed] a small rocky islet, about twenty feet above the surface of the water. Several canoes covered the top of the islet, in which dead bodies were deposited” (in Barry 1926: 401).

Edward Bell (1792):

“Whilst the Boat pull’d up along shore, Mr. B. and myself walked along the Beach; at a little distance from the Point, on a high Bank of Sand we observed several large Canoes curiously ornamented raised by the help of Pillars, about man height from the ground, which we found contained the remains of dead Bodies, and from the size and ornaments of the Canoes & the manner of their being placed, it is probable the deceased were chiefs, or people of high rank, in passing over some loose Sand we trod upon a Plank of Wood which caught our attention, and on clearing away the Sand we took off two large Planks which covered a Coffin or Box of about 6 feet long, and 3 feet Broad, at first we could perceive nothing but a Bundle of decayed Matts, which upon removing three or 4 folds of, we came to as many folds of Deer Skins which were not so much decayed, after removing all the folds we found the dead Body of a Man, we saw no more of it than from the neck to the middle, so much of the body was in a very perfect state, and in no way offensive, the Skin & flesh seem’d perfectly hard and sound, unwilling to disturb the body any further we replaced the folds of Skins and Matts, and after placing every thing as we found them, went on to the Boat, and embark’d, proceeding on the Survey” (Bell 1932: 37-38).

Captain Bishop (1795):

“The Chiefs and the free People, when they die, are put into a Box or a Chest, placed with their knees up to the Breast, with their Back upwards, and wrapped up in the Best Sea Otter Skins, and then Placed upon the top of some high tree. If he is rich in Slaves they kill a certain number accordingly and Bury them round the foot of the tree” (Bishop 1967: 127).

John Scouler (1825):

“...I availed myself of the opportunity of examining the mode of internment, & to procure a specimen of their compressed skulls. The opportunity was very favourable, as the boat I was in was manned with Owyhees, who had less superstition than any people in the country, not excepting the Canadians. All the canoes of the dead are placed along the steep sides of the rock near the river & none of them were placed toward the summit of the hill, which is about 150 feet about the level of the river. The canoes are not raised from the ground, as is the custom in many places. The canoes were covered by boards fixed firmly by cords & pressed down by large stones. On many of these canoes were placed carved wooden dishes, such as they use to steam their sturgeon in. Many of the canoes were so firmly fixed that it was impossible to get a view of their interior. Unwilling to do any injury, I examined one that was very much decayed. On lifting up one of the boards I disturbed a serpent who had [taken] up his abode in the canoe; (Le Virgil) which contained a complete skeleton. In this canoe I saw many of the ornaments of the deceased, which consisted of beads, Hyaquass, & some European trinkets. The steepness of the rock prevents the canoes from accumulating, as they roll into the river when they begin to decay & are carried out to the ocean. The canoes are in some instances ornamented with feathers & boards painted with rude resemblances of the human figure. This method of burying the dead, if I may use the expression, is very affecting. The solitude of the place & the assemblage of so many objects with which we are not accustomed to associate serious ideas, deposited as mementos of the dead, can not but form an interesting contrast & give rise to the most serious reflections” (Scouler 1905: 279-80).

John Scouler (1825 – Columbia estuary):

“In our progress we passed the burying ground of Comcomli; here in the space of two years, the unfortunate old man had deposited the remains of 8 individuals of his family. The canoes had a curious & melancholy appearance; they were covered with laced coats, silks & beads, & every article which the deceased possessed. The Indians, like our late ancestors, deposit the canoes of the dead along with the body. C[omc]omly’s sons had their fowling piece by their side & a loaded pistol in each hand. Occasionally the old man visits the graves of his sons & exposes the bodies to see that all the ornaments remain about them, & if necessary to put new blankets & mats around them” (Scouler 1905: 276-77).

William Fraser Tolmie (1830s):

“On a high bluff & also on a small rocky islet the habitations of the dead are very numerous. The Chenooks seem to choose places the most difficult of access to deposit the remains of their defunct friends” (Tolmie 1963: 168-69).

Pierre Jean deSmet (1830s-40s)

“During the epidemic fever of 1832, which almost swept this portion of the Columbia valley of its inhabitants, vast numbers of the dead were placed among them. They were usually wrapped in skins, placed in the canoes, and hung from the boughs of trees six or eight feet from the ground. Thousands of these were seen” (deSmet 1906: 67-68).

Paul Kane (1840s):

“About ten miles lower down we encamped for the night near [a burial] much against the inclination of my men, whose superstition would have led them to avoid such a place...in which the Indians deposit their dead. I took a sketch of the rock before the night set in.

There is another rock lower down, on which were deposited two or three hundred of their burial canoes; but Commodore Wilkes having made a fire near the spot, it communicated to the bodies, and nearly the whole of them were consumed. The Indians showed much indignation at the violation of a place which was held so sacred by them, and would no doubt have sought revenge had they felt themselves strong enough to do so” (Kane 1859: 200-01).

Samuel Parker (1841):

“Among some interesting islands of basalt, there is one...situated in the middle of the river, rising ten or fifteen feet above high freshet water. It is almost entirely covered with canoes in which the dead are deposited, which circumstance gives it its name. In the section of country from Wâppatoo island to the Pacific ocean, the Indians, instead of committing the dead to the earth, deposit them in canoes, and these are placed in such situations as are most secure from beasts of prey; upon such precipices as this island, upon branches of trees, or upon scaffolds made for the

purpose. The bodies of the dead are covered with mats, and split planks are placed over them. The head of the canoe is a little raised, and at the foot there is a hole made for water to escape" (Parker 1841: 152-53).

Samuel Parker (1841):

"I noticed on my return, a singular rocky point on the north shore...rising nearly perpendicular about one hundred feet separated from the adjacent high hills... It was covered with canoes containing the dead. These depositories are held in great veneration by the Indians. They are not chosen for convenience, but for security against ravenous beasts; and are often examined by the friends of the deceased, to see if the remains of the dead repose in undisturbed quiet. And such is their watchful care, that the anatomist could rarely make depredations without detection, or with impunity" (Parker 1841: 165-66).

Eugene Duflot de Mofras (1841):

"The Chinooks do not burn their dead, but give them graves worthy of a race who pass most of their lives on the water. So, when a man dies, his nostrils are stuffed with a kind of shellwork, and bands made of glass beads or woven fabrics are attached to his eyelids. The body, clothed in its finest garments, is then wrapped in pelts or woolen blankets and placed, with the head pointing toward land and the feet toward the river, in a canoe covered with bark, elevated on four stones and supported by horizontal bars. Branches of trees placed around this aerial sepulchre hold all the objects used by the deceased during his lifetime – his bow, arrows, gun, hatchet, and bowl" (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 184).

George Colvocoresses (1840s):

"We saw on both banks many Indian villages, some of which were at one time without inhabitants. This last feature was attributed to the ravages of the fever and ague, and the appearance of the burying-grounds in the vicinity served to confirm the statement; they were large, and thickly studded with graves. The first case of the kind occurred in the year 1830, when an European vessel, commanded by Captain Dominis, was lying at anchor in the river, and the Indians have always believed that he brought the disease among them. In the opinions of the physicians of the Hudson's Bay Company, the disease would not prove so fatal if they

would adopt the European mode of treating it, but this they will not do; they prefer their own treatment, which consists in taking a series of cold baths. The manner of disposing of the dead does not appear to be the same at all the burial grounds. In some, the coffins are all painted red, the favorite color, and have hung around them mats, baskets, bows and arrows; in short, everything supposed to be of use to the departed on their journey to the world of Spirits and future Hunting Grounds” (Colvocoresses 1852: 258).

John Minto (1840s):

“...when a leading man like Chenamus, Chief of Chinooks, died, the body was carefully swathed in cedar bark wrappings; his war canoe or barge of state was used as his coffin, and his second best canoe, if he had two, was inverted and placed over the body as a defense against the weather or wild beasts; a small hole was made in the lower canoe and it was placed in a slanting position to facilitate complete drainage. No money reward would induce an Indian of the Lower Columbia to enter and labor in a canoe that had been thus used for the dead. Thus the best and generally all the property worth notice was rendered useless to the living” (Minto 1900: 300).

Other, less conventional forms of burial are reported for the Chinookans along the lower Columbia River. Townsend (1839: 174) refers to gathering an embalmed and wrapped “mummy” from a burial near Sauvie’s Island. This appears to be similar to what Minto witnessed on Sauvie Island some six years later: “‘The dead were there,’ in large numbers, swathed in cedar bark, and laid tier above tier on constructions of cedar slabs about four inches thick, and often four feet wide” (Minto 1900: 310). William Fraser Tolmie alluded to finding cremated human remains along the lower Columbia as well within the context of canoe burials: “Passed a canoe fastened to the trunk of a tree in the bank about 5 yards from margin, containing the ashes of a Chenooke. The Indians call these sepulchers Nihilush elihe ‘the Place of the Dead’” (Tolmie 1963: 167). During the epidemics of the 1803s, interment methods often became hastier among the Chinookan people of the lower Columbia due to the astonishingly high mortality rate. In some cases, complete canoe burials were probably not feasible and there are some accounts of interring human remains within houses where all residents had died or otherwise departed, and of large-scale cremations.

Disposal of the remains of slaves was more perfunctory, according to written accounts of the period. Alexander Ross reported that

"All, excepting slaves, are laid in canoes or wooden sepulchres, and conveyed to some consecrated rock or thicket assigned for the dead; but slaves are otherwise disposed of; that is, if he or she dies in summer, the body is carelessly buried; but if in winter, a stone is tied about the neck, and the body thrown into the river, and none but slaves ever touch a slave after death" (Ross 1849: 97).³¹⁸

Franchère had similar comments regarding the burial of slaves, "When they die they are thrown, without ceremony, under tree trunks or at the edge of the woods" (Franchère 1967: 110). Charles Bishop claimed that "their Slaves when dead are thrown out into the Woods and left to rott or to be Eaten by Wolves &c –" (Bishop 1967: 127). George Simpson suggested of slaves that "they are left a pray to the Dogs & Crows as they are denied the ordinary burial" (Simpson 1931: 101).

Notes

¹ For example, in a letter from the HBC Governor and Committee to John McLaughlin, dated September 27th, 1843, they instruct him to gather such ethnographic information:

“We shall expect you to send us an annual report ... on the general state of the Native population, made up from information to be furnished by the gentlemen in charge of the different stations west of the mountains, in which may be included any interesting particulars respecting their manners, customs and traditions, together with such collections of words, arranged in the form of a vocabulary, as may from time to time be conveniently made” (HBC Governor and Committee 1843: 307).

² Kardas noted of the fort’s site that

“This broad, flat point of land was known as Belle vue Point or the Jolie Prairie. It apparently was not occupied by any Indians, although there were several large villages located on the opposite (south) bank of the Columbia river, and several of the large islands nearby” (Kardas 1971: 30-31).

³ Kane goes on to discuss traditional preparation of these camas bulbs by the Chinookan people of the Fort Vancouver area:

“They are cooked by digging a hole in the ground, then putting down a layer of hot stones, covering them with dry grass, on which the roots are placed, they are then covered with a layer of grass, and on the top of this they place earth and grass down to the vegetables. Into this water is poured, which, reaching the hot stones, forms sufficient steam to completely cook the roots in a short time, the hole being immediately stopped up on the introduction of the water. They often adopt the same ingenious process for cooking their fish and game” (Kane 1859: 186-187).

⁴ A cursory review of Melville Jacobs unpublished Clackamas notes did not reveal more about this site, but it is possible that a comprehensive review of these notes might be illuminating (M. Jacobs n.d.).

⁵ Robert Hine and Savoie Lottinville, editors of the Theodore Talbot journals, make reference to a suggestion that “the post had been built on an Indian graveyard,” though the source of their information is unclear (Talbot 1972: 119). As Talbot was at the Fort in the 1840s and the burial site was not mentioned in earlier writings raises interesting

questions about the antiquity of the burial site and related matters – a point perhaps inviting further investigation.

⁶ For example, Clatsops and Tillamooks, tribal groups of the ocean coast, often visited en route to fishing and trading at the Cascades (Coues 1897: 858, 879; E. Jacobs n.d.). At other times, wars were reported between the Clatsop and the Cascades people, bringing coastal peoples into the Portland basin for other reasons (Coues 1897: 793).

⁷ Accounts of this travel are throughout the region between productive resource sites abounds in the written accounts of early observers – especially in reference to fishing sites. Travel linked a number of salmon fishing stations that were visited in season, but also eulachon, sturgeon, and other fish. Briefly summarizing the patterns of resource use found in the Portland Basin immediately before the construction of the fort, Morse (1820) noted,

“About 40 miles from the mouth of the Columbia river is a famous smelt and sturgeon fishery. Also abundance of Wapatoe, a species of potatoe, an excellent substitute for the real potatoe. The smelts are taken from the middle of March to the middle of April, and at no other time. They are fat and of good flavor. The Indians dry and run a stick through a number of them and use them in the place of candles. When lighted at the top, they burn to the bottom, giving a clear and bright light” (Morse 1820: 375).

Assessing reported population fluctuations in the Portland Basin, Boyd and Hajda (1987: 321) conclude that

“some villages in the Wappato Valley [between the Sandy and Kalama Rivers, thus including the Fort Vancouver area] were three or four times as large in early April, at the time of important fish runs, as they were in late November...The most likely sources for spring-season visitors are the upstream, interior locations especially subject to resource deficiencies at that time of year. The movements and shared use of resources areas...would be made possible by the numerous interlocking social networks, which not only channeled the flow of goods but which also brought distant people together for a broad range of purposes. This social system, unfamiliar to Lewis and Clark and other early observers [was] larger and more diffuse than the usual units of ethnographic research...it probably made possible the support of larger populations defined on a regional basis than would otherwise have been the case” (Boyd and Hajda 1985: 321).

Some sources mention “abandoned villages” in the region (e.g., Franchère 1967: 49), but this evidence lends support to the suggestion that some of these villages were abandoned only seasonally, while residents engaged in social, economic, ceremonial, and subsistence tasks in other areas. By the 1820s and 1830s, these references likely refer to places that have been abandoned due to epidemics and associated demographic contractions.

⁸ Manby provides considerably more detail about this encounter, some of which may be illuminating in terms of the condition of the lower Columbia at the time of first European contact. As he recalled,

“Captain Broughton expressed a good deal of satisfaction at his expedition. A great variety of scenes were met with and good weather prevailed with them the whole time. The country was in general woody and of moderate height. Some clear places of a few acres were seen. A luxurious verdure every where clothed them, and many bears and deer were seen on the banks of the river.

“Seven extensive villages were met with. The Indians, on first seeing our boats, came forward in their canoes, equip’d for war. Almost every man was provided with a war mat, which they took off as soon as certain tokens of friendship were given on each side. They were armed with clubs, lances and bows and arrows. The report of fire arms created great surprise and terror among them, and the effect was shewn to them by shooting many birds. The Indians beg’d of Mr. Broughton to fire at a war garment, imagining it could not be pierced. Of course he satisfied their curiosity and still more alarmed them by driving a ball through it when twice doubled. An old man who appeared of some consequence kept company with them five days and became particularly attached to the Capt. He supplied them with fish and many other things, as he led the way in his canoe and had sufficient authority to demand part of the sport every hunter or fisherman had met with. The river narrowed to a mile about fifty miles up and where they left off its breadth was half a mile and three fathoms deep, the water quite fresh and clear, not at all influenced by the tide, but running gently with a continual drain down. Many small rivers emptied themselves into it, one of which Captain honor’d with my name.

“They regretted returning as they found the Indians well inclined to friendship and had every reason to believe another day or two would have brought them to its source. At the most distant part they were at they visited a few hutts and were civilly treated by the tribe who gave them a

goose and a basket of very fine cranberries, offered them oil, and in short, every thing their habitations afforded. In the possession of their people were seen a remarkable tomahawk, exactly similar to those used by the Canadian Indians. Signs were made that they had procured it from the eastward, as well as a few little ornaments of brass they had at their ears. If their signs were rightly interpreted, by pursuing the river higher up you would meet with a fall of water, then a second and at length you would enter a lake. The river and lake they delineated with a piece of burnt stick, and expressed their meaning of the water fall by taking water up in their hands and pouring it out again.

“It is well known that the Indians of Canada and Hudson’s Bay frequently go into the most interior part, both on hunting and commercial expeditions, carrying their canoes some miles through the woods from lake to lake and pass the most rapid falls with the greatest ease. From this circumstance I think it very likely that European commoties are repeatedly bartered through the numerous tribes and find their way from one side of America to the other.

“On a barren rock in the middle of the river they observed a vast number of canoes hauled up, some even to its very summit. Curiosity led them to it and it proved the receptacle for the dead. The bodies were wrapt in deer and bear skins and, like the custom of De Fuca, Indians had their warlike weapons with them.

“Large flocks of geese and ducks were every where seen and all the other birds common to the more northern part of America. Animals were equally abundant. They saw many, and where ever they landed, the tracks [of] moose and common deer made a beaten path” (Manby 1992: 198-200).

⁹ As Clark noted during his visit to Neerchokioo village,

“We recognized the man who overtook us last night. He invited us to a lodge in which he had some part and gave us a roundish root about the size of a small Irish potato which they roasted in the embers until they became soft. This root they call Wapato, which the bulb of the Chinese cultivate in great quantities called the *Sagittifolia* or common arrowhead. It has an agreeable taste and answers very well in place of bread. We purchased about 4 bushels of this root and divided it to our party” (in Coues 1897).

¹⁰ Specifically, after a stay at Neerckokioo, Clark noted

“Soon after several canoes of Indians from the village above came down dressed for the purpose as I supposed of paying us a friendly visit. They had scarlet & blue blankets, sailor’s jackets, overalls, shirts and hats independent of their usual dress. The most of them had either war axes, spears or bows sprung with quivers of arrows, muskets or pistols, and tin flasks to hold their powder” (in Coues 1897: 248).

¹¹ Coues (1897: 917n) who edited the edition of the journals being quoted here, notes that this meadow was “at or near present site of the historic Fort Vancouver.” More recently, Moulton (1991: 36n), editor of the most comprehensive recent edition of the journals, concurs that the site was in present-day Vancouver, but does not mention the fort location specifically.

¹² Compare, for example, the accounts of Silverstein (1990), Saleeby (1983), Suphan (1974), Spier (1936), Berreman (1937), and Hodge (1907).

¹³ As Suphan expressed during the Indian Claims Commission review of Chinook materials:

“As a group these historical accounts provide us with a wealth of references to “tribes”, villages, chiefs, and tribal lands but are as often as not confusing, for names appear never to be heard of again, while perhaps the greatest difficulty is occasioned by the various names applied to the same “tribes” and local groups by various writers. Nor need the usage of a particular name accord with its usage by another writer” (Suphan 1974a: 172).

Terminological ambiguity was by no means restricted to accounts of the Chinook. Explorers’ and travelers’ accounts confuse and conflate groups in a surprising number of configurations. For example, Eugene Duflot de Mofras applied the term “Tillamook” to tribal populations from the lower Columbia region all the way to northern California:

“The Indians south of the Columbia River are classified as Tillamooks; this includes the Nehalems, the Nikas, the Salmon River Indians, the Alseas, the Umpquas, the Klamaths, the Tututunne, and the Shastas” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 185-86).

The term Tillamook is ordinarily only applied to the Salish-speaking communities living between Cape Foulweather and Tillamook Head in Oregon; this application is,

itself, a misnomer, as the name indicates the residents of Nehalem Bay only within the Tillamook language (E. Jacobs n.d.). The application of the name to people as far away as the Shasta and Klamath is without parallel in the anthropological literature.

¹⁴ References to the Chinooks' centrality in regional trade networks are numerous. Alexander Ross provided detail regarding the currencies of this trade at the time of first European contact:

“The circulating medium in use among these people is a small white shell called *higua*, about two inches long, of a convex form, and hollow in the heart, resembling in appearance the small end of a smoking pipe. The *higua* is thin, light, and durable, and may be found of all lengths, between three inches down to one-fourth of an inch, and increases or decreases in value according to the number required to make a fathom, by which measure they are invariably sold. Thirty to a fathom are held equal in value to three fathoms of forty, to four of fifty, and so on. So high are the *higua* prized, that I have seen six of 2½ inches long refused for a new gun. But of late, since the whites came among them, the beaver skin called *enna*, has been added to the currency; so that, by these two articles, which form the medium of trade, all property is valued, and all exchange fixed and determined. An Indian, in buying an article, invariably asks the question, *Queentshich higua?* or, *Queentshich enna?* That is, how many *higua?* or, how many beaver skins is it?” (Ross 1849: 95-96).

¹⁵ Verne Ray, for example, depicted trade as being fundamental to an understanding of Chinook social structure and organization, being key to dispute resolution and to the assignment of individual and group status:

“[Trade] permitted them to exert a widespread influence of a sort which did not often lead to conflict. It resulted in both the group and many of its members becoming known and discussed over a wide area, whereas intervening peoples might be unknown and of no interest. It led to a high contempt for groups that were “just poor people” (that is, had little to trade) and a consequent bolstering of their own self-confidence” (Ray 1938: 99).

Similarly, intertribal and interregional relations were defined by these trade relationships. As Melville Jacobs noted,

“The residents of poorer villages suffered from greater economic and social ambitions and traveled more often to localities of greater wealth, economic security and social prestige; the wealthier communities were almost always downstream or to the west. Along lower rivers or coastal rivers the larger food supply permitted populations denser in numbers, relatively wealthier in household goods, and enough satisfied with their own dignity and value to travel and marry within comparatively narrower radii” (Jacobs 1937: 55-57).

¹⁶ Alexander Ross was among those early writers who described traditional gaming on the Lower Columbia, in events that appear to have been associated with multi-tribal trading events:

“...the men generally spend their time in gambling. The chief game, *chal-e-chal*, at which they stake their most valuable property, is played by six persons, with ten circular palettes of polished wood, in size and shape resembling dollars. A mat three feet broad and six feet long is spread on the ground, and the articles at stake laid at one end, then the parties seat themselves, three on each side of the mat, facing one another; this done, one of the players takes up the ten palettes, shuffling and shifting them in his hands, when at a signal given he separates them in his two fists, and throws them out on the mat towards his opponent, and according as the palettes roll, slide, or lie on the mat when thrown, the party wins or loses. This he does three times successively. In this manner each tries his skill in turn, till one of the parties wins. Whole days and nights are spent in this game without ceasing, and the Indians seldom grumble or repine even should they lose all that they possess. During the game the players keep chanting a loud and sonorous tune, accompanying the different gestures of the body just as the voyageurs keep time to the paddle” (Ross 1849: 90-91).

¹⁷ The lower Columbia River, both upstream and downstream from Fort Vancouver, was lined with numerous villages of this type:

“In winter they live in villages, but in summer move about from place to place. Their houses are oblong, and built of broad, split cedar-planks, something in the European style, and covered with the bark of the same tree. They are sufficiently large and commodious to contain all the members of a numerous family, slaves included. At the top or ridge pole, an opening gives free passage to the smoke; they have one or more, according to the number of families in each. But I never saw more than

four fires, or above eighty persons – slaves and all – in the largest house” (Ross 1849: 98).

Similarly, HBC Governor George Simpson noted,

“From the Cascade Portage to the Coast they are collected into Villages of Ten to fifteen Houses and three or Four Families inhabiting the same House. They live in great comfort throughout the year, as Fish are taken at all Seasons, Roots abundant close to their Houses and Wood Animals are numerous so that they may have a variety of choice fare” (Simpson 1931: 95-96).

¹⁸ Tribal population on the middle and lower Columbia River is notoriously difficult to estimate, and was clearly in flux even prior to its original recordation (Boyd 1999; Silverstein 1990; Kardas 1971: 68-71). The author of this report views any population estimates for this region prior to the 1850s with skepticism, in light of seasonal mobility, incompleteness of surveys, and a host of other factors. This being said, population densities were reportedly high, with almost unbroken settlement among some portions of the Columbia River shoreline (Simpson 1931).

¹⁹ A number of authors commented on this point. Franchère made the following observations of traditional chiefly roles:

“Among the Columbia River natives, the political structure is reduced to its simplest form. Each village has its chief, but he does not appear to exercise great authority over his fellow citizens. However, at his death they render him great honors. They practice a kind of mourning and chant his funeral song for almost a month. These chiefs are honored in proportion to their wealth; the one who has many wives, slaves, strings of beads, and so forth, is a great chief” (Franchère 1967: 115).

Over 25 years later, Samuel Parker made similar observations:

“The government of the Indian nations is in the hands of chiefs, whose office is hereditary, or obtained by some special merit. Their only power is influence; and this in proportion to their wisdom, benevolence, and courage. They do not exercise authority by command, but influence by persuasion, stating what in their judgment they believe to be right, and for the greatest good of their tribe or nation, or of any family or community.

The chiefs have no power of levying taxes, and they are so much in the habit of contributing their own property for individual or public good, that they are not generally wealthy. Their influence, however, is great; for they rarely express an opinion or desire, which is not readily assented to and followed. Any unreasonable dissent is subdued by the common voice of the people. Probably there is no government upon earth where there is so much personal and political freedom, and at the same time so little anarchy; and I can unhesitatingly say, that I have nowhere witnessed so much subordination, peace, friendship, and confidence, as exist among the Indians in the Oregon Territory. The day may be rued, when their order and harmony shall be interrupted by any instrumentality whatever" (Parker 1841: 255).

On the basis of numerous accounts, all attesting to the same basic pattern of governance, Saleeby summarizes,

"The village formed the major social and political unit in Chinook society...Each village had its own chief whose powers were advisory and judicial...and who had the power to appropriate the property of others for personal purposes. The legendary chief Concomly of the Chinook proper was treated by the white fur traders as chief of all the Chinook, a false distinction which he nonetheless carried off quite well" (Saleeby 1983: 24).

²⁰ Comments on head-flattening along the lower Columbia are numerous. A representative description comes from the writings of Alexander Ross:

"Among other fantastic usages, many of the tribes on the coast of the Pacific, and particularly those about Columbia, flatten the heads of their children. No sooner, therefore, is a child born, whether male or female, than its head is put into a press, or mould of boards, in order to flatten it. From the eyebrows, the head of a Chinook inclines backward to the crown; the back inclining forward, but in a less degree. There is thus a ridge raised from ear to ear, giving the head the form of a wedge; and the more acute the angle, the greater the beauty" (Ross 1849: 99-100).

On the matter of head shape serving as an emblem of status, Ross also notes,

"The flatness of the head is considered the distinguishing mark of being free born. All slaves are forbidden to bear this aristocratic distinction. Yet I

have seen one or two instances to the contrary, where a favourite slave was permitted to flatten the head of a first-born child. No such custom is practiced in any part of the interior" (Ross 1849: 99-100).

HBC Governor, George Simpson, observing Chinookan peoples in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, made similar comments:

"They have... a strange practise of flattening the upper part of the Head which at an early age disfigures them very much but as they advance in Life it is not offensive to the Eye at least was not so to me at the first sight and as none but the wretched Slaves have round heads, I begin to fall into the Chinook way of thinking that they do not look so well (particularly the Ladies) with round as with Flat Heads. The Child is almost constantly kept laced down on its back on a Cradle or Wooden frame the back part of the head leaning against the board, on the forehead a pad is laid and tied lightly to the board which keeps the head in the same position and by constant pressure in this manner until the child is about 18 months old it becomes flattened or assumes the shape of a Wedge and the flatter it is the more dignified and fashionable the Wearer; this operation does not seem to give pain as the children rarely cry and it certainly does not affect the brain or understanding as they are without exception the most intelligent Indians and most acute and finished bargain Makers I have fallen in with. A couple of those Heads will be sent to the Hon Committee next Season as a curiosity" (Simpson 1931: 96).

²¹ Parker notes that

"The wealth of the lower Indians is estimated by the number of wives, slaves, and canoes. Every Indian of any distinction takes as many wives as he is able to support, and his wealth is supposed to accord with the number" (Parker 1841: 254-255).

²² Kardas (1971), for example, noted that

"The role of older women in governing Chinook society is well attested by the 19th Century writers, who also noted the high position held by native women in general. Not only did the women play an important role as traders (both by producing marriage alliances with their relatives and by preparing and collecting foodstuffs traded, or owning the slaves that

performed these tasks), but women also had a voice in governing the villages” (Kardas 1971: 56).

²³ This village-based organization of the tribal community and political structure is reflected linguistically; as Hodge noted, “Most of the original Chinookan bands and divisions had no special tribal names, being designated simply as “those living at such a place” “ (Hodge 1907: 274).

²⁴ Some of these delineations still apply the term “Chinook” as a general heading for all Columbia River “tribes” below the Dalles, while others apply the term only to the “Chinook proper,” consisting of estuarine communities, usually only on the north side of the Columbia. For example, Alexander Ross presented an alternative tribal delineation that was influential within the literatures of his time, identifying only the estuarine population on the north side of the Columbia as “Chinook”:

“All the Indian tribes inhabiting the country about the mouth of the Columbia, and for a hundred miles round, may be classed in the following manner:--1. Chinooks;--2. Clatsops;--3. Cathlamux;--4. Wakicums; --5. Wacalamus; --6. Cattleputles; --7. Clatscanias;--8. Killimux;--9. Moltnomas;-- and 10. Chickelis; amounting collectively to about 2,000 warriors. But they are a commercial rather than a warlike people. Traffic in slaves and furs is their occupation. They are said to be decreasing numbers. All these tribes appear to be descended from the same stock, live in rather friendly intercourse with, and resemble one another in language, dress, and habits” (Ross 1849: 87-88).

