Original MSS Study

THE WOMEN OF FORT VANCOUVER

by

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The American fur trader and explorer, Jedediah Smith, spent the winter of 1828-29 at Fort Vancouver, dependent upon the hospitality of the Hudson's Bay Company after the massacre of most of his party by Indians on the Umpqua River. When he returned to St. Louis he repaid the many kindnesses he had received by warning the United States government against British activities in Oregon. Among other things, Smith told the secretary of war that while he was at Vancouver, "No English or white woman 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."[1]

Smith was undoubtedly accurate when reporting that women formed a prominent part of the Fort Vancouver scene, but when he went on to imply that the presence of part-Indian families

was one of several factors which "seemed to combine to prove that this fort was to be a permanent establishment" he was indulging in a bit of anti-British propaganda. He and the two partners who joined him in writing the letter were experienced mountain men who knew full well that Indian and mixed-blood wives and half-breed children were almost universal at fur-trade posts, American as well as British, temporary as well as permanent. There was nothing sinister or even unusual in the situation at Fort Vancouver.

From the very beginning of the fur trade in North America, alliances between European traders of all nationalities and Indian women were more the rule than the exception. When the trader entered the wilderness from Europe or the colonies he left normal family life behind, and it was not long before he sought a substitute. This task was not difficult. Often the first act of hospitality by a chief at a native village was the offer of a wife, daughter, or slave to comfort the visitor during his stay, and Indians arriving at a post to trade would occasionally make similar proposals to the bourgeois in charge. To refuse such gestures was to risk offending both the native man and the woman. As commercial contacts between the races increased, liquor or other presents were sometimes requested by the men in return for the favors of their women. Of course customs in respect to continence before marriage and fidelity

afterwards varied from tribe to tribe, and there were certain groups, such as the Beaver Indians of the Peace River region, which prohibited unions with Europeans.[2] But on the whole, the traders had no trouble finding women.

And for the most part the Europeans were pleased with what was offered. Though such matters as comeliness, cleanliness, and disposition varied greatly from person to person and from group to group, the traders found a number of the Indian girls, particularly among such tribes as the Crees and the Nez Percés, to be pretty, intelligent, compliant, and good-natured. As one Hudson's Bay Company officer reported after long years of service on the shores of Hudson Bay, the native women were "very frisky when Young," and "Lud [lewd] from their cradle, being prone to all manner of Vices."[3]

But many traders found that short-term liaisons were not enough. In their lonely outposts they came to long for feminine companionship and domesticity, and they discovered that more stable relationships with native women were almost necessary for comfort and even survival. An Indian "wife" knew the native techniques for preparing and cooking the game and fish upon which many traders were forced to depend for long periods; only such a helpmeet could keep him supplied with the moccasins and snowshoes so essential for travel and could mend his clothes or prepare new ones of dressed skins when his European garments became unwearable. Such feminine

companions often assisted the trader's work by patching canoes, skinning the fur-bearing animals he caught, and dressing the pelts he received.

There were, however, still greater advantages for the trader in regularized unions with Indian women, particularly with the daughters or other relations of chiefs and prominent tribal leaders. Such alliances generally served to protect the trader against harassment or attack by members of his wife's tribe. They also helped to assure him of the trade of her relations, an important factor when there was competition for furs. More subtle but perhaps most important in the long run was the impact of such unions upon the native cultures. By decking his wife with European trinkets, jewelry, textiles, and beads, and by equipping her with metal utensils and tools the trader accelerated a demand for trade goods among her people, with the result that many Indians were induced to become fur-gatherers, and native crafts gradually were altered or discarded. And with stable marital unions came the opportunity to learn native languages more readily, and in his wife the trader often had close at hand an able interpreter.

With all of these inducements, to say nothing of the fact that some Europeans fell genuinely in love with native girls who caught their eyes, it was inevitable that virtually every trader, sooner or later, acquired an Indian or part-Indian wife. In most cases, particularly in the early days of the

trade, the unions were arranged according to the marriage customs of the woman's tribe. Usually these involved negotiations with the girl's parents and the payment of an agreed amount of goods or number of horses by the prospective groom. If the European was a lowly hired hand or an ordinary free trapper he practically always opened the discussions; company partners or officers or leaders of independent parties were often first approached by the Indians. In any case, once the payment was made, the couple was considered married. Only in rare cases were any ceremonies involved.

Wives could also be acquired in other ways. Sometimes they were purchased from native, or even white, slave traders. More often traders took over the women of Europeans who were leaving the Indian country and who could not or would not take their country wives and children with them. In such cases the new husband sometimes made a payment to the old, but more often he received a "dowry" in return for assuming the added responsibilities. And on occasion, as the records only too plainly show, the traders simply eloped with the women of other whites or of Indians.

