

WITHIN THE COLLECTION

A LOOK INSIDE THE FORT VANCOUVER MUSEUM



MCLOUGHLIN FAMILY
COLLECTION

NCRI CURATION SERIES NO. 4

MCLOUGHLIN FAMILY
COLLECTION

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Introduction

by Heidi Pierson

It is likely that John McLoughlin never pictured himself as the “Father of Oregon” in his early days. He probably saw himself as a gentleman farmer living out his days on the St. Lawrence River, or as a doctor in one of the lively cities of Québec. The son of John McLoughlin, a Scotch-Irish farmer, and Angelique Fraser, daughter of a wealthy landowner, young John found his chosen profession early in life. At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to Dr. James Fisher and, five years later, in 1803, applied for his medical license. As it happened, after an altercation with a British soldier that necessitated a hasty departure, he instead signed a five-year contract with the North West Company (NWC), a fur trade concern.

McLoughlin’s uncles helped him negotiate a deal with the NWC, but it was NWC agent Simon McTavish’s lavish promises that convinced McLoughlin to sign a five-year contract for the low annual stipend of £20. This was the fateful moment in Dr. John McLoughlin’s life, when he put his foot on the path that led him to the far Northwest. It is evident in McLoughlin’s letters—sent during those early years stationed at Fort Kaministiquia (later Fort William) as an assistant physician and apprentice clerk—that he planned to return to his family and try again to make it as a doctor back in ‘civilization’. McLoughlin’s letters also reflect his dislike of frontier life, dissatisfaction with his pay and prospects, and unhappiness with the fur trade in general. What happened to make him stay in spite of all this?

For one thing, he turned out to be good at his job. At a height of six feet and four inches, McLoughlin’s stature was impressive, but it was his skill as a trader and businessman that distinguished him. McLoughlin’s close relationship with his younger brother, David, was also a main factor in his staying with the NWC. David wanted to pursue a medical education in Edinburgh, Scotland, and McLoughlin agreed

to help provide the necessary funds. It was a decision that essentially forced him to stay employed in the fur trade. Ultimately, McLoughlin negotiated a three-year contract totaling £200. It was during this time period that he met his first wife.

McLoughlin's first wife is something of a mystery. Sources suggest that she was part of the Ojibway tribe and they were likely married *à la façon du pays*; that is, "in the fashion of the country." It was commonplace for fur traders to form alliances with Indian or Métis women. In addition to offering companionship, women were important partners in the fur trade. A native woman's ability to gather food, speak local languages, prepare furs, and make clothing was invaluable, and the fact that fur companies frowned upon the tradition did little or nothing to abate these cross cultural unions. Little is known about the life of the first woman McLoughlin joined with, except that she bore McLoughlin a son named Joseph. She may have died young, since John McLoughlin raised Joseph and married his second wife a few years later.

McLoughlin met his second wife, Marguerite Wadin McKay, in 1811, probably at Fort William. Marguerite was the daughter of a Swiss fur trader, Jean Etienne Wadin, and her mother was Cree or Ojibway. Marguerite herself had been married before, to Alexander McKay, another fur trader and had four children with him: Thomas, Catherine, Marie, and Nancy. Alexander and Thomas went to Astoria in 1811 to work for John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company. As was the case in many informal fur trade marriages, once McKay left for Astoria his union with Marguerite was dissolved. Later that same year, Alexander was on a fur trading expedition on the HMS Tonquin when he and most of the ship's crew were killed. Thomas escaped his father's fate, and he and his sisters would soon have a new stepfather: John McLoughlin.

By the time McLoughlin met Marguerite, he was in his late twenties and she her mid-thirties. Many years later

people who knew them would comment on how John doted on his wife, and demanded that others treat her with respect. Often described as a kind and gentle woman, Marguerite could calm her often fiery-tempered husband, and offer sound and reasonable advice to temper his judgments. The year that John and Marguerite married, 1811, was also significant for McLoughlin in his career, for it was time once again to renew his contract with the NWC.

McLoughlin chose to again renew, this time securing the guarantee that he would be made a partner at the end of the contract. Marguerite bore a son—John, Jr.—in 1812. For a few years the McLoughlin family would live in the Lac la Pluie (Rainy Lake) District near Lake Superior. Times were relatively peaceful, but as the family grew, outside forces would disturb their calm. Shortly after McLoughlin was made a partner, the family moved back to Fort William. Concerns were rising about the increasing violence between the agents of the NWC and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), who had been bitter rivals for decades. This hostility would end up being costly to both companies, and to McLoughlin personally, for a number of years.

McLoughlin and others became convinced that the rivalry between the HBC and the NWC would lead to ruin. As he grew in age and influence, McLoughlin joined a splinter group who wished to work with the HBC to create a more profitable environment for all. Representing the interests of this group, McLoughlin traveled to London in November, 1820, to meet with the HBC along with other NWC representatives. Negotiations between the two companies continued until 1821, when the companies were merged under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. After spending some time with his brother David (now in France), McLoughlin returned to North America in 1822 as the new Chief Factor of the Rainy Lake District, where he stayed for the next two years. In 1824, McLoughlin received a new assignment that would change his life forever.

George Simpson was the Governor of the HBC's North American operations, part of which was the Columbia District—a huge area stretching from the Rocky Mountains in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west, and spanning the coastline from Mexican California to Russian Alaska. Simpson had been concerned for some time about the dismal returns from the area, and appointed McLoughlin as the new Chief Factor, perhaps hoping that he could bring prosperity to the languishing trade. The post would prove a challenging one.

The Oregon Country was under a joint occupancy agreement between the United States and Great Britain: this meant that neither country owned the land, and that citizens from both countries were allowed to freely move about the area. McLoughlin arrived in Astoria in November 1824, with Marguerite and their two youngest children—Eloisa and David—in tow. Their eldest two children—John Jr. and Elizabeth—had been left behind in Québec to be educated. The first order of business was to establish a new headquarters for the district on the north side of the Columbia River. The HBC believed that joint occupancy would be temporary, and that a boundary would eventually be drawn along the Columbia River, with the land north of the river British territory and while the area south of the river under American jurisdiction. It was with this theory in mind that the site for Fort Vancouver was decided.

McLoughlin and Simpson explored the northern bank, finally settling on a wide plain near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. Fort Vancouver would be a grand experiment in self-sufficiency. The district's distance from convenient supply lines meant that McLoughlin would have to ensure that as many supplies as possible would be taken from the surrounding resources, and that crops and livestock would provide food and, hopefully, profitable surplus. Simpson and McLoughlin got along well at the time, and remained friends for many of the nearly 20 years McLoughlin spent in charge of the district; it was not until

the 1840s that an irreparable rift would form between them.

Simpson visited again in 1828, and found the Columbia District much improved: new farms provided food; flour and saw mills had been built; salmon salting operations took place at the waterfront; a schooner (the Cadboro) had arrived to help trade for furs along the coastline and inland waterways; and a change in management had significantly reduced the costs of the Snake fur brigade – a seasonal fur trading expedition based out of the Fort. Simpson was impressed with what McLoughlin had accomplished and heaped praise upon him and his administration. Things were going well and the prosperity of Fort Vancouver would only increase, leading some to describe the site as the “New York of the Pacific”. As Fort Vancouver and its operations grew in scale and reputation, more American citizens began to immigrate to the area. American missionaries also immigrated to the Northwest, often stopping at Fort Vancouver.

Three groups of missionaries came to Fort Vancouver in the 1830s: the Whitmans and Spauldings, Jason Lee’s group, and later Fathers Blanchet and Demers. McLoughlin and Fort Vancouver were known for providing excellent hospitality, and it is from guests that we often get our best descriptions of the fort and its inhabitants. Narcissa Whitman provides some excellent descriptions of the gardens, meals in the big house, and Marguerite and daughter Eloisa. From her letters, we learn that, unlike American and European women, Marguerite rode horses “gentleman fashion” (astride), and that McLoughlin requested that Narcissa teach his children songs in the evenings.

McLoughlin dealt with American visitors kindly, offering them supplies and the hospitality of the fort and helping them out with supplies. This was a calculated move. McLoughlin knew that refusing to trade with Americans would only encourage them to create their own supply lines to the Northwest—creating unnecessary competition for the HBC. However, the wealth and power displayed by McLoughlin

and the HBC at Fort Vancouver caused much comment and consternation among American visitors. Reports were sent back to the United States urging prompt settlement of the area to counter the British presence in the area. McLoughlin found himself in the geographical and ideological center of the storm –American immigrants moved West not just to find a new home, but also to forward what they perceived as the Manifest Destiny of the United States, and at the same time his superiors in the HBC, urged him to discourage and even turn away American settlers, and to continue to strengthen British corporate and cultural ties to the area. McLoughlin's persistence in assisting American settlers and missionaries would later become the cause of increasing strife in his relationship with the HBC.

In 1838, McLoughlin was summoned to London to meet with the HBC officers and committee. The meetings were successful for McLoughlin, and he received praise for his handling of affairs in the Columbia District. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company was formed during these meetings, based at Fort Nisqually, and McLoughlin was given official superintendence over that company as well as an additional £500 per year. McLoughlin returned to Fort Vancouver triumphant, at the height of his career and success. Unfortunately, this shining moment was short-lived and McLoughlin would soon fall from grace. Within a few years he would no longer be working for the HBC and most of his fortune would be gone, his future uncertain.

George Simpson visited Fort Vancouver for a short time and then went north to visit the coastal forts. When Simpson returned, he promptly ordered most of McLoughlin's coastal forts to be closed, announcing that the steamship Beaver would be used to take over the trade completely. McLoughlin was furious, and argued with Simpson over the increased cost and difficulty that would come from managing unruly sea captains and expensive ship repairs. Simpson was unmoved, and felt antagonized by McLoughlin—the rift had begun

between them, and would continue to widen. Soon Simpson would visit Fort Stikine on the Alaskan coast, a visit that would result in devastating news for McLoughlin.

Simpson arrived at Fort Stikine in April of 1842 to find that John McLoughlin, Jr., had been murdered the week before. Simpson conducted a cursory investigation, concluding that John Jr. had provoked his own murder through his mistreatment of the men there. His condolence letter to McLoughlin was accompanied by an official report blaming his son. McLoughlin was devastated by the news and incensed by Simpson's accusation. McLoughlin blamed Simpson for removing support staff and leaving his son in a vulnerable position. Simpson countered with the opinion that John Jr. was a violent and "insane" drunkard. McLoughlin spent years refuting Simpson's claims—eventually proving that the killing was actually a premeditated homicide. McLoughlin's obsession with the matter ultimately alienated him from the HBC and many of his friends.