Bancroft’s historical writings also muddled distinctions, yet helped to enshrine these muddled distinctions within the historical literature. In this case, the term “Chinook” was applied to all area populations, including at least one that did not speak the Chinook language:

“Among the prominent tribes, or nations of the Chinook family may be mentioned the following: the Watlalas or upper Chinooks, including the bands on the Columbia from the Cascades to the Cowlitz, and on the lower Willamette; the lower Chinooks from the Cowlitz to the Pacific comprising the Wakiakums and Chinooks on the north banks, and the Cathlamets and Clatsops in the south; the Calapooyas occupying the Valley of the Willamette, and the Clackamas on one of its chief tributaries of the same name” (Bancroft 1890a: 223).

²⁵ The census notes continued after these lines:

“On the Columbia alone in the Salmon Season, I am of opinions from the Dalles to the Sea the number of men is about two thousand and every river along the Coast is inhabited by a different tribe speaking a different language or a different dialect and mostly live in a state of perpetual hostility towards each other” (Hudson’s Bay Company 1826a).

²⁶ Suphan, for example, reported that

“Popular as well as ethnographic accounts of primitive [sic] peoples invariably make use of the term “tribe”; indeed not to do so seems awkward. Yet there are valid objections to the indiscriminate use of this typological concept, for unless one defines precisely what sort of social unit is referred to assumptions may be made about its application that violate the facts of the matter; “tribe” has been used to mean many things. Thus to take just our own immediate area as an example, “tribe” has been used in the literature to designate entire linguistic stocks (such as the Chinook), dialect groups (such as Tillamook when referring to all who spoke that dialect of Coast Salish), and to single villages. More commonly it has been applied to peoples sharing a natural area of some sort and speaking a common dialect; examples are the “Clatsop tribe”, “Cathlamet tribe” [and so on]...use of the term “tribe” is unfortunate in the discussion of any Northwest coast people inasmuch as the concept carries the connotation of a political body composed of several bands or villages united by some form of overall government – a head chief, a council of chiefs, etc. Such a connotation has no application to the socio-political facts of Northwest coast life, for widespread throughout the region, and as far west as the Rockies as well, was a pattern of village political autonomy” (Suphan 1974a: 186-187).

²⁷ Kardas (1971), for example, noted that

“In the early 19th Century, Chinookan speakers occupied both banks of the Columbia River from the mouth of the river to 200 miles upstream... These included the lower regional dialect group of Clatsop, Chinook, and Shoalwater Chinook. The upper dialects started with Kathlamet and Skilloot. Just east of the Skilloot on the south bank of the river up to the Dalles were the Multnomah, Clackamas, Clowewalla, Cascades, Hood

River and Wasco peoples. On the north bank of the river east of the Skilloot were Clackamas, Cascades, White Salmon and Wishram groups. Wasco and Wishram, opposite each other at the Dalles, were the easternmost Chinookan speakers” (Kardas 1971: 40-41).

²⁸ Others applied this term to head-flattening tribes along the lower Columbia and the outer coast as far north as maritime British Columbia and southeast Alaska. Kane noted,

“The Flat-Head Indians are met with on the banks of the Columbia River, from its mouth east to the Cascades, a distance of about 150 miles; they extend up the Walhamette River’s mouth, about thirty or forty miles, and through the district between the Walhamette and Fort Astoria, now called Fort George. To the north they extend along the Cowlitz River, and the tract of land lying between that and Puget’s Sound. About two-thirds of Vancouver’s Island is also occupied by them, and they are found along the coasts of Puget’s Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca. The Flatheads are divided into numerous tribes, each having its own peculiar locality, and differing more or less from the others in language, customs, and manners” (Kane 1859: 173).

²⁹ For example, Eugene Duflot de Mofras reported that

“The Flatheads proper are the Indians who live in the coastal regions and the tributaries of the headwaters of the Columbia. Leading Flathead tribes are the Klikitas, the Multnomahs, the Cowlitz, the Chehalis, the Clatsops, the Tillamooks, and the Chinooks” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 181-82).

³⁰ These are perhaps what Hodge (1910) referred to as the “divisions” of the Chinook.

³¹ Hajda (1984) notes that ““Shahala” was a term used only by Lewis and Clark, applied to people based at the Cascades some of whom covered considerable distances in their seasonal movements. It comes from an expression meaning “upriver” (cf. Jargon *saxli*, meaning “up” or “high”), and it was probably used in this sense as well as in reference to Cascades people” (Hajda 1984: 67).

Barry (1927a: 54) is somewhat unusual in reporting “Sha-ha-la” as being a different population than “Wat-la-la” – designating the former as being in the area from Hood

River to the Willamette and the latter as being in the area from Hood River to the Cascades.

³² In his analysis of Washington tribal distribution, Spier (1936) notes of Cascades distribution,

“The Cascades group (iḷaḷa’la, “lake people,” or waḷa’lidE’l̥xam) were located on both sides of the Columbia at the Cascades, and on the north side downstream at least to Skamania and perhaps to Cape Horn [upstream from modern-day Washougal, Washington]. These are the Watlala mentioned by Lewis: waḷa’la, “lake,” was evidently at the head of the Cascades. A village may have been there; at any rate, it marked their easternmost point. The Cath-lath-la-las or Cathleyacheyachs (the latter mentioned by Ross at the head of the Cascades people. Three villages of theirs are known on the north bank, the lowest about half a mile below the upper Castle Rock. The location of settlements on the south bank is little known” (Spier 1936: 21).

³³ Edward Curtis (1911b) recounts the Cascade villages as follows:

“Gahlahishachk, those on the north bank of the Columbia at the cascades inhabiting the following villages:

- a. Wahllala, “Their Lake,” opposite Cascade Locks, Oregon.
- b. Skamanyak, “Obstructed,” at the middle cascades.
- c. Kihaiagilhum, “Middle Village,” a little below Skamanyak.
- d. Kaiuchikhliqtih, at the lower cascades.
- e. Kamigwaihat, “Upper Road,” a little below the former.”

Suphan (1974b), meanwhile, interpreted Cascades villages as follows:

“From the journals of Lewis and Clark we learn of three villages on the Washington shore at and about the cascades; these were Y-e-huh just above the rapids, Clah-clel-lah just below the rapids, and Wah-clel-lah at Beacon Rock a few miles above Skamania, Washington. Together these formed the explorers’ Sha-ha-la Nation. The economic activities of these Indians apparently led them downstream from the cascades rather than toward Hood River and the Dalles... “In subsequent years the Indians resident at the cascades are designated by a variety of terms:

Cathlayackty, Thlameoyackoack, Cathleyacheeyachs, Cathlakaheckit, Cathlathlala; identification of one with another, or equation with Lewis

and Clark's villages, would at best be quite tenuous. It is evident, however, that one village was above the cascades on the north shore near Lakewood, Washington, at or near the site of the Yehuh village, while others were on the Oregon shore from about Cascade Locks to opposite Wind River" (Suphan 1974b: 43-45).

³⁴ She also depicts this village as being just upstream from the much larger "Columbia Valley" villages which included Multnomahs and other Upper Chinookan speakers. Simultaneously, she appears to classify the population at Washougal, upstream from Neerchokioo, as being "Columbia Valley" in affiliation.

³⁵ Morse (1820: 368) reported 500 "Mathlanobs" "At the upper end of the island above named, in the mouth of the Wallaumut" in the years immediately preceding the construction of Fort Vancouver.

³⁶ They are also called "Choteaus." The singular Chinookan linguist, Michael Silverstein Shoto "Kanasisi" (Silverstein 1990: 545).

³⁷ Michael Silverstein has suggested that the term "Skillute" is probably the Chinookan imperative s(i)k'lútk, meaning "look at him!" which was misunderstood to be the name of the tribe (Moulton 1990: 20). The term appears to be interchanged "Sha-hala" in Lewis and Clark's journals.

³⁸ On this point, see Silverstein (1990).³⁸ Ruby and Brown (1986) note,

"The Skilloots spoke the Clackamas dialect of the Chinookan language. In 1805 the American explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark found them on both the north and the south bank of the Columbia River above and below the entrance of the Cowlitz River, in present-day Oregon and Washington. The tribe numbered about 2,500 at that time. They were among the many lower Columbia River peoples who were virtually depopulated by plagues in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Ruby and Brown 1986: 208).

³⁹ For example, encountering a Kalapuya community on the Willamette River on May 24th, 1835, John Kirk Townsend found them apparently unable to communicate in Chinook Jargon, the seemingly universal interethnic trade language of the Lower Columbia region and beyond:

“On the Klakamus river, about a mile below, we found a few lodges belonging to Indians of the Kalapooyah tribe. We addressed them in Chinook, (the language spoken by all those inhabiting the Columbia below the cascades) but they evidently did not comprehend a word, answering in a peculiarly harsh and guttural language, with which we were entirely unacquainted... “We saw here a large Indian cemetery. The bodies had been buried under the ground, and each tomb had a board at its head, upon which was rudely painted some strange, uncouth figure. The pans, kettles, clothing, &c., of the deceased, were all suspended upon sticks, driven into the ground near the head board” (Townsend 1839: 162).

⁴⁰ Commenting on the reasons for this social isolation, Melville Jacobs noted what he viewed as the stark contrasts between the material affluence of the Kalapuyans and those of the neighboring Chinookans:

“[their isolation] is, however, less surprising when it is considered that the Willamette above Oregon City is not very well supplied with salmon, and a few important Kalapuya communities such as the Tualatins and Yamhills had no salmon whatever; the economic life of the valley must have appeared strikingly poverty stricken compared with that of neighboring peoples, excepting possibly those to the east. Every neighboring group may have shunned marriage in any numbers with the Kalapuyas. A poor larder is little inducement for either trade or marriage. They were pleasant people, but you did not go to live in their country” (Jacobs 1937:65).

⁴¹ There are accounts suggesting that Chief Casino was Klickitat or Kalapuya. These claims appear to be the result of some level of confusion about Casino’s affiliations, though it is certain that this important chief held some influence in these tribal communities. See Spencer (1933: 21-22).

⁴² Most sources suggest that the Upper Chinook dialects were all mutually intelligible, including the Multnomah, Cascades, and Clackamas dialects (Silverstein 1990; Spier and Sapir 1930: 159).

⁴³ Compelling accounts of this phenomenon are presented in papers that are – at the time of this report’s completion – being submitted for publication as a single book, to be edited by Kenneth Ames, addressing Chinookan archaeology, ethnography, and ethnohistory.

⁴⁴ Gairdner (1841: 255) reports the following tribal populations in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, two of the four being listed as “extinct”:

Katlagakya [a band and synonym for Shahala] “From the Cascades to Vancouver, along the river”

Mamnit [a Multnomah band] “In Multnomah Island, now extinct, on the side next the Columbia”

Katlamimim [a Multnomah band] “In Multnomah, all on the side next Wallamat, the lower branch being extinct”

Wakamass [apparently a Multnomah band] “From Deer’s Isle to the lower branch of the Wallamat, at its mouth; Kesho is their chief.”

⁴⁵ Though Nathaniel Wyeth had a clear bias against his competitors, the HBC, his accounts on this point may still be instructive,

“With the consolidation of the Northwest and Hudson’s Bay Companies in 1821, the establishment of headquarters at Fort Vancouver, and the effective administration of Dr. John McLoughlin as Chief Factor west of the Rocky mountains British interests developed at a wonderful rate. It was claimed on the floor of congress that “shares in the Hudson’s Bay Company, which originally were of the value of 20 pounds each, were now selling in the market at the enormous price of 200 pounds sterling.” And again “that shares of that company have risen from sixty to two-hundred and forty pounds sterling.” With the growth of English interests on the Columbia English claims to sovereignty grew apace. American operations were confined to irregular incursions by fur-trading parties and to traffic carried on with natives from the decks of vessels brought into the inlets of the coast. The British were establishing posts and extending a well-organized, lucrative and strongly supported trade” (Wyeth 1899: xv).

⁴⁶ The experiences at Fort George, in many respects, set the stage for what would transpire at a larger scale at Fort Vancouver. Writing of Fort George in 1817, Peter Corney noted

“The whole of the settlers here do not exceed 150 men, most of whom keep Indian women, who live inside of the fort with them. Nearly all the settlers are Canadians. The clerks and partners are Scotch...The Company’s canoes arrive here from the interior, in the spring and fall; they bring the furs that are collected at the different posts on the west side

of the Stoney [Rocky] mountains, and take back stores for the posts”
(Corney 1932: 367).

Many authors from these early days of the Northwest fur trade commented on the tremendous ethnic variety of the fur trade community. During the Snake Country expeditions of the North West Company, fur trader Alexander Ross was taken aback by the motley diversity of one of the expeditions undertaken from Spokane House:

“On assembling my people, I smiled at the medley, the variety of accents, of dresses, habits, and ideas; but, above all, at the confusion of languages in our camp: there were two Americans, seventeen Canadians, five half-breeds from the east side of the mountains, twelve Iroquois, two Abinakee Indians from Lower Canada, two natives from Lake Nipissingue, one Sauteaux from Lake Huron, two Crees from Athabasca, one Chinook, two Spokanes, two Kouttanais, three Flatheads, two Callispellums, one Palloochey, and one Snake Slave!” (Ross 1855: 6).

Many other authors commented on the tremendous diversity of the fur trade population that was gathering in the region. George Simpson, for example, observed during part of his tour of the region,

“Our bateau carried as curious a muster of races and languages as perhaps had ever been congregated within the same compass in any part of the world. Our crew of ten men contained Iroquois, who spoke their own tongue; a Cree half-breed of French origin who appeared to have borrowed his dialect from both his parents; a North Briton, who understood only the Gaelic of his native hills; Canadians who of course knew French; and Sandwich Islanders who jabbered a medley of Chinook, English, &c. and their own vernacular jargon” (Simpson 1847: 176-177).

This diversity sometimes threatened to devolve into amorphous and discordant fragments. Speaking of the Snake River expeditions after 1821, Lamb (1941) notes:

“After 1821 [Donald] McKenzie remained east of the mountains, and none of the commissioned gentlemen assigned to the Columbia saw fit to take charge of the party in his stead. As a result, the expedition seems to have deteriorated until it consisted of nothing more than a leaderless group of freemen, Iroquois, and Indians, most of whom has been outfitted on credit

by the Company, and who in return had agreed to turn over any furs they might trap or trade" (Lamb 1941: xxi).

The threat of this kind of discord was a constant threat to the operations of the fur trading post and was controlled through a variety of HBC policies aimed at maintaining order through a hierarchical leadership style organized by the race and class of its employees.

⁴⁷ HBC Governor George Simpson noted that even the banks of the lower Columbia were not especially good for trapping beaver and other species that had eclipsed the sea otter in importance:

"There are few or no Beaver on the Banks of the Columbia owing to the rapidity of the Current and great rise and fall of the Water sweeping away their Young and not enabling them to form Lodges or Dams; they are however numerous on some of the small Lakes and Creeks in the back country and if the Natives would but apply themselves to Hunting during the Winter Months the Trade would be greatly increased" (Simpson 1931: 95).

⁴⁸ Following the passage of the Treaty of 1818, which called for the United States and Britain to share the Oregon Territory, the North West Company initiated an aggressive campaign, centered in the interior Northwest, to harvest much of the available fur-bearers so as to supply their coastal enterprises and to make these resources unavailable for potential American use (Simpson 1931). The Snake expeditions were the result. The HBC, following a similar policy, continued these expeditions after the merger of the two companies.

Few of the resident peoples from the Plateau and northern Great Basin worked in these efforts, but coastal tribes, Native Hawaiians, Iroquois, and others. Most were intermittent contract employees of the sort sometimes referred to as "freemen." As the Snake River expeditions were described by Lamb,

"Few of its members were regularly engaged servants of the Company; the great majority were freemen, by which were meant retired or discharged servants, for the most part half-breeds or Indians, who preferred to remain in the wilds and endeavor to carry on an independent existence" (Lamb 1941: lx).

Simpson (1931) complained bitterly about the freemen of the Snake River expeditions, claiming that,

“they are forming plots and plans quarrelling with the natives and exposing themselves and us to much trouble and danger. This band of Freeman [are] the very scum of the country and generally outcasts from the Service for misconduct are the most unruly and troublesome gang to deal with in this or perhaps any other part of the World” (Simpson 1931: 45).

⁴⁹ Some modern Cowlitz have alluded to oral traditions of their ancestors helping the HBC to locate the site of the modern fort, but no written account of this event was encountered in the course of the current research.

⁵⁰ Visiting Fort George on April 12th 1824, John Scouler found that the site was almost completely abandoned:

“To-day we landed (well craved) at Ft. George, & were received in a very polite manner by Mr. McKenzie, the only gentleman at present at the fort. He informed us that the other gentlemen were employed in building a new fort, about 80 miles further up the river, at Point Vancouver, & Ft. George had been ceded to the Americans by the treaty of Ghent, & they were expected to take possession of it very soon” (Scouler 1905: 165).

Elliott (1907) reviews information pertaining to the location of Fort Vancouver.

⁵¹ Recent research by Doug Wilson and others suggests that this Village pre-existed the construction of the 1829 fort, but occupied the site after laborers were displaced by the 1827 floods. Proximity to the newly-constructed fort allowed the Village to persist and expand around this original nucleus.

⁵² Deward Walker similarly suggests that

“The Hudson’s Bay Company trading operation in the Columbia Basin was built on and operated within the traditional tribal system of trade and exchange. Rather than replacing it, the Hudson’s Bay Company system intensified this traditional system” (Walker 1997: 94).

More elaborately, Theodore Stern (1993: 33) describes the “Columbian Trading Network,” observing first that “despite [the HBC’s] growing importance, they cannot have been responsible for giving rise to the network: they had only a traffic already in existence.” Instead, Stern (1993:26) says:

“Exchange was deeply embedded in social relationships. Something of its complex nature can be seen in the career of Kammach, son of a headman and himself in time to become a headman of the Tualatin Kalapuya, dwelling above the falls of the Willamette. Trade such as his brought to the Kalapuya exotic articles including Klickitat baskets, woven mountain goat wool blankets from the Salish of the western Plateau, and buffalo robes from the Plains. Kammach early aligned himself with the interests of the prominent Clackamas Chinook leader, Cassino. When he thereafter married the daughter of a Chinook headman - either Clackamas or Wishram-Wasco - his father paid over a bride price of twenty slaves and ten rifles. Annually thereafter, Kammach visited friends - in all likelihood trading partners - among the Luckiamute and Mary’s River bands of Kalapuya in the middle valley, as well as the Alsea on the coast, in trips that might last six months. He brought them horses and money dentalia, together with rifles, blankets, coats, tobacco, and gunpowder. From them he received in return slaves, beaver skins, buckskins, and other hides. These he handed over to his father-in-law, perhaps as a supplement to the bride price, but surely as something more: for his father-in-law was probably the source of his trading goods, and in turn traded the beaver pelts and the hides at Fort Vancouver, while trading the slaves within the native network” (Stern 1993: 26).

⁵³ Kardas notes that these trade relationships were found along the entire river, with both upper and lower Chinookans serving as intermediaries in trade:

“Beads and Hudson Bay Company blankets...became popular [among tribes] after White contact. Like the downriver Chinook, furs traded by the Wishram and Dalles people to the Hudson’s Bay Company were obtained from other tribes. Direct contact between the White trader and their neighbors, was resented by the Dalles people who considered it their right to act as middlemen” (Kardas 1971: 64-65).

⁵⁴ McLoughlin found it difficult to find sufficient horses to support HBC operations without regular recourse to Nez Perce for support. In a letter to Peter Skene Ogden,

dated September 6th, 1829, McLoughlin lamented the absence of sufficient horses to support the Company's ongoing trading expeditions into the Northwestern interior:

“As to Horses as you suggest I think the best you can do is to go to Nez Perces Camp and trade all you can and if you cannot procure a sufficient number those men you will be obliged to leave will be sent down to this place It is certainly distressing to find after the pains that have been taken to complete your Party that all our trouble should be lost from the want of Horses however I hope you will be more successful than you apprehend and that you will be able to take all your party with you”
(McLoughlin 1829f: 55).

The fort residents were originally dependent on Indians for the purchase of Chinook style canoes, which were purchased and piloted by Chinookans, Hawaiians, Iroquois and others for many aspects of the fort's operations. This dependence on Indian canoes and often Indian canoe teams for transportation was problematic; by no later than 1834, a small shipyard was operating in the association with the Fort to address this need, producing larger boats for transportation along the river. Not until the 1840s, with the arrival of American settlers, did boat building become widespread in the area (Bancroft 1890b: 27-28).

⁵⁵ Both the HBC and North West Company had sought to exploit divisions between tribal populations in order to maintain the upper hand. At Fort George, George Simpson noted,

“The great people of the Village are constantly at variance with each other, arising chiefly from jealousy of the attentions shewn them at the Fort; these misunderstandings are never attended with serious consequences we therefore keep them alive as by that means we know all that passes and have them in a certain degree under our control”
(Simpson 1931: 104).

⁵⁶ Fort Williams, established by American Nathaniel J. Wyeth at the mouth of the Willamette was the principal competing land-based enterprise; chronically mismanaged and far outclassed by the Fort Vancouver operation, this fort was already abandoned by the mid-1830s (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 65).

Avery Sylvester founded a trading post at Willamette Falls in 1844. At that time, the HBC was still actively seeking to suppress competing commercial enterprises in the area:

“it was necessary to use a little deception, as the Agents of Hudson’s Bay Company, who monopolize all the trade here or try to, have always made it a practice whenever anyone started a trading post here, to set up another in opposition to it, no matter for what purpose” (Sylvester 1933: 361).

⁵⁷ In a letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee of the HBC, dated August 13th, 1829, McLoughlin reported that they had to maintain an unexpectedly lively trade in “second hand Surtout trousers & Waistcoats Gentlemens cast off Clothes,” noting that,

“The Americans dispose of such articles on the coast Indeed our requisition is high from the necessity of having a vanity to suit the fancy of the natives and I see no alternative we must Beat the opposition off or they will be a constant source of annoyance” (McLoughlin 1829e: 41).

⁵⁸ For example, in a letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee of the HBC, dated July 6th, 1827, McLoughlin noted,

“It is necessary your Honors prohibit the masters of vessels coming here and their crews having any traffic or Dealings with the natives – not even to allow any going on board the vessel Except such of the very principal and best chiefs pointed out to them...

“People who are not acquainted with Indians are apt to Spoil them by allowing them too much Indulgence or to take liberties that offend – and from my own knowledge of Indian character I am certain that the Great number of Whites who lost their lives on this coast is Entirely owing to the too Great communication the crews of the Vessels have with the natives. There are no people who prove the correctness of the common saying “that familiarity begets contempt” more than Indians – in our Intercourse we must treat them with apparent openness and confidence though we must still be constantly on our Guard, and this is a line of conduct that no people are less apt to conform to than Sailors. Captain Hanwell at my suggestion it is true at once prevented any Indians coming on board, but others may not be so compliant and it is too Import[ant] to us both in a moral and commercial point of view to be on Good terms

with the natives not to adopt every precaution to secure it, and if the Chinook Indians are so much addicted to Liquor it is owing to the facility with which they have hitherto found means of getting it from the Vessels, and you may depend that unless all traffic between the vessel and Indians is put a Stop to – the trade will greatly suffer and ultimately it will cause Blood to be Shed” (McLoughlin 1827: 47-48).

⁵⁹ In the same year, Samuel Parker made comments on the commercial operations of the fort and the Indian Store:

“Among the large buildings, there are four for the trading department. One for the Indian trade in which are deposited their peltries; one for provisions; one for goods opened for the current year’s business; and another for storing goods in a year’s advance. Not less than a ship load of goods is brought from England annually, and always at least one in advance of their present use, so that if any disaster should befall their ship on her passage, the business of the Company would not have to be suspended. By this mode of management, there is rarely less than two ship loads of goods on hand. The annual ship arrives in the spring, takes a trip to Oahu during the summer, freighted with lumber to that island, and bringing back to Vancouver salt and other commodities, but generally not enough for ballast; and in the last of September, or in the first of October, she sails for England with the peltries obtained during the preceding year” (Parker 1841: 187).

⁶⁰ Pricing of goods varied, but was done so as to achieve a consistent margin of profit. Tolmie observed that “At all the outposts the goods are advanced in price 33-1/3 pct. for the Indian trade” (Tolmie 1963: 176). Pricing was challenging not only because of the multiple markets that influenced the trade, but also in the considerable distance and time-lag in the exchange of market information. As Lamb notes, “The length of time which elapsed between the taking of a skin and the receipt at Fort Vancouver of the notification of the price it actually fetched in the London market might be as long as three years” (Lamb 1941: lxxvii).

Writing in 1841, Wilkes noted that these items were distributed for a variety of distinct purposes:

“All the imported goods are divided into three classes, viz. : articles of gratuity, those of trade, and those intended to pay for small services, labour, and provisions. The first consists of knives and tobacco; the

second, of blankets, guns, cloth, powder, and shot; the third, of shirts, handkerchiefs, ribands, beads, &c. These articles are bartered at seemingly great profits, and many persons imagine that large gain must be the result from the Indian trade; but this is seldom the case. The Indians and settlers understand well the worth of each article, and were not inclined to give for it more than its real value, besides getting a present or “potlatch” to boot” (Wilkes 1841: 333).

⁶¹ William Fraser Tolmie was among the many observers who noted the abundance of trade goods along the lower Columbia, and their particular concentration in those villages with the strongest trade ties to the fort:

“Have been coasting left bank and now arrived at Tawallish, a small lodge near to which Kiesno the highest chief on river & his party are encamped. The men are mostly clothed with blue capots or greatcoats with a hood, armed with knives & their well polished muskets are ranged round a tree in military regularity – in front of hamlet, men, squaws & children are squatted. Kiesno intends proceeding to the fort today” (Tolmie 1963: 168).

Assigned as the surgeon at Fort Vancouver, William Fraser Tolmie later became the factor at Fort Nesqually.

⁶² Clearly, from early on the fur trade, the people of the lower river had access to greater wealth as well as guns, giving them a considerable strategic advantage over their rivals in all directions. In 1795, only three years after the first arrival of ships at the mouth of the Columbia, Bishop reported the account of one lower Chinook trader:

“Their mode of trade is somewhat curious, and afforded us an hearty laugh has he more curiously described it. They go up the River Chinook [apparently the Columbia] two or three hundred miles and come to Strange villages, where they land and offer trade with some trifling Pieces of Copper or Iron. The Strangers naturally demand more. The chief then gives the Signal and they all discharge their Pieces laden with Powder, into the Air. These People never having heard or seen such a Strange Phenomena throw off their Skins and Leather War Dresses and fly into the woods, while the others Pick them up, and leave on the Spott the articles first offered. Then they Proceed to other Places in like manner. And thus for the Quantity of goods we Pay for one of these dresses they get

sometimes twenty, but we suppose this mode cannot last long, as they will naturally be aware of a Second visit of the kind" (Bishop 1967: 118-19).

⁶³ Samuel Clarke describes a purported failed attempt to take possession of Fort Vancouver by the Wasco tribe. The Wascos, resentful over the relocation of a Hudson Bay Company trading post in their territory, assembled a hundred war canoes and made plans to lay siege to the fort, traveling by river through Klickitat territory. The presence of an apparent war party raised the suspicions of the Klickitat chief who, being on friendly terms with the HBC, sends word to John McLoughlin to expect an attack. Upon hearing this news, McLoughlin sent for Kiesno, the chief of the nearby Multnomah tribe, in order to gather "as many of his war canoes as possible, fully armed and equipped" and lie in wait for the Wascos (Clarke 1905: 233).

Nearing the fort in the afternoon, the Wascos landed and made camp on the south shore of the Columbia, preparing for the following day's attack. Being that "the Wascos and Multnomahs were friends and had much trade together," Kiesno and some of his men visited the Wasco camp (Clarke 1905: 234). At the sounding of cannons emanating from the fort, the Wascos became very frightened and were told that it is "only King George's men making thunder and lightning" (Clarke 1905: 234). This, along with various other stories told by Kiesno, caused the Wascos to reconsider their attack against the British who are perceived to possess "power over the elements" (Clarke 1905: 234).

In the morning, the Wascos made an attempt to visit the fort and were met with instructions to send three representatives to visit Dr. McLoughlin, leaving the rest of the party at the camp to receive a feast. They are made to wait an hour before meeting with the Governor, during which the three head men meet "a magnificent Highlander standing guard," along with "another six-foot Highlander" serving as the company's piper (Clarke 1905: 235). By the time the Governor meets with the Wasco party, "the pride of Wasco was at a low ebb," presumably due to the appearance of the highlanders and the sounding of the "bagpipes [which] were making them feel weaker and weaker" (Clarke 1905: 235). McLoughlin then set negotiation terms with the Wascos and ordered they be "treated to the best there was to be had" in the fort, sending them off with various sundries so that "was no cause for complaint" (Clarke 1905: 235). Purportedly, this did not satisfy the Wasco women who, upon the return of the fleet, "had to accept the men's excuses, that there was not a medicine man in all Wasco" who could compete with the powers of King George (Clarke 1905: 236).