As families of half-breed children began to multiply in the fur country, the daughters of the mixed unions, who were often raised in the cultures of their mothers, were much desired as brides. When the fathers were men of consequence in the

trade it is unlikely that a purchase price was involved, but it was "the custom of the country" to make substantial gifts when the parent was a Canadian voyageur, an ordinary trader or trapper, or other "servant." Except during the French colonial regime the wilderness practically never saw a clergyman or a magistrate prior to the nineteenth century. Thus a couple was considered married simply upon the transfer of the horse, the gun, or the rum to the bride's father or former husband, just as was the case when the parent was an Indian.

Such marriages á la façon du pays, country marriages, or fur-trade marriages as they were known had a recognized status on the frontier. The couple were considered to be man and wife by their peers in the trade and by the natives. But the institution had very definite limitations, even when the woman's father was a European. Essentially a country marriage was an Indian marriage. Native customs and attitudes prevailed. The wife was entirely subservient to the husband. She was little more than his chattel, and if he was a brute her life was one of drudgery and misery. Also, the union could be terminated by either party, at any time, and for any reason. It was ordinarily recognized at the outset that such marriages were temporary, liable to be ended when the husband left the region or returned to European society. Escape from an unhappy marital situation was relatively easy for the man, but

the woman often had little choice but to remain with her husband, since as years went by the Indians became less and less inclined to receive white men's wives and their children back into the tribe. Elopements with native lovers were fairly common, but former wives of traders generally had a difficult time finding Indian husbands.

Although many traders took their obligations as husbands lightly, cynically referring to their wives as their "bits of brown" when corresponding with friends, the advent of children and years of shared experiences sometimes developed strong ties of mutual affection and family solidarity. In such cases the final departure of the husband from the Indian country required agonizing decisions. Almost always the native and mixed-blood wives were not adaptable to the ways of settled communities. Skill at dressing skins and preparing pemmican were of little use in St. Louis, London, or Edinburgh. And many women flatly refused to leave their homelands and their Indian relatives.

The lives of the comparatively few families which did attempt to remain together and make the move to "civilization" were often made miserable and even ruined by the strong racial prejudices of the period. Sometimes the cruelest of the persecutors were former traders who had abandoned their country families and married white women. For these reasons many men lingered with their wives and children in the fur trade until they died, or they removed to the settlements of retired

traders which grew up beyond the frontiers at such places as Red River near Lake Winnipeg, the Willamette Valley of Oregon, the present Pueblo in Colorado, and British Columbia. But eventually the farmers, the preachers, the merchants, and all the other elements of "respectable society" reached these remote refuges, and the pangs of discrimination had to be faced.

While the trading community might look upon country marriages as respectable, if often temporary, arrangements, their legal validity was, to say the least, questionable. A white wife and family in the United States, Great Britain, or Canada was no bar to a fur-trade union. Conversely a man widely known to have a native wife and several children in the Indian country could return to "civilization" with or without his brood and could quite legally marry another woman in a civil or religious ceremony.

Occasionally missionaries and other visitors to fur-trading establishments, insensitive to or indignant at the customs of the Indian country, were forthright in branding the wives of their hosts as "mistresses" and the children as "illegitimate." Needless to say, some white relations of deceased traders expressed the same sentiments and attempted to bar the country families from inheriting the estates. Certain traders sought to avoid such disagreeable situations by remarrying their country spouses before a clergyman or justice of the peace as

soon as an opportunity presented itself. This procedure put an end to most of the difficulties, though prejudice still persisted in many cases.

But until well into the nineteenth century few traders ever were given this option, at least while they remained beyond the frontier. Others, like Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden, were too proud to resort to such measures. For them many years of faithful cohabitation were ample proof of an honorable and valid marriage. Unfortunately for Ogden's wife and children, the law did not take his view of the matter, and they received only part of his estate.[4] In Canada a series of probate cases, notably that concerning the right of William Connolly's half-breed family to share his estate, resulted eventually in recognition of the legal validity of fur-trade marriages, even those to wives who had been discarded, but the situation long produced controversy, heartache, and economic distress.

Only rarely did a fur trader bring a European woman into the Indian country. Almost always such ventures proved disastrous. Women nurtured among the amenities of city or farm life were overwhelmed by the squalor, loneliness, and hardships encountered at the average trading post. During the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the development of settlements such as Red River, the growth of farms at a number of posts, and the improvement of conditions at the

larger stations and depots such as York Factory and Fort Vancouver were among the elements which resulted in the introduction of an increasing number of white women into the domain of the fur trader. Not all of these ventures were successful. A large proportion of the newcomers soon found excuses for departing to more civilized regions. Even the pampered wife of George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company's territories, was forced by poor health to beat a retreat to Britain. Others, such as the consorts of the chief factors at York Factory and Moose Factory, remained at their husbands' sides for a number of years, but they were not always entirely happy with their lot.