As the 1840s progressed, Fort Vancouver saw an influx of new Americans arrive over the Oregon Trail. The earliest settlers were dependent on McLoughlin's good will for their survival, often arriving hungry and destitute, bereft of supplies at the beginning of winter. Although official policy required McLoughlin to "send back" the new arrivals, McLoughlin felt strongly that this was not the right thing to do, instead aiding stranded settlers, bringing food and blankets, and providing supplies on credit to help the settlers establish themselves. McLoughlin's rationale is best explained by the following quote: "I am of the opinion if I had acted otherwise than I did, besides Vancouver being pillaged and the Companys [sic] Business Destroyed—England and the United States would be at War."

By 1844 the HBC had decided to remove him from control of the Columbia District. A letter was sent to McLoughlin informing him that his tenure as head of the Columbia District, and his supplementary salary, would end

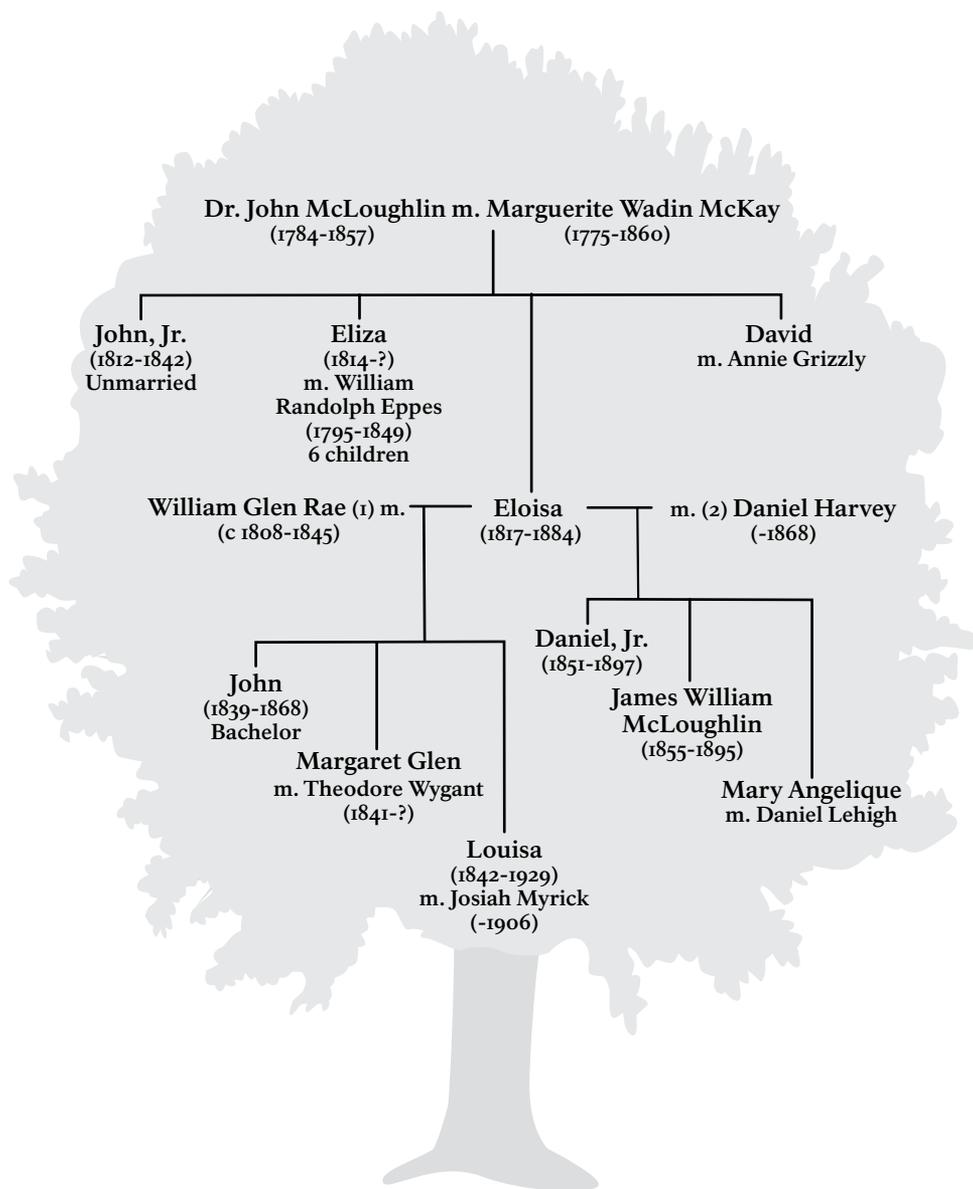
in May, 1845. In addition, the company charged McLoughlin's account £4,173 for improvements to "his" claim at Willamette Falls in Oregon City. McLoughlin had claimed the Willamette Falls for the Hudson's Bay Company in 1829, but was forced to transfer the claim to his own name to prevent American challenges to the British company's presence. This financial penalty effectively wiped out his life savings. McLoughlin was humiliated and bitter, his plans to move back to his family home in Québec were dashed, and he was stuck with a highly disputed piece of land in Oregon City. In reaction, McLoughlin, knowing that he must remain there to secure his claim, built his home adjacent to the falls in 1845, and moved there with Marguerite in the first part of 1846. They were soon joined by his widowed daughter Eloisa and her three children.

McLoughlin lived out the rest of his days in Oregon City, which officially became a part of the United States in 1846 when the 49th parallel was set as the border between the U.S. and Canada. McLoughlin became an American citizen in 1851, and was active in Oregon City as a businessman, merchant, and mill owner. Unfortunately, his land claim by the Willamette Falls continued to be in dispute throughout the remainder of his life, and McLoughlin died in 1857 with the issue still unresolved. It was not until five years after his death that the Oregon State Legislature returned the claim to his heirs upon the payment of a nominal sum.

"His benevolent work was confined to no church, sect nor race of men, but was as broad as suffering humanity, never refusing to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and provide for the sick and toilworn," so spoke Willard H. Rees in 1879 at a meeting of the Oregon Pioneer Association. In the years after McLoughlin's death, recognition of his important legacy and his role in the formation of the Oregon Territory increased, and people began to remember him fondly. Additionally, Oregonians began to understand the dilemma McLoughlin had faced as an HBC Chief Factor in the center of American expansionism. In 1909 the McLoughlin

Memorial Association was formed to save his home, one of the earliest historic preservation movements in the West, and in 1957 McLoughlin was officially named the "Father of Oregon." If McLoughlin could have known that his memory would be so honored, perhaps it would have given his family some comfort in those most challenging years.

McLoughlin Family Tree



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John and Marguerite



Daguerreotype of John McLoughlin

Dr. John McLoughlin was born on October 19, 1784 in Rivière-du-Loup, Québec. His mother, Angélique Fraser, had Scottish and French Canadian heritage, and was raised Presbyterian. It is not known how she met McLoughlin's father, a prosperous, Catholic landowner who was also named John, but their marriage, and her conversion to Catholicism, triggered a conflict between the two families. McLoughlin was the second of seven children.

In 1791, the family moved to Québec City. In 1798, when McLoughlin was fourteen years old, his uncle, Simon Fraser, arranged for him to begin an apprenticeship with

Dr. James Fisher, one of the most prominent physicians in Québec City. McLoughlin completed his training four years later, but his career in medicine was thwarted by a disastrous confrontation with a British military officer.

Daguerreotypes are one of the earliest types of photographs, and were most commonly produced between 1839 and the late 1850s. To make daguerreotypes, early photographers first coated a copper plate with silver and placed the plate in a box where it was exposed to iodine vapors. Five to thirty minutes later, the plate was removed, its surface now covered with a light-sensitive silver-iodide film. The plate was then placed in a camera and exposed to light. Early exposure times could range from five to seventy minutes, but technological developments in the 1840s reduced exposure times to less than forty seconds, making the daguerreotype a more practical portraiture method.

After exposure, the plate was placed in an enclosed box, which held the plate at a 45 degree angle over a pan of heated mercury. Vapors from the heated mercury caused the plate's image to emerge. The plate was then washed, toned in a bath of gold chloride, and dried. After drying, daguerreotype images were sometimes hand-colored, then placed inside a case. Daguerreotype images are direct positives, meaning that their images are reversed (though this problem is easily solved by flipping the glass plate over).

Daguerreotypes are easily recognizable due to their mirror-like surface, a product of the silver coating on the plate. Reflections on this surface can make daguerreotypes difficult to view. This difficulty may have contributed to the development of photographic methods that produced images that were easier to see – like the ambrotypes seen later in this book.

North West Company Seal

At the age of eighteen, John McLoughlin had finished his training as a physician and was preparing to enter the medical field by submitting a petition to practice in Canada. However, within days of his graduation McLoughlin, known as a man with a temper, assaulted a British officer and was forced to flee his home. In April, 1803, McLoughlin hastily signed a contract with the North West Company, one of the principle fur trading companies in Canada and the employer of his uncle. McLoughlin's nephew later described the episode:

I will tell you what nobody knows on the Pacific Coast, viz: What made the Dr leave Canada and turns his steps toward the N W...The Dr. had just been received M.D. and was taking a walk with a young lady, when in crossing a muddy street (it was in the spring and in Quebec!) over a plank, the lady in front, when in opposite direction came an English officer, who pushed the lady from the plank. Please look into the mud and try to discover the English Officer lying down in it and with it covered from head to feet – In those days there was danger in store for the young gallant and to the N.W. he went to save himself and join his uncles and alas! to forget her.

After joining as an apprentice clerk, McLoughlin was assigned to Fort Kaministiquia near Lake Superior, where he would also take on collateral duties as the post's only physician. In 1808, McLoughlin's apprenticeship expired and he became a full clerk, but he had grown to dislike the fur trade and anxiously awaited the expiration of his contract, after which he planned to finally open his own medical practice.

That same year McLoughlin learned that his brother, David, needed money in order to pursue his own medical training in Scotland. Always supportive of his brother, McLoughlin renewed his contract with the Company, and in doing so was able to send David the funding to complete his education.