The relocation of forts was generally a contentious matter, upsetting the balance of power between tribes. McLoughlin addressed this issue in a letter to the Governor

Deputy Governor & Committee of the HBC, dated September 1, 1826, concerning the relocation of Fort Walla Walla:

“When I was at Walla Walla last fall this subject at Mr. Deases Suggestion was mentioned to the chiefs as he considered it would be dangerous to move the Establishment without obtaining their Consent. When our Intention was announced they agreed to the Intended Removal but shortly after I left the place Mr. Black Informed me some of the Leading Chiefs told him they would not consent to the Fort being Removed and in the Winter he Repeatedly wrote me that the party opposed to the Removal was daily Increasing, And in the Spring When Mr. Black touched on the subject their Answer was they had no objection to Remove the Fort Lower Down— But it must be on the south side. Mr. Black observed that he wished to Build on the north Bank — all the Chiefs exclaimed against it and offered Horses and Beaver Skins to Induce him to Remain where he was or to Rebuild on the South side. He being away if we Removed the Fort in Opposition to the Will of the Natives would Expose it to Great Danger and also the Communication Up and Down the River and Greatly Injure the Whole of the Columbia Trade of the Interior — told them he would not take their Horses or Beaver Skins and since he found they had such an Aversion to the Fort being Removed to the North Bank he would not Remove it for the present but wait for further Orders” (McLoughlin 1826: 26).

⁶⁴ As McLoughlin reports, when a fire threatened to burn down the fort in 1844, “the Indians within reach” as well as servants and settlers in the area, “on seeing the danger to which the place was exposed, rushed to our succor and afforded every assistance in their power,” putting out the fire and stopping the fire shortly before it engulfed the fort (McLoughlin 1844).

⁶⁵ Hajda (1984), for example, notes some evidence that the population of villages proximate to the forts increased proportionately to those of the larger Lower Columbia region; when Fort George was the regionally dominant fort (1811-1824), lower Columbia villages exhibited elevated numbers, and the same happened to villages close to Fort Vancouver after 1824. Population increases were both from movement between Chinookan communities, but also from the relocation of non-Chinookans (such as Cowlitz and Klickitat) from inland locations.

⁶⁶ The HBC marriage policy not only provided trade advantages away from the Fort, as is widely known, but also at the Fort, with kin giving reason to visit Fort and with the Village providing a nucleus for camping and visitation for outsiders. This function was

appreciated by the HBC. By allowing the Village to develop outside of the Fort's walls, this minimized any strategic threat while allowing the Village to facilitate commerce.

⁶⁷ Traditional gaming is discussed in various sources. See, e.g., Kane (1855, 1857).

⁶⁸ In 1833, Tolmie described seeing ceremonial activities being carried out among one of these encampments very near to the fort; the passage is of rare descriptive value, so is quoted in whole here:

“Rode out with Govr. & Cowie to see the farm which extends along bank of R to E. of fort – there several large fields of wheat & pease & one of barley – with rich & extensive natural meadows. Heard a loud howling & approaching a party of from 30 to 40 Indians, men, women & children performing their devotions. They formed a circle two deep & went round & round, moving their hands, as is done in sculling, exerting themselves violently & simultaneously repeating a monotonous chant loudly. Two men were within the circle & kept moving rapidly from side to side making the same motion of arms, & were I am told the directors or managers of the ceremony. Having continued this exercise for several minutes after we beheld them becoming more & more vehement & excited, they suddenly dropped on their knees & uttered a short prayer & having rested a short time resumed the circular motion. During the ceremony so intent were they that not an eye was once turned towards us, although we stood within a few yards. In an encampment close by, several persons were squatted round the fires – the dwellings, formed of poles covered with skins, looked very wretched. Felt a sensation of awe come over me when they knelt & prayed. The Govr. says that they have imitated the Europeans in observing the 7, as a day of rest” (Tolmie 1963: 172).

Tolmie revisited the encampment a few days later:

“Having reached to near the extremity of the farm entered the forest & visited the Indian encampment at which the religious ceremonies were performed last Sunday. Today the lodges were crowded with human beings of all sizes and sexes, squatted closely round the fires which burnt in the middle, notwithstanding their filthy abodes the inmates looked fresh & healthy, outside were several wolfdogs who retreated growling at our approach. Shook hands with a few of the principal men & by signs they gave us to understand on enquiry that about sunset the devotional ceremonies would commence. The camp seemed well supplied with food, for the central poles of the wigwam were hung with large pieces of

salmon drying in the smoke. What externally appeared as several dwellings within was one apartment & contained at least 50 individuals. Apart from it was a smaller hut, in which an old wrinkled beldame displaying her personal charms without regard to decency, seemed to preside. The women were all in a state of nudity except having the corner of a blanket round loins" (Tolmie 1963: 178).

The exact identity of the inhabitants of this encampment are unclear from the passage.

⁶⁹ Townsend (1839: 130), for example, alludes to a Kowalitsk [Cowlitz] Indian named George who appears to have served the HBC often as "a capable and experienced [river] pilot" on the lower Columbia.

⁷⁰ Farnham (1843: 177) somewhat contemptuously referred to "an Indian village on the bank of the Columbia opposite Vancouver," apparently Neerchokioo: "It was a collection of mud and straw huts...We hired one of these cits to take us across the river." A temporary camp, apparently of Chinookan speakers, was reported north of the fort occasionally (Wuerch 1979: 100).

⁷¹ Many authors especially mention the French, Métis and Hawaiian labor at the farm. Pambrum, for example, noted that "an extensive farm was conducted on which from one to two hundred men were employed, mostly French-Canadians and Kanakas" (Pambrum 1978: 28). Similarly, Farnham reported evocatively that,

"The farmer on horseback at break of day, summons one hundred half-breeds and Iroquois Indians from their cabins to the fields. Twenty of thirty ploughs tear open the generous soil; the sowers follow with their seed, and pressing on them come a dozen harrows to cover it; and thus thirty or forty acres are planted in a day, till the immense farm is under crop" (Farnham 1843: 65).

⁷² Referring to the general pattern of salmon fishing around the Willamette-Columbia confluence in 1844, settler Peter Burnett noted that

"All the salmon caught here are taken by the Indians, and sold to the whites at about ten cents each, and frequently for less. One Indian will take about twenty per day upon an average. The salmon taken at different points vary greatly in kind and quality, and it is only at particular places that they can be taken. The fattest and best salmon are caught at the mouth of the Columbia; the next best are those taken in the

Columbia, a few miles below Vancouver, at the cascades and at the dalles” (Burnett 1902: 421).

Hawaii was a major market for these fish. Writing that same year, trader Avery Sylvester noted that

“All the salmon caught in the river are caught by the natives, some in nets made by themselves and some with spears. The whites who wish to purchase them get 8 to 12 for a dollar, payable in trade. This brings them about \$5 per bbl, ready for shipping. We put up this year about 250 bbls, which we sold at Oahu at a very good advance” (Sylvester 1933: 360).

⁷³ Curtis (1911: 57) retells the story of Spokane Indians traveling en masse to assist in milling and woodcutting operations at the fort:

“A man born about 1834 tells of a journey made in boyhood down the Columbia to a white settlement near the mouth, probably Vancouver, Washington. They party, consisting of nearly a hundred people in seventeen canoes, visited the Indians of the lower river and worked occasionally at sawing wood for the white men, and returned after an absence of a year.”

⁷⁴ Bancroft noted, with perhaps too much dramatic intent, that

“Traders of interior posts were in constant danger of Indian attacks. Only a few men could be kept at each post, and the Indians at times were discontented. When in want of provisions they could not get, they would become desperate and easily excited” (Bancroft 1890a: 36, note 21).

⁷⁵ Efforts to expand trade along the Oregon coast were mixed, so that there is surprisingly poor representation of Oregon coast communities despite the relative proximity of this region. The HBC generally maintained awkward relationships with these coastal tribes but guides from these tribes were sometimes found at the fort, while the Tillamook were a more regular presence due in part to their interconnections with the Chinookan communities of the lower Columbia River. David Douglas (1914: 213) makes reference to Indian guides at the fort from

“the coast south of the country inhabited by the Killimuks...the Alseas, the Umpquas, the Klamaths, the Tututunne, and the Shastas. Until recent

years the latter tribes have been showing marked hostility toward parties of white settlers, and the expedition sent out for the first time in 1829 by the Hudson's Bay Company into regions occupied by these Indians had to ward off repeated attacks" (Dufлот de Mofras 1937: 185-86).

⁷⁶ To cite one of the numerous examples, when tribes heard rumors of potential American attacks on tribal communities in the early 1840s, chiefs such as "*Peo-peo-mux-mux* of the Walla Walla tribe visited Fort Vancouver, as an Indian envoy, to ascertain what truth was contained" in these rumors (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 94). The tensions of this time were a contributing factor to the Whitman massacre.

The name *Peo-peo-mux-mux* name commonly has been translated as "Yellow Serpent" (Hines 1850: 165).

⁷⁷ The fort staff had a well-deserved reputation as congenial hosts to travelers from abroad and a center of social life. Even their bitter competitors, such as the American trader Nathaniel Wyeth, were apparently wined and dined at the fort:

"I remained at Fort Vancouver eating and drinking the good things to be had there and enjoying much the gentlemanly society of the place"
(Wyeth 1899: 178).

⁷⁸ The *Tonquin* was a ship of great historical consequence in the region, being the vessel that carried the Astorians to the west coast, where they constructed Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia. After leaving Astoria, the *Tonquin* ventured north to Nootka Sound to participate in trade with the resident Nuu-chah-nulth (or "Nootka"). (The exact band of Nuu-chah-nulth has been a point of contention; various lines of evidence suggest that these events may have taken place in Clayoquot Sound, among the ancestors of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations.) In the course of trade, the ship's notoriously caustic commander, Lieutenant Jonathan Thorn insulted a chief of the Nuu-chah-nulth, ordering the chief to leave his ship and then tossing pelts in the chief's face to express his dissatisfaction with the prices requested for these pelts. The tribe withdrew, returning later and attacking the ship. A few crew members attempted to escape, but were captured and killed; one survivor, James Lewis, coaxed a number of Nuu-chah-nulth onto the ship and then ignited the powder room, killing himself and many tribal members. In the end, only one member of the *Tonquin's* crew remained – this was Lamazee (or George Ramsey) is sometimes reported as being half-Chinook or of Clatsop ancestry, who ultimately made his way back to Astoria to report the incident (Seton 1993; Franchère 1851).

⁷⁹ The Blackfeet presented a sort of obstacle on the eastern edge of the Columbia District, being famously hostile to all outside travelers in their territory. Franchère depicted them as “a warlike and ferocious tribe who killed every stranger who fell into their hands” (Franchère 1967: 65). Fur trapping parties venturing east of the Rockies were severely hampered by the Blackfeet. As William Fraser Tolmie reported,

“The snake party of trappers of which so much was heard but so little learn’t...proceed to the territory around Lewis’s or the Great Snake River & its northern branch & some times enter the northern parts of Menzies in the Snake country. They are much annoyed by the Blackfoot Indians from the other side & some sharp skirmishes often occur. Their mode of travelling is on horseback, with beaver traps slung to the saddle, & they stop at all places where beaver are found until they have exhausted the spot, except when molested by the Indians. They live on buffalo beef. Here several American parties have been massacred by the Indians but the Coy’s have always escaped at the worst with the loss of a few lives” (Tolmie 1963: 176).

James Douglas sometimes made reference to the Blackfeet problem in his correspondence, noting for example a large trapping party of the American Company whose horses were “driven off by successive bands of marauding Blackfeet” (James Douglas, in Rich 1943: 225). When traveling in Blackfeet territory, HBC warned expeditions,

“your day and night watch must be strictly attended to” (Ogden 1830). “I am sorry to have to inform you that two of Mr. Ogdens Trappers were killed in course of the Season by the Blackfeet Tribe” (McLoughlin 1828b: 66).

The Blackfeet were reputed to treat outside populations this way consistently, regardless of race. John Kirk Townsend, in a journal entry of September 16th, 1834, summarized the popular view of the Blackfeet among HBC employees of the time:

“Enemies, sworn, determined enemies to all, both white and red, who intrude upon his hunting grounds, the Blackfoot roams the prairie like a wolf seeking his prey, and springing upon it when unprepared, and at the moment when it supposes itself most secure” (Townsend 1839: 122).

In 1842, Reverend deSmet initiated a missionary effort among the Flatheads from his base at Fort Vancouver, and used this mission as a point of entry into missionary efforts among the Blackfeet (McLoughlin 1842c). The Blackfeet continued to be a threat into the period of American occupation nonetheless. As McLoughlin noted in 1843,

“the Blackfeet about the Rocky mountains attack and murder all whites indiscriminately, our people as well as the Americans, and do not the Americans and our people make common cause against the Blackfeet” (McLoughlin 1843f: 187).

⁸⁰ Numerous sources describe how the fort initially had a rude stockade of tall pickets, entirely surrounded by a ditch, though this ditch has not been located archaeologically. Years later, tensions with arriving Americans brought about a restoration and enhancement of defensive elements to protect Fort residents from American and Indian communities alike. Even years later, “The buildings are enclosed by strong pickets about sixteen feet high, with bastions for cannon at the corners” (Kane 1859: 171).

⁸¹ As Lamb notes,

“The Indians did not cease to give serious trouble the moment McLoughlin arrived in the Columbia, as is sometimes supposed. Oddly enough, the first words of his first letter to Simpson, dated June 20, 1825, inform the Governor of an inter-tribal murder which threw the Indians of the lower Columbia Valley into a turmoil, and caused McLoughlin to fear for the safety of the men and posts in his charge” (Lamb 1941: lvii).

As McLoughlin describes the events in a letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee of the HBC, dated October 6th, 1825,

“We were a longer time in removing from Fort George in consequence of a War breaking out between the Natives about that place caused by Concommley’s Son getting one of his Slaves to ass[ass]inate another Chief of the Chinook Tribe close to the Fort and the Indians collecting about the place either to revenge the assasination or Support the assasin. I was afraid they might be encouraged by their numbers (and seeing the few men about the place) to attempt to take the Fort to possess themselves of the property in it. I therefore Sent a Reinforcement to Fort George and this for a time put a Stop to our transporting the property and even in a great measure to our work at this place” (McLoughlin 1825: 5).

⁸² There are numerous comments on this general theme in the correspondence of the fort's officers. Even inter-tribal warfare could distract Indian labor and cause any number of other troubles. For example, James Douglas wrote to the Governor, Deputy Governor and Committee of the HBC on October 14, 1839 that

“At Fort McLaughlin, business has on the whole improved since last year; the Natives being at peace among themselves and with their neighbors, have used as much exertion as is consistent with their... habits” (in Rich 1943: 213).

Also, conflict could cut off access to trade routes. Prior to the construction of Fort Vancouver, as McLoughlin knew, a largely Iroquois hunting party from Fort George had done battle with a group of Cowlitz, who controlled access to trails into the interior of Washington. As Alexander Ross noted,

“The disasters in the Cowlitz had not only shut us out from that hunting ground but prevented our trappers from this place from proceeding across the ridge in the E-yack-im-ah [Yakima] direction” (Ross 1813: 21).

The traders at Fort George had quickly convened a council to make peace – not because of fear of retaliation necessarily, but because of a fear of lost trade opportunities.

⁸³ The HBC attack discussed here was successful, involving several skirmishes and the burning of the Port Townsend village. McLoughlin noted in his letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated August 7th, 1828,

“Having already exceeded the time allotted & further delay being extremely injurious to our business on this side of the Mountains, our people gave over the pursuit of the murderers & on their return burnt the Village at Port Townsend, this Village was two hundred paces in length, the Houses as on the Coast made of boards & built contiguous to each other” (McLoughlin 1828b: 65).

Simultaneously, Klallam women were apparently present at the fort and occasionally married fort employees (Munnick 1972).

⁸⁴ McLoughlin goes on to note that,

“To punish those Murderers two mode could be adopted, either to employ Indians or act ourselves.

“All the Indian Tribes on the Columbia from the Dalls to the Sea, offered us their Services, but accepting their offer would be kindling war among them, cause a great deal of innocent Blood to be shed, give them a claim on us & lower us in their opinion, as they would consider by our employing them that we were unable without their assistance to protect ourselves, for these reasons we declined accepting the offer” (McLoughlin 1828a: 57).

Elsewhere in his correspondence, McLoughlin continued to reference the attack and its justification in terms of the realpolitik of HBC security in the region:

“It is certainly most unfortunate to be obliged to have recourse to hostile measures against our fellow beings but it is a duty we owed our murdered Countrymen & I may say we were forced by necessity, as had we passed over the atrocious conduct of their Murderers, others by seeing them unpunished would have imitated their example & whenever an opportunity offered have murdered any of us that fell in their way” (McLoughlin 1828b: 65).

⁸⁵ The sinking of the *William and Ann* was a source of concern for a variety of reasons, and clearly the fear of “Indian troubles” slowed distribution and trade of goods throughout the region (McLoughlin 1828a, 1829b). The loss of the *William and Ann* was additionally upsetting to McLoughlin because the absence of its cargo put the HBC at a disadvantage in 1829-30 when American ships, including the *Owhyhee* and *Convoy* out of Boston, were able to enter the Columbia and trade for fur, upsetting the HBC’s growing monopoly (Sampson 1973b: xxxii). Lamb summarizes the event as follows:

“The supply vessel *William and Ann*, inward bound from England, was wrecked on the bar of the Columbia, with the loss of all her crew and cargo; and two American trading ships entered the river with the intention of making a prolonged stand against the Hudson’s Bay Company there.

The loss of the *William and Ann* was a crippling blow to McLoughlin’s plans for the coastal trade. It left him once again without an adequate supply of goods—“destroyed all our measure of precaution”, as he himself expressed it. In addition it was suspected that the crew of the vessel had been massacred by the Clatsop Indians, and this suspicion strained relations with the natives at the very moment that an alternative market for their furs was at hand. In June, McLoughlin received positive

evidence that the Indians had in their possession goods from the *William and Ann*, and he felt it necessary to send an expedition to demand their return. The property recovered what was negligible, but the bodies of several of the missing crew were found, and the evidence collected satisfied McLoughlin that the men had met death by drowning, and had not been molested by the natives" (Lamb 1941: lxxvii-lxxviii).

McLoughlin described the specifics of the attack in a letter to John Warren Dease, dated July 4th, 1829:

"Messrs [William] Connolly [Samuel] Black [John] Work [Francis] Ermatinger & [John] Harriott with sixty men paid a visit to the Clatsops to demand restitution of the property they secured from the wreck of the *William & Ann* but instead of getting this they were insulted. when they attacked the natives Killed four and destroyed their Village the rest saved themselves by flight and I have the satisfaction to say not one of our people got the slightest wound" (McLoughlin 1829c: 18-19).

There was no intention of rescuing captives in this operation, but merely in the restitution of property and the meting out of punishment. As McLoughlin noted, This becomes clear in McLoughlin's August 1829 initial report to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, in which he provided additional detail:

"I suppose about this time your Honors will [have heard] of the wreck of the *William & Ann* and the melancholy loss of all the crew We were told when Govr Simpson was here that Capt Swan and part of the crew (if not the whole) landed at Clatsop point and were murdered by the natives which from there [sic] well known savage disposition we were inclined to believe, at the same time our informant not being clear in his Statement caused us to apprehend his object (though we had this Report from Several still we could trace it up to the same person) was to endeavor to induce us to make war on the Clatsops with whom he was at variance for these Reasons we could not rely on his report and deffered taking such measures as so atrocious a deed deserved till we had more authentic information of its being perpetrated...

"...it was only on the 21st June when the only Indian Chief here whom we had found correct in the Intelligence he has hitherto brought us, informed us that the day previous he had seen the Chief of the Clatsop Village who told him he and his people had picked up from the wreck

twenty one Bales [of] Goods but that all the crew had been drowned. We determined on demanding restitution of this property...

“Mr Connolly sent a message to the Clatsops demanding restitution of the property to which they replied they would restore all they yet had and pay by giving us Slaves for what they had appropriated to themselves and requested us not to land... Mr Connolly sent the Clatsops word he must land with his people but that since they promised to give up the property they need be under no apprehension from us his Messenger returned with an old Brush and Scoop and said the Clatsops told him take this to your Chief and tell him this is all he will get of his Property, and on our People getting into the Boats to land the Indians fired at the Vessels some Balls went through the Bullworks, the Vessels returned their fire but still the Indians continued theirs till our People were nigh the Shore when one of the Indians being killed by a Shot from us they all fled and took to the woods. our People Burnt their Village and all their Property...” “Since then we have not been able to collect any further information or ascertain if any of the crew had been murdered. five of the Bodies have been found” (McLoughlin 1829d: 19-20, 30-31).

Importantly in this report to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, his first draft indicated that he was “of the opinion that the crew were murdered,” but in the final draft sent to the HBC, he had rewritten this line, indicating that he was “of the opinion the crew were *not* murdered” (McLoughlin 1829d; Barker 1948: 38). Though he maintained this position, the Clatsop and other river tribes were treated with extra suspicion in the months that followed (McLoughlin 1830c).

⁸⁶ The exact number of dead in this attack is a subject of disagreement in the literature. Some sources suggest that the death toll was negligible, while others suggest that this was a major defining event in Clatsop history, effectively killing their traditional leadership. In the latter category, missionary John Frost noted in 1840,

“...the Clatsops and indeed all the Indians in this region, have properly no chiefs; they having all passed away. The last chiefs of the Clatsops having been killed by the Hudson bay company for the real or supposed murder of some of their men, which were thrown on this shore from one of their vessels, which was wrecked on the coast” (Frost 1934:140-41).

Oregon Historical Society interviews from 1899 with Clatsop woman, Jennie Michel seem to corroborate Nehalem-Tillamook accounts of the attack recorded by Franz Boas' student, May Mandelbaum Edel in 1931 (Deur and Thompson n.d.). These suggest large numbers of casualties, and significant impacts upon the tribal population. Oral traditions regarding this attack persisted in some Clatsop, Tillamook, and Chinook families, and the story of this attack anecdotally appears to be of great importance to some Clatsop descendents today.

⁸⁷ The full relevant quote is as follows:

“...the Indians considered the property as ours and after receiving particular information of what had been collected by the different Indians if we had not made a demand of it we would have fallen so much in Indians Estimation that whenever an opportunity offered our safety would have been endangered and the conduct of the Indians in the Contemptuous reply they sent to Mr [William] Connolly and their firing on our people left them no alternative but to attack the Indians and act towards them in the manner they did and it may be as well to state though in my opinion none of the crew were murdered still several of the Gentlemen here think they were” (McLoughlin 1829e: 41).

⁸⁸ Lamb summarizes the events surrounding the Smith massacre as follows:

“The plundering of the *William and Ann* was not the only trouble which the natives caused McLoughlin at this time. He had reported to Simpson on his arrival that Jedediah Smith, one of the leading figures in the American fur trade, had arrived at Fort Vancouver in August with three men. The four were the only survivors of a party of nineteen which had set out from California and which had been attacked by Indians at the Umpqua River. A “Southern” Expedition was being outfitted at the time, under Chief Trader McLeod, and McLoughlin hurried its departure, and instructed McLeod to do his utmost to punish the murderers and recover Smith’s property. McLeod’s journal of this expedition, which is preserved in the Company’s Archives, was printed in 1934, together with the portion of Simpson’s report which relates to Jedediah Smith, and other relevant documents. McLeod got in touch with the offending Indians without difficulty, but as it was clear that the conduct of Smith’s own men had in great part provoked the attack, he took no action against them. However, he did insist upon the restitution of Smith’s property...” (Lamb 1941: lxxvii-lxxviii).

Like the Tonquin incident, the Jedediah Smith massacre of 1829 was precipitated by mistreatment of a chief in the course of trade negotiations that went awry. McLoughlin recalled in a memo to his Fort Vancouver Files, dated November 15th, 1843:

“...on the party arriving at the entrance of the Umpqua, the Indians stole the only axe the party had, and as they absolutely required it, after doing all they could in vain, to get it from the Indians, they had recourse as a last alternative to tying the Chief, on which the axe was restored”
(McLoughlin 1843a: 115).

Some accounts suggest that the attack had been facilitated by the slave of an Umpqua woman and her HBC employed husband at Fort Vancouver, who believed that there would be no HBC retaliation for the killing of Americans. For example, as the Clatsop woman, Celiast Smith, reported to W.H. Gray, the leader of the group of Indians attacking Smith’s party was

“a slave of a Frenchman by the name of Michel, or rather belonging to Michel’s Umpqua wife. This slave had learned, from the statements and talk he had heard at Vancouver, that in case the Indians killed and robbed the Boston men, there would be no harm to them...killing a Boston man (American)...pleased the Hudson’s Bay Company. Under this instruction, it is said, this slave ran away from Vancouver, and went back to his people, and was the cause of the massacre of Smith’s party” (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 57).

The HBC determined to send a party to the Lower Umpqua territory to investigate the causes of the Jedediah Smith massacre and to seek the return of Smith’s property. McLoughlin’s decision to send a party into the Umpqua territory was shaped by the same concerns that had motivated all of his other retaliatory expeditions. As articulated in a letter to Governor George Simpson, dated March 24th, 1829,

“It became now more necessary that he should visit them to enquire into the cause of this horrible massacre, as the facility with which the natives had destroyed this party if allowed to pass unchecked all whites being the same Kind of people in the eyes of Indians would lower us in their estimation induce other Indians to follow their example and endanger our personal security all over the Country” (McLoughlin 1829i: 77).

After Jedediah Smith massacre, William Slacum “made the Indians restore all Smiths property which was in our reach and employed some of our people two months on that object” (McLoughlin in Rich 1943: 32).

⁸⁹ McLoughlin explained this attack in a letter to George Simpson, dated March 20th, 1831:

“Mr. Ermatinger’s woman ran away with an Indian last Spring and he sent Lolo the interpreter after her and desired him to punish the Indian by cutting the tip of his ear which he did and though in the civilized World such an act will appear hash and on that account it would be preferable that he had resorted to some other mode of punishment. Still, if the Indian had not been punished it would have lowered the Whites in their Estimation as among themselves they never allow such an offence to pass unpunished” (McLoughlin 1831b: 185).

⁹⁰ Michel LaFramboise was the leader of the party that attacked the Tillamooks. In his instructions to LaFramboise, he wrote,

“M^r Michel Laframboise

Dear Sir

You will proceed with the party under your command to the Killimook country for the purpose of punishing the atrocious murder of Pierre Kakaraquiron and Thomas Canasawarette who were savagely murdered by the above tribe twenty days since,

As it is impossible for me at a distance to point out the manner in which this can be effected with the least effusion of blood, I shall not shackle you with copious instructions, particularly as your experience in that part of the country, and your Knowledge of the Indian character, will point out to you the best mode of obtaining the object of your mission, permit me, however to recommend that as ‘tis likely some innocent beings may in such cases unavoidably become victims as well as the guilty the severity necessary, for our own safety & security may always be tempered with humanity and mercy. – after accomplishing this object you will proceed on your trapping Expedition and you will either come here this fall, next winter, or send us accounts of your proceedings before the express leaves this [place] in March, Wishing you a safe and happy accomplishment of the objects of your Expedition

I am

&c signed J. McL” (McLoughlin 1832b: 268-69).

After this party killed six people, McLoughlin wrote a follow-up letter to Michel Laframboise, dated May 9th, 1832:

“I received yours of the 4th instant yesterday and I am happy to find that you have accomplished your object and that you have lost none of your party and I pray to God that we may not be exposed again to have recourse to violent measures at the same time I think it but right that you send word to the sauvages – that what we have done is merely to let them see what we can do, and that as we do not wish to hurt the innocent we expect that themselves will Kill the remainder of the Murderers of our people. – if they do not we will return” (McLoughlin 1832c: 272).

⁹¹ Some of these attacks and threats on the Cascades population predated the construction of Fort Vancouver, but were undertaken by men later associated with the fort. Franchère reports that the Astorians in 1811-12 used threats of severe violence in retaliation for the taking of his party’s goods at the falls. After buying food from a village at the falls sufficient to meet their provisioning needs, his party then turned the tables on the villagers:

“Since we had now provided ourselves with enough food for several days, we informed the Indians why we had come and told them that we were determined to kill them and burn their villages if they did not bring back to us, in two days what they had stolen on the seventh...
“An Indian and his wife who had accompanied us advised us to make one of the chiefs our prisoner. We soon succeeded in doing so, without running any risk. We invited one of the natives to smoke with us, and he came; a little later, another followed suit. Finally, one of the chiefs came – a man highly regarded among them. Immediately we seized him, pinioned him under a tent, and set over him two guards with drawn swords.

Then we sent the other two natives to their people with the news of the capture of their chief, telling them that if they did not return to us at once the supplies they had taken, we would put him to death. Our stratagem worked” (Franchère 1967: 96-97).

Such threats appear to have continued into the HBC period. As HBC Governor George Simpson noted,

“All the Natives of the River appear well disposed indeed I never saw such good humoured inoffensive Indians in any part of the Country; those of the Cascade and Chûte Portages have on three or four occasions attempted to pillage the Brigades when the Country was first established but the example made of them at the time and subsequent conciliatory yet firm and judicious conduct of the traders has deterred them from offering any insult or violence for several years past” (Simpson 1931: 95).

