

SHIPS AND BOATS

Hudson's Bay Company

Beaver. The Hudson's Bay Company steamship *Beaver* was not only the first steamer in Puget Sound, but also the most venerable. Built in England in 1835, she was 101 feet long, 20 feet in the beam, and had an 11 foot deep hold. After sailing around the Horn and arriving at the Fort Vancouver via the Sandwich Islands, the *Beaver*, which was originally meant for travel on the Columbia River, was assigned to routes from Fort Nisqually in Puget Sound and further north to other Company trading posts. The *Beaver* had a crew of thirty, ten of whom were wood choppers, because she burned some 40 cords a day, which was about all she could carry. In 1860, she took up the Victoria-New Westminster run as a passenger boat. She was sold as a tugboat by the Company in 1874, and after several more reincarnations and owners, she was abandoned after hitting the rocks near Vancouver Harbor in 1888.

Julia. The *Beaver* was joined in 1853 by the Hudson's Bay Company ship *Julia*, a bark-rigged propeller steamer, 122 feet in length and 20 feet in beam.

Otter. Built in England in 1852 for the Hudson's Bay Company, the *Otter* was a wooden, single-screw steamer, schooner rigged. The dimensions of this 291-ton gross ship were 125 feet long by 22 feet in beam and drew 12 feet.

Prince Albert. Built in England in 1841 for the Hudson's Bay Company, this 303-ton ship was 103' long, 25'6" wide, and 17'6" deep. It had only a single year of run—1854—on the West Coast.

"Nisqually Express." The *Nisqually Express* was apparently a relatively fast boat run from Fort Victoria and other Company posts to Fort Nisqually; the Company had an earlier, analogous express from Fort Vancouver to York.

United States (USS)

Active. Built as the *Gold Hunter* in 1849 as a sidewheel steamer (length 172.5 feet, beam 24.5 feet, draft 10.3 feet), the *USCG Active* was purchased in 1852 and used until 1861 for the US Coast Survey. Under the command of Lt. James Alden, she took part in the North West

Boundary Commission survey of the San Juans as well as helping transport troops during the Pig War.

General Harney. This 110-ton schooner was first used in 1859 to transport lumber for a Catholic church in Port Townsend. In August, 1859 she was used for the transport of troops and materiel from Port Townsend and Bellingham Bay to San Juan Island. On December 3, 1859, she ran aground on the island under strong gale winds. From 1860 to 1876 she was used to haul cargoes in the Puget Sound area, and was beached again when she caught fire while hauling lime. In the next decade she wrecked several more times in the San Juans, culminating in her scuttling on Goose Island in 1889.

Jeff Davis. Built in 1853 in Bristol, Rhode Island, the *Revenue Cutter Jefferson Davis* was a 177-ton topsail schooner, 94'8" long, 23'1" in beam, with a 9' draft. She arrived on the West Coast in 1854, becoming the first ship of the United States Revenue Cutter Service to be stationed north of San Francisco. The *Jeff Davis* sailed the Puget Sound until 1862, when she was sold.

Massachusetts. Built in Boston in 1845, the *USS Massachusetts* was used to transport troops throughout the Puget Sound region. She was a slow-moving, propeller-driven steamship that also had sails, and was 161 feet long with 31 feet at the beam.

Sea Bird. Built on the East Coast, the *Sea Bird* came to California in 1851 and sailed the Sound from 1857-1858. She was 225-foot long, 450-ton sidewheeler, with 110 horsepower.

Shubrick. *US Steamer Shubrick* was built in Philadelphia in 1857 and used as a revenue cutter and lighthouse tender throughout Puget Sound. One hundred forty feet in length and twenty-two in beam, she was a single engine steamer rigged as a brigantine.

Royal (British) Navy (HMS)

Forward. Built in 1856, *HM Gunboat Forward*, a screw steamer stationed at Esquimalt served along with the *Grappler*, she was sold for mercantile service in 1869.