McLoughlin continued to be employed by the North West Company until 1821, when it merged with its longtime rival, the Hudson's Bay Company.

During his time as a clerk for the North West Company, McLoughlin would have used this seal to stamp wax envelope seals. Remnants of red wax can still be seen on its face.





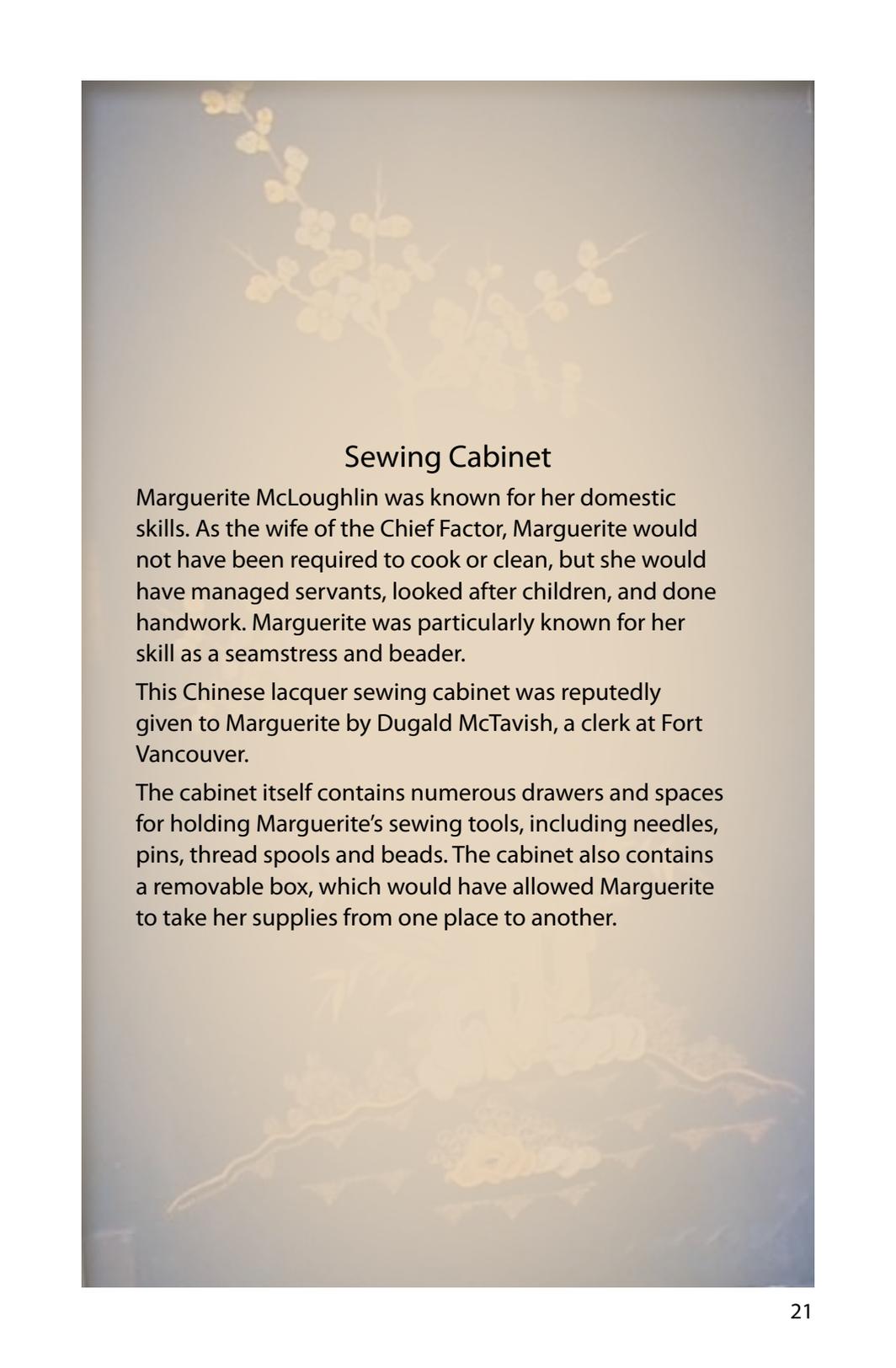
Daguerreotype of Marguerite McLoughlin

Marguerite Wadin was born around 1775 near Montreal. Her father, Jean Etienne Wadin, was a Swiss fur trader and merchant. The identity of Marguerite's mother is unknown, but she was likely full or part Ojibway or Cree. As a young woman, Marguerite married Alexander McKay, a fur trader for the North West Company, with whom she had one son and three daughters. In 1810, McKay resigned and joined John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company expedition. McKay died in 1811 while on board the HMS Tonquin

Newly widowed and living at Fort Kaministiquia with her daughters (her son, Tom, had gone with his father and became a ward of the Pacific Fur Company), Marguerite met John McLoughlin. The two entered into a marriage à la façon du pays (literally, in the fashion of the country), which would last until McLoughlin's death in 1857.

McLoughlin informally adopted her three daughters, and Marguerite cared for McLoughlin's son, Joseph, from a previous relationship with an unknown American Indian woman. Relationships between fur trading company employees and American Indian women were often not sanctified by clergy, and ranged from temporary partnerships to dedicated, lifelong unions. John and Marguerite were together for about 30 years before they had an official Roman Catholic marriage in 1842, which was presided over by Fort Vancouver's Father Francis Norbert Blanchet.





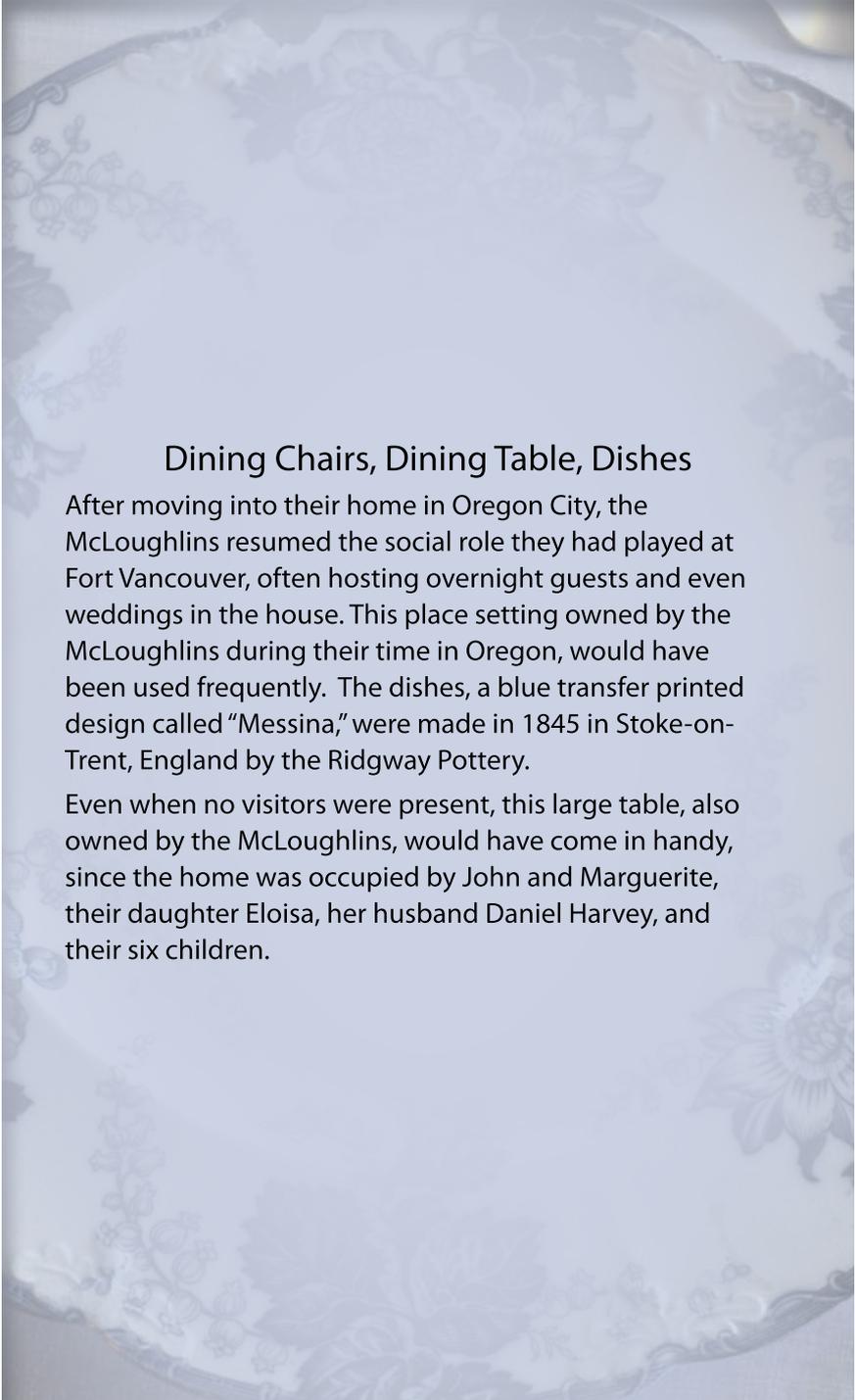
Sewing Cabinet

Marguerite McLoughlin was known for her domestic skills. As the wife of the Chief Factor, Marguerite would not have been required to cook or clean, but she would have managed servants, looked after children, and done handwork. Marguerite was particularly known for her skill as a seamstress and beader.

This Chinese lacquer sewing cabinet was reputedly given to Marguerite by Dugald McTavish, a clerk at Fort Vancouver.

The cabinet itself contains numerous drawers and spaces for holding Marguerite's sewing tools, including needles, pins, thread spools and beads. The cabinet also contains a removable box, which would have allowed Marguerite to take her supplies from one place to another.