⁹² This objective was the same whether McLoughlin was attempting to secure HBC property (as in the case of the *William and Ann*) or to secure property of unconnected expeditions (such as the Jedidiah Smith party). The attack on Clatsop village was motivated in no small part by a desire to obtain the goods lost in the wreck of the *William and Ann*; the expedition to the lower Umpqua region to revisit the site of the Smith massacre was also explained in no small part as an effort to take – by force if necessary – property obtained by the tribes in that conflict.

⁹³ Missionary John Frost describes McLoughlin and other Fort Vancouver residents punishing an intertribal murder on Lower Columbia River:

“This morning Dr. McLaughlin came down from pillar rock with his men, bringing with them an Indian who was with the slave, one of the murderers who was shot on [August] 27th, and as there was no doubt that this Indian was as deeply implicated as the slave he was consequently adjudged worth of death according to the laws of Great Britain & America. He was therefore, by order of the Governor, hung by the neck until he was dead, at 1 Oclock P. M.” (Frost 1934: 61).

⁹⁴ Even interpersonal conflicts presented potential threats to the security of the Company. In a letter to William Connolley, dated July 2nd, 1830, McLoughlin noted,

“I was informed here this summer...that Mr [William] Kittson had offered two Horses to get an Indian Killed [La Souris?] will you have the Goodness to state to Mr Kittson that the Company will not allow such proceedings and that it must not be done – It is only when Indians have murdered any of the Companys Servants or any person belonging to the Establishment that we can have a Right to Kill the Murderer or get him Killed” (McLoughlin 1830b: 109).

⁹⁵ Speaking of John McLoughlin, Coan noted, "His family claims that he even punished White employees of the company who troubled the Indians (Coan 1920: 57).

⁹⁶ The fort generally sold rifles to the Indians but reportedly took measures to restrict the amount of ammunition available in local tribal communities at any one time.

Guns obtained at Fort Rupert were used in extermination campaigns by certain "Kwakiutl" bands of the British Columbia coast –especially the Lekwilda against rival tribes to their south, while Puget Sound tribes used rifles obtained from Fort Vancouver to repel attacks by these bands: "The Salish had very few guns, although in Fort Vancouver they had had a source of supply for some years longer than the Lekwiltok, who obtained their firearms at Fort Rupert" (Curtis 1913: 108; Taylor and Duff 1956).

Similarly, rifles obtained by the Klamath were an important contribution to their preexisting traditions of slave-raiding among the nearby Achomawi and Shasta tribes. Ironically, a few of the slaves obtained with the assistance of Fort Vancouver rifles or ammunition probably found their way into the Fort Vancouver community as they were obtained by Chinookan residents of the Village and nearby Indian communities (Spier 1930).

⁹⁷ This issue comes up frequently in Fort Vancouver correspondence. For example, Captain Henry Hanwell, commissioned in 1826 to oversee the HBC coast survey, was caught selling alcohol to the Indians along the coast. McLoughlin replied angrily:

"It is unfortunate the Captain Sells liquor to the Indians – It spoils them – we Sell No liquor to them on any account, Selling liquor to Indians is prohibited by a positive order of the Committee" (quoted in Lamb 1941: lxx).

Yet, concurrently, HBC Governor George Simpson was making the case that the sale of alcohol and firearms was a necessity if the Company was going to be competitive in the Northwest: "Without these articles we can have no chance of success, we must therefore either abandon the contest altogether, or follow the example of our opponents by the unlimited sale of them to the natives" (Simpson 1832).

McLoughlin's later correspondence seems to reflect the Company position that the sale of alcohol is necessary for the sake of competition. Referring to the Russians on the northern Northwest Coast, he advised his employees,

"...if they complain of your giving Arms Ammunition and Liquor to the Natives you will tell them that you are obliged to do so in consequence of its being done by the Americans, and to prove to all that the Hudsons Bay

Company is averse to supplying these Indians...you will propose to the Americans collectively to discountenance the issuing and selling of these articles to which if they agreed you will also conform" (McLoughlin 1831a).

On the lower Columbia, where McLoughlin and the Fort Vancouver officers exerted more pervasive control, prohibitions on the sale of alcohol were somewhat more effective. In 1845, Warre and Vavasour attribute the peaceful condition on the lower Columbia to the prohibition of alcohol and limitations on the availability of firearms:

"The Indians of the north are sometimes troublesome, but those of the Columbia are a quiet, inoffensive, but very superstitious race. To the last cause may be traced their quarrels with the white man and with one another. They are well armed with rifles, muskets, etc., but from policy they are much stinted by the H. B. Co. in ammunition...The total abolition of the sale of intoxicating liquors has done much for the good of the whole community, white as well as Indian; and so long as this abstinence (which can hardly be called voluntary) continues the country will prosper. When this prohibition is withdrawn, and the intercourse with the world thrown open, such is the character of the dissolute and only partially reformed American and Canadian settlers, that every evil must be anticipated, and the unfortunate Indian will be the first to suffer" (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 57).

Wilkes commented on the prohibition on liquor among employees or other individuals associated with the Company, as well as prohibitions on the sale of alcohol to Indians. As with all HBC policy, this was driven by pecuniary motivations. Wilkes commented on this in 1841: "They have found this rule highly beneficial to their business in several respects: more furs are taken, in consequence of those who are engaged having fewer inducements to err; the Indians are found to be less quarrelsome, and pursue the chase more constantly" (Wilkes 1845: 330).

⁹⁸ In a 1837 letter, Herbert Beaver mentions one abandoned child, a girl from the lower Umpqua River, who was cared for by himself and other fort residents; she later died and was buried at the fort:

"Since I commenced this letter we have received a sad blow to our happiness in the loss of a little girl, bequeathed to us at her departure by Mrs. Capendal, who will be equally sorry with ourselves to hear of her death, which took place after four days sickness, if you will kindly inform

her of it. She was the daughter of one of our hunters of the same name, by an Indian Chieftess of the Tsaleel Tribe, who live on the Umpqua about two degrees to the southward. I never saw her father. He left the Fort on an expedition the very day we landed at it, and is not expected to return for some months. He was exceedingly fond of her; Her mother has been de[ad] about two years, and all her relatives are dead; so that she was the chief of her nation, which is one of the most [barbarous] on the coast. Her death took place within a fortnight after two marriages, which, being the first, we celebrated with a little dance at which she gained universal attention by her engaging manners, and a white frock which Mrs. Beaver had made for her, and which had never been seen at Vancouver. The hearty manner of her prayer for her father can never be forgotten. Excuse my mentioning this, but we loved her, and all regret her; also the liberty I take in requesting you to get the Epitaph on the other side engrossed on a small, plain, white marble slab, in as inexpensive a manner, as may be, and forwarded to me, at my cost, by first ship. I know you will sympathize with our loss of almost the only thing we had begun to love at Vancouver. She was wholly under our care and much improved since Mrs. Capendal saw her" (Beaver 1959: 43).

⁹⁹ Writing in 1841, Charles Wilkes mentioned these schools in the course of his review of the operations and buildings of the fort:

"In addition to these, there are extensive kitchens and apartments for the half-breed and Indian children that the Company have taken to bring up and educate. Of these there are now twenty-three boys and fifteen girls, who claim the particular attention of Dr. M'Laughlin and Mrs. Douglass. A teacher is employed for the boys, who superintends them not only in school, but in the field and garden... Dr. M'Laughlin estimated the labour of four of these small boys as equal to that of a man. It was an interesting sight to see these poor little cast-away fellows, of all shades of colour, from the pure Indian to that of the white, thus snatched away from the vices and idleness of the savage. They all speak both English and French ; they are also instructed in religious exercises, in which I thought they appeared more proficient than in their other studies. These they are instructed in on Sunday, on which day they attend divine worship twice. They were a ruddy set of boys, and when at work had a busy appearance : they had planted and raised six hundred bushels of potatoes ; and from what Dr. M'Laughlin said to me, fully maintain themselves. The girls are equally well cared for, and are taught by a female, with whom they live and work" (Wilkes 1945: 332).

¹⁰⁰ For example, Celiast, daughter of Clatsop Chief Coboway, “married” and had a son with the Fort Vancouver baker, Basile Poirier of Montreal, only to have McLoughlin intervene to dissolve the association and send Basile east when “it was learned that he had a wife living in Canada” (Munnick 1972: A-67). McLoughlin later promoted the marriage of Celiast to Solomon Smith, a teacher working for the Company.

¹⁰¹ Referring to the Clatsop who came under attack in the *William and Ann* incident, Colvocoresses noted:

“It is also said of them that they are very belligerent; there is scarcely a tribe on the coast with which they are on friendly terms. A white man, however, can travel through any part of their territory quite safely as he can in any other, for the Hudson’s Bay Company are sure to punish all murders, or robberies, with death; and the severity, as well as the certainty of the punishment, is sufficient to prevent the commission of such crimes more frequently than they occur in civilized countries. About a year since, a white man was murdered for his property by a slave belonging to a Chief; the instant the murder was made known to the Company, the slave was seized, and hung in presence of all the tribe” (Colvocoresses 1852: 257).

Historical writers, such as Bancroft, frequently return to the point that this policy seems to have brought about the desired effects and pacified the tribes of the region:

“I am aware that it was a common belief among the early settlers, because the Hudson’s bay people were less frequently attacked than others, that they enjoyed immunity; but such was not the case. Nothing but their uniform just treatment, and the firmness and intrepidity of the leaders and officers in charge, preserved this apparent security. Except in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver, or among the diseased and wasted tribes of the Willamette and Columbia valleys, there needed to be exercised sleepless vigilance, and a scrupulous regard to the superstitions of the different tribes” (Bancroft 1890a: 36).

So too, McLoughlin’s biographers seem to attribute much of his success to his balance of aggression and congeniality:

“The remarkable ascendancy which McLoughlin later possessed over the Indians was only acquired through the years, and by strict adherence to the time-tested principles which underlay the Indian policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company. So far as possible the Indians were left alone, and the Company sought to modify only the most barbarous of their customs. On the other hand the Company regarded its posts and servants as things apart, and aimed to make it clear that if either were molested, certain retribution would follow. This is not to say that relations between the Indians and the Company were not cordial. Every effort was made to win and retain the friendship and support of the chiefs, and matrimonial as well as other measures were frequently employed, sometimes regardless of the convenience of the individual concerned” (Lamb 1941: lvii).

¹⁰² By 1845, Warre and Vavasour noted,

“Fort Vancouver is similar in construction to the posts [elsewhere in the District], having an enclosure of cedar pickets 15 feet high, 220 yards in length and 100 yards in depth. At the northwest angle is a square blockhouse containing six 3-lb. iron guns” (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 46).

¹⁰³ For example, in a memo written on November 15th, 1843, McLoughlin attempted to justify his actions and challenge claims of his excessive brutality:

“I will not take upon myself to assert that our trapping parties have in no instance exceeded the bounds of moderation in punishing acts of aggression committed by the Indian Tribes through whom they passed, nor even that individuals of these parties have not indulged in acts of private revenge when not under the eye of there [*sic*] leader, but this fact I may fearlessly assert, that we have taken every means that could be devised for the prevention of crime, by having these parties well organized, commanded by efficient persons of trust and confidence; by maintaining the strictest discipline among the Men, and by punishing every known offence committed; every man in these parties was also directed to be kind and forbearing towards the Indians, and fully understood that any act of wanton murder would expose him to the penalties of a capital indictment in the criminal courts of Canada” (McLoughlin 1843a: 117).

¹⁰⁴ A more complete rendition of this quotation from McLoughlin is as follows:

“on the first Settlement of this Country, the Columbia Indians were exceedingly troublesome, and in fact until 1834, it was not considered safe to travel up or down this river with less than 60 men, armed with muskets and fixed bayonets. Now even strangers can come down the River from the Snake Country by twos and threes. It is true, it is improper and impudent for strangers to do so, and they ought not, as it will lead to trouble; but it is a proof the Indians have not been butchered in the way Captn. Spaulding represents, and we brought them to this state by prudent, forbearing conduct joined with firmness. The very nature of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s business of itself ought to protect them from such foul aspersions. We are traders, and apart from more exalted motives, all traders are desirous of gain...

“Is it not self evident we will manage our business with more economy by being on good terms with Indians than if at variance. We trade furs, none can hunt fur bearing animals or afford to sell them cheaper, than Indians. It is therefore clearly our interest, as it is unquestionably our duty to be on good terms with them and the Indians of the Columbia are not such poltroons as to suffer themselves to be ill treated, particularly when the disparity of numbers is so great as to show but one white man to 200 Indians, and to conclude, I will observe that I have been in charge of this Department since 1824 and I am convinced that none of our proceedings can justify the slightest reflection being cast on the H.B.Co. and I am also satisfied that in every respect our conduct can bear the closest investigation” (McLoughlin 1843a: 118).

¹⁰⁵ Fort Langley, for example had a social structure very similar to that of Fort Vancouver, with Métis, Hawaiian and Iroquois men working at middle-level positions, between an Anglo-Canadian managerial class and a large population of intermittent Native laborers. As described in Modeste Demers’ letter to Monseigneur of Juliopolis, November 10, 1841,

“About twenty men are employed there at agricultural activities, of whom eight are Canadians, one an Iroquois, and the other Kanakas, inhabitants of the Sandwich Islands; all having wives and children after the fashion of the country” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 104).

¹⁰⁶ This is not suggest that early authors criticized the “feudal” aspects of the HBC management. Indeed, some seem to have expressed great admiration for it. Bancroft wrote of it thusly:

“Here was feudalism on the western scaboard... The Canadian [employees] were serfs to all intents and purposes, yet with such a kindly lord that they scarcely felt their bondage; or, if their felt it, it was for their good” (Bancroft 1890a: 47).

Contemporary observers such as Samuel Parker attribute the Company’s success to this model of leadership:

“But very few Americans who have engaged in the fur business beyond the Rocky Mountains, have ever succeeded in making it profitable. Several companies have sustained great loss or entire failure, owing generally to their ignorance of the country, and the best mode of procedure. The conductors of these enterprises, mainly, were inexperienced in Indian trade, and, like Americans generally, they perhaps expected the golden fruits of their labor and industry, without the time and patience requisite to ensure it. Hence the results have frequently been disappointment. The Hudson Bay Company have reduced their business to such a system, that no one can have the charge of any important transactions, without having passed through the inferior grades, which constitute several year’s apprenticeship. Their lowest order are what they call servants, (common laborers.) All above these are called gentlemen, but of different orders” (Parker 1841: 188).

¹⁰⁷ Under the Astorians and the North West Company, Fort George had proven a relatively egalitarian social environment among employees. This changed notably at around the time of the move to Fort Vancouver, reflecting the very different culture of the HBC. Brown (1980: 217) described the HBC after the merger with the North West Company as

“a hothouse atmosphere in which social distinctions seemed to grow and flourish. Pressed to economize and to increase the efficiency of company operations, and wielding strong monopoly powers, the new governor [George Simpson] and his associates were able, for a time, to sort and simplify the fur trade population into classes of people distinguished by their race on one hand and their membership in kin-friendship networks on the other, directing them along different career paths.”

¹⁰⁸ George Simpson summarized the employees of the fort as follows:

“The people of the establishment, besides officers and native laborers, vary in number, according to the season of the year, from one hundred and thirty to upwards of two hundred. They consist of Canadians, Sandwich Islanders, Europeans and half breeds; and they contain among them agriculturalists, voyageurs, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, carpenters, masons, tailors, shoemakers, &c. &c. &c” (Simpson 1847: 142).

On this differentiation between race, class, and employment in the HBC, Kardas asserted that

“Almost all Whites and half-breeds were laborers or middlemen. Iroquois served frequently as bowsmen on canoes and probably spent the majority of their time traveling local runs. Natives served locally as interpreters, apprentices and laborers. Owhyees during the early years were used as middlemen; later they were more often employed as woodcutters, and laborers and a few are also designated as “pigherds.” Since men were called up for various jobs as needed, even these assignments are tentative. From the mid-1840’s onward increased emphasis on farming and lumbering kept most of the men near the fort” (Kardas 1971: 214-15).

Similarly, Lang notes,

“there had always been a hierarchy within the trade, one that for the most part reflected ethnic differences between the Scottish upper-echelon clerks or administrators and the French-speaking *Canadiens*, including Métis voyagers, who provided labor” (Lang 2008: 87).

¹⁰⁹ While the veracity of Herbert Beaver’s accounts are uncertain, he reported on a number of alleged abuses of lower-status and usually Native labor. His letter to Benjamin Harrison, dated March 19, 1838, provides one such account:

“The poor Sandwich Islander, whom I mentioned to you as having been flogged and put in irons on the twenty-fifth of August last, was released on the twenty-ninth of January, making five months and four days, during which period they were never by order, though sometimes by the

humanity of the cook, at the risk of exchanging situations with him, taken off. How far he may have deserved this, or any other punishment, is still not ascertained, and is likely to remain so for some time longer..." (Beaver 1959: 86).

¹¹⁰ The term "Canadians" was often applied to the Métis. This appears to be the suggestion, for example, in Tolmie's account of a group of Canadians traveling near the fort:

"On a visit to Lake Vancouver 'met cavalcade of Canadians scampering along & thence followed by. The scene was now very animating – there were the Canadians mostly dressed in blue capots, glazed hats with a red military belt & having their coal black hair dangling in profusion about their shoulders – wild picturesque looking figures & their horses rougher & more shaggy than themselves'" (Tolmie 1963: 171).

¹¹¹ Iroquois were often among the "freemen" who had left the company's formal contractual service but continued to work intermittently for the HBC as needed.

¹¹² Lacking a clear common language, the fort community was instead broken into speech communities, with officers commonly using English, and the majority of French-Canadian and Métis employees commonly using French among one-another. French placenames such as "the Dalles" and "Deschutes," are still scattered across the Northwestern landscape, reflecting the predominance of this language among the employees of the HBC and North West Company who encountered these places and reported them back to the non-Native world.

However, for broader communication, between fort employees and members of area tribes, as well as within the mixed-race households of the Village, Chinook Jargon or "Chinuk Wawa" was the primary language of everyday use. The Jargon emerged as a trade language synthesized from several languages around the context of trade and other cross-cultural encounters, a linguistic development with precedents elsewhere on in North American frontier trading centers. Drawing heavily from the lexicon of lower Chinook, but also incorporating various words from Nootkan, Salish and other Native languages, the Jargon acquired numerous English and French elements during the period of HBC operations in the region, within a grammar that was flexible and allowed for the general transmission of meaning within a multicultural milieu. This pidgin language, probably rooted in precontact trade languages used along the lower Columbia, continued to evolve at Fort Vancouver in directions that reflected the ethnic admixture of the fort community. Indeed, in a recent book on the development of the

Jargon, Lang (2008) refers to the fort as a linguistic “hothouse” in which the preexisting trade language was used intensively, sometimes in unprecedented domestic contexts, and diffused to populations that had heretofore been outside of its sphere of use.¹¹² Horatio Hale suggested that Chinook Jargon was so universally used at the fort that it was becoming a creolized primary language among the mixed-race population there:

“The place at which the Jargon is most in use is Fort Vancouver. At this establishment five languages are spoken by about five hundred persons, — namely, the English, the Canadian French, the Tshinuk [Chinook], the Cree or Knisteneau, and the Hawaiian. The three former are already accounted for; the Cree is the language spoken in the families of many officers and men belonging to the Hudson’s Bay Company, who have married half-breed wives at the posts east of the Rocky Mountains. The Hawaiian is in use among about a hundred natives of the Sandwich Islands who are employed as labourers about the fort. Besides these five languages there are many others, — the Tsihailish [Chehalis], Walwala [Walla Walla], Kalapula [Kalapuya], Naskwale [Nisqually] &c. — which are daily heard from natives who visit the fort for the purpose of trading. Among all these individuals there are very few who understand more than two languages and many who speak only their own. The general communication is therefore, maintained chiefly by means of the Jargon, which may be said to be the prevailing idiom. There are Canadians and half-breeds married to Chinook women, who can only converse with their wives in this speech, — and it is the fact, strange as it may seem, that many young children are growing up to whom this factitious language is really the mother tongue, and who speak it with more readiness and perfection than any other” (Hale 1846: 644).

Some authors – apparently doing so erroneously – suggest that all multiracial families in the Village spoke French, and that only the Indians spoke Jargon. For example, in 1841, Eugene Duflot de Mofras described the fort as follows:

“The total population of Fort Vancouver is 700 individuals. Of this number 25 are Englishmen, and 100 are French Canadian *engagés* with their families. The majority of the white men have married Indian women and speak only the French language. The Chinook Indians, whose huts adjoin Fort Vancouver, speak a jargon of French and Indian, interspersed with a few English phrases” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 99).

Meanwhile, the Catholic missionaries who operated at Fort Vancouver from 1839 onward quickly learned that it was nearly impossible to communicate their message to a population as diverse as they encountered at the fort. Like missionaries from other denominations working in the region, they almost immediately determined that a knowledge of Chinook Jargon was a prerequisite for their efforts, and translated numerous hymns, biblical texts, and ultimately sermons into the Jargon for use at the Fort and elsewhere. As Father Blanchet noted,

“The diversity of languages met with at Vancouver, the gathering place of several tribes, the difficulty of learning them, and above all lack of time have induced me to use the jargon, which is understood and spoken almost everywhere. In that way I solve many difficulties” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 169).

The use of this language has been revitalized significantly in recent years through the work of the Grande Ronde Cultural Resources program and the Chinook Indian Nation.

¹¹³ Hussey notes that “The village was in existence at least as early as 1832, and it probably was laid out in 1829 or at an even earlier date” (Hussey 1957: 217). It is uncertain to what degree it was “laid out” or developed as an aggregation of independent efforts by Company employees.

Kardas summarized the residents of the Village as follows:

“During the 30 years that the village was occupied, it housed simultaneously individuals of several distinct cultural traditions. These can be grouped into 4 major categories: (1) French-Canadian fur collectors and transporters and miscellaneous British and American craftsmen; (2) a small number of Iroquois men used as boatmen; (3) an imported group of Hawaiian boatmen (“Kanakas”) brought over by the Hudson’s Bay Company to transport goods on the Columbia River; and, (4) the wives of all these men, most of whom were drawn from local Indian tribes around Fort Vancouver. A few local Indian males were also employed” (Kardas 1971: 5).

It is probably the Village that Samuel Parker noted as a habitation of “Indians” at Fort Vancouver in 1835: “There are about one hundred white persons belonging to this establishment, and an Indian population of three hundred in a small compass contiguous” (Parker 1841: 140). This claim has been the foundation of ambiguous accounts in later historical works, such as that of Alley and Munro-Fraser, who seem to quote Parker without attribution: “About one hundred persons were employed at the

place, and some three hundred Indians lived in the immediate vicinity (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 64).

¹¹⁴ For example, John Kirk Townsend reported,

“On the farm, in the vicinity of the fort, are thirty or forty log huts, which are occupied by the Canadians, and others attached to the establishment. These huts are placed in rows, with broad lanes or streets between them, and the whole looks like a very neat and beautiful village. The most fastidious cleanliness appears to be observed; the women may be seen sweeping the streets and scrubbing the door-sills as regularly as in our own proverbially cleanly city” (Townsend 1839: 124).

He later noted,

“I have given this notice of the suburbs of the fort, as I find it in my journal written at the time; I had reason, subsequently, to change my opinion with regard to the scrupulous cleanliness of the Canadians’ Indian wives, and particularly after inspecting the internal economy of the dwellings. What a first struck me as neat and clean, by an involuntary comparison of it with the extreme filthiness to which I had become accustomed amongst the Indians, soon revealed itself in its proper light, and I can freely confess that my first estimate was too high” (Townsend 1839: 124).

The Reverend C.G. Nicolay makes reference to the village in a passing reference typical of the time, in 1846,

“The Company’s servants are principally Scotch and Canadians, but there is also a great number of half-breeds, children of the Company’s servants and Indian women. These are generally a well featured race, ingenious athletic, and remarkably good horsemen; the men make excellent trappers, and the women, who frequently marry officers of the Company, make clever, faithful, and attentive wives; they are ingenious needlewomen, and good managers. They frequently attend their husbands on their trading excursions, in which they are most useful; they retain some peculiarities of their Indian ancestors, among which is the not unfrequent use of the mocassin, though usually it is made of ornamental cloth, instead of deer skin. The approach to this the principal

establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company in the west gives the strange a high idea of its prosperity and importance; the thickly peopled village, the highly cultivated fields, the absence of all guards and defences, the guns of the fort having long since been dismounted, the civilized appearance of its interior, and the activity and energy which prevails, — the noble river, here seventeen hundred yards wide, on which perhaps some of the Company's vessels, brigs, or steamers, well appointed, manned, and armed, are at anchor, and these are heightened in the effect by the magnificent scenery by which it is surrounded; the noble woods flanking the mighty stream, and backed by lofty mountains, the snow-covered peaks of Mount Hood and Mount St. Helens towering over all; while the wild flowers and fruits in their season carpet the ground in wild luxuriance" (Blanchet 1878: 52-53).

¹¹⁵ Visiting the school, Father deSmet proclaimed,

"Listen to the voices of those children from the school house. They are the half-breed offspring of the gentlemen and servants of the Company, educated at the Company's expense, preparatory to their being apprenticed to trades in Canada. They learn the English language, writing, arithmetic and geography" (deSmet 1906: 65-66).

The school, under American schoolmaster John Ball, attempted to extinguish Native cultural practices and language to some degree (Woolworth 2003). As the famous half-Chinook grandson of Concomly, Ranald McDonald, recalled of the school: "The big boys had a medal put over their necks, if caught speaking French or Chinook, and when school was out had to remain and learn a task" (in Lewis and Murakimi 1990: 25). Beaver (1959: 82) proposed rounding up all of the "half-breed" children elsewhere in the Columbia District – a total of roughly 100 at the time – for schooling at Fort Vancouver. While this did not happen in the organized way that Beaver proposed, some families do appear to have brought children to the fort for schooling from outlying posts.

¹¹⁶ Kardas (1971: 171-79) provides what she presents as a comprehensive list of Hawaiians, Iroquois and local Indian employees of Fort Vancouver by name, from 1827 through 1843, based on Company records. She also provides a list of all non-Native employees of the fort during the same period (Kardas 1971: 180-97).

¹¹⁷ Lang seems to counter conventional wisdom on this topic somewhat, when suggesting that,

“For the most part, they were low in status within the ambient society, frequently former slaves freed upon the death of their owner and bartered to European or Métis men. For many, their marriage bespoke an improvement in situation, since they gained greater access to goods around which their society revolved and that had been denied them under the old hierarchy” (Lang 2008: 106).

This may be an overstatement, especially during the early years of the fort, when Chinookan women of high status were marrying readily into the fort population, but seems to have become more the case with time, as women married into the fort community from an increasingly expanding tribal sphere.

¹¹⁸ Charles Wilkes noted of the trappers at the fort: “These are allowed to take their wives and even families with them; and places, where they are to trap during the season, on some favourable ground, are assigned to them. These parties leave Vancouver in October, and return by May or June” (Wilkes 1845: 333).

¹¹⁹ Hussey has suggested, similarly, that

“By marriage to the daughter of a chief or other prominent Indian, the European trader was often able to assure himself of the friendship and commerce of that man, his family, and his village, tribe, or group. Such a connection could sometimes also preserve the trader’s scalp from unfriendly Indians. A native wife helped her husband learn the language of her group and kept him informed of local events related to his business. Equally important was the knowledge of wilderness lore among native women” (Hussey 1991: 266-67).

¹²⁰ Similarly, Bancroft notes,

“He who respected not his own marriage relation, or those of others, must suffer for it, either by incurring the wrath of the company, or the vengeance of the natives, or both. Licentiousness could not be tolerated, and this was one reason why, with so many discordant elements in the service, such perfect order was maintained. And this discipline was as rigidly enforced outside the fort as within it” (Bancroft 1890a: 28).

¹²¹ In a letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee, Hudson's Bay Company, dated June 24th, 1842, for example, McLoughlin reported on a man in the Columbia District who "went to the Indian Lodges after a woman for which he was deservedly flogged – as he had afforded an opportunity to the Indians if so Inclined to cut off the whole Establishment" (McLoughlin 1842a: 46).

¹²² As Kardas notes of HBC policies facilitating marriages with Indian women:

"By these policies the Company not only encouraged friendly and affinal relations with local Indians, and established at least some kinship bonds through children, but it also created a group of *Métis* on whom it drew for future employees (Kardas 1971: 131).

¹²³ Bancroft makes a colorful reference to caravans of these kind, involving the officers and Governor of the Company,

"Another picturesque feature of this early Hudson's Bay life in Oregon was that of the chief trader's caravan when it moved through the Indian country; or when the governor himself made a tour through the Willamette Valley, as occurred at rare intervals. On these occasions Indian women were conspicuous. In addition to the trappers' wives, there was the grand dame, the wife of the bourgeois, or leader. Seated astride the finest horse, whose trapping were ornamented with colored quills, beads, and fringes to which hung tiny bells that tinkled with every motion, herself dressed in a petticoat of the finest blue broadcloth, with embroidered scarlet leggings, and moccasins stiff with the most costly beads, her black braided hair surmounted by a hat trimmed with gay ribbon, or supporting drooping feathers, she presented a picture, if not as elegant as that of a lady of the sixteenth century at a hawking party, yet quite as striking and brilliant.

When the caravan was in progress it was a panorama of gayety, as each man of the party, from the chief trader and clerk down to that last trapper in the train, filed past with his ever-present and faithful helpmate in her prettiest dress" (Bancroft 1890a: 46-47).