Ganges. *HMS Ganges* was an 84-gun second-rate ship of the line, built in England in 1821. Under the command of Rear Admiral Baynes, she was flagship for the Pacific Station of the Royal Navy from 1857-1861. In 1865 she returned to England to be converted into a training ship.

Grappler. *HM Gunboat Grappler*, launched in 1856, was a screw steamer stationed at Esquimalt and served along with the *Forward*; she was decommissioned in 1865 and eventually burnt in 1885.

Plumper. Launched in England in 1848, *HMS Plumper* was an 8-gun wooden screw sloop. With a displacement of 755 tons, she was 140 feet long, 27'10" in beam and drew 11'4½". Engaged in the Northwest Boundary Survey, the *Plumber*, under the command of Captain Henry Richards, surveyed most of coast line of British Columbia. She was retired and eventually broken up in 1865.

Pylades. *HMS Pylades* was one of the five warships of the Royal Navy's Pacific Station. Launched in 1854, she was a wooden-screw corvette. She was broken up in 1865.

Satellite. A 21-gun corvette, at 200 feet long the *HMS Satellite* was the largest in her class in the Royal Navy. James Charles Prevost was captain of the *HMS Satellite* as well as commanding officer for the Northwest Boundary Survey.

Tribune. *HMS Tribune* was one of the five warships of the Pacific Station of the Royal Navy. Designed by naval architect William Symonds, she was built in 1850 as a 31-gun auxiliary screw frigate.

Private

Amelia. (Schooner)

Caledonia. While on a trip from Victoria to the Fraser River, the Steamer *Caledonia* exploded November 2, 1859, killing a fireman and injuring several others. The ship drifted for 28 hours before coming ashore on Orcas Island.

Constitution. Built in New York in 1850, the wooden propeller steamer *Constitution* came to the West Coast in 1851. In 1856 she was bought by Hunt & Scranton and worked the Olympia to Victoria run in Puget Sound, then went down to San Francisco but returned north for the Frazer Gold Rush of 1858. When the fever broke, she was returned south and sold at auction.

Cortez. Built in New York, the *Cortez* came to the West Coast in 1852, and Puget Sound in 1858. An 800-ton steamship, she was a 225 feet long, 32½ feet in beam, and had a 24 foot depth of hold. Captained by

T.H. Huntington and C.C. Dall, she was eventually sold in 1861 and sent to China.

Eliza Anderson. Probably the most steadfast, although also the slowest, steamer to serve in these waters was the *Eliza Anderson*, a 140 foot long and 24 foot beam, 279-ton vessel. Launched in 1858 at Portland for the Columbia River trade, she was soon consigned to the inland seas, where she made a run from Olympia (departing at 7:00 a.m. on Mondays) to Victoria (departing 3:00 a.m. on Thursdays).

Enterprise. The steamer *Enterprise* was probably the boat originally built in 1855 for the Willamette trade and later brought by Captain Tom Wright to the Frazer River.

Helen Hawkins. (Sloop)

W[ilson]. G. Hunt. A 185-foot-long side-wheeler with a 25-foot beam.

Major Thompkins. The *Major Tompkins*, which was built in Philadelphia in 1847, served as a freight and passenger steamer in the Puget Sound. In 1854, she was brought from San Francisco to Puget Sound, and commenced a run among Olympia, Seattle, Victoria, and other ports. However, her service was short-lived, for she hit rocks and foundered the next year.

Northerner. The side-wheel steamer *Northerner* customarily ran from California to the Puget Sound. On January 5, 1860 she struck Blunts Reef near Cape Mendocino and sank, resulting in the death of 40 people.

Pacific. (Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company)

Panama. (Steamer)

Rose.

Sand Stone.

Sherman. (Schooner)

Sources:

Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room, Ships and Shipping Database (www.tpl.lib.wa.us/cgi/shipcgi2.exe).

Watson, Bruce McIntyre. *Lives Lived West of the Divide: A Biographical Dictionary of Fur Traders Working West of the Rockies, 1793-1858. Appendix B: Ships on the NorthWest Coast.* Kelowna, BC: Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice, University of British Columbia, 2010.