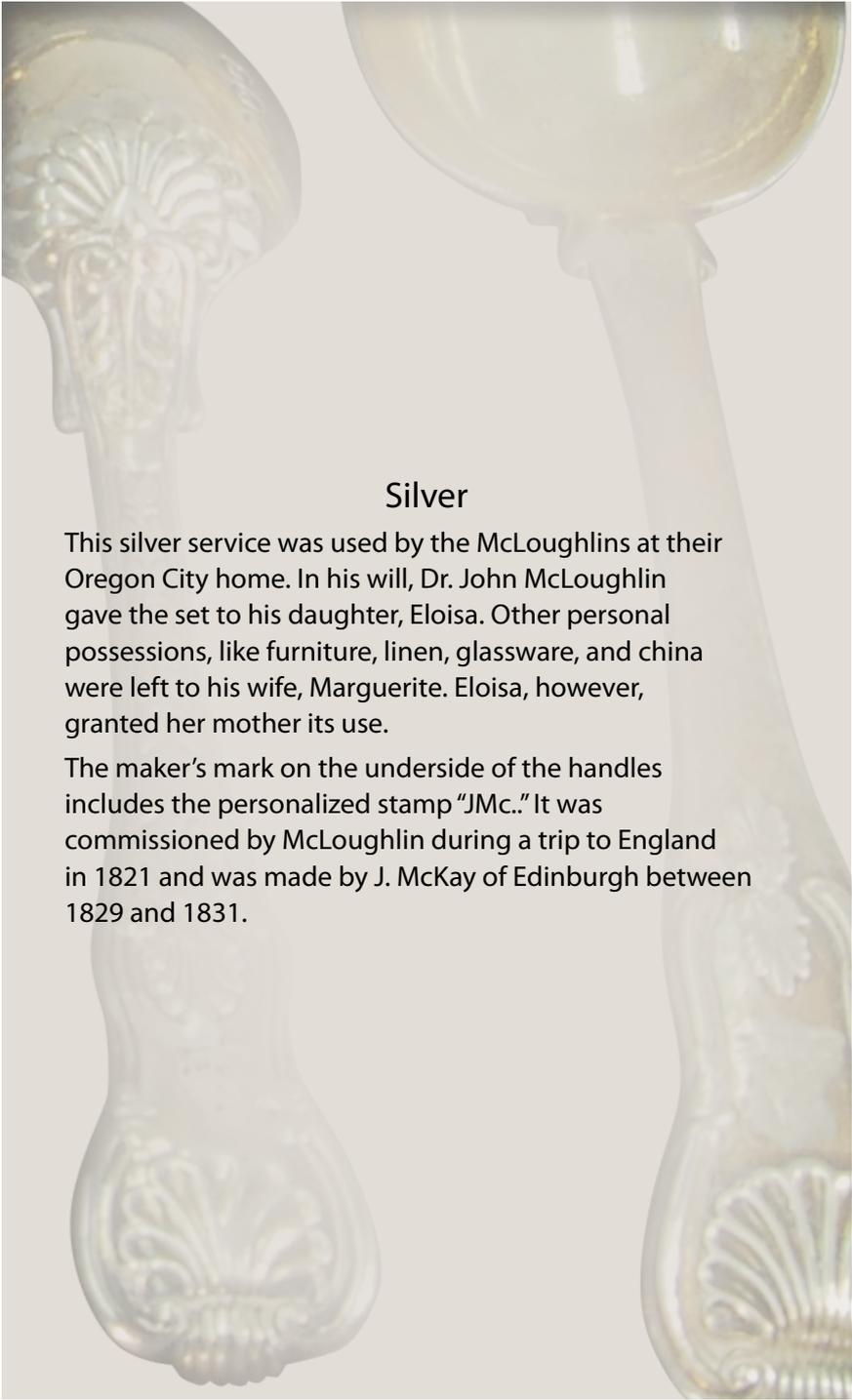


Dining Chairs, Dining Table, Dishes

After moving into their home in Oregon City, the McLoughlins resumed the social role they had played at Fort Vancouver, often hosting overnight guests and even weddings in the house. This place setting owned by the McLoughlins during their time in Oregon, would have been used frequently. The dishes, a blue transfer printed design called “Messina,” were made in 1845 in Stoke-on-Trent, England by the Ridgway Pottery.

Even when no visitors were present, this large table, also owned by the McLoughlins, would have come in handy, since the home was occupied by John and Marguerite, their daughter Eloisa, her husband Daniel Harvey, and their six children.





Silver

This silver service was used by the McLoughlins at their Oregon City home. In his will, Dr. John McLoughlin gave the set to his daughter, Eloisa. Other personal possessions, like furniture, linen, glassware, and china were left to his wife, Marguerite. Eloisa, however, granted her mother its use.

The maker's mark on the underside of the handles includes the personalized stamp "JMc." It was commissioned by McLoughlin during a trip to England in 1821 and was made by J. McKay of Edinburgh between 1829 and 1831.



Personal Adornments

Throughout their lives in the Pacific Northwest – at Fort Vancouver and in Oregon City – the McLoughlins were well-to-do members of the upper class and their personal adornments reflected this status.

In the early nineteenth century, stick pins (also known as tie pins) like these were popular among English gentlemen, who used them to pin down the folds of their cravats. During the period that McLoughlin used them, they were almost exclusively used by upper class men, but after 1860 they became more popular among middle class men. Their settings are onyx and amethyst.

The ring was worn by Marguerite, and was a gift from her husband. This style, which features a mine cut diamond surrounded by five pearls, is called a “forget-me-not” ring because it is modeled after the forget-me-not flower, which has five petals. Victorian jewelry is often highly symbolic, and forget-me-nots (the flowers and the rings) were symbols of devotion, remembrance, and undying love.

For Marguerite, owning this ring would have been a reminder of her husband’s love, but it also served as a symbol of her status. While some women in Oregon would have had engagement or wedding rings, only upper class women like Marguerite would have had a “dinner ring” – a ring just for special occasions – like this one.

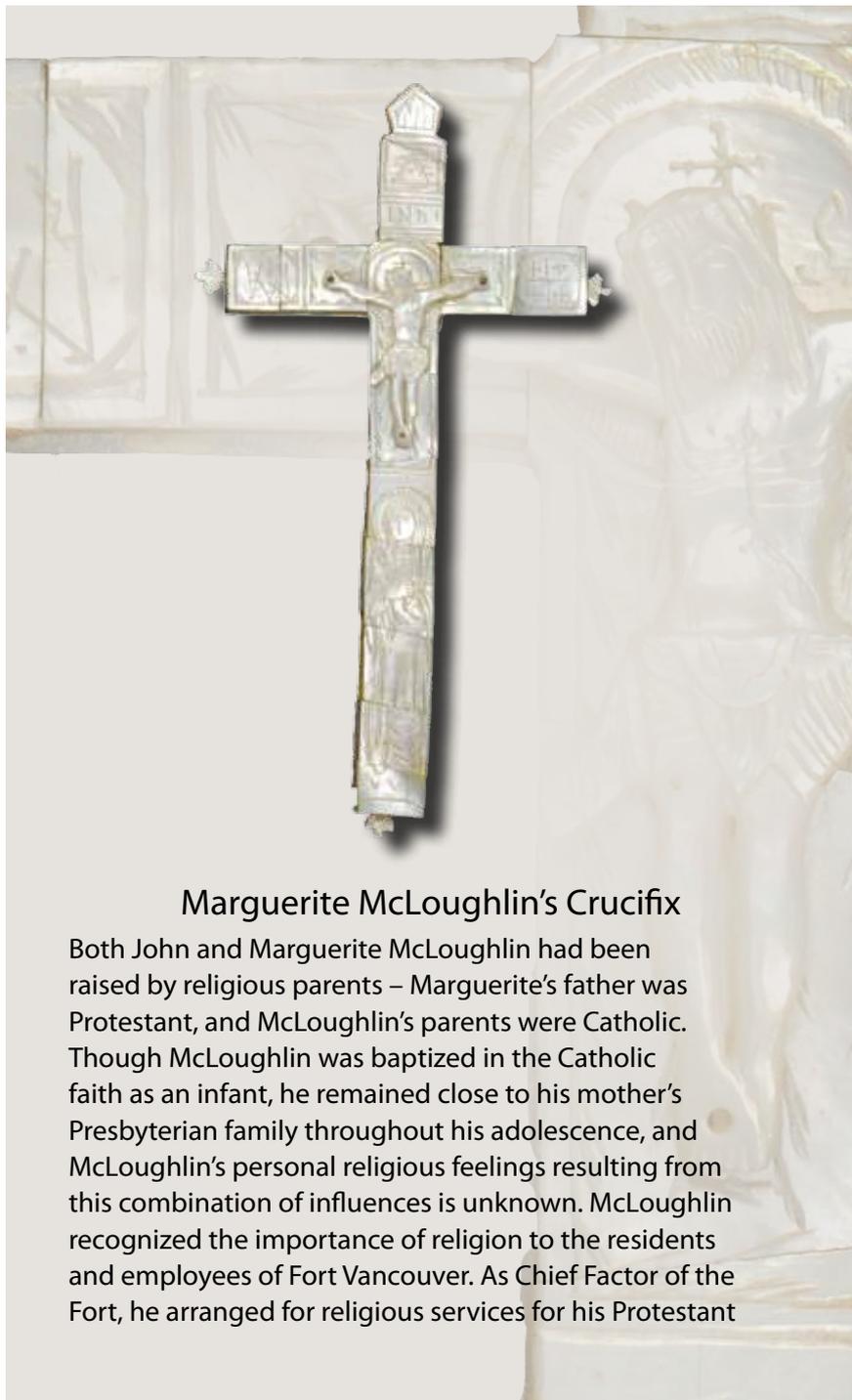


Mourning Ring

Throughout the nineteenth century, it was popular to wear “mourning” jewelry, often rings, as reminders of deceased loved ones. Mourning rings were made in a variety of designs, but most of them were engraved with the name of the deceased and their date of death. They were often decorated with symbols of death, or personal reminders of the deceased.