¹²⁴ In the winter of 1824-25, for example, George Simpson found himself pressured by chief Calpo's wife to marry her daughter and exchange a dowry of 100 beaver pelts "in order to establish and confirm her rank." These strategic negotiations were delicate, as both sides wanted to enhance their trade relationships but Simpson was not in a position to marry. As he noted in his journal, "I have therefore a difficult card to play

being equally desirous to keep clear of the Daughter and continue on good terms with the Mother" (Simpson 1931: 104-05).

¹²⁵ Speaking generally of HBC forts in the Columbia District, Wayne Suttles paints a grim picture of the experience of women in these alliances:

"Ethnographic work has suggested that the journals show: that in Native society women were used by their families to further economic and political ends; they were married off and perhaps remarried as suited their families' purposes. Young women seemed to have little choice in the matter. Perhaps a young man did not either. But for a young woman removed to her husband's village, there might be no escape from an unhappy marriage but suicide" (Suttles 1998: 188).

¹²⁶ Certainly this was reported of the lower Chinook chief, Concomly, whose daughter married into the Fort George community (Lee and Frost 1844: 97).

¹²⁷ Simpson proceeds from this point, suggesting that "indeed this observation applies to the whole Indian Country on both sides of the Mountain and I am sorry to say that even Members of Council are not excepted which is more injurious to the Comp interests than I am well able to describe..." (Simpson 1931: 99).

¹²⁸ Franchère noted of the traditional roles of Indian women along the lower Columbia in the early 19th century:

"Though a little less slaves (as I have observed) than among most Indians in America, the Columbia River women are burdened with the hardest labor. They fetch water and wood; they carry supplies whenever they move their homes; they clean the fish and cut it into small slices for drying; they prepare the food; they cook the fruits in season. Among their primary duties is the making of cane mats, baskets for the gathering of roots, and hats of very ingenious design. Since they find little necessity for clothing, they sew very little, and more often the men take the needle in hand" (Franchère 1967: 111).

¹²⁹ The enduring marriage of John McLoughlin and his wife, Marguerite, helped to set the standard for interethnic marriages. Marguerite's native language has been identified as Cree. She was widely regarded as a social hub of the settlement, politely hosting visitors and sometimes overseeing some of McLoughlin's more charitable activities in the community, including the raising of abandoned children. McLoughlin

was famously loyal to, and deeply protective of, his wife for the duration of their lives together (Hussey 1991).

So too, the marriage of McLoughlin's primary assistant and successor, James Douglas, served as a prominent example within the fort. His wife, Amelia, was the daughter of Douglas' prior supervisor, Chief Factor William Connolly, and Suzanne Pas-de-Nom, "a full-blooded Cree" (Hussey 1991: 274). The two shared the McLoughlins' home. James Douglas had arrived at Fort Vancouver by 1830, and he succeeded John McLoughlin in 1846, holding the post as Chief Factor until 1849. He then moved to Fort Victoria, ultimately becoming governor of British Columbia.

¹³⁰ Dunn, for example, describes the officers' wives at the fort, who differ from the women of the Village in many respects:

"Many of the officers of the company marry half-breed women. These discharge their several duties of wife and mother with fidelity, cleverness, and attention. They are in general good housewives; and are remarkably ingenious as needle-women. Many of them, besides possessing a knowledge of English, speak French correctly, and possess other accomplishments; and they sometimes attend their husbands on their distant and tedious journeys and voyages. These half-breed women are of a superior class, being the daughters of chief traders and factors, and other persons high in the company's service, by Indian women, of a superior descent or of superior personal attractions. Though they generally dress after the English fashion, according as they see it used by the English wives of the superior officers, yet they retain one peculiarity – the leggin or gaiter, which is made, now that the tanned deerskin has been superseded, of the finest and most gaudy-colored cloth, beautifully ornamented with beads" (Dunn 1844: 147-8).

Writing based primarily on his experiences with officers' wives on the Lower Columbia, Ross Cox noted,

"The half-breed women are excellent wives and mothers, and instances of improper conduct are rare among them. They are very expert at the needle, and make coats, trousers, vests, gowns, shirts, shoes, etc., in a manner that would astonish our English fashioners. They are kept in great subjection by their respective lords, to whom they are slavishly submissive. They are not allowed to sit at the same table, or indeed any table, for they still continue the savage fashion of squatting on the ground at their meals, at which their fingers supply the place of forks. The

proprietors generally send their sons to Canada or England for education. They have a wonderful aptitude for learning, and in a short time attain a facility in writing and speaking both French and English that is quite astonishing. Their manners are natural and unaffectedly polite, and their conversation displays a degree of pure, easy, yet impassioned eloquence seldom heard in the most refined societies" (Cox 1832: 343-44).

¹³¹ As Lang suggests, "Most mothers of the children at Fort Vancouver were not native or even casual speakers of Chinook proper by the early 1830s; far from it" (Lang 2008: 103). Instead, he suggests, they came from farther afield by this time, from places throughout the region. "As time passed, ever more came from outside the Chinook homeland, and an increasing number of children had mothers of indigenous languages other than Chinook" (Lang 2008: 103).

¹³² Samuel Parker suggests this in his writings on the subject, though it is difficult to discern the degree to which Parker's claims were colored by his opposition to these marriages generally:

"There is another circumstance which operates against the prospects of benefiting many of the population here – the common practice of living in families without being married. They do not call the women with whom they live, their wives, but their women. They know they are living in the constant violation of divine prohibition, and acknowledge it, by asking how they can, with any consistency, attend to their salvation, while they are living in sin. I urged the duty of entering into the marriage relation. They have two reasons for not doing so. One is, that if they may wish to return to their former homes and friends, they cannot take their families with them. The other is, that these Indians women do not understand the obligations of the marriage covenant, and if they, as husbands, should wish to fulfil their duties, yet their wives might, through caprice, leave them, and they should be bound by obligations, which their wives would disregard (Parker 1841: 183-184).

¹³³ George Simpson observed,

"A most inhumane practise existed here for some time after Fort George was established of the Children of the Whites by the Native Women being murdered by the Mothers; this arose from the circumstance of the Fathers insisting that the heads should not be flattened and the Mother preferring to sacrifice her child to having it ranked a Slave the grand distinction

being in the formation of the head but the custom was held in such detestation by the Whites that I believe no instance of the kind has been known for some years past" (Simpson 1931: 101).

¹³⁴ Palmer, for example, alludes to sailors from the British ship *Modesté* visiting Fort Vancouver in the winter of 1845-46:

"many of them were on shore promenading, and casting *sheep's eyes* at the fair native damsels as they strolled from wigwam to hut and from hut to wigwam, intent upon seeking for themselves the greatest amount of enjoyment" (Palmer 1906: 208).

¹³⁵ Responding to Herbert Beaver's accusations of lewd behavior at the fort, James Douglas reported to the Directors of the HBC in 1838 that

"no person is permitted to make fancy visits, and I neither have nor would suffer any person, of whatever rank, to introduce loose women into this Fort" (in Beaver 1959: 145).

Observers such as Charles Wilkes also countered these assertions:

"An opinion has gone abroad, I do not know how, that at this post there is a total disregard of morality and religion, and that vice predominates. As far as my observations went, I feel myself obliged to state, that everything seems to prove the contrary, and to bear testimony that the officers of the Company are exerting themselves to check vice, and encourage morality and religion, in a very marked manner" (Wilkes 1845: 332).

¹³⁶ A considerable correspondence can be found in McLoughlin's letters on this event. In his letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee, Hudson's Bay Company, dated July 7th, 1842, McLoughlin noted of his son:

"...in Consequence of Mr. McLoughlin's not allowing the men to take Indian wives or bring Indian women into the Fort, according to his orders, and not allowing the men to go out of the Fort at night to go after Indian women, and his flogging two men because they had given away their wearing apparel to Indian women, that all the men of the Fort except Pouhow, a Sandwich Islander, had Signed an agreement, which had been

written by Thomas McPherson before last Christmas to murder the late Mr. John McLoughlin" (McLoughlin 1842b: 60).

¹³⁷ Bancroft, with racist overtones, expresses a view that was no doubt prevalent among many 19th century men:

"Up to August 1836, Fort Vancouver was a bachelor establishment in character and feeling, if not in fact. The native women who held the relation of wives to the officers of the company were in no sense equal to their station; and this feature of domestic life in Oregon was not a pleasing one. It was with the company a matter of business, but with the individuals it was something different. To be forever debarred from the society of intelligent women of their own race; to become the fathers of half-breed children, with no prospect of transmitting their names to posterity with increasing dignity, as is every right-minded man's desire; to accumulate fortunes to be devoted to anything but ennoblement – such was the present life and the visible future of these gentlemen. The connection was so evidently and purely a business one that, as I have before stated, the native wives and children were excluded from the officers' table, and from social intercourse with visitors, living retired in apartments of their own and keeping separate tables.

"Not to be degraded by the conditions so anomalous presupposes a character of more than ordinary strength and loftiness" (Bancroft 1890a: 26-27).

Elsewhere, Bancroft laments that, among the "half-breed" children, "the paternal name soon disappears" due to the fact that sons seldom married into white society but more commonly took Indian women as their wives (Bancroft 1890a: 27, note 1).

¹³⁸ As Suttles noted of Fort Langley, in what is now metropolitan Vancouver, B.C.,

"Not mentioned in the journals by name but represented at the fort were the Chinook and their neighbours on the lower Columbia River. Several of the women who came with their husbands to the fort must have been from these tribes. There is some indication of difficulty between these women and the wives later taken from the Kwantlen and other local tribes, but 'the enlightened ones from the Columbia' (20 March 1829) must have influenced the locals' perception of the newcomers and how to deal with them" (Suttles 1998: 175).

¹³⁹ Interestingly, Douglas does not seem to refer to the presence of Native Hawaiians in his journals.

¹⁴⁰ Famously, a group of Iroquois from Fort George entered Cowlitz territory for the purposes of trade and exploration and instead ended up attacking a village, killing a number of men, and taking scalps. The cause of this conflict was rumored to be Iroquois advances on Cowlitz women, which the Cowlitz men resented, provoking an attack that the Iroquois repelled successfully. After this conflict, the traders at Fort George were concerned that they would lose access to the Cowlitz territory and the lands to the east accessed through their territory. They promptly invited their chief, "How-How" to Fort George and negotiated a peace settlement. How-How and his men were attacked by Chinooks as they departed the fort, due to enduring conflicts between the two groups (Ross 1849: 129-31).

¹⁴¹ This mission was granted to the Jesuits as the Seigniorship of Sault St. Louis in 1680 for the purpose of the conversion of the Iroquois.

¹⁴² Certainly, tribal communities that have been members of the Iroquois Confederacy live on both sides of what became the international border of the United States and Canada. The contemporary Iroquois tribes in both countries are numerous. In the period since 1820, the identification of national context for Iroquois people became increasingly complex:

“... the various social, economic, and political consequences of the Iroquois defeat by the Americans in the revolution were apparent. A number of Iroquois, including many of those who had been allies of the British during the war were living on reserves in Canada; others remained in their old homeland, which became part of the United States of America. The War of 1812 had confirmed the territory held by both the British Crown in Canada and the United States. In so doing, it confirmed that each government would continue to deal separately with the Iroquois living within its borders. The once powerful and independent Iroquois confederacy had become “nations within nations” (Tooker 1978: 449).

Several Iroquois tribes exist in New York State near Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. And numerous reserves with Iroquois exist in Ontario province between Montreal to the east and west of Toronto and Niagara Falls. Most of the Iroquois individuals mentioned in Fort Vancouver records appear to have been from Canada rather than the U.S. (York n.d.).

¹⁴³ This is apparently the only published account of a lower Chinook slave raid into the interior (Hajda 2005).

¹⁴⁴ There are numerous brief accounts of slavery as observed at Fort Vancouver. Writing in 1831, George Simpson noted,

“Slaves form the principal article of traffick on the whole of this Coast and constitute the greater part of their Riches; they are made to Fish, hunt, draw Wood & Water in short all the drudgery falls on them; they feed in common with the Family of their proprietors and intermarry with their own class, but lead a life of misery, indeed I conceive a Columbia Slave to be the most unfortunate Wretch in existence; the proprietors exercise the most absolute authority over them even to Life and Death and on the most trifling fault wound and maim them shockingly. Several of the Flat Head Women at the Establishment keep Female Slaves and it was the practise to allow them be let out among the newly arrived Servants for the purpose of prostitution; indeed the Princess of Wales (Mr. McKenzie’s Woman) carried on this shameful traffick to a greater extent than any other having 8 or 10 female Slaves, it is now however broke off altho with some difficulty all the Women in the Fort having come to a resolution that they would not conform to this innovation as it deprived them of a very important source of Revenue. These wretched Slaves often change proprietors two or three times in the course of a Season and when they escape a violent Death they are brought to a premature end by Disease when they are left a pray to the Dogs & Crows as they are denied the ordinary burial. Our remonstrances with the Chiefs however begin to have the effect of ameliorating the situation of those dreadfully oppressed people and Casseno the next man to Concomely in the River shews his respect for the Whites by kind treatment of his Slaves” (Simpson 1931: 101).

Samuel Parker noted in the early 1840s, that

“slavery exists in a modified form among the Indians west of the mountains, not generally, but only among the nations in the lower country. They are bought; taken prisoners in war; taken in payment of debts, if they are orphans of the debtor; and sell themselves in pledges. They are put to the same service which women perform among those Indians who have no slaves” (Parker 1841: 197).

Kane summarized Chinookan slavery thusly:

“Slavery is carried on to a great extent among them, and considering how much they have themselves been reduced, they still retain a large number of slaves. These are usually procured from the Chastay tribe, who live near the Umpqua, a river south of the Columbia, emptying near the Pacific. They are sometimes seized by war parties, but children are often bought from their own people. They do not flatten the head, nor is the child of one of them (although by a Chinook father) allowed this privilege. Their slavery is of the most abject description. The Chinook men and women treat them with great severity, and exercise the power of life and death at pleasure. I took a sketch of a Chastay female slave, the lower part of whose face, from the corners of the mouth to the ears and downwards, was tattooed of a blueish colour. The men of this tribe do not tattoo, but paint their faces like other Indians” (Kane 1859: 181-182).

The exact monetary value of a slave varied considerably over time, and reflected the gender, age, physical strength, and other attributes of the individual (Donald 1997). Various trade values are mentioned by a number of travelers on the lower Columbia, such as Eugene Duflot de Mofras who noted in 1841,

“Slavery is an established custom among American coastal Indians. The value of a male slave is approximately the same as the price of four or five white woolen blankets either plain or gaudily striped, or two pounds of powder. Women, however, are somewhat more valuable” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 185).

¹⁴⁵ Chroniclers such as deSmet speak briefly of the lot of children within lower Columbia slavery:

“Besides those who are born in this unhappy state, there are others who become so, by the fortunes of war. All prisoners are considered slaves by their conquerors, though, in general, only their children experience this hard lot. Wars are sometimes engaged in for the express purpose of acquiring slaves” (deSmet 1847: 124-25).

¹⁴⁶ Kane noted on this point, that the

“The Chinooks and Cowlitz Indians carry the custom of flattening the head to a greater extent than any other of the Flathead tribes...it is from amongst the round heads that the Flatheads take their slaves, looking with contempt even upon the white for having round heads, the flat head being considered as the distinguishing mark of freedom” (Kane 1859: 181).

¹⁴⁷ On this topic, George Simpson noted,

“Several of the Flat Head Women at the Establishment keep Female Slaves and it was the practise to allow them be let out among the newly arrived Servants for the purpose of prostitution; indeed the Princess of Wales (Mr. McKenzie’s Woman) carried on this shameful traffick to a greater extent than any other having 8 or 10 female Slaves, it is now however broke off altho with some difficulty all the Women in the Fort having come to a resolution that they would not conform to this innovation as it deprived them of a very important source of Revenue” (Simpson 1931: 101).

¹⁴⁸ deSmet used almost identical wording, noting that slaves “are well treated, except in case of old age or other inability, when they are left to perish of want” (deSmet 1847: 124).

¹⁴⁹ Many of these claims suggest that leaders sometimes placed wives or daughters into a form of servitude that involved forced prostitution. Apparently in response to these claims, Alexander Ross noted that “I never knew a single instance of a Chinooke, or one of the neighbouring tribes, ever selling his wife, or daughter, or any other member of his family” (Ross 1849: 92).

¹⁵⁰ Ray (1938: 51) for example, mentions lower Chinooks, at the mouth of the Columbia River, holding slaves from the Puget Sound and Willamette Valley region.

¹⁵¹ Kniffen (1928) described Pit River rituals aimed at retaining community coherence despite the periodic loss of large segments of their population, especially women and children who were the principal targets of these raids. In one account,

“After the [Klamath and/or Modoc] had destroyed our dwellings and carried off our women and children, we made a great hunt lasting several weeks. We passed clear around Goose lake, killed much meat, feasted, and danced. When we arrived home we had forgotten our sorrows and were happy again” (Kniffen 1928: 308).

¹⁵² Some accounts, such as those of Edward Curtis provided surprising detail on the slave trade based on interviews with lower Columbia tribal members in the early 20th century. In these writings, Fort Vancouver is depicted as a slave trading venue:

“The slaves of the Cowlitz were obtained by the barter of canoes at the annual native gathering at the Dalles of the Columbia, or at Fort Vancouver, and were usually Kalapuya from Willamette river in Oregon, or Klamath and Shasta from southwestern Oregon and northern California. The Kalapuya slaves were mostly children sold by their parents, but the Klamath and Shasta slaves were bought from the Walamt [Willamette] and the Klackamas, who had purchased captives of one tribe from warriors of the other, the Klamath and the Shasta being constantly engaged in raids against each other. From the Cowlitz some of these Oregon and California captives passed northward into the hands of the Puget Sound tribes. Prisoners taken by the Quilliute from the Makah were traded to the Hoh, whence they passed successively, ever southward, to the Queets, Quinault, Humtulips, Hoquiam, and finally the bands of Shoalwater bay, and a few even came into the possession of the Chinook” (Curtis 1910: 75).

¹⁵³ Lang (2008: 114) appropriately interprets these as being Shasta: “The Sasté or Shasta...were frequently slaves of the lower Columbia tribes. It is not clear whether...Sasseté in the records were manumitted slaves or wives conveyed to the lower Columbia by the California brigades.”

¹⁵⁴ The killing of slaves was done somewhat casually, if historical and ethnographic records are to be believed. For example, Ray (1938: 76) notes that slaves were sometimes killed and their bodies placed under the funerary canoe of a headman who had died. Herbert Beaver reported various abused slaves in his journals, though it is sometimes difficult to discern the extent to which his abolitionist bias might have colored his accounts. In one account, he alludes to an Indian boy, “a fine little fellow, six years old, a slave to another Indian, being sick, and thrown into the water by his inhuman master to perish, was rescued by our people, cure in the hospital, and has remained with us ever since; that is, about two years” (Beaver 1959: 22).

McLoughlin’s correspondence reveals friction on this issue, as Company employees sometimes sought to intervene to protect slaves. One case involved a Mr. Simon McGillivray who expressed concern to McLoughlin regarding the Walla Walla area tribes killing of a slave named Sasty – probably a Shasta slave. In his reply to McGillivray, on February 27th, 1832, McLoughlin recommended restraint:

“You know also that altho’ the killing of Sasty is murder yet with these Indians it is considered no greater offence than killing a horse; and perhaps not so bad as the shooting the Cow. God forbid that I should mean to justify Murder, but in dealing with Indians we ought to make allowance for their manner of thinking and if I was addressed on the subject by any of them I would say the Almighty has forbid the shedding of innocent blood, and commanded that he who shed man’s blood by man shall his blood be shed. And in obedience to this command, if a Chief among us was to Kill a slave that Chief would be killed. But as you have not the means of putting this command in execution you will leave it to the Almighty who will punish the Murderer either in this world or the world to come. But you know well what to say and I only mention this to explain you my view of the case” (McLoughlin 1832a: 255).

¹⁵⁵ In a letter to Benjamin Harrison, dated November 15, 1836, Beaver noted:

“I have seen more real slavery in the short time I have been here, than in the eight years and a half I was in the West Indies. There are also Indians, but I cannot say correctly the number, I think about forty, held in actual bondage, having been purchased by persons of all classes in the Establishment. It is true that discipline is maintained, but it is by the use of the lash and the cutlass, supported by the presence of the pistol. I have heard in such a manner, as to leave no doubt of their having taken place, of scenes of atrocity, which make the blood run cold” (Beaver 1959: 20).

In his second letter to Benjamin Harrison, dated January 18, 1837, Beaver revises his figures: “I have ascertained the number of slaves to be Eight, belonging to Officers of the Company, and twenty four to the Common Men; some having been parted with” (Beaver 1959: 31).

¹⁵⁶ McLoughlin provides more detail in his letter than what is presented in this excerpt. A more thorough recounting of his letter is as follows:

“It is incorrect that we encourage Slavery and on the reverse we avail ourselves of every opportunity to discourage it. Tho’ we cannot prevent Indians having Slaves We tell the Masters it is very improper to keep their fellow beings in Slavery: moreover we have redeemed several and sent them back to their own Country this very season. Some Indians of this vicinity had captured two families in the Willamette or as they express

themselves made slaves of them. By our influence they were liberated but strange as it may appear there are instances in which the slave will not return to their lands... You know your honors have sent us Instructions positively to prohibit any of the Companys servants having slaves, and prior to the receipt of your instructions my predecessors had opposed it, and one of them J. Dugald Cameron Esq. had emancipated the Slaves of the wives of the Servants, and sent them away from the place, but though he did this with a view to ameliorate their situation it proved the reverse as the servants wives made a present of them to their Indian Relations, who forced them to become their Slaves by whom they were treated worse than they could have been if they had been with their former mistresses at the Fort, as for me seeing what had occurred, I did not make the Servants Wives send their slaves away but availed myself of every opportunity to make them work, & pay them as other Indians. The consequence is, that our ploughing & harrowing is principally done by Indians and several of these Indians have claimed their liberty, in which I support them by doing which, I commit no wrong, as they have been all told. We disapprove of any one have Slaves and consider every one about the Establishment as free" (McLoughlin 1839: 275).

¹⁵⁷ Alexander Ross, for example, noted during the early years of the trade on the lower Columbia that,

"If we may judge from appearances, these people are subject to but few diseases. Consumption and the venereal disease are the complaints most common amongst them; from their knowledge in simples, they generally succeed in curing the latter even in its worst stages" (Ross 1849: 98).

¹⁵⁸ On the demographics of the lower Columbia region, one should consult the expert and monumental works of Robert Boyd (1999, 1990). Clearly, the section of the current document on disease and demography represents a selective summary and does not attempt to achieve the depth of analysis presented in other works, especially those of Boyd.

¹⁵⁹ McLoughlin noted in a letter to Francis Heron, dated September 9th, 1831,

"I am sorry to Inform you that the fever and ague [intermittent fever] is raging with as great violence as last year a few days ago we had 68 on the sick list but at present the number is less Indians report that the mortality among the Indians of the Wallahamette has been very great" (McLoughlin 1831c: 212-213).

¹⁶⁰ Some references identify 1832 as a year of high mortality, but it is likely that these references are alluding to the entire course of the epidemic, with its peak years of mortality apparently lasting from 1830 through 1832. Duflot de Mofras, for example, suggests that “In 1832, intermittent fever carried off more than 10,000 members of the Chinook and Flathead tribes who live along the lower stretches of the Columbia River” (Duflot de Mofras 1937: 174).

¹⁶¹ Smallpox followed shortly after the end of the epidemic, but its effects were more broadly spread throughout the Pacific Northwest region.. Referencing this new epidemic in a letter to Benjamin Harrison, dated March 19, 1838, Herbert Beaver noted,

“The small pox, which I told you was raging to the northward, has ceased, but not before it made dreadful havoc among the Indians, of whom it took off one in three, who were attacked. Our own health has been excellent, which, considering the dampness of our abode, can only be ascribed to the providential care of Him, who in his wrath remembers mercy. May he have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and especially upon the benighted people of my charge” (Beaver 1959: 88).

¹⁶² For example, Lang states that

“by the late 1830s, the population of native speakers of Chinook had been devastated, having fallen from an estimated twenty thousand at the turn of the century to a mere handful, two hundred at best” (Lang 2008: 103).

Taylor and Hoaglin (1962: 167) estimate that, by the end of this epidemic, there were only 175 “Chinook” remaining – probably an underestimate, if the entire lower Chinook population is considered, though perhaps accurate if alluding to the estuarine Chinook population.

A few sources, meanwhile, suggest less than 90% mortality, though all seem to agree that the epidemics eliminated a majority of the population. DeSmet, for example, suggests mortality among roughly two-thirds of the population:

“Until the year 1830, the Territory of Oregon was thickly settled by numerous tribes of Indians; but at that period the country bordering on the Columbia was visited by a fatal scourge which carrier off nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants. It showed itself in the form of an infectious fever, which threw the individual into a state of tremor, and produced

such a burning heat throughout the body, that the patient would sometimes cast himself into the water to obtain relief" (deSmet 1847: 122).

¹⁶³ A short time later, Eugene Ermatinger reported on mortality at the fort, expanding somewhat on McLoughlin's comments:

"The establishment felt the contagion, too, severely. Almost all caught it more or less, but from care its effects were less destructive upon us. I was fortunate to escape. At one time there were 80 men besides women numbered amongst the patients. Of the former we buried three, a Mr. Anderson, shipbuilder, one of them, and of the latter many, besides children. It did not luckily extend beyond the Cascades" (in McDonald 1980: 140).

Peter Skene Ogden noted in his journals,

"Returning to Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, after a short absence in the autumn of 1830, I found a few of the servants suffering under an attack of intermittent fever...In twenty days after the first symptoms of its appearance, the whole garrison, with the exception of two...had successively undergone the ordeal" (Ogden 1933: 67-68).

¹⁶⁴ Wilkes, for example, noted upon arriving at the Village that,

"We came in at the back part of the village, which consists of about fifty comfortable log houses, placed in regular order on each side of the road. They are inhabited by the Company's servants and we were swarming with children, whites, half-breeds and pure Indians" (Wilkes 1845: 326).

¹⁶⁵ As John Kirk Townsend wrote on November 5th, 1834,

"A disease of a very fatal character is prevalent among these Indians; many of them have died of it; even some of those in the neighborhood of the fort, where medical assistance was always at hand" (Townsend 1839: 129).

¹⁶⁶ Journal accounts make occasional references to individuals who had undergone shamanic treatments first before coming to the fort for medical help. Samuel Parker, for example, recalled,

“An Indian had a son laboring for a long time under a lingering and dangerous complaint. Their medicine men had done all they could for him, but without success. The father brought his son to the hospital at Fort Vancouver, and earnestly desired to have him treated with care and with the best medical attendance. The sick son was received, and in about six months was restored to health. When his father came to take him home, he remarked to Dr. McL. “My son is a good boy, he has been with you a long time, and I think you must love him; and now as he is about to leave you, will you not give him a blanket and shirt, and as many other small things as you think will be good? We shall always love you”” (Parker 1841: 252-253).

¹⁶⁷ In a letter to the HBC Governor Deputy Governor and Committee, dated October 11th, 1830, John McLoughlin reported on the postponement of the development of Fort Simpson:

“this sickness obliges us to postpone our sending to Establish Nass [Fort Simpson, at mouth of Nass River, B.C.] till our People recover or till the Express arrives and you may depend as soon as we can we will fullfil our Instruction on this point” (McLoughlin 1830f: 139-40).

¹⁶⁸ McLoughlin, apparently, espoused the view that the plowing of the soil might have contributed to the epidemic:

“This great mortality extended not only from the vicinity of the Cascades to the shores of the Pacific, but far north and south; it is said as far south as California. The fever and ague was never known in this country before the year 1829, and Dr. McLaughlin mentioned it as a singular circumstance, that this was the year in which fields were ploughed for the first time. He thought there must have been some connexion between breaking up the soil and the fever. I informed him that the same fever prevailed in the United States, about the same time, and in places which has not before been subject to the complaint” (Parker 1841: 191-92).

The missionaries' responses suggest an odd but predictable mixture of compassion with suggestions that the epidemics represented divine retribution for the Indians' "abominable lives." The accounts of Blanchet and Demers, for example, note that in 1830,

"there came a disastrous malady, called *fièvres tremblantes* [shaking fevers, or malaria], which made such terrible ravages among them that it cut down almost nine-tenths. Inflamed and consumed by the ardor of the fever, these unfortunates would cast themselves into the water in the hope of finding solace there, only to find death there, prompt and sudden...The scourge of God having stricken these unfortunate savages because of their abominable lives returns to visit them every year and still carries off a certain number, although some of its intensity is lost" (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 18-19).

¹⁶⁹ On this point, deSmet notes,

"During this fearful visitation, which attacked the colonists as well as the natives, Dr. McLaughlin displayed the most heroic philanthropy, in his laborious attention to the sick and dying. The Indians superstitiously attributed this scourge to a quarrel between some agents of the Hudson Bay Company and an American captain, which led the latter to throw a species of charm into the river by way of revenge" (deSmet 1847: 123).

¹⁷⁰ For example, deSmet attributed a lack of new construction of houses among the lower Columbia Chinookans to this kind of despondency:

"The smallpox is the principal disease that alarms the natives; they are in continual dread of it, and imagining that they have a short time to live, they no longer build the large and convenient cabins to which they were formerly accustomed" (deSmet 1847: 123).