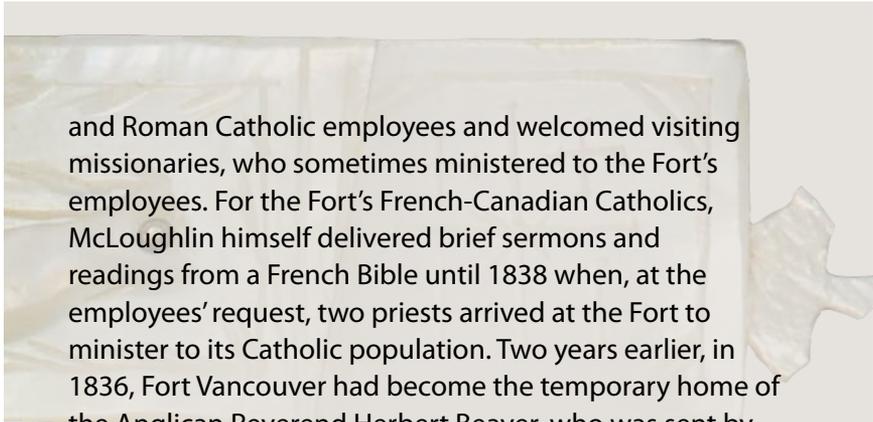
This mourning ring was acquired by McLoughlin in 1840 and commemorates the death of Alexander Roderick McLeod. McLoughlin had worked with McLeod during his early career, when he was employed by the North West Company in eastern Canada. McLeod named McLoughlin as a co-executor of his estate, and left money in his will for the manufacture of this mourning ring. It is notable that, even though the North West Company had been dissolved since 1821, one of the men chose to include in the ring’s design an onyx stamp bearing the symbols of the Company (a beaver, a tree, and a banner with the word “Perseverance”) as reminder of his friend and former co-worker.

Inside the band, McLoughlin had engraved the words “A.R. McLeod, A Lamented Friend, Obt [a Latin abbreviation for “date of death”] 11 June 1840.”



Marguerite McLoughlin's Crucifix

Both John and Marguerite McLoughlin had been raised by religious parents – Marguerite's father was Protestant, and McLoughlin's parents were Catholic. Though McLoughlin was baptized in the Catholic faith as an infant, he remained close to his mother's Presbyterian family throughout his adolescence, and McLoughlin's personal religious feelings resulting from this combination of influences is unknown. McLoughlin recognized the importance of religion to the residents and employees of Fort Vancouver. As Chief Factor of the Fort, he arranged for religious services for his Protestant



and Roman Catholic employees and welcomed visiting missionaries, who sometimes ministered to the Fort's employees. For the Fort's French-Canadian Catholics, McLoughlin himself delivered brief sermons and readings from a French Bible until 1838 when, at the employees' request, two priests arrived at the Fort to minister to its Catholic population. Two years earlier, in 1836, Fort Vancouver had become the temporary home of the Anglican Reverend Herbert Beaver, who was sent by the Hudson's Bay Company. The McLoughlins also acted as hosts to Methodist missionary Jason Lee and Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, who established a mission at present-day Walla Walla, Washington.

McLoughlin officially rejoined the Catholic Church in 1841, and it is likely that Marguerite would have agreed with her husband's beliefs. After moving to Oregon City in 1846, the McLoughlins donated land on which a small Catholic church was built, and they became regular attendees.

This intricately carved mother-of-pearl crucifix was owned by Marguerite. Its carvings are rich with Christian symbolism, like the triangle near the top of the cross, whose three sides represent the Holy Trinity. The figure of Jesus has been carved from a separate piece, and is held to the cross with silver pins, one of which is missing. At the base of the cross is a delicately carved image of the Virgin Mary holding what may be the stem of a palm frond, a traditional symbol of Christianity. At Mary's feet are stylized representations of Lilies of the Valley, which are often closely associated with her.

Marguerite McLoughlin would likely have cherished such an item that was not only a symbol of her faith, but also a beautiful work of art.

GREGORIUS PI

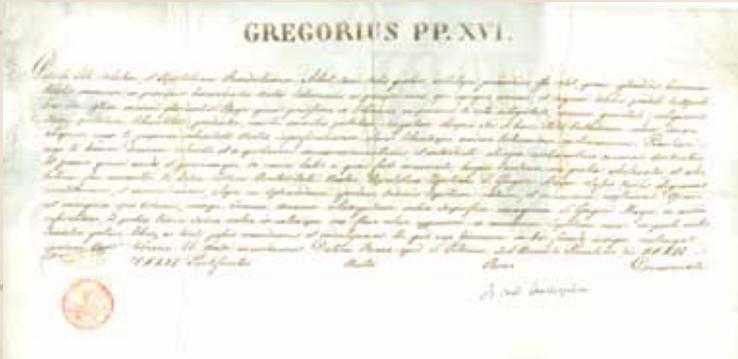


St. Gregory Medal and Papal Bull

In 1847, Father Francis Norbert Blanchet, a Catholic priest who had served at Fort Vancouver, traveled to Rome to meet with the reigning pope, Gregory XVI.

During this visit, the Pope declared Oregon an apostolic vicariate and made Blanchet its archbishop. The Pope also made Dr. McLoughlin a Knight of the Order of St.

Gregory, an honor that very few have received. Blanchet brought this medal and papal bull back to Oregon City, where they became prized possessions of McLoughlin.



The document, written in Latin, reads:

Beloved son, health and apostolic benediction. Nothing certainly gives us greater pleasure and satisfaction than to decorate with the titles of honor and special marks of our favor men possessed of lofty gifts of mind and heart, whose glory it is to deserve well of the apostolic see. And whereas we have been informed on the highest authority that you are esteemed by all for your upright life, correct morals and zeal for religion, and that you are conspicuous for your allegiance to ourselves and this chair of Peter, we have therefore determined graciously to bestow on you some token of our goodwill towards you. Desiring then to honor you in a special manner, and to this absolving you and holding you as absolved from all pain of excommunication and interdict and from other ecclesiastical censures, judgments and penalties which you may have incurred; in whatsoever manner and for whatsoever cause inflicted; we of our apostolic authority do by these letters choose and constitute and declare you a Knight of St. Gregory the Great of civil grade, and we do receive you into the illustrious company and rank of the Knights of the said Order. Wherefore we permit and grant that you may freely and lawfully wear the insignia of the Order, to wit: an octangular cross of gold with a red front bearing in the center a likeness of St. Gregory the Great, hung with a red silk ribbon yellow on both sides at the breast on the left side after the ordinary fashion of knights. That no mistake be made in the wearing of this badge, we order that a figure of the said cross be delivered to you. Given at Rome, at St. Peter's on the 27th day of February, 1846, in the 16th year of our Pontificate.

A. Cardinal Lambruschini



Reliquary

This reliquary was given to Dr. John McLoughlin by Pope Gregory XVI in 1847, along with the medal and papal bull declaring him a Knight of St. Gregory. It was a prized possession of McLoughlin and his family, in part because of its illustrious source, in part because it was a symbol of their faith, and also because of its contents, which would have reminded the McLoughlins of their Canadian heritage.



The interior of the reliquary is decorated with gold stitching and colorful flower-shaped sequins. It contains fragments of the remains of two of French Canada's most important martyrs: Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalement (spelled Lallement on the reliquary's label). Brébeuf and Lalement were Jesuit missionaries who had traveled from France to introduce Christianity to Eastern Canada's Huron population. Brébeuf arrived in 1625 and Lalement in 1646.

The Huron were allies of the French during this period, and instrumental in the development of the fur trade. Brébeuf was the founder of the Huron mission and the administrator of its three posts. In the 1640s, he also occasionally served as spiritual director and confessor to the Ursuline Monastery in Québec, a place to which McLoughlin had a special connection – McLoughlin's favorite sister, Marie Louise, would later become Abbess and his eldest daughter, Eliza, was a student there.

Brébeuf and Lalement met during their work at the Saint-Louis (now called Saint Ignace) mission in Ontario. In 1649, the mission was attacked by the local Iroquois, and Brébeuf and Lalement were captured, tortured, and killed. At the time McLoughlin received this reliquary, they were only known as missionaries and martyrs - neither would be canonized until 1930.



Napoleon Medallion and Coronation Medal

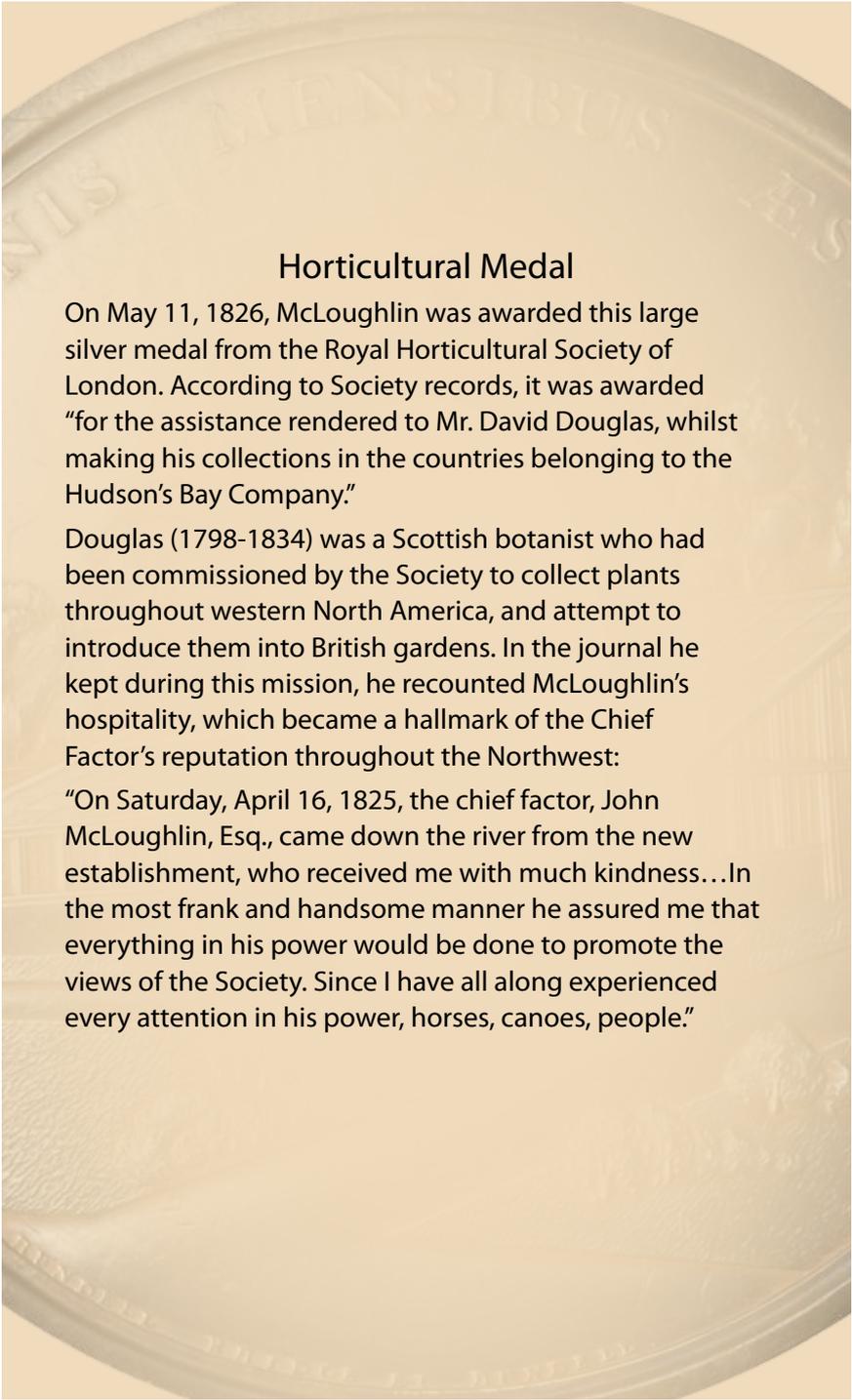
The fact that McLoughlin kept these commemorative medallions serves as an indicator of two things that interested him: the life of Napoleon Bonaparte and British politics and monarchy. The medal bearing the bust of Napoleon commemorates his capture by the British in 1815, and a speech he made aboard the British ship HMS Bellerophon before being exiled to the island of St. Helena is inscribed on its reverse side. The medal bearing the bust of Queen Victoria commemorates her coronation.

Despite being a British subject for much of his life, and having a brother who had fought in the Napoleonic Wars, McLoughlin had admired Napoleon since his youth in Québec. Like Napoleon, McLoughlin required unflinching obedience from those who served under him and instituted a system of reward and punishment among native populations to secure their loyalty. When McLoughlin sent his son-in-law, William Glen Rae, to manage the rugged Fort Stikine, he advised him, "Be kind, be patient, be just, but remember Napoleon's motto, 'Be Master.'"



The medal commemorating the 1838 coronation of Queen Victoria is not the official medal issued by the British government, but is instead an item produced by a private company. McLoughlin, who was serving as Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver at the time of Victoria's coronation and played a key role in Britain's North American empire, might have enjoyed possessing this commemoration of his new queen's ascendancy.



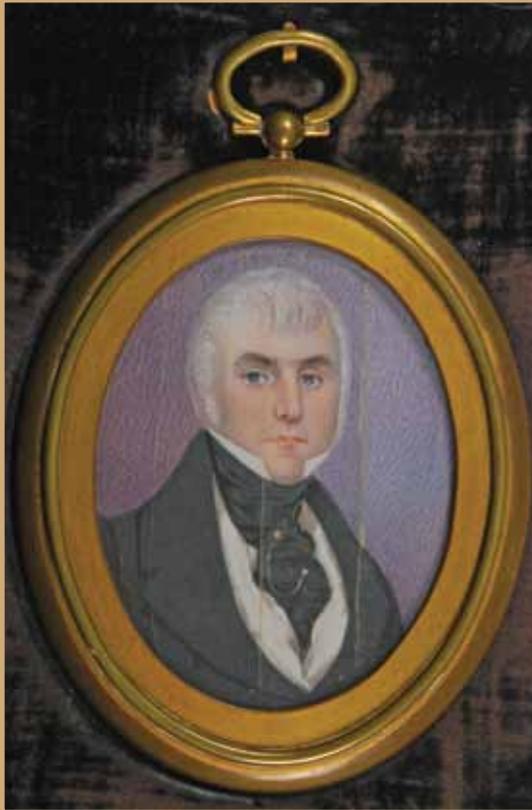


Horticultural Medal

On May 11, 1826, McLoughlin was awarded this large silver medal from the Royal Horticultural Society of London. According to Society records, it was awarded "for the assistance rendered to Mr. David Douglas, whilst making his collections in the countries belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company."

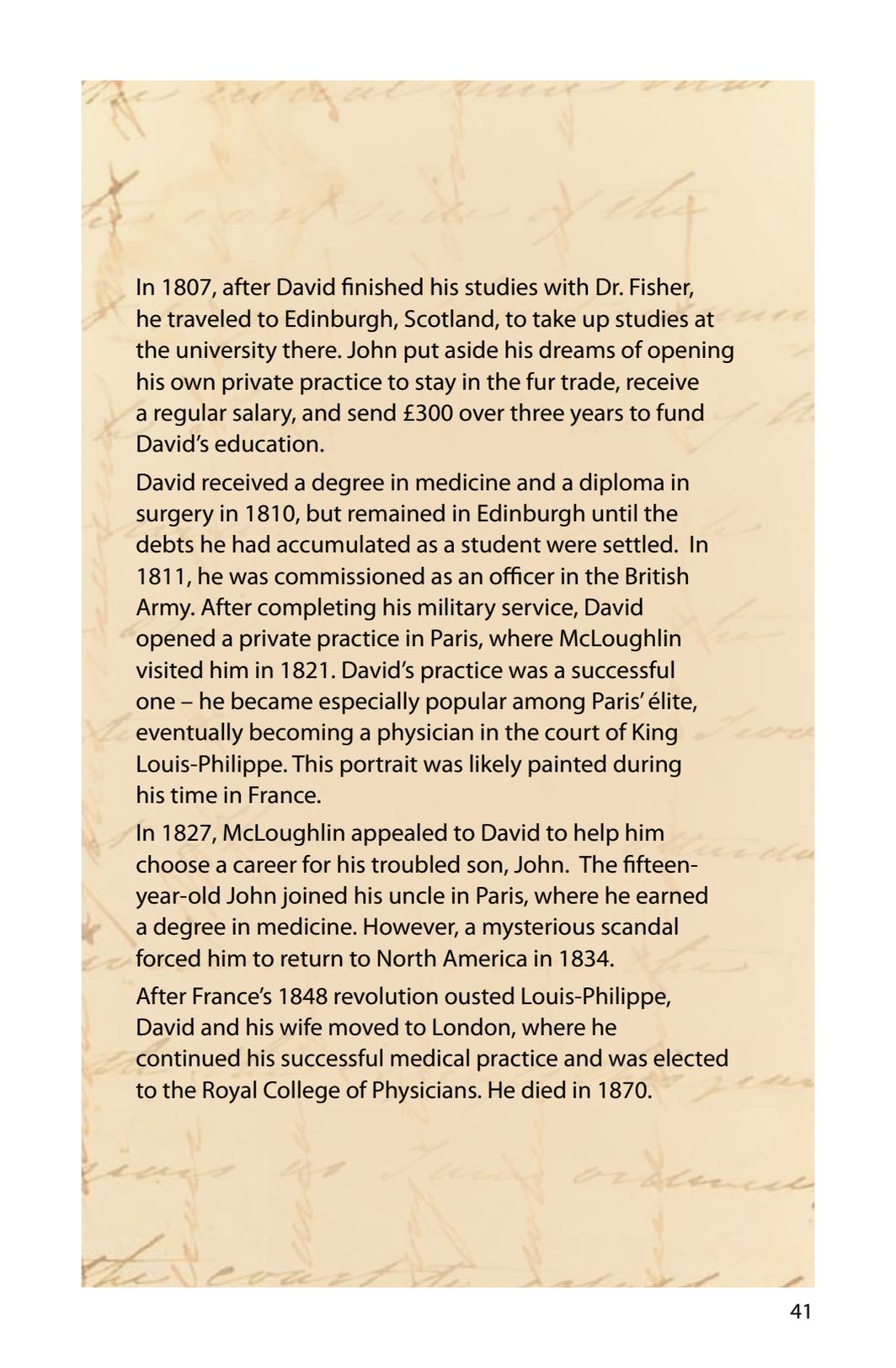
Douglas (1798-1834) was a Scottish botanist who had been commissioned by the Society to collect plants throughout western North America, and attempt to introduce them into British gardens. In the journal he kept during this mission, he recounted McLoughlin's hospitality, which became a hallmark of the Chief Factor's reputation throughout the Northwest:

"On Saturday, April 16, 1825, the chief factor, John McLoughlin, Esq., came down the river from the new establishment, who received me with much kindness... In the most frank and handsome manner he assured me that everything in his power would be done to promote the views of the Society. Since I have all along experienced every attention in his power, horses, canoes, people."



Portrait of David McLoughlin

This portrait, painted on ivory, depicts Dr. David McLoughlin, the younger brother of John. The McLoughlin brothers were close, and perhaps made even closer by training in the same profession. As John was ending his apprenticeship with Dr. James Fisher of Québec in 1802, David was just entering his own apprenticeship with the same doctor.



In 1807, after David finished his studies with Dr. Fisher, he traveled to Edinburgh, Scotland, to take up studies at the university there. John put aside his dreams of opening his own private practice to stay in the fur trade, receive a regular salary, and send £300 over three years to fund David's education.

David received a degree in medicine and a diploma in surgery in 1810, but remained in Edinburgh until the debts he had accumulated as a student were settled. In 1811, he was commissioned as an officer in the British Army. After completing his military service, David opened a private practice in Paris, where McLoughlin visited him in 1821. David's practice was a successful one – he became especially popular among Paris' élite, eventually becoming a physician in the court of King Louis-Philippe. This portrait was likely painted during his time in France.

In 1827, McLoughlin appealed to David to help him choose a career for his troubled son, John. The fifteen-year-old John joined his uncle in Paris, where he earned a degree in medicine. However, a mysterious scandal forced him to return to North America in 1834.

After France's 1848 revolution ousted Louis-Philippe, David and his wife moved to London, where he continued his successful medical practice and was elected to the Royal College of Physicians. He died in 1870.