¹⁷¹ Edward Ermatinger noted, "It did not luckily extend beyond the Cascades" (in McDonald 1980: 140).

This is echoed in the accounts of Samuel Parker, who noted after the epidemics:

"I have found the Indian population in the lower country, that is, below the falls of the Columbia, far less than I had expected, or what it was when

Lewis and Clarke made their tour. Since the year 1829, probably seven-eighths, if not as Dr. McLaughlin believes, nine-tenths, have been swept away by disease, principally by fever and ague. The malignancy of the disease may have been increased by predisposing causes, such as intemperance, and the influence of intercourse with sailors...So many and so sudden were the deaths which occurred, that the shores were strewn with the unburied dead ...The Chenook nation...though once numerous and powerful, now number not more than fifteen hundred, or two thousand" (Parker 1841: 192-93, 265).

¹⁷² A more dramatic, if racist, recounting of the same events appear to be provided by John Kirk Townsend in his journal entry from August 20th, 1835:

"The Indians of the Columbia were once a numerous and powerful people; the shore of the river, for scores of miles was lined with their villages; the council fire was frequently lighted, the pipe passed round, and the destinies of the nation deliberated upon. War was declared against neighboring tribes; the deadly tomahawk was lifted, and not buried until it was red with the blood of the savage; the bounding deer was hunted, killed, and his antlers ornamented the wigwam of the red man; the scalps of his enemies hung drying in the smoke of his lodge, and the Indian was happy. Now, alas! where is he? – gone; – gathered to his fathers and to his happy hunting grounds; his place knows him no more. The spot where once stood the thickly peopled village, the smoke curling and wreathing above the closely packed lodges, the lively children playing in the front, and their indolent parents lounging on their mats, is now only indicated by a heap of undistinguishable ruins. The depopulation here has been truly fearful. A gentleman told me, that only four years ago, as he wandered near what had formerly been a thickly peopled village, he counted no less than sixteen dead, men and women, lying unburied and festering in the sun in front of their habitation. Within the houses all were sick; not one had escaped the contagion; upwards of a hundred individuals, men, women, and children, were writhing in agony on the floors of the houses, with no one to render them any assistance. Some were in the dying struggle, and clenching with the convulsive grasp of death their disease-worn companions, shrieked and howled in the last sharp agony" (Townsend 1839: 170-71).

¹⁷³ There are references to this practice in the ethnographic literature of the region (e.g., E. Jacobs n.d.) and many specific references to this practice within the historical literatures addressing the Portland Basin. The records of Blanchet and Demers note,

“The mortality was so great in one of their villages that the survivors, not being able to bury the bodies that had piled up there, were obliged to destroy them by giving them over to the flames to preserve the surrounding country from infection” (Blanchet and Demers 1956: 18-19).

Similarly, deSmet comments that,

“The population of entire villages was cut off by this terrible pestilence....villages were burnt in order to arrest the infection which would have arisen from the pile of dead bodies that were left unburied” (deSmet 1847: 122-23).

¹⁷⁴ Traveling by Sauvie Island in the early 1840s, Parker noted that

“Our canoe was large and propelled by Sandwich Islanders, of whom there are many in this country, who have come here as sailors and laborers. Five miles below the fort, we passed the main branch of the Multnomah. It is a large river, coming from the south, and is divided by islands into four branches at its confluence with the Columbia. Here commences the Wâppatoo island...It was upon this island the Multnomah Indians formerly resided, but they have become as a tribe extinct...This island was formerly the residence of many Indians, but they are gone, and nothing is left except the remains of a large village...The name Multnomah is given to a small section of this river, from the name of a tribe of Indians who once resided about six miles on both sides from its confluence with the Columbia, to the branch which flows down the southern side of the Wappatoo island” (Parker 1841: 150, 152, 172).

Another 1840s account provides detail on human remains encountered on the island:

“In 1805, the central seat of the Multnomahs, near the east end of Wapato (Sauvie’s) Island, had a population of ‘eight hundred souls’ noted, ‘as the remains of a large nation,’ surrounded by kindred near-by tribes, aggregating two thousand two hundred and sixty souls. In 1845 the site was without human habitation. ‘The dead were there,’ in large numbers,

swathed in cedar bark, and laid tier above tier on constructions of cedar slabs about four inches thick, and often four feet wide, --causing the observer to wonder how the native, with such agencies as he possessed, could fell and split such timber. At this time so many as two hundred natives, could not be seen on the banks of the Lower Columbia, between the mouth of the Willamette and Clatsop Point, without special effort at counting the few living in the scattered villages, often separated by several sites once inhabited by large numbers apparently" (Minto 1900: 310).

¹⁷⁵ Tolmie, for example, noted that the villages were depopulated at the epidemic's core, but that people migrated to the peripheries:

"Intermittent fever which has almost depopulated Columbia R. of the aborigines, committed its fullest ravages & nearly exterminated the villagers, the few survivors deserting a spot where the pestilence seemed most terribly to wreck its vengeance" (Tolmie 1963: 183).

¹⁷⁶ By the 1840s, such authors as Paul Kane noted that, "The country in which the Chinooks inhabit being almost destitute of furs, they have little to trade in with the whites" (Kane 1859: 185).

¹⁷⁷ Frost, for example, comments that "Dr. McLaughlin furnished us with a boat, with which to descend the river to Fort George, and the next day we loaded our boat, and endeavoured to get indians to go down with us, and bring the boat back; but we could obtain only one, with whom however, we determined to proceed..." (Frost 1934: 66).

¹⁷⁸ HBC efforts to shift some of the labor burden to interior tribes after the epidemics were often unsuccessful. Some tribes actively resisted participation in the fur trapping enterprise. The Colville and Nez Perce, for example, are said to have considered trapping for the HBC to be beneath them, and could not be induced to take on roles that had formerly been assumed by lower Columbia River region groups (Walker 1997).

¹⁷⁹ The Hawaiian name of the man widely known as John Cox (or "Coxe") was Naukane. He was given the English name due to his purported resemblance to a sailor by the same name. He hailed from the Kona coast of the island of Hawai'i; his father was a chief in this area, he was associated with the royal family of Hawaii of his time and was sometimes alluded to as a "chief" (Duncan 1972; Bona 1972). Some accounts

suggest that he was buried at Fort Vancouver, but this has been a point of some contention (Bona 1972: 170).

¹⁸⁰ John Scouler reported in 1824,

“From the character of the northern tribes, a greater degree of vigilance & caution than is required among the friendly Cheenooks, from whom we suffered no trouble, except from their begging propensities. We, however, can have no possible reason for apprehending any danger, our crew is well armed & a party of thirteen natives of Owyhee will make us perfectly secure” (Scouler 1905: 176-77).

¹⁸¹ Unlike most other employees brought to the Northwest from remote locations, they did not often sign formal contracts with the HBC. Native Hawaiians’ contracts, if they had them, typically lasted a maximum of three years (Barman and Watson 1996; Koppel 1995; Duncan 1972; Bona 1972). References to the terms of Native Hawaiians employment are surprisingly abundant in the literature of the fur trade. On the point of pay for Hawaiian labor, for example, Sampson (1973a) provides this detailed summary:

“Hawaiians, or Kanakas as they were generally called, were employed on vessels sailing between Hawaii and the west coast in the late eighteenth century. At least by 1811, contracts were made for the employment of Kanakas on trading vessels. That year Captain Jonathan Thorn, commanding Astor’s ship *Tonquin*, engaged twelve Islanders for the intended commercial establishment on the *Columbia*. The term of engagement was for three years, during which the Americans were to feed and clothe them; and at the expiration of their service, each was to receive \$100 in merchandise. At the same time Thorn shipped another dozen islanders as crew members. The North West Co. also utilized Hawaiian laborers, and by 1831 there were about thirty-five Kanakas on the *Columbia*. The North West Co. gave them only food and clothing, but by 1823 they were receiving subsistence plus £ 17 per annum from the Hudson’s Bay Co., successor to the North West Co. in that area. The relatively high wages paid to the Hawaiians caused dissatisfaction among the European engagees, who also earned £ 17, and the wage was reduced to £ 10 by Governor Simpson in 1824. By 1841, however, Kanakas were being paid £ 17 per annum at the Company sawmills seven miles east of Vancouver, where they constituted a majority of the labor force” (Sampson 1973a: 111).

¹⁸² Relations between the HBC and the British consulate in Honolulu appear to have soured considerably by 1842, for example, when the Company's two agents submitted a letter of protest to the Hawaiian king and the governor of Oahu regarding the appointment of Alexander Simpson to the post of consul (Thrum 1911: 40). Alexander's uncle, HBC Governor George Simpson arrived on the island to sort out the dispute to the Company's satisfaction.

¹⁸³ For a sense of the impressive quantities and diversity of cargoes routed through Hawaii by the HBC, see McAllan (2002).

¹⁸⁴ This appears to have sometimes resulting in their underrepresentation in fort records. For example, Kardas (1971: 202-03) determined that "prior to 1842 at least seven Kanaka-Indian families lived in the village. Only two of these appear to have remained at the fort after 1840."

¹⁸⁵ One prominent example centers on events beginning in 1832, when an American – Nathaniel Wyeth – attempted to establish his own fur trading post as well as production and shipping facilities for salmon and lumber. Chronically understaffed and underfunded, his operation floundered and, for a time, he hired a number of Native Hawaiians and attempted to compete for the services of HBC freemen. Frustrated by the terms of their employment, a number of his Hawaiian workers deserted his operation – some joining the workers at Fort Vancouver and others traveling in small groups through the region, staying with Indian communities and reportedly raising some havoc for fur traders. By late in 1836, Wyeth had determined to quit his operation, and by early the next year the HBC agreed to buy his goods and arrange for safe passage of his remaining Hawaiian workers back to Oahu (Barman and Watson 2006: 70-73; Duncan 1972: 7-9).

¹⁸⁶ Despite the general success of Native Hawaiian labor recruitment, there were certainly challenges. Illness was a common problem for Native Hawaiians, with the abrupt change in climate and diet, sometimes poor or hazardous working conditions, and the diversity of peoples converging on the lower Columbia with infectious diseases. Occasionally within the Company correspondence of the time, there is also a suggestion that Native Hawaiians were sometimes at a linguistic disadvantage, with some individuals knowing neither English nor Chinook Jargon. Translators were sometimes needed when precise communications were required between Company management and these individuals (e.g., McLoughlin 1942a).

¹⁸⁷ The Native Hawaiian population was seen as fertile ground for conversion among the missionaries living in the region. In a letter from Mr. Bolduc, of the Blanchet and Demers mission, written August 5, 1842, he suggested that a top missionary priority should be the conversion of the Hawaiian "pagans":

“I was not more cast down than at my departure from Quebec, and especially since I can be useful here, helping the missionaries with their work and learning the Sandwichian tongue, which will be of great use even on the Columbia, since more than 500 Sandwich Islanders are there in the service of the Company, who are all pagans” (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 133).

¹⁸⁸ A number of missionaries complained of the treatment of Hawaiians by the HBC, though these missionaries were almost all American nationalists and the veracity of their accounts is difficult to confirm.

¹⁸⁹ Barman and Watson (2006: 219-433) provide a remarkably detailed list of biographical information regarding the Native Hawaiians identifiable in existing records who worked in the Pacific Northwest fur trade – an excellent starting point for more detailed investigations.

¹⁹⁰ Similarly, establishing the exact number of Hawaiian laborers present at the fort at any given time is more challenging than might be originally assumed. Duncan (1972) suggests that roughly 35 Native Hawaiians were working at Fort Vancouver, as well as additional Hawaiian laborers at Forts Walla Walla, Simpson, and Colville. There is some suggestion that their numbers increased, and were increasingly consolidated at Fort Vancouver through the late 1840s. Winther (1967: 187) reported 152 Hawaiian employees south of the 49th parallel in 1845-46. There were roughly 50 Native Hawaiians living and working at Fort Vancouver when the military arrived in 1849 (Bona 1972: 173).

By 1842, George Simpson declared that the HBC had hired too many Hawaiians and attempted to prohibit McLoughlin from continuing recruiting new Hawaiian labor to Fort Vancouver.¹⁹⁰ McLoughlin replied that he had to recruit an additional 50 to replace the many employees and freemen who had died, as well as those who had retired. An abrupt intensification in trade through Honolulu generally from 1844 through the end of that decade may also have contributed to the expansion of the Hawaiian laborer population at Fort Vancouver at this time (McAllan 2002).

¹⁹¹ This testimony was provided in the court case, *Corporation of the Catholic Bishop of Nisqually v. Gibbon et al.* – a case undertaken by the Catholic church after their claims to lands at Fort Vancouver were occupied by squatter American settlements.

¹⁹² This expanded land base was later reflected in the Indian Claims Commission docket of the Cowlitz, who unsuccessfully claimed their expanded territory. As summarized by Fitzpatrick:

“Cowlitz claimed, in Docket 218 before the Indian Claims Commission, 1,716,000 acres within the following areas. The eastern boundary was along the Cascade Divide on the headwaters of the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers. The southern boundary passed east of Vancouver Lake near but not on the Columbia River, northwest to the Willapa Hills and northeast along the Chehalis River to the Nisqually River and Mount Rainier. The Indian Claims Commission disputed the Cowlitz claim to the Lewis River and Willapa Hills area but it appears ethnographically sound” (Fitzpatrick 124-25).

¹⁹³ Linguistic evidence might be interpreted to suggest a relatively recent movement of Sahaptin speaking Klickitats into the Lewis River drainage and elsewhere in southwest Washington; it might also be interpreted to suggest that they regularly interacted with Chinookans, with their experiences among the upper Chinookans being their main point of contact prior to the 1830s (Jacobs 1937).

¹⁹⁴ Curtis, in particular, alludes to stories of presumably pre-contact Klickitat participating in retaliatory raids against Chinookan villages for those villages’ attacks on Cascades communities, as well as making attacks on Shoshonis who were at war with Chinookan villages near the Cascades (Curtis 1911: 38).

¹⁹⁵ The question of whether this account of Cayuse displacement of the Klickitat was accurate is a point of debate in anthropological literatures, with most accounts suggesting that this may not have occurred.

¹⁹⁶ Curtis (1913) notes extensive Cowlitz intermarriage with Klickitat, as well as the Chinook; Ray (1938) recorded genealogical information that confirmed this.

¹⁹⁷ The fact that people used the term rather loosely is complicated by the clear sharing of cultural practices between the Klickitat and the Cowlitz and other lower-river tribes. Authors such as Wilkes may be confusing the two when making general comments about the Klickitat, such as “A roundhead Klickitat woman would be a pariah” (Winthrop 1913: 157).

¹⁹⁸ Theodore Winthrop noted of the ethnonym “Klickitat” that “so the Sound Indians name generally the Yakimahs and other ultramontane tribes” (Winthrop 1913: 42).

¹⁹⁹ For example, Curtis mentions that “At the head of [Lewis River] were the Taítnapūm, a small, cognate, but distinct tribe” (Curtis 1911: 37). Tolmie noted of the “Whulwhaipum Tribe” that they “Inhabit White Salmon River Mountains and right bank of the Columbia from the Cascades to Fort Vancouver” (Tolmie and Dawson 1884: 124).

²⁰⁰ Gibbs noted that, “Their usual residence during the summer is around Chequoss, one of the most elevated points on our trail from Fort Vancouver across the Cascades” (Gibbs 1854: 404).

²⁰¹ Just below the Columbia Cascades. John Kirk Townsend reported on September 30th, 1834:

“About two miles below the cataract is a small village of Klikatat Indians. Their situation does not appear different from what we have been accustomed to see in the neighborhood of the fort... Although enjoying far more advantages, and having in a much greater degree the means of rendering themselves comfortable, yet their mode of living, their garments, their wigwams, and every thing connected with them, is not much better than the Snakes and Bannecks, and very far inferior to that fine, noble-looking race, the Kayouse, whom we met on the Grand Ronde” (Townsend 1839: 126).

Subsequent entries in his journals give the impression that these people are occupying the same areas. For example, on November 5th, 1834, he notes,

“We are visited daily by considerable numbers of Chinook and Klikatat Indians, many of whom bring us provisions of various kinds, salmon, deer, ducks, &c., and receive in return, powder and shot, knives, paints, and Indian rum, i.e. rum and water in proportion of one part the former to two of the latter” (Townsend 1839: 129).

²⁰² Much of this was initiated by Anglican missionary, Herbert Beaver, whose report to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, dated October 2, 1838, noted,

“The Klickatack tribe, which I formerly noticed to you, appear the most likely to receive benefit from any exertions, which may be made in their behalf. They have not congregated this year at any one spot in such large numbers as during the last, nor have they been so successful in their agricultural pursuits, owing principally to a bad choice of soil, whereon to

exercise them, and in which they had no one to direct them, although a plough was given to some of them. Nevertheless they appear anxious to labour, as well as to learn, as far as opportunity may be afforded for either the one or the other, esteeming the former no degradation, and the latter a privilege; and as they exceed all the neighboring tribes both in conduct and numbers; so they seem to be that, to which attention should first be turned, as presenting the most favorable field for missionary enterprise. As a proof of their comparatively greater propriety of behaviour, I will adduce the single fact, that instances of their women living, either temporarily or permanently, with white men are exceedingly rare. To ascertain their numerical force, there being no precise data discovered, on which we can proceed to calculate it, is difficult; but it must be considerable from the tract of country, not more thinly inhabited than the smaller tracts of other tribes, over which their language is spoken. The same language, or with a little variation of dialect, is also spoken by one or two other tribes, and it is understood by one or two more" (Beaver 1959: 130).

²⁰³ George Gibbs depicted Fort Vancouver and Puget Sound as the two points of contact between non-Indians and the Klickitat: "West of the mountains, both at Vancouver and at Puget sound, they also are generally called Klikatats" (Gibbs 1854: 407).

Haberlin and Gunther (1930) discussed connections between the Klickitat and the Nisqually, for example: "The Nisqually traded largely with the Klikitat, using shell money for payment." This shell money was used by Klikitat in trade with tribes of Idaho and Montana. Klikitat purchased clams, herring, smelt, berries, sometimes coiled baskets. Klikitat gave Nisqually Columbia River dried salmon, buckskin clothing" (Haeberlin and Gunther 1930: 11-12).

²⁰⁴ Upon returning to England, Herbert Beaver for example, alluded to the two main tribes of the Fort Vancouver area as being the Chinooks and the Klickatats. The former the priggish Beaver berated as depraved and morally corrupt, while he often praised the latter as brave and industrious (Pipes 1931).

²⁰⁵ As a result, early chroniclers of Indian cultures, using Fort Vancouver as a base of operations, often referenced Klickitat cultural practices extensively in their works (e.g., Gibbs 1955-56).

²⁰⁶ In the former category, Samuel Parker suggested “I have seen many of the Klicatat nation, who reside at the north of the Cascades, yet I have not been able to learn of them any thing more definite, than that they are a large nation. The Chinook nation resides along the Columbia river, from the Cascades to its confluence with the ocean...” (Parker 1841: 265).

A map of the current tribal distribution in 1852 shows most of the area north of the Columbia in the vicinity of the fort as being Klickitat (Eastman 1852).

²⁰⁷ Based on his observations in the winter of 1845-46, Henry Warre wrote

“The Indians on the Columbia river are generally a quiet, inoffensive people; they have been very much reduced in numbers by disease and the constant wars that are waged upon them by their more powerful neighbors to the on the adjoining prairies, who wander about, without any fixed place of residence” (Warre 1970: 25).

²⁰⁸ Hazard Stevens reported of the Klickitat: “Large bands of the Yakimas has crossed the Cascades and were pressing on the feebler races on the west, by whom they were appropriately termed ‘Klit-i-tats,’ or robbers” (H. Stevens II: 22). There is some disagreement on the actual meaning of the name.

²⁰⁹ For example, writing on May 13th, 1836, Townsend noted,

“Two days ago I left the fort, and am now encamped on a plain below Warrior’s point. Near me are several large lodges of Kowalitsk Indians; in all probably one hundred persons. As usual, they give me some trouble by coming around and lolling about my tent, and importuning me for the various little articles that they see. My camp-keeper, however, (a Klikatat) is an excellent fellow, and has no great love for Kowalitsk Indians, so that the moment he sees them becoming troublesome, he clears the coast, sans ceremonie” (Townsend 1839: 177).

²¹⁰ On Klickitat movement into southern Oregon, Browne (1858: 7-8) noted:

“Assuming a possessory right over the whole valley, they established camps on the various rivers, and in the course of a few years, by gradual advances, pushed their way over the Calapooia mountains into the valley of the Umpquas.

In former times the Umpquas were a powerful tribe, owning all the country between the Calapooia mountains north, the Cañon mountains south, the Cascades east, and the Pacific west. The Shastas and Rogue Rivers had frequent wars with them, but finally, through mutual interest, effected a coalition. From this time the Umpquas began to lose much of their original independence, and at the period of the invasions of the Klickitats had greatly degenerated.

The Klickitats, fresh from the scenes of the recent victories, skilled in the arts of war, and still determined upon subduing all the races of the south, found no difficulty in reducing the Umpquas to such terms of submission as they thought proper to dictate. One great source of their success was their skill in the use of fire-arms, of which they had procured an abundant supply from the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company.

They opened an extensive trade with the southern tribes in furs and peltries, and crossed the mountains at various intervals during the year. The valley of the Willamette was their public highway to the north, and their depot during the greater part of the year, where they left their property and families" (Browne 1858: 7).

Similarly, Joseph Lane noted that the Klickitats were well established even at the head of Willamette Valley, where they had dislocated other tribes but had maintained positive relationships with white settlers:

"The *Clickitals* claim a small tract of land at the head of the Willamette valley, on the west side of that river. They own quite a number of horses; are well armed; brave and warlike; but on good terms with the whites" (Lane 1850: 129-30).

George Gibbs noted that their broad distribution made a census or other general statements about the tribe problematic:

"[The *Klikitat*] inhabit, properly, the valleys lying between Mounts St. Helens and Adams, but they have spread over districts belonging to other tribes, and a band of them is now located as far south as the Umpqua. Their nomadic habits render a census very difficult, though their number is not large" (Gibbs 1854: 403).

²¹¹ George Gibbs noted that in 1853-54,

“The Klikatat were treated as belonging to the eastern division of this Territory, to which their original location and affinities attach them. As, however, they are here spoken of as connected with the western division, some explanation is necessary. After the depopulation of the Columbia tribes by congestive fever, which took place between 1820 and 1830, many of that tribe made their way down the Kathlapūtl (Lewis River), and a part of them settled along the course of that river, while others crossed the Columbia and overran the Willamette Valley, more lately establishing themselves on the Umkwa [Umpqua River, in southwestern Oregon]. Within the last year (1855), they have been ordered by the superintendent of Oregon to return to their former home, and are now chiefly in this part of the Territory. The present generation, for the most part, look upon the Kathlapūtl as their proper country, more especially as they are intermarried with the remnant of the original proprietors” (Gibbs 1877: 170-71).

²¹² Curtis provides summaries of oral history on this point. He refers to Klickitats with a “winter village” near Vancouver who were called into involvement in the Yakima War. He also retells a story, apparently shared by Klickitat elders, suggesting that Klickitats aided the Toppenish Yakama in fighting the whites and of those who did “Nearly all of them were men who had been driven out of the Klackamas country” (Curtis 1911: 27, 39). These individuals remained in Yakima territory and later surrendered to Colonel Wright, from the Dalles.

²¹³ The Klickitat continued to be a presence in the southern Puget Sound after the initial removal of Fort Vancouver’s Klickitat. M.T. Simmons, Indian Agent for the Puget Sound District wrote in 1858 that “There is a portion of the Indians of my district whose homes are high up on the rivers, principally on the Nisqually, Puyallup, and Snoqualmie. They are nearly related to the Yakimas and Klikatats by blood, and are sometimes called Klikatats...They cross the Cascade mountains frequently to visit their relations, and are, to some extent, imbued with the hostile feeling that still exists among them. Part of those Indians – those living on the Nisqually and Puyallup – were the most formidable we had to contend against during the late war” (Simmons 1858: 522).

²¹⁴ Bancroft goes on from this comment with a summary of settlements associated with Champoege:

“French Prairie, the tract where the servants of the fur company began their planting in the Willamette Valley, extended from the great westward bend of that river south to Lac La Biche about twenty-five miles...The landing at the crossing of the Willamette on the east side was known as

Campement du Sable, being a sandy bluff and an encampment at the point of arrival or departure for French Prairie. Two miles above this point was Champoeg, the first settlement” (Bancroft 1890a: 70-71).

²¹⁵ Louis La Bonte, Sr. played a critical role in the establishment of the community, but not without considerable difficulty in light of HBC policies of the time:

“[posted at] Fort Vancouver... his service terminated some time near 1828, when he asked to be dismissed and allowed to remain in Oregon. This was directly against the policy of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who wished none of their trappers to become settlers or free laborers in their territory, and it was the rule that all their servants must be dismissed at the place where they were enlisted. But LaBonte was an astute Frenchman and contended that as he had enlisted in Oregon and was not brought here by the Hudson’s Bay Company, it was no infraction of this rule, but rather in compliance with it that he should be dismissed here. Notwithstanding, his request was refused and no dismissal was allowed unless he returned to Montreal. Accordingly, he made the trip to Canada, starting in March, and receiving his regular papers certifying to the ending of this term of service. But he immediately began the journey back and arrived here again in November of the same year – which may have been 1830” (Lyman 1900: 170-71).

Blanchet summarizes this early history as follows:

“This valley takes its name from the river which flows through it from south to north. It is a continuance of large and level prairies strewed with timber which is found specifically along the banks of the streams. The east shore of it may well be called the granary of Oregon, the western shore being generally mountainous. The settlement of this valley began as follows: There remained in the country three Canadians, remnants of the old expedition of Hunt and Astor, viz: Etienne Lucier, one of the former, and Joseph Gervais and Louis Labonte of the latter. Etienne Lucier being tired of living a wandering life began in 1829 to cultivate land near Fort Vancouver, and getting dissatisfied with his first choice, he left it in 1830, and removing to the Wallamette valley, settled a few miles above Champoeg, then, called by the Canadians “Campement de Sable.” Following his example the two others, Joseph Gervais and Louis Labonte followed him in 1831 and settled some distance south of him, one on the right and the other on the left side of the river” (Blanchet 1878: 75).

²¹⁶ As Jason Lee noted of Champoege, 1834 “Most of the men are Canadians with native wives” (Lee 1916: 264).

²¹⁷ Genealogy websites of uncertain veracity suggest that she may have been Kwakiutl, but that descendants are not of one mind on the matter.

²¹⁸ For a good overview of early social life at Champoege, see Lyman (1900). On the social diversity of “French Prairie,” see for example Jetté (2007).

²¹⁹ As within the fort community, missions also turned their attention to Champoege to eliminate Native institutions and other perceived vices of the fur trade community. Blanchet reports that “its settlers began to feel the necessity of having some priests to reconcile them to God, and also to instruct their wives and children” (Blanchet 1878: 75). By 1841, Wilkes (1845: 349) reports a Catholic mission situated 12 miles away from the community, overseen by Blanchet, which catered to the community.

²²⁰ In 1845, Warre and Vavasour reported, “The total number of inhabitants in the Valley of the Willamette is about six thousand, of whom about 1000 may be considered as subjects of Great Britain” (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 53).

²²¹ For example, in his report to the Governor and Committee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, dated October 2, 1838, Beaver made one such request relating to Native Hawaiians:

“Now we do not want to import iniquity, and I would, therefore, humbly propose, as a likely remedy for this lamentable condition of a useful, and if properly directed, well-behaved race, that your agent at Oahu be requested to institute minute enquiries into the characters of the Kanakas, who may be shipped for the Columbia River, whither none would be allowed to proceed, on whose steadfastness in well-doing a reasonably grounded reliance cannot be placed by the missionaries, who should be consulted, and from whom they should all bring to your Chaplain a certificate of Baptism, and, if women, of marriage with the men, whom they accompany” (Beaver 1959: 131-32).

²²² Governor George Simpson wrote to the Archbishop of Quebec regarding the imminent departure of Blanchet and Demers for Fort Vancouver in a letter dated February 17, 1838:

“By the letter received yesterday, already alluded to, the Bishop enters fully into my views, and expresses his willingness to fall in with my suggestions. That letter I have laid before the Governor and Committee, and am now instructed to intimate to your Lordship that if the priests will be ready at Lachine to embark for the interior about the 25th of April, a passage will be afforded them, and on arrival at Fort Vancouver measures will be taken by the Co’s representative there to facilitate the establishing of the Mission, and the carrying into effect the objects thereof generally” (in Blanchet 1878: 24-25).

²²³ Specifically, Parker noted that,

“This trading post presents an important field of labor, and if a Christian influence can be exerted here, it may be of incalculable benefit to the surrounding Indian population. Let a branch of Christ’s kingdom be established here, with its concomitant expansive benevolence exerted and diffused, and this place would be a centre from which divine light would shine out and illumine this region of darkness” (Parker 1841: 169-70).

Many protestant missionaries envied the Catholic stronghold in Fort Vancouver, some attempting to establish their own missions temporarily at the Fort or to otherwise capitalize on the regional position of the Fort and its mission.

²²⁴ Blanchet reported perhaps 30 missionaries operating in the region, though many of these individuals worked together in the same locations, so that the actual number of missions – while varying rapidly with time – was lower than this figure. On the religious condition of the region at the time of their arrival, Blanchet reported,

“It may be well to take a view of the country in relation to the Indian tribes, the servants of the Hudson Bay Co. and Catholic and Protestant settlers, in order to have a correct idea of the condition of things in the mission entrusted to their care. Their mission extended from California to the Northern glacial sea, between the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains. The Indian tribes were numerous, scattered all over the country, speaking a multitude of divers [*sic*] and difficult tongues, and addicted to polygamy and all the vices of paganism. The servants of the H. B. Co. in active services in its 28 forts for fur trade, were in great majority Catholics; so also were the four families settled in Cowlitz, and the 26 established in the Wallamette valley, with their wives and children. Many of the servants and settlers had forgotten their prayers and the

religious principles they had received in their youth. The women they had taken for their wives were pagans, or baptized without sufficient knowledge. Their children were raised in ignorance. One may well imagine that in many places, disorders, rudeness of morals and indecency of practices, answered to that state of ignorance. There were also found in the valley of the Wallamette some Protestant settlers, and in different parts of the country about 30 protestant ministers, with their numerous attendants, their wives and their children. The Methodists had two missions, one in the Wallamette valley, and the other at the Dalles. The Presbyterians were established at Wailatpu among the Walla Wallas, at Lapwai among the Nez Perces, and on the Spokane river. Besides these, the H. B. Co. had its own chaplain at Vancouver for two years. These ministers were zealous, making efforts and using all means possible to gain converts to their sects" (in Blanchet 1878: 61-62).

²²⁵ The perspective of these two pivotal missionaries upon first arriving at Fort Vancouver is well summarized in other accounts. In their Notice from January 1840, for example, they provided a third-person account of their arrival and experiences:

"At Vancouver catechism, or rather the recital of prayers accompanied by advice and instruction, began early on the fifth day after the arrival of the missionaries. They made a visit through the village, took the names of the Catholic inhabitants, and made certain of the number of men and women to separate before proceeding with the rehabilitation of marriages...

"Mr. Demers was able in a little while to acquaint himself with a certain language called the [Chinook] jargon in the country, by means of which he began to teach them. He gave two catechisms to the natives each day, one before noon and the other in the evening. On the 20th of February there were no less than 150 natives at evening prayer, and their number cannot fail still to increase. Ordinarily two periods of catechism are held each day in French, one for the women and little girls of the Fort, of whom several know their prayers well enough to be able to recite the rosary...

"Fort Vancouver is situated north of the Columbia, at 33 leagues from the Pacific Ocean, on a prairie of several hundred arpents bordered by thick forest. The fort contains 76 Canadians engaged in the service of the establishment... "The Company possesses 28 establishments west of the Rocky Mountains for the fur trade with the natives. Three hundred whites, almost all Catholics, are employed in the service of these establishments. This figure joined to those of the colonies of Cowlitz and of Walamette and that of the free persons hunting on the plains to the

south, and including the women and children, forms already a Catholic population of about 900 souls. The number of natives attending the instructions in preparation for baptism is about 500, and cannot fail to increase from day to day, if one judges from the favorable attitude toward the missionaries shown by the heathen nations of the country" (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 13-16).

²²⁶ On this, Blanchet and Demers noted,

"A large number of the natives of the Cascades, as well as part of the Klickitats, understanding the jargon, regularly attend catechism and evening prayer, which are observed every day at Vancouver. In order to etch more readily in their memory the truths contained in the Apostles' Creed, Mr. Demers has translated them into this language and had them fitted to a canticle melody which the catechumens sing with pleasure during the observance of the holy sacrifice. He has also translated into the jargon the sign of the cross, the way of giving ones heart to God, and has undertaken the translation of the other prayers" (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 19).

²²⁷ Blanchet goes on to note,

"The Vicar General was pleased with the invitation. He left St. Paul on March 11th, to meet Father Demers at Vancouver, and he stopped on his way at the *Wapato* Lake [near Oaks Park in modern Portland], which is but a few miles below the Clackamas river, where the Indians of the Clackamas tribes were assembled to dif the *Wapato* root, (a kind of potatoe) on the right shore of the Wallamette. He was received by chief *Poh poh*, and gave the tribe a mission of 4 days...Chief *Pohpoh* returned to St. Paul, in April to learn more, and strengthen his faith..." (in Blanchet 1878: 119-20).

²²⁸ Father Blanchet wrote in his reports about his frequent contests for the allegiance of the Clackamas residing at the confluence of the Willamette and Clackamas Rivers with the Methodist missionary Waller for Pohpoh's allegiance. Key to the Catholic strategy was instilling dissatisfaction among area tribes with every aspect of the Methodist mission, including the austerity of protestant services; as reported by Blanchet,

"On the fourth day of the mission arrived *Pohpoh* with some of his people. He complained very much that when his flag was hoisted on Sunday, Mr.

Waller pulled it down to the great displeasure, even of those of his own sect. On another day there came some Indians of Clatsop. On seeing the altar, ornaments and vestments, they said: "Mr. Frost is far from showing us such things" (in Blanchet 1878: 121-22).

Blanchet also describes holding services in Pohpoh's lodge at the Clackamas confluence, and an eight-day visit from Pohpoh at St. Paul in order to obtain instruction and numerous gifts to be taken back to his village (Munnick 1972: A-66). References to this competition in mission reports continue for a number of years, and were even reported back to the Catholic church hierarchy in eastern Canada. In Blanchet's letter to the Bishop of Quebec, February 17, 1842, he reports,

"heresy has been forced to its curtailment and obliged to leave us the field at the village on the Tlackemas [Clackamas] River which has resisted since the month of May of last year the efforts and perverse innuendos of a false apostle. The village at the falls of the Walamette and the one at the Cascades have also heard the voice of our mother, the Catholic Church. I am sending Your Highness a story of the visits which I have made to these three villages and elsewhere" (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 78).

Despite his clear association with the Clackamas village at the Clackamas-Willamette confluence, the location of Pohpoh's village is a matter of some confusion. Munnick reports that the village of Pohpoh was located "on the left bank of the Columbia" and that the baptism of Chief Pohpoh's daughter Emelie was said to take place in "the environs of Vancouver" (Munnick 1972: A-81). This could be interpreted as further confirmation of the mobility and broad influence of these leaders, as well as the overlapping claims of different village groups in this area - widely reported as being "Cascades" instead of "Clackamas" at this time.

²²⁹ For example, Blanchet reports,

"On reaching the Clackamas Indian village, Rev. A. Langlois found the cross erected in 1841 had disappeared. It had been cut down by order of the Methodist preacher Waller, to the great sorrow of the Indians. Yes, the cross which shows the excess of the love of the Son of God for man; the cross by which Jesus Christ, our Blessed Redeemer, redeemed the world; the cross made known from that of the two thieves by a miracle; the cross shown to Constantine, in heaven, with the words: "hoc signo vinces," the

cross which converted the whole world from paganism, and which is a terror to the devils, the cross, whose sign shall appear at the least day, that cross is a scandal to the Methodist minister, Waller; he has it in horror as the devils, he cannot bear the sight of it; he ordered it to be cut down, and pretended to teach the poor Indians Christ crucified, without showing them a cross!!! Great God! What subversion of ideas and judgment in the sect! What destruction of saving doctrine! What turning upside down of common good sense and true religion rather unfortunately too well typified by the turning upside down of a table adoring the short belfry, (short faith) of the Methodist churches!" (in Blanchet 1878: 136-37)

²³⁰ On the prominence of Cascades and Klickitats during this period, Blanchet notes,

"A good many of the Cascade Indians who understand this jargon, and some of the Klickatats, attend the catechism and evening prayers. In order to impress deeper upon their memory the truths contained in the Apostles' Creed, I have tried to arrange it to a certain air. The Indians love music very much; they know nearly by heart the Canticles that were sung at the Mass on Sunday last. I expect to learn the Klickatat language, which will be of great use in instructing this tribe and those of Des Chutes and of the Cascades, who understand it well. The greatest difficulty in learning the language spoken on this side of the mountains, consists in the pronunciation which is such, that we are many times at a loss to find characters to represent it, as in Sahaletaye, God, hihkt, one. Time does not allow me to expatiate on this matter" (in Blanchet 1878: 58).

In Blanchet and Demers' Notice from July 1845, they reported on travel along "the land route to get from Walamette to Vancouver." Blanchet notes,

"The journey is made on horseback, and, during the long days, one can make it in fourteen hours on good mounts. On arriving at the village of the Klickitats, the chief gave me a good reception, and told me that a few days before he had had a quarrel with an American minister that had come to indoctrinate his people. He added that no one wanted to listen to him, and if he had attempted to persist, he would have driven him away promptly. These good natives have already received several times M. Blanchet's instructions, and appear to be firm in their good resolutions. They are at the expense of building two little chapels with the odds and ends that the Company's sawmill is giving them. After the reception the chief himself offered to take me across to the fort, which is opposite their

camp, and undertook to take care of my horses” (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 146-47).

²³¹ In the 1956 reprint of these journals, this was phrased somewhat differently: “As much as the Indians of Cowlitz love to communicate with the missionaries, so much the Kalapooyas like to avoid them” (in Blanchet and Demers 1956: 20). On missionary efforts among the Kalapuya, Blanchet reported more generally that,

“The Vicar General who passed a month among the Canadians established on this river, could not speak highly of the Indians he had seen – the Kalapooias. They were very numerous before the fevers, but are now reduced to a small number, which keeps decreasing every day. They are poor and lazy; thieving may be considered as their predominant passion. They wish to keep away from the missionaries as much as the Cowlitz Indians wish to be near them. Hardly any of them were seen by the Vicar General at the chapel assisting at the instruction. But it seems we might succeed better among the different tribes of this nation who are settled on the tributaries of the Upper Wallamette. From these they take their different names. I learn that there are fourteen or fifteen different dialects spoken by the tribes; they are not so essentially different but that they can understand each other. Moreover, the Chinook jargon is spoken among the Kalapooias” (in Blanchet 1878: 58-60).

²³² Writing in 1842, Blanchet noted that

“The missions to be attended this year, were those of Chinook Point, Vancouver, Cascades, Clackamas, Wallamette Fall, and the Sound, whose tribes were so famished for heavenly things: Witness their running after the Blackgown in 1840 and 1841, and their repeated calls for a priest ever since. The name of another mission was presented to the council, that of the New Caledonia, now British Columbia, which was threatened to be visited by the Presbyterians of Walla Walla (in Blanchet 1878: 129).

Blanchet makes occasional reference to Indians from these northern areas making appeals for new missionary outposts in their territories, presumably in the course of trade at the Fort, such as one note mentioning that “a deputation of Indians came down from New Caledonia to Vancouver, in 1844, to call for a missionary” (in Blanchet 1878: 152).

²³³ Arriving with Jesuit priests to join the Fort Vancouver mission in the mid-1840s, Pierre deSmet witnessed firsthand the horrible effects of this disease:

“We arrived in the Oregon Territory during the prevalence of a disease (bloody flux) which was considered contagious, though the physicians attributed it to the unwholesome properties of the river-water. Numbers of savages fell victims to it, especially among the Tchinouks, and the Indians of the Cascades, large parties of whom encamped along the banks of the river, on their way to Vancouver, to obtain the aide of a physician. Those who could not proceed were abandoned by their friends; and it was truly painful to see these poor creatures stretched out, and expiring on the sand. The greater part of our sailors, and three of the sisters, were attacked by the pestilence; the Rev. Father Accolti also experienced its terrible effects; for myself, I was obliged to keep my bed during 15 long days, and to observe a rigorous diet. But the captain of our vessel was the greatest sufferer. The disease attacked him so violently, that I seriously fear he will never return to the cherished family – the affectionate wife and children of whom he used daily to speak with so much tenderness” (deSmet 1847: 167-68).

²³⁴ Boyd alludes to these later epidemics in a number of his writings. For example, he notes that

“At Vancouver deaths clustered between the last week of November [1847] (the first casualty was a half-Cayuse child) through the third week of February [1848], a three-month span. Thirty-nine deaths were recorded during this period, with a peak during the first week of 1848, when eleven died. Judging by the names, almost all of the recorded mortalities were local Indians, though one Iroquois and two Hawaiians died as well... A March 16, 1848, letter written by HBC factor James Douglas stated: ‘The fur returns of the Indian shops of Fort Vancouver, Fort George and Umpqua River are inferior in value to those of last year, a result accounted for by the distressed state of the Natives, who have been suffering with measles since the month of December last, and have not recovered from the stunning effects of that severe visitation’” (Boyd 1994: 25, 29).

²³⁵ Warre and Vavasour’s notes provide some background for this census:

“The Gentlemen in charge of the Hudson’s Bay Company’s posts on the north of the Columbia have made very accurate estimates of the Indian population in the neighborhood of their several stations, and we have

every reason to believe, from our own observations, in the accuracy of these statements.

The Indian tribes on the Columbia and in the interior of the country are a very migratory race, and it is very difficult to arrive at their exact numbers. We believe the above statements to be rather *under* their numerical strength" (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 58).

²³⁶ Winthrop (1913: 251) for example, discusses visiting the fort after running the Columbia cascades in a "Hudson's Bay Company boat" which they traversed "most beautifully." While the local Klickitat and Chinookans did most of this work, there is evidence to suggest that such services were provided by individuals hailing from innumerable tribes throughout the region, but tribal affiliation was commonly omitted from written accounts.

²³⁷ Still, the formidable stockade still appears prominently in written accounts. As noted by Samuel Parker, for example,

"The enclosure is strongly stocaded, thirty-seven rods long, and eighteen rods wide, facing the south. There are about one hundred white persons belonging to this establishment, and an Indian population of three hundred in a small compass contiguous. There are eight substantial building within the enclosure, and a great number of small ones without" (Parker 1841: 149).

²³⁸ A number of accounts have summarized the history of this school. Bancroft, for example, reported,

"Observing that during his ten years' residence in the country many young children were coming forward in the village within the walls of the fort, McLoughlin secured the services of an American as teacher, one Solomon Smith, left objectless by the failure of Wyeth's expedition; and the school thus organized, the first in Oregon, was a good one, wherein were taught the English branches, singing, deportment, and morality. It was the heart and brain of the Oregon Territory, though there were other places pulsating in response to the efforts at Fort Vancouver" (Bancroft 1890a: 10-11).

A few youth from Fort Vancouver's Métis community were sent into the Indian "Mission Manual Labor School," an institution founded by missionaries to provide

training to Indians in 1834; this institution later became Willamette University in Salem (Frost 1934: 164).

²³⁹ deSmet likewise marveled at the industry of the Kanaka Village community:

“Six hundred yards below the fort, and on the bank of the river, is a village of fifty-three log houses; in these live the Company’s servants; among them is a Hospital, in which those of them who become diseased, are humanely treated. Back and a little east of the fort, is a barn, containing a mammoth threshing-machine, and near this are a number of long sheds, used for storing grain in the sheaf. And behold the Vancouver farm, stretching up and down the river, three thousand acres, fenced into beautiful fields, sprinkled with dairy-houses and herdsmen’s and shepherd’s cottages! A busy place is this. The farmer on horseback at break of day, summons one hundred half-breeds and Iroquois Indians from their cabins to the fields. Twenty or thirty ploughs tear open the generous soil; the sowers follow with their seed, and pressing on them come a dozen harrows to cover it; and thus thirty or forty acres are planted in a day till the immense farm is under crop. The season passes on, teeming with daily industry, until the harvest waves on all these fields. Then sickle and hoe glisten in tireless activity to gather in the rich reward of this toil. Thirty or forty Sandwich Islanders are felling the pines and dragging them to the mill; sets of hands are plying two gangs of saws by night and day. Three thousand feet of lumber per day; nine hundred thousand feet per annum; are constantly being shipped to foreign ports” (deSmet 1906: 64-65).

²⁴⁰ Even relatively conventional historical accounts concur on the point that the Americans and the HBC were perceived very differently by the indigenous peoples of the region. For example, as Glassey noted,

“There were two reasons for the peaceful conditions among the colonists in the Columbia and Willamette Valleys. First, the Hudson’s Bay Company knew how to control Indians. The natives wanted to trade and that was possible under Company regulations only if the Indians remained at peace. True, the British at Fort Vancouver flogged natives who committed depredations and made it a point to apprehend such culprits to the degree that capture and punishment were sure. Indians had a higher regard for the British than for the Americans because the former did not work in the fields, but utilized native labor, while ever the American missionaries toiled hard and long at their crops. Indians looked

on with contempt because with them labor was performed by their women or their slaves. Then, too, Americans often caused trouble by unprovoked attacks on the natives, which was not true of the British. That fact amply proved by resultant wars in United States territory, whereas Western Canada never suffered from similar occurrences" (Glassey 1953: 2).

²⁴¹ There is some evidence to suggest that the tribes of the lower Columbia believed that it was the American ships, specifically, that carried epidemic diseases to their region – a view that Americans sometimes claimed had been cultivated by the HBC for trade advantages (McLoughlin 1839; Cushing 1839). If this is true, it would perhaps be among the more manipulative tactics employed by Fort employees to be reported in the available documentation.

²⁴² Specifically, in a letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee, Hudson's Bay Company, dated November 21st, 1840, McLoughlin shared the perspective shared by certain allies of the Fort administration, who noted that

"...the success of your parties in escaping the fury of the savages and the ill success of all smaller Companies who have ventured into that region excited in the breasts of those men a spirit of jealousy to the slanderous instigation" (in McLoughlin 1840: 32).

²⁴³ For example, in their "Petition of a Number of Citizens of the Territory of Oregon, Praying the Extension of the Jurisdiction of the United States of that Territory, March 25, 1843," a group of American settlers lamented that "our Indian agent is entirely dependent on them for supplies and funds to carry on his operations" (Shortess, Wilson, et al. 1844: 4).

²⁴⁴ As Bancroft summarized,

"The new Indian agent had not been many weeks in Oregon before he was called upon to act in his official capacity. Word came to Fort Vancouver that the Cayuses has burned a mill at the Waiilatpu mission, besides insulting Mrs. Whitman, and that the Nez Percés had threatened violence and outrage at the Lapwai. This news greatly alarmed the colonists, as it seemed to confirm a rumor then prevalent that all the Oregon tribes were preparing for a general attack on the settlers" (Bancroft 1890a: 268).

²⁴⁵ McLoughlin, however, doubted the veracity of this claim. His full statement on the matter, included in his letter to the Governor Deputy Governor & Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, dated November 15th, 1843, stated that,

"A few days after the departure of the Express last March, a momentary excitement broke out among the Nez Percés, and Cayouse Tribes, who inhabit the Country about Walla Walla, caused by a report spread among them, that Dr. White, who as I informed you last Fall, gave himself out as Indian Agent for the United States, had said, he would take their lands from them, which it is certain he never said, and also from another report, which came to the Wallamette, that the Cayouse and Nez Percés, had said they intended to attack the white Settlers, in that place, which was also unfounded" (McLoughlin 1843b: 128).

²⁴⁶ On the threats posed by the Snake Indians, McLoughlin noted,

"Let Mr. Benton examine the history of the Snake Country before its occupancy by the Hudsons Bay Company, and he will find that the Indians were hostile to all whites, and attacked our trapping parties indiscriminately with the trapping parties of his own countrymen, committing equal deprivations [*sic*] on the property of both; and let him compare its past with its present state, when a single white man of any Nation, can travel without dread of molestation, from the Rocky Mountains to Fort Vancouver, and then let him say if the Hudsons Bay Company has armed the Indians to shoot the American who ventures to hunt or trade on the Columbia" (McLoughlin 1843f: 190-191).

²⁴⁸ McLoughlin references these sentiments in a number of letters, such as in a letter to the HBC Governor Deputy Governor & Committee, dated July 19th, 1845, in which he notes of the American settlers that,

"...they were so strongly prepossessed against us, that they expected when they left the States they would have to fight with us on arriving here, and to build Forts to protect themselves from the Indians whom we would, they supposed, excite against them" (McLoughlin 1845b: 86).

²⁴⁹ On this point, Bancroft notes,

“Nor was McLoughlin ignorant that the pilgrims of 1843 were prevented by circumstances rather than by will from hostile acts; and notwithstanding that the danger was averted for the time, he did not regret having written to England for protection. In the summer of 1844 he had added a bastion to Fort Vancouver, and otherwise increased the defenses of the place, which before was hardly in a condition to resist attack. The reason given for these preparations was the threatening demeanor of the natives of the interior, and the necessity of doing something to secure the company’s property in case of an outbreak. But these explanations did not deceive the more intelligent of the Americans, and while some smiled at the admission that the Americans were feared, others chose to take alarm, and to accuse the company of intending to make war on them” (Bancroft 1890a: 446-47).

²⁵⁰ Violence outside of the Pacific Northwest also affected the region’s tribes, directly and indirectly. James Douglas, for example, mentions a tradition expedition to Sutter’s Fort in California by Walla Walla and Cayuse tribal members in 1845. While there, it is said that someone arbitrarily shot and killed the Walla Walla’s chief “man of business in his party,” the son of the Walla Walla chief. The two groups retreated to Oregon, but Douglas correctly predicted that hostilities would be redirected at non-Indians in Oregon (J. Douglas 1845).

²⁵¹ Specifically, they noted that,

“The stations of the H. B. Company are scattered over so great an extent of country it would be impossible to collect their men in time to meet an attack: and altho there are nominally 200 men employed about this fort, not half that number could be depended upon to meet an aggression.

Some few might be recruited among the half breeds, subjects of Great Britain, in the valley of the Willamette. But, we fear, that if left to their own resources the Hudson’s Bay Company will be obliged to employ the Indian tribes, from whom we cannot expect a very manageable or available force” (Warre and Vavasour 1909: 64).

²⁵² Hussey nicely summarized this point in his historical writings regarding the Fort, noting that,

“for a number of years [after 1846] the various establishments and storehouses of the Hudson’s Bay Company continued to contain the largest single stock of food, merchandise, and particularly, firearms in the

area. Thus, in times of crisis, the settlers were quite likely to turn to the Company and to Fort Vancouver for assistance” (Hussey 1957: 96).

²⁵³ Tracking the exact configuration of these claims is challenging in light of the turbulence of the period, and has represented a topic of focused inquiry in past studies (see especially Hussey 1957: 97-114). As summarized by Bancroft, Henry Williamson unsuccessfully claimed acreage adjacent to the Fort in 1848, but later moved downstream, settling the site of what would later become downtown Vancouver. Amos Short, a settler who had originally occupied lands along Multnomah Channel, including Sauvies Island, later acquired 640 acres, including a portion of Williamson’s claim. Williamson disputed Short’s claim, but ultimately relented (Bancroft 1890b: 10-11).

²⁵⁴ Specifically, Glassey reported,

“While the border question had been settled in 1846, it was recognized that the British had been in the Territory a long time and had built forts and habitations. The fact that the boundary had been fixed at the 49th parallel of latitude did not mean that the British were dispossessed. In truth, so firm was the conviction that the British had property rights, and so uncertain was any American’s title to the land he occupied, that the barracks, when finally built, were erected on land at Vancouver purchased from the Hudson’s Bay Company. Similarly, Fort Steilacoom was erected on land leased from the Puget Sound Agricultural Company” (Glassey 1953: 45).

²⁵⁵ As Bancroft summarizes these events,

“Captain Rufus Ingalls, assistant quarter-master, was directed by Major H.D. Vinton, chief of the quarter-master’s department of the Pacific division, to proceed to Oregon and make preparations for the establishment of posts in that territory. Taking passage on the United States transport Anita, Captain Ingalls arrived at Vancouver soon after Hathaway landed the artillerymen and stores at that place...When the quarter-master began to look about for material and men to construct barracks for the troops already in the territory and those expected overland in the autumn, he found himself at a loss. Mechanics and laboring men were not to be found in Oregon” (Bancroft 1890b: 83).

²⁵⁶ On this point, Talbot reported,

“We find the Territory in a completely disorganized state. Two thirds of the settlers of Oregon have left farms and families behind, and gone to the California gold mines. Every thing like regular labor has ceased. Those who have been to the mines and returned with their bags of gold and have turned the heads of those who have not been, the most exorbitant prices are paid for provisions and goods of all descriptions, and it is next to impossible to get a white person to work steadily, for the highest wages. The H.B. Company have lost nearly all their employees being obliged to hire Indians and even they charge 4 and 5\$ a day for their paltry services” (Talbot 1972: 126).

²⁵⁷ The name “Fort Columbia” sometimes appears in reference to this facility too, though common use of this name was abandoned following the creation of a separate fort on the Columbia estuary formally assuming that name in 1896-1900.

²⁵⁸ As Talbot reported,

“The people here detest us and are straining every nerve to have us removed, I for one am nothing loth to go, unless we can have all of them removed, of which there is not much chance. I am afraid it will be compromised by circumscribing our limits in such a manner as to leave us in the closest vicinage to very unpleasant neighbors. It would be a hard matter for any class of people to be more unpopular than Army Officers are in this country. This principally arises from their having done their duty in selecting the most eligible points in the Territory for Govt. purposes. In the last Oregon City paper I see a string of resolutions, passed at some little town on the Wilhamet, denouncing us in most unmeasured terms and praying that we may all be sent out of the country, (a resolution I most heartily second and I suppose you would too). We are accused in the vilest language of being leagued with the H.B. Company and the Papists to defraud the people of their just rights and etc...” (Talbot 1972: 154).

The ragtag character of these troops, and their growing reputation for reckless and even lawless behavior in the early months of Vancouver Barracks operations, may have contributed significantly to these sentiments, in addition to their preemption of strategic lands along the lower Columbia:

“The men of the regiment were predictably of mixed background and commitment. Talbot related their efforts to beat the black market, their attempts at suicide, their drunkenness, eccentricities, and all the emotional eruptions caused by their close confinement during long winter months” (in Talbot 1972: 119).

²⁵⁹ As Bancroft asserted, “At all events, matters proceeded amicably between Hathaway and Ogden during the residence of the former at Vancouver” (Bancroft 1890b: 85).

²⁶⁰ Theodore Talbot, for example, temporarily hired “a Kanaka, (the common name given to Islanders here) as a servant, but I find it as much as I can do to keep myself, in the present state of things, so that I was glad to get rid of him” (Talbot 1972: 136).

²⁶¹ As evidence of this recognition of Klickitat title by the courts, Browne (1858) offered the following:

“At a term of the United States district court, held in Washington county in 1851, complaint was made before the grand jury by one Donald McLeod that a band of Klickitats had committed a trespass upon his property by destroying timber which he had prepared for his house.

“The accused were brought before the court, with Agent Parish as their interpreter; but after an informal hearing of the case, the judge could not find any law to meet it. They maintained their right to destroy their own timber; that it grew on their own land; that they had acquired the land by conquest; that they had given McLeod warning not to settle there; that it had never been purchased from them, &c. The judge held that there could be no action for trespass against them; that it was not shown that McLeod had acquired any legal title to the land, but it was shown that the accused had a possessory claim to it which government had never extinguished.

“Another case was brought before the same court. One Bridgefarmer built a fence across a certain trail which had been opened by them, and which was their public highway. They broke down the fence, and passed as usual. An attempt was made to bring an action of trespass against them. The judge delivered an opinion to the same effect.

“From this and many similar cases which might be cited, it will be seen that there was at least some recognition of the rights assumed by these Indians” (Browne 1858: 8-9).

²⁶² As Deloria and DeMallie have commented, the Willamette Valley treaties of 1851 promised the Clackamas Tribe of Indians, for example, “the privilege of residing upon the grounds now occupied by them at the ferry of the Clackamas River, during the natural lives of the signers of this treaty” (in Deloria and DeMallie 1999: 1297).

²⁶³ Evidence of these outmigrations is scattered through the Indian agency records from the decades that followed. For example, by 1877, some Chinookan speakers were being reported in such as the Klamath Lake Agency (Pilling 1893: 31). There is also some reference to Umpquas adopting Chinookans so as to give them tribal affiliation in their southern Oregon communities (U.S. Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1986: 28-29; Munnick 1974).

²⁶⁴ In 1888, Indian Agent John McClane (1888) reports that there were, among the 115 “mixed-blood” residents of Grand Ronde, no fewer than four claiming Iroquois ancestry and 32 claiming “Wapato Lake” ancestry. Wapato Lake is presumably a Clackamas population associated with what is now east-central Portland.

²⁶⁵ Examples from this period mention small numbers of Indians in each community:

“The Cowlitz Indians live on the Cowlitz river from its mouth to the settlements. They number about 120...The Chenooks live at Baker’s Bay. Total number about 100...friendly to the whites” (Lane 1850: 132).

“The Cascade Indians, a branch of the Chinooks, live at the Cascades of the Columbia. They number one hundred and twenty. The Clickatats claim a district of country north of the Columbia, but they are a roving tribe, and are scattered about in different parts of the Territory. Their number is four hundred and ninety-two” (Dart 1851: 215).

“On the Columbia river, and at Shoalwater bay, are a few remnants of the once numerous Chinooks” (Gibbs 1854: 447).

²⁶⁶ Washington Territory separated from Oregon Territory in 1853; Oregon became a state in 1856.

²⁶⁷ Referring to the Isaac Stevens treaties of western Washington, Harmon (1999: 85) notes, “subdivisions of the populations encompassed by the treaties were far more numerous and ambiguous than the Americans wanted to admit.”