Eloisa, daughter of John and Marguerite McLoughlin

Their Children

Eloisa McLoughlin

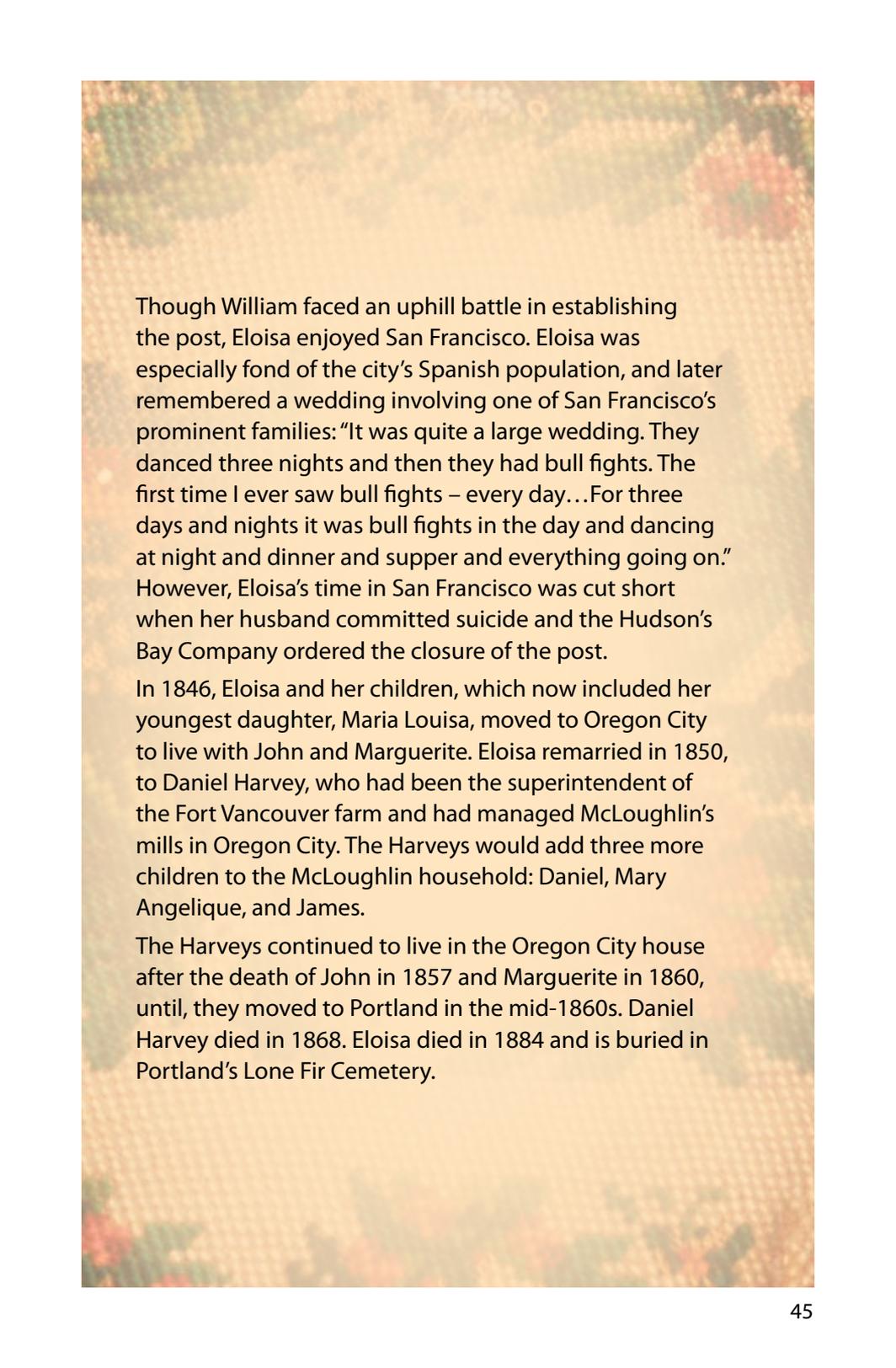
Eloisa McLoughlin was born in 1817 while her father was working at Fort Kaministiquia. When McLoughlin was assigned to take charge of Fort George in modern-day Astoria, Oregon, Eloisa came with her parents and younger brother, David. Their sister, Eliza, remained at the convent in Québec, where she would receive her education, and their elder brother, John, was put into boarding school. The family relocated again in 1825, when Fort Vancouver was established.

McLoughlin favored Eloisa, who is said to have taken after her father in both appearance and personality. In 1838, Eloisa married Fort Vancouver's head clerk, William Glen Rae, who was promoted to Chief Trader and transferred to Fort Stikine in 1841. Eloisa and their son, John, followed him. Life at the rugged Stikine was harder than it had been at Fort Vancouver – in her memoirs, Eloisa described it as “a miserable place.”

William was then transferred to Yerba Buena (modern day San Francisco), where he was to establish a new Hudson's Bay Company post. Eloisa remained in Vancouver, taking care of her daughter Margaret, who had been born on the journey from Stikine. In California Rae was successful in establishing a new Hudson's Bay Company post. Later that year, he was joined by Eloisa and their children, John and Margaret.



This beaded bag
was owned by Eloisa.

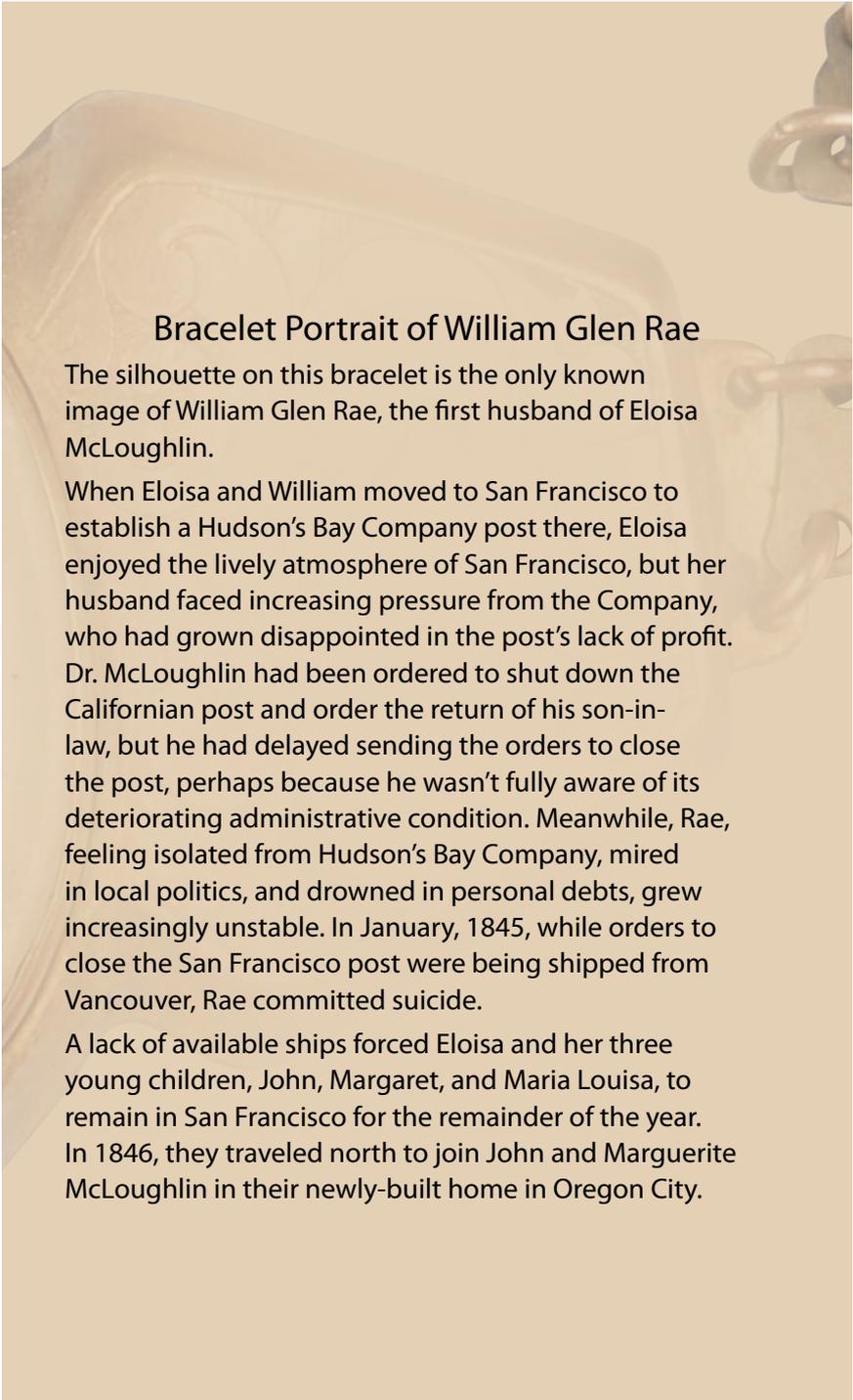


Though William faced an uphill battle in establishing the post, Eloisa enjoyed San Francisco. Eloisa was especially fond of the city's Spanish population, and later remembered a wedding involving one of San Francisco's prominent families: "It was quite a large wedding. They danced three nights and then they had bull fights. The first time I ever saw bull fights – every day...For three days and nights it was bull fights in the day and dancing at night and dinner and supper and everything going on." However, Eloisa's time in San Francisco was cut short when her husband committed suicide and the Hudson's Bay Company ordered the closure of the post.

In 1846, Eloisa and her children, which now included her youngest daughter, Maria Louisa, moved to Oregon City to live with John and Marguerite. Eloisa remarried in 1850, to Daniel Harvey, who had been the superintendent of the Fort Vancouver farm and had managed McLoughlin's mills in Oregon City. The Harveys would add three more children to the McLoughlin household: Daniel, Mary Angelique, and James.

The Harveys continued to live in the Oregon City house after the death of John in 1857 and Marguerite in 1860, until, they moved to Portland in the mid-1860s. Daniel Harvey died in 1868. Eloisa died in 1884 and is buried in Portland's Lone Fir Cemetery.





Bracelet Portrait of William Glen Rae

The silhouette on this bracelet is the only known image of William Glen Rae, the first husband of Eloisa McLoughlin.

When Eloisa and William moved to San Francisco to establish a Hudson's Bay Company post there, Eloisa enjoyed the lively atmosphere of San Francisco, but her husband faced increasing pressure from the Company, who had grown disappointed in the post's lack of profit. Dr. McLoughlin had been ordered to shut down the Californian post and order the return of his son-in-law, but he had delayed sending the orders to close the post, perhaps because he wasn't fully aware of its deteriorating administrative condition. Meanwhile, Rae, feeling isolated from Hudson's Bay Company, mired in local politics, and drowned in personal debts, grew increasingly unstable. In January, 1845, while orders to close the San Francisco post were being shipped from Vancouver, Rae committed suicide.

A lack of available ships forced Eloisa and her three young children, John, Margaret, and Maria Louisa, to remain in San Francisco for the remainder of the year. In 1846, they traveled north to join John and Marguerite McLoughlin in their newly-built home in Oregon City.