²⁶⁸ As Stephen Dow Beckham summarizes these events,

“The Chehalis River Treaty Council proved a disastrous event. Unlike prior treaty councils in western Washington...the conference on the Chehalis River included many disillusioned Indians...Discontent also mounted when Stevens named ‘chiefs’ and tried to force all of the bands...onto a single reservation. The conference erupted in angry exchanges and Stevens stormed from the session” (Beckham 1987: 24).

²⁶⁹ The potential fate of allotments has been an especially challenging issue when families enrolled in Quinault have attempted to seek independent tribal recognition. As Fitzpatrick notes,

“The treaty of Olympia in 1869 and Executive Order 1873, and a 1911 Act (S.5269) effectively opened the Quinault reservation to all members of “fish eating tribes of the Coast” who wished to enroll there. Cowlitz and Chinook did so in large enough numbers to now effectively outnumber the original band that settled upon the Quinault reservation. When they and the Yakima, for other reasons, opened their tribal rolls to Cowlitz and Cascade peoples the effect was that neither reservation lost lands or had lands alienated because they were not allotted” (Fitzpatrick 1986: 87).

²⁷⁰ As Hodge summarizes this moment in Cascades Indian history

“In 1854 they were reported to number 80. In 1855 they joined in the Wasco treaty under the name of ‘Ki-gal-twal-la band of Wascoes,’ and were removed to the Warm Springs res. in Oregon, where a few still survive” (Hodge 1910: 922).

²⁷¹ In 1852, Modocs of northern California had been invited to a peace council by Colonel Ben Wright near Tule Lake and then were fired upon, killing many headmen and their families. Columbia Barracks infantry were sent into Modoc territory and adjacent areas on the Oregon-California border to minimize “the probabilities of an exterminating war on that frontier” after the event (Hitchcock 1953: 74). Some two decades later, Vancouver Barracks would supply troops and howitzers to combat the next generation of Modocs during the Modoc War of 1872-73 – a War that was intensified considerably by the memory of those early events (Murray 1969; Bancroft 1890b).

²⁷² The Rogue War, which some historians divide into two major periods (the first occurring in 1853, the second from 1855 through at least 1856.

²⁷³ Commenting on the early Rogue War, McLoughlin reported an incident that occurred in 1829-30 in a memo to HBC Fort Vancouver Files, dated November 15th, 1843:

“Rogue’s River... owes its name to the conduct of the Natives who were very impudent and troublesome, and went so far as to take the people’s kettles from the fire and help themselves to the contents; and when the men proposed to drive them out of camp and then punish them for their impudence, Mr. McLeod from motives of humanity would not allow them, but made them give the Contents of their kettles to the Indians, saying to his men, “Take pity on the Indians and give them food”. From Mr. McLeod’s humanity and forbearance those Indians took a footing, and have been troublesome to the Whites ever since. However as the H.B.Co’s people were in large parties and knew their character they never had any rupture with them” (McLoughlin 1843a: 116).

McLoughlin appeared to view this persistent threat in the Rogue Basin as further confirmation of the wisdom of his former policies – prescribing the use of force, often significant force, when conflicts arose with tribes early in their relationship with the HBC and other fur trading enterprises.

²⁷⁴ As Bancroft summarized the situation,

“in the summer and autumn of 1853... the superintendent received official notice that all the Indian treaties negotiated in Oregon had been ordered to lie upon the table in the senate... As if partially to avert the probable consequences to the people of Oregon of this rejection of the treaties entered into between Governor Gaines, Superintendent Dart, and the Indians, there arrived at Vancouver, in September, 268 men, rank and file, composing the skeleton of the 4th regiment of infantry, under Lieutenant-colonel Bonneville. It was not too late in the season for troops to do more than go into winter quarters. The settlers and the emigration had defended themselves for another year without aid from the government, and the comments afterward made upon their manner of doing it, in the opinion of the volunteers came with a very ill grace from the officers of that government” (Bancroft 1890b: 245-246).

²⁷⁵ As Ross Browne reported on Klickitat involvement,

“Desirous... of pushing their conquest still further south than they had yet penetrated, so as to obtain the same supremacy over the Shasta and Rogue

River tribes which they had already obtained over the Umpquas, they proffered their aid to the whites on the occasion of every outbreak or manifestation of war. In 1851, when Lieutenant Stewart was killed on Rogue river, near the mouth of Stewart's creek, they armed themselves ready to unite in any expedition against the hostile tribes. In 1853 General Lane considered it expedient to avail himself of their repeated offers, and a party of sixty Klickitat warriors, well mounted and armed, proceeded to join him at the scene of war. They had reached as far south as the Grave Creek hills, where they were met by Mr. Grover, one of the commissioners who had negotiated the treaty of September 10, 1853, just concluded at Table Rock. As there was then no necessity for their services, they were directed to return" (Browne 1858: 8).

Tensions between the HBC and American settlers persisted through the Rogue War period, with the American military occasionally making threats of armed conflict against the Company due to rumored associations with combatant tribes (Glassley 1953: 40-42).

²⁷⁶ On this point, J. Ross Browne testified to Congress:

"Early in the spring of 1855 the superintendent of Indian affairs thought it expedient to remove them from the Willamette valley to their original country north of the Columbia. Under the provocations which they had already received, it may readily be supposed, they left with no good will towards the whites. From the moment of their departure they were in a state of war. Driven from a country to which they had established a right, under Indian usages, back to their homes in the Simcoe mountains, they openly declared their determination to fight. They charged fraud and bad faith on the part of the government and its agents, accused all the whites of cheating them, and protested that they would have satisfaction" (Browne 1858: 9).

This point was later made by a number of historians, such as Samuel Clarke:

"the Klickitats stoutly held for their right of conquest. As a rule they had made friends of the whites; as workers they were useful and esteemed superior to other Indians. In the spring of 1855 the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon had them removed to their own country, east of the Cascades... They swore vengeance, and that was one cause for the war of 1855-57 that costs such loss and expense" (Clarke 1905: 322).

²⁷⁷ As Glassley noted, Colonel George Wright gave explicit orders that might help sever tribal access to these resources:

“Among Colonel Wright’s orders were these: he was to establish his headquarters at The Dalles and to assemble there all the troops which he might find it necessary to use in the Yakima War; to set up a military post at Walla Walla; another on the Yakima River; another midway between The Dalles and the Yakima River post. The strategy called for preventing the Indians from fishing, thus threatening their food supply and advancing the probability of capitulation” (Glassley 1953: 132).

²⁷⁸ Glassley reported of these events that

“As soon as news of hostilities at the Cascades was received, the post commander, Colonel Morris, took several measures. First, believing that Vancouver might be attacked, he moved all women and children to the Hudson’s Bay Company’s old fort. Then, obeying his orders from General Wool, he refused arms and ammunition to the volunteer home guard. At the same time he detailed 40 regulars, commanded by Lieutenant Phil Sheridan, to proceed by the steamer Belle to the Cascades” (Glassley 1953: 134-35).

²⁷⁹ Oral tradition suggests that at least one of the Cascade leaders killed in retribution was Tumault, a signer of the 1855 Willamette Valley treaty, which sent most signatories to the Grand Ronde Agency: “The Cascades didn’t flee ‘cause they had just signed the treaty so they figured they were kind of exempt from it” (Williams 2000).

²⁸⁰ Browne (1850) elaborated on the purported connections between Yakima and Klickitat sentiment toward the Americans and the position of the Hudson’s Bay Company, noting that

“The most formidable of the tribes in [Washington] Territory were the Yakimas, inhabiting the country on the eastern slope of the Cascades. This tribe has long been connected, by strong ties of blood and interest, with the Klickitats. They frequently crossed the mountains and descended to the Sound, but their principal field of adventure was eastward. They traded with the tribes of the east, from whom they purchased furs and peltries, and held a profitable connexion with the posts of the Hudson’s Bay Company. In their intercourse with the “King George” men, as the English were called, they had been taught to believe

that the Columbia river was the boundary between the American and British possessions. Until within a few years past they had seen but few Americans, and those of the worst class. They looked upon them as an inferior race of whites. They had never felt the power of the American government. The traditions which had reached them across the Rocky mountains were vague and unfavorable. Of the Indian battles there, they only heard of Indian prowess and the slaughter of Americans. Coming from tribe to tribe, in every form of exaggeration, the tales that were told them were of a rapacity and injustice on the one hand, and deeds of valor on the other. But they were aware that still further east, where these bad people lived, they had taken away the lands of the Indians, and were gradually trying to get the country west of the Rocky mountains" (Browne 1858: 9).

²⁸¹ The town of Battle Ground, Washington was named during these events. A Klickitat band was reportedly ordered into Vancouver Barracks, but a portion of the band promptly departed, escaping to the north. Soldiers pursued them as far as modern-day Battle Ground. After several shots were fired into the air by both parties, the chief "Umtux" was said to be the sole casualty.

²⁸² As Ruby and Brown have summarized these efforts, induced by the Yakama War,

"Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs Joel Palmer issued a proclamation on October 13, 1855, ordering the Willamette valley Indians to remain in temporarily designated areas. Whites regarded their absence from those designated areas without permission as dangerous to the peace of the region. Indians who were unable to account for their presence outside those areas were to be arrested, retained in custody, and sent to county jails or the military Fort Vancouver" (Ruby and Brown 1986: 139).

²⁸³ Fitzpatrick (2004: 118), for example, suggests that the Cowlitz were sent to two "reservations," one at Fort Vancouver, after the initial violence of the Yakama War:

"During the 1855 war Umtuch and many of his men were hung. The remainder of the band, consisting of women and children, were transported to the Yakima reservation. Soon after, and during the war, two reserves developed; one was at Cowlitz Landing and another at Fort Vancouver" (Fitzpatrick 2004: 118-19).

²⁸⁴ Forty three Nez Perce served alongside ten white soldiers in Company M under the command of Capt Henri M Chase, 2nd Regiment, Washington Territory Volunteers, from March 11-July 12, 1856, while a second company of Nez Perce served under the command of Spotted Eagle from Dec 15, 1855 through Jan 20, 1856. Many of the Nez Perce soldiers had died before their claims for compensation were submitted, and it was not until 1883 that payments were made to soldiers and their families for this service. Ironically, the Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph, who by then had been removed to Indian Territory, was identified to receive the payment due his father, who had fought in the Yakima war, alongside fellow Nez Perce chief, Looking Glass (U.S. Office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs n.d.: 234, 261).

²⁸⁵ Writing of Louis La Bonte, Jr., son of a fur trader father and a Clatsop mother, Lyman reported,

“During the Indian war of 1855-56 he was a member of the Oregon Volunteers in the company of Robert Newell, which was stationed at Fort Vancouver to hold in check the Cascade Indians and the Klickitats to the north” (Lyman 1900: 170).

²⁸⁶ Fitzpatrick (2004: 86-87) explicitly interpreted this reference to “Vancouver Indians” as “the Chinook and the Cowlitz,” based on circumstantial evidence. Ray (1966: 299) interprets these Vancouver Indians as being “friendly Indians of the Columbia river District...the Cascade Chinookans, and the Lewis River Cowlitz (Taitnapam).”

²⁸⁷ Subsequent accounts of these events are consistent with this interpretation. Isaac Stevens’ son, Hazard Stevens, reported,

“On the day after reaching Vancouver the governor held a council with a band of Klikitat Indians, at which Colonel Wright was present, and made arrangements for moving them temporarily to their original home east of the Cascades on the Klikitat River, with the view of placing them ultimately on the Yakima reservation” (H. Stevens 1901: 208).

²⁸⁸ The exact spelling of this name is unclear in Stevens’ handwritten notes.

²⁸⁹ Similarly, Indian Agent John Cain reported of the White Salmon reservation,

“The Indians number about eight hundred, made up of the Vancouver Indians and Cascade Indians, and the remainder, mostly Klickatats, that were scattered along the river, and roaming over the country at large...I have every reason to believe the feelings of the Indians at the White Salmon reservation are kindly disposed towards the whites; they have

withstood all the arguments and inducements of the war party to join them to renew the war” (Cain 1857a: 346).

²⁹⁰ Specifically, Isaac Stevens noted,

“On my return from the Walla Walla council I determined in consequence of the unsettled condition of the Interior not to move the Indian parties to the above [Fort Vancouver] council to Simcoe, but to keep them on the White Salmon and its vicinity, and I directed Agent Cain to collect the Indians of the Yakima reported by Col. Wright to be friendly in the same general vicinity...in the Yakima itself, everything was uncertain” (Stevens 1856b).

²⁹¹ Townsend’s successor, Indian Agent R.H. Lansdale familiarized himself with the oral and written record of the relocation and reached similar conclusions. Writing from White Salmon in 1858, Lansdale reported,

“Many of the Klikatats were removed during the late war from their former homes west of the Cascade mountains to this agency. They had lost most of their horses while under surveillance of the military; they became very poor, and had to be fed and clothed partially by the bounty of the government” (Lansdale 1858: 275).

²⁹² As Washington Territory Special Indian Agent Sidney Ford noted,

“a few of the most trustworthy were allowed to hunt, and indeed, ammunition in small quantities was furnished them, until by degrees, as the danger passed off...the Indians were permitted to roam at large, as formerly” (Ford 1857: 631).

²⁹³ Indian Agent R.H. Lansdale reported in 1860,

“I have felt myself compelled [to remove] the bands of Lewis River Klikitats, because of the threatening aspect of relations between those Indians and the white settlers...This band of Klikitats, however, have never been treated with, or their lands purchased. White settlers have occupied the most valuable places for grazing, field culture, and fishing. So driven from post to pillar was this scattered and injured people, that but one white settler, and he a former member of Congress, would allow

them to remain, even temporarily, on lands yet belonging to them, the title to which has always heretofore been acknowledged by our government as vesting in the aboriginal inhabitants till fully treated with and ample compensation allowed. The agent has undertaken to remove them personally, with the aid of head chief and interpreter, without the expensive interposition of superintendent of removal, conductors, &c., &c. A careful account of expenditures will be kept, for which the agent will file his own voucher, and he is confident the mode of removal pursued will prove far cheaper than if done by contract.

The band named number, as well as can be ascertained in their scattered condition, 100 souls, thirty-seven of whom were transported by steamer from Lewis river to Rockland, Washington Territory. They are now en route from the latter place to this agency. Forty-three have undertaken to remove their horses, their cattle, and themselves, over the Cascade mountains to Yakima reservation, and the remainder the agent has not yet succeeded in inducing to leave willingly their old hunting and fishing lands, though he yet hopes to accomplish so necessary an undertaking as soon as possible.

These Indians have been badly treated by the white; driven without compensation from their own lands; their houses burned and otherwise destroyed; the graves of their people inclosed in the white man's field. They unwillingly consent to remove to please the government agent, hoping and trusting that their great father will yet provide some compensation for their lands in the form of annuities for beneficial objects, apart from the other bands treated with and settled on the Yakima reservation" (Lansdale 1860: 430).

²⁹⁴ As late as 1879, Western Washington Indian Agent R.H, Milroy reported on the continued presence in western Washington of the

"Cowlitz Klickitat Band, consisting of 105 Indians, men, women, and children, and situated on the Upper Cowlitz River and tributaries, about 40 miles southeast of Olympia [and the] Louis [Lewis] River Band, consisting of 104 Indians, men, women, and children, and situated on the Louis River and tributaries, about 90 miles southeast of Olympia...The Upper Cowlitz Klickitat and Louis River bands talk one language, the Klickitat spoken by most of the Yakamas" (Milroy 1879: 159).

²⁹⁵ In the early 20th century, this remnant Cowlitz population is referenced in a number of sources (Fitzpatrick 1986). For example, among federally unenrolled Indians seeking status through the rolls of Charles Roblin were many Cowlitz from throughout

southwest Washington; indeed, surveying this population in the early 20th century, Roblin was able to produce a 20 page list of Cowlitz descendents, in addition to a full 8 page list of Chinooks, residing in southwestern Washington and vicinity (Roblin 1919).

²⁹⁶ In addition to “passing” as white, these British subjects increasingly sought to “pass” as American to avoid the hostilities of the growing American majority. As James Douglas noted in a letter to Sir George Simpson, dated March 5th, 1845:

“British feeling is dying away so much, that Englishmen, in the Wallamette, are either afraid or ashamed to own their own country” (J. Douglas 1845: 180).

²⁹⁷ Overstating the case somewhat, Munnick suggests that when the HBC withdrew from the Fort, the Hawaiians had “no other place to go except to the tribes of their wives” (Munnick 1972: A-61).

²⁹⁸ Members of the Tchinouk Tribe of Oregon, based in Klamath Falls, appear to be descended from this population, reporting that they were descended from two Chinook women and their French former-HBC employee husbands at Champoeg. These families, totaling about 300 individuals, petitioned for federal recognition, but were determined ineligible in 1986 (U.S. Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1986).

²⁹⁹ Even McLoughlin’s stepson, Thomas McKay, “was denied the vote in the 1870 elections because he was considered by a US district court to be either a British subject or a member of the Indian community” (Lang 2008: 119).

³⁰⁰ Other assessments of Fort Vancouver history make only glancing references to the details of this migration. Kardas, for example, notes that

“It would be of considerable interest to know what happened to these village “wives” when the Company left the area. We know only that some of these women and children went with their European husbands. Others probably remained and went back to live with relatives if any were still living during the 1850’s” (Kardas 1971: 230).

More detailed biographical and genealogical research would no doubt facilitate a richer understanding of the connections between Fort Vancouver and many of the founding families of Fort Victoria.

³⁰¹ Sources disagree on the exact number of structures. Alley and Munro-Craser report that in 1853, “Vancouver, the Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters” was said to

consist “of 100 houses occupied by its employees, chiefly Kanakas” (Alley and Munro-Fraser 1885: 153). Hussey and Stevens’ accounts appear to be more reliable on this point.

³⁰² Following the HBC departure, Barracks commanders consolidated operations at and around the fort site. As of June of 1865, Fort Vancouver was in the Oregon District of the U.S. Army, with Captain Philip A. Owen commanding. Companies stationed there included 1st Oregon Company A, 1st Washington Territory Company E, and 9th United States Company D (Lamont et al. 1897: 1273).

³⁰³ In another council setting, Howard noted that the tribes he met with sometimes pleaded for Skemiah’s release, despite the fact that they had no personal connection with him:

“[Skemiah’s story] renegades had learned during our interview, therefore the “skookum-house” loomed up as a possibility to them. As soon as they heard of it, these renegades, though two hundred miles from the old captive, pleaded his case with me and begged for the imprisoned Skemiah’s release. The renegades were thus connected by a common feeling and sympathy against all the white men, even though they did quarrel and fight with each other” (Howard 1907: 264).

³⁰⁴ There is a discrepancy between the number of prisoners originally reported in the records as captured (35, in July 1877) and the number (33 consisting of “22 bucks, 9 squaws, and 2 papooses”) who arrived at Fort Lapwai before transfer to Fort Vancouver (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 10: 339; U.S. Office of the Adjutant General n.d.: 339: 115).

Officer’s records from the time mention specific Army personnel “conducting Indian prisoners and sick and wounded soldiers from Fort Lapwai, I.T., to Fort Vancouver, W.T., August 1877 [and] on duty guarding Indian prisoners at Fort Vancouver, W.T., August 7 to 29, 1877” – presumably Redheart’s band, and possibly other individuals as well (Hamersley 1884: 222)

³⁰⁵ Ruby and Brown (1989: 86) report that in the same month, March 1879, the Indian agent at Fort Simcoe/Yakama agency, “Wilbur sent at Indian, Hahawsawuni, accompanied by Captain W.H. Winters, to incarceration at Vancouver Barracks for sowing “seeds of discord” among the Indians, urging them to leave the reservation.” It is unclear, but the timing and similarity in the name to Sloh-oh-savune suggest this may have been the same individual.

³⁰⁶ In a letter to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, E.A. Hoyt dated September 4th, 1879, Yakima Indian agent James H Wilbur “remonstrates” vehemently against bringing additional prisoners there. Wilbur stated that,

“Their own people here are opposed to their being brought here, and the Indians of this Treaty are opposed; and to bring them here, so near the scene of their fighting last Summer, would be to introduce an element of trouble, that would be unending owing to the Whites of this vicinity, and the Indians of this agency. I took the milder part of the prisoners, last winter without murmuring³⁰⁶...but the prisoners now held at Vancouver whose hands are red with blood, and who needed to be guarded by the military, and have been escaping notwithstanding such guard, to bring them here, I repeat would be to make this agency unending trouble” (in Vancouver Barracks n.d.: 919: 765).

After considerable debate, and proposals to send all of these prisoners to Indian Territory in Oklahoma, the commanders determined that the ringleaders retained at Fort Vancouver would also be “sent to Yakama agency to return to their families due to exemplary conduct” (Vancouver Barracks n.d.: Reel 11). Attempting to respond to Yakama Agency concerns, Howard made additional prisoner removals to Yakama contingent on “good behavior” and would only send prisoners who already had family at Yakama. Howard announced to his post that the “ringleaders” would still be allowed to go to Yakama: “In consequence of their good conduct since they have been here the government has determined to send these prisoners also to Yakama, whither they will be escorted in a few days by sufficient guard” (Howard 1879: 149; Howard 1999: 660-61). These prisoners left Vancouver Barracks en route to Yakima on September 22, 1879. In the years that followed, a portion of the Paiute population that had been sent to Yakima at this time relocated to Warm Springs to join their extended families there.

³⁰⁷ Howard reported,

“The Indians were defeated in every battle; they broke into small parties, but were pursued relentlessly until a part were captured and the rest driven far beyond the field of operations” (Howard 1907: 419).

³⁰⁸ Speaking of the final campaign of the Sheepeater War, Glassey summarizes as follows:

“Getting the prisoners out was a task. Food was scarce. The snows had started to fall. After 62 days Farrow brought his force and the prisoners to the Columbia River, eventually delivering his charges to the Vancouver Barracks, where Colonel Henry A. Morrow, a brevet General, was in command, with Captain John A. Kress in charge of the arsenal. Orders

were soon issued to move the prisoners to the Umatilla Agency which was done. The following spring they were again moved, this time to the Fort Hall Reservation in Southeastern Idaho.

“How many prisoners were there? A letter from the Adjutant-General, Washington, D.C., dated June 18, 1925, in response to an inquiry from Colonel Aaron F. Parker says in part, “Nothing has been found of record showing definitely the date of surrender of the last party of Sheepeater Indians to Lieutenant Edward S. Farrow, Twenty-first Infantry, in 1879. However, the records indicate that Lieutenant Farrow and his force of Umatilla Indian scouts captured 14 Sheepeaters at Big Meadows September 21; compelled the surrender of 39 near the Middle Fork of the Salmon River October 1, and compelled the surrender of 12 on October 6, 1879, near Chamberlain Basin” (Glassey 1953: 247).

³⁰⁹ Howard explains his position in the following terms:

“To me, the most satisfactory operation in the Northwest was inaugurated by a very small band of savage Indians near the head waters of the Salmon river. In this campaign I did not take the field, but by trusted subordinates subdued the Indians, captured the whole tribe, and brought them down the Columbia river to my headquarters, which were then near Vancouver Barracks. Here, we had the opportunity of applying the processes of civilization, namely, systematic work and persistent instruction to Indian children and youth. These Indians were well fitted to abandon their tepees and blankets, dress as white men, and join the civilized Warm Spring Indians who dwelt just beyond the Dalles of the Columbia. In this work of preparation, or I may say of probation, the young Indian princess, Sarah Winnemucca...was my interpreter, and bore a prominent and efficient part” (Howard 1907: 10-11).

³¹⁰ This leader appears to have been involved with the “dreamer prophet” movement. As noted by Ruby and Brown (1989: 62):

“Another Dreamer-Prophet was the Smohallan disciple, Hackney (Hehaney, Hiachenie) of the John Day (or Dockspus) Tenino band. Hackney, who had about eighty followers...was repeatedly arrested and released throughout most of the 1870’s. As late as 1878-79, at the close of the Bannock-Paiute War, he left the Warm Springs only to be rearrested and confined under military guard at Vancouver Barracks.”

³¹¹ The diffuse distribution of tribal members over the intervening century and a half considerably complicates all questions of tribal affiliation in the region. The historical diaspora of the Chinook and Cowlitz, for example, suggests that a full and inclusive consultation with these tribes might minimally include – on the Washington side of the Columbia River – the federally recognized Cowlitz Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis, the Quinault Nation, the Shoalwater Bay Tribes, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, as well as the federally unrecognized Chinook Tribe. Of these, the Chinook, Yakima, and Cowlitz might appear to have the most direct associations with Fort Vancouver according to the documents consulted in this study.

³¹² Certainly, the modern Chinook Indian Nation would be prominent among these unrecognized tribes with strong ties to the Fort. The smaller Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes has on its rolls extended families with ties to the Fort too. Other lower Chinookan groups without federal status, including the Tchinouk Indians – who petitioned unsuccessfully for federal recognition in the 1980s – also claim family associations with the Fort population, both Native and non-Native.

Unrecognized tribal communities of mixed Chinookan ancestry associated with the Columbia cascades fishing stations also have likely ties to the Fort community. Historically, a number of tribal families persisted around the Columbia Cascades, most notably the residents of the Celilo Village, but also in smaller communities in the Hood River, Oregon and White Salmon, Washington areas (Fisher 2010, 2008; Boyd 1996). These populations do not typically have distinct federal recognition, though their individual members are sometimes enrolled with federally recognized tribes such as Warm Springs and Yakama. Among these groups, the Celilio-Wyam Indian Community has an organized tribal government.

³¹⁴ There are a number of original sources making reference to the location and use of the Fort Vancouver cemetery. William Fraser Tolmie, for example, reported,

“At 6½ attended Plant’s funeral – the procession made up by McL., Cowie & self & about 25 servants, Europeans, islanders & Canadians, set out from Plant’s house. The coffin unpainted, slung on pieces of canvas & thus borne by four men, passing through a pretty grove of young oaks & other trees, we arrived at burial ground which is suited about a gunshot to N. of fort, in a fertile upland meadow greatly beautified by wild flower & trees in flower. The funeral service read by the Govr. The great want here is the ground is not being inclosed, some of the graves are surrounded with palisades but the greater number are merely covered with stones & logs of wood. The behaviour of the servants was decorous & befitting the solemn occasion. The character of the deceased was not such as to make his death

a matter of vivid regret to his fellows. He had been a noted bruiser, distinguished for a quarrelsome disposition, but having the redeeming quality of unflinching courage & hence being a valuable attendant in moments of danger" (Tolmie 1963: 173).

Peter Crawford provided testimony on the configuration of the Fort, including the cemetery, based on 1848 observations:

"There was a graveyard where the whites, the Kanakas and everybody else [were] buried, north of the Hudson's Bay fort, about 300 yards. It still stands there where it did then (in Bona 1972: 171).

See Walker Research Group (2006) and Thomas and Friedenborg (1997) for more references of this kind.

³¹⁵ On this theme, Parker reported,

"They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that in the future state we shall have the same wants as in this life. Under the influence of this belief, the wife of Calpo, an influential chief of the Chenook village near Cape Disappointment, on losing a daughter in the year 1829, killed two female slaves to attend her to the world of spirits, and for the particular purpose of rowing her canoe to the far off happy regions of the south, where they locate their imaginary elysium. She deposited her daughter, with the two slain females by her side in a canoe, with articles of clothing and domestic implements. She was the daughter of Concomly, and a woman of distinguished talents and respectability, a firm friend of white men, and had more than once saved them from death. How dark was the mind of this talented woman, and how differently would she have conducted under the influence of divine revelation! These Indians never mention the name of their relatives after they are dead" (Parker 1841: 249).

³¹⁶ Kane reports,

"A few years before my arrival at Fort Vancouver, Mr. Douglass, who was then in charge, heard from his office the report of a gun inside the gates. This being a breach of discipline he hurried out to inquire the cause of so unusual a circumstance, and found one of Casanov's slaves standing over the body of an Indian whom he had just killed, and in the act of reloading his gun with apparent indifference, Casanov himself standing by. On Mr. Douglass arriving at the spot, he was told by Casanov, with an apology,

that the man deserved death according to the laws of the tribe, who as well as the white man inflicted punishment proportionate to the nature of the offence. In this case the crime was one of the greatest an Indian could be guilty of, namely, the robbing the sepulchre canoes. Mr. Douglass, after severely reprimanding him, allowed him to depart with the dead body

“Sacred as the Indians hold their burial places, Casanov himself, a short time after the latter occurrence, had his only son buried in the cemetery of the Fort...The coffin was made sufficiently large to contain all the necessaries supposed to be required for comfort and convenience in the world of spirits” (Kane 1859: 175-176).

³¹⁷ A few sources, such as that of William Fraser Tolmie, note that the Métis residing at the fort held prohibitions on the casual contact with human remains. Tolmie noted in his journals:

“Rec[eived] intimation this morning at 4 of [Mr.] Plant’s death. Mr. McL. did not think it advisable when spoken at breakfast, that body should be inspected, as from the force of Canadian prejudices, such a thing had never been done. Must endeavour to overcome these prejudices, when I became better acquainted with their nature & extent” (Tolmie 1963:172).

³¹⁸ This river burial of slaves is echoed by an account of Edward Curtis. One of Curtis’ Chinookan consultants reported visiting an unnamed village near Fort Vancouver, with a chief named K̄iésnut, also known as Wínatka (apparently Casino). According to Curtis’ consultant, this chief’s son died and was deposited on a burial house on a riverine island, while two young slaves of the same age as the son were bound together, weighted, and through from a canoe into the deep waters of the Columbia River (Curtis 1913: 89).