Their Grandchildren

Ambrotype Photograph of Margaret Rae, Maria Louisa Rae, and Angelique Harvey

The young women in this photograph are the three daughters of Eloisa McLoughlin Rae Harvey.

On the left sits Margaret Glen Rae, who was born in 1841 aboard the Hudson's Bay Company steamship Beaver on the journey from Fort Stikine to Fort Vancouver. In the center sits Maria Louisa Rae, who was born in San Francisco in 1842.

On the right sits Mary Angelique Harvey, daughter of Eloisa and her second husband, Daniel Harvey. She was born in 1854, and lived in the McLoughlin House along with her grandparents, parents, siblings and half-siblings.

Ambrotypes are somewhat similar to daguerreotypes, like those of John and Marguerite McLoughlin seen earlier. Both types are direct positive images and are usually found in decorated cases with mats and preservers. However, unlike daguerreotypes, ambrotypes are produced by a different chemical process and do not have a mirror-like surface, which allows for easier viewing.

To create an ambrotype, a photographer used a “wet-plate” collodion process, in which a glass plate was first coated with a light-sensitive mixture of gun cotton, ether, and alcohol, then soaked in silver nitrate. The plate was placed in a camera, purposefully underexposed, and developed, all while still wet. The ambrotype process produced a faint negative image on the plate. When the finished plate was placed in a case, it was backed with black material, which could be lacquer, cloth, paper, or metal, to make the image appear positive.



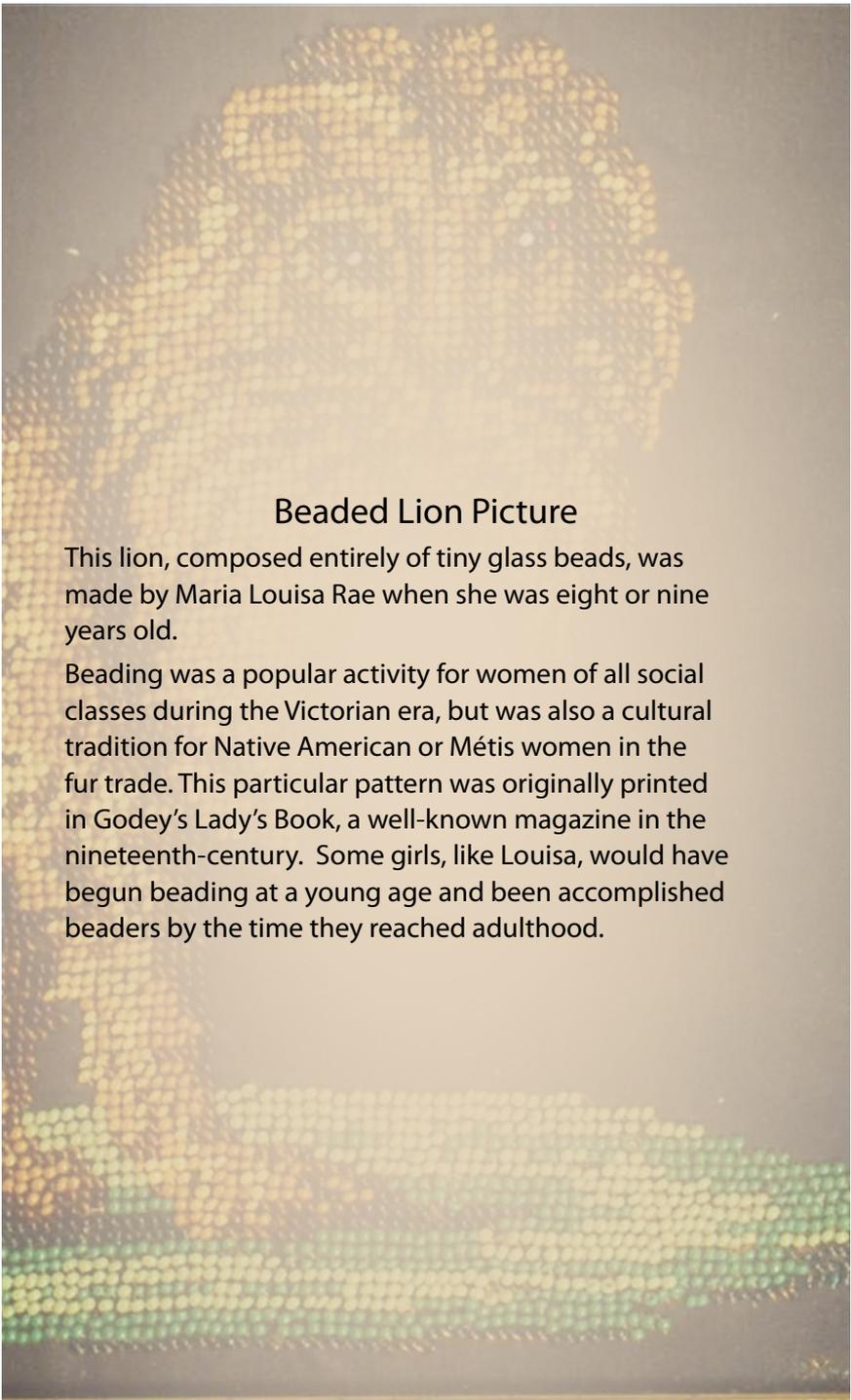


Melodeon

Maria Louisa, who was often called simply "Louisa," became Dr. McLoughlin's favorite grandchild. Known for her sense of humor and musical talent, Louisa received this rosewood melodeon from her grandfather when she was eight years old. Louisa also helped her grandfather with secretarial duties towards the end of his life, with accounts and transcribing letters.

Though it looks like a piano, the melodeon is actually a type of reed organ, and uses a vacuum bellows to pull air past metal reeds to produce a sound. Melodeons were popular instruments in the nineteenth century, mainly due to their affordability and portability.



A large, intricate beaded picture of a lion, composed of tiny glass beads. The lion's body is primarily yellow and orange, with a green and blue patterned base. The background is a dark, textured grey.

Beaded Lion Picture

This lion, composed entirely of tiny glass beads, was made by Maria Louisa Rae when she was eight or nine years old.

Beading was a popular activity for women of all social classes during the Victorian era, but was also a cultural tradition for Native American or Métis women in the fur trade. This particular pattern was originally printed in Godey's Lady's Book, a well-known magazine in the nineteenth-century. Some girls, like Louisa, would have begun beading at a young age and been accomplished beadworkers by the time they reached adulthood.



Louisa Rae,
granddaughter of
John McLoughlin

Margaret Rae,
granddaughter of
John McLoughlin



Ivorytype Photographs

These ivorytype photographs show Louisa and her sister, Margaret, probably in or approaching middle age. Though Margaret was sent to San Jose, California, to be educated, Louisa remained in Oregon City and attended Judge E.S. Shattuck's school.

At the age of sixteen, Louisa married Captain Josiah Myrick, an entrepreneur who owned several businesses in the area, including a skating rink, a mining venture, and a steamboat operation on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. The couple had four children, three of whom were born before Louisa turned twenty years old.

After their marriage, the couple lived in Portland. Louisa was instrumental in the organization of the Oregon Historical Society and worked to preserve her family's Oregon City home after its relocation from the Falls to the Heights section of the city in 1909.

Margaret, Louisa's older sister, also had an ivorytype portrait taken of her, probably around the same time. In 1858 or 1859, Margaret married Theodore Wygant, who managed a portage business and worked for the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company.

Ivorytypes were first produced in the mid-1850s and were meant to resemble hand-painted ivory miniatures. They were made by lightly coloring a salted paper print (a print made on paper using a negative). The colored print was then waxed or varnished and attached image side up to the back of a glass pane using a mixture of Canada balsam and beeswax, rendering the lighter areas of the image semi-transparent. A plain white sheet of paper was then painted with patches of bright color corresponding to colored areas in the photograph and placed behind the photograph. The resulting image is softer and more painterly than a traditional photograph.



John Rae in the 1860s

John Rae Highland Costume

John Rae was the only son of Eloisa McLoughlin and William Glen Rae. Little is known about his life, except that he is said to have once visited his father's ancestral home in Scotland's Orkney Islands, where he may have had occasion to wear this traditional highland costume.





Pocket Watch

This gold pocket watch bears the names of four generations of the McLoughlin family and provides an excellent illustration of the passage of heirlooms. The topmost name, Dr. John McLoughlin, is, of course, the man who was Chief Factor at Fort Vancouver from 1825 to 1845, and became known as the "Father of Oregon."

Below him is the name of Daniel Harvey, Sr., McLoughlin's son-in-law and the second husband of Eloisa McLoughlin. Harvey worked as the superintendent of the farm at Fort Vancouver and managed the Oregon City sawmills owned by McLoughlin. Harvey and Eloisa married in 1850 and had three children, Daniel, Jr. (b.1851), Mary Angelique (b.1854), and James William McLoughlin (b. 1856).

The third name, J. McL[oughlin] Harvey, Sr., likely refers to James, the youngest Harvey child. The last name, J.McL[oughlin] Harvey, Jr., refers to his son, who was the great-grandchild of Dr. McLoughlin.



The design at the center depicts a stylized seal using the letters "M," "C," and "L." Three years are engraved on the exterior of the watch: 1824, 1857, and 1868, all of which have a special significance to the McLoughlin-Harvey family. In 1824, Dr. McLoughlin, accompanied by his wife, Marguerite, and two of his children, John and Eloisa, traveled from York Factory in central Canada, to Fort George in present-day Astoria, Oregon. This year marked the introduction of the McLoughlin family to the Pacific Northwest and may have been when McLoughlin received the watch. 1857 was the year of Dr. McLoughlin's death in Oregon City, and the year when Daniel Harvey would have inherited the piece. In 1868, Daniel Harvey died, and James McLoughlin Harvey, Sr. may have inherited the watch, which would have provided the then-twelve year old with a powerful reminder of his family's history and legacy.

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The Northwest Cultural Resources Institute (NCRI) is a cooperative partnership based at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, dedicated to fostering cultural resources research, education, and stewardship in the Pacific Northwest. The institute brings together National Park Service staff, university professors, and subject matter experts to facilitate research and training, provide expertise, and support other innovative educational endeavors using national parks as laboratories.

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