The appearance of European women in the Indian country had a demoralizing effect upon fur-trade society. Only the most amiable and liberal-minded of the white wives could bring themselves to associate on terms of equality with the native and part-native consorts of the officers and clerks who were their husbands' coworkers and friends. While a few of the country wives had been well educated by fathers or husbands or at schools in Canada, Europe, or the United States, the majority could not read and spoke better French and Indian than English. A cutured European found it tiresome to converse with these women who could talk of little but their children and domestic chores. But more important were the ingrained prejudices of the period. It was an exceptional white woman who could rise

above the notion that she was superior to all persons with Indian blood. And in this attitude she was sometimes joined by her husband, who upon marriage to her suddenly found grave deficiencies in the country women with whom he once gladly consorted. Attempts by "daughters of the country" to mingle on terms of social equality with the white wives were regarded as impertinent. Further, the European ladies, particularly when supported by missionaries, often regarded marriages _á la façon du pays_ as immoral, and the country wives were snubbed as fallen women.

All of these factors combined to reduce the status of the daughters of the country and to make them feel uncomfortable in white society. Fur-trade unions gradually fell into disfavor, being replaced by regular civil or religious marriages. White women became more desired as wives by company officers, clerks, skilled artisans, and other prominent figures in the trade, although many long continued to choose their brides from the ranks of the Indians and mixed-bloods. Ordinary _voyageurs_, trappers, and laborers, on the other hand, almost always found their consorts among the peoples with whom they lived and worked.

Despite all the disadvantages and inequalities of fur-trade marriages, Indian and part-Indian women generally entered willingly and even eagerly into such unions. From birth they

were brought up to regard a subservient role as both natural and inevitable. They knew for certain that marriage to an Indian would mean a life of drudgery and an early old age. Even the meanest and most benighted European generally retained some respect for the notion that a wife was a companion and partner, not merely a piece of property. Union with a white man meant greater security from such hazards as starvation and inter-tribal warfare, and it promised access to the trader's wealth of trinkets, fabrics, and utensils. Above all it brought increased status for herself and improved trade possibilities for her relations. If the husband was a bourgeois she could be reasonably confident of such luxuries as better clothing, housing, and imported foods and spices. A native woman was not deterred by the knowledge that in certain regions fur-trade practice would require her husband to eat apart from her, for that was also the usual Indian custom. She was prepared to endure loneliness, isolation, hardships, and frequent moves, since those conditions, too, were part of the life she had always known.[5]

The Hudson's Bay Company was forced to deal with the matter of liaisons between its employees and native women from the very outset of its operations in North America. Orders issued in 1682 repeated earlier instructions which "rigorously excluded" Indian women from the Company's establishments on Hudson Bay. Employees whom "neither the

Lawes of God or Man can restraine from Wickedness" were to be returned to England. The London committee had the moral welfare of its servants in mind when promulgating these rules, but perhaps more decisive were the facts that women were a drain upon the precious stores of food, they accelerated the spread of venereal diseases which kept the men from work, and they tended to walk away with any loose articles left unprotected.[6]

As might have been expected, these moralistic directives were largely ignored in the field, particularly after 1690 when Henry Kelsey brought back a native wife from an exploring trip to the interior and insisted that she be permitted to live with him. During the next century it became almost routine for the company's governors and other officers to keep Indian women within the posts. Ordinary servants were rarely granted the same privilege, although in one way or another the men generally managed visits to their paramours in nearby woods or Indian encampments. Sometimes the servants were allowed to bring women into the forts provided they did not remain overnight. Under these circumstances, it was not long before a half-breed population grew up around the company's establishments, and the firm found that the male offspring often made excellent employees.[7]

Although the London committee continued to insist on a puritanical code of conduct, conditions in North American during the latter part of the eighteenth contury forced an

unofficial relaxation of the curbs on marital alliances for even the most lowly employees. In order to meet the competition of the North West Company and other rivals, the Hudson's Bay Company expanded its trading operations far inland from the shores of Hudson Bay. This move necessitated the recruitment of large numbers of experienced French-Canadian voyageurs, hunters, and interpreters, and these men ordinarily would work only if allowed their marriages á la façon du pays. By the time of the amalgamation of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, there remained little in practice to distinguish the employees of the latter firm from the generality of American fur traders as far as country marriages were concerned.

At the time of the union and for some years thereafter the attitude of the company toward liaisons with native women was confused. The London directors persisted in discouraging such unions, but the firm's officers in North America both indulged in them personally and encouraged other employees to do likewise. George Simpson, innocent of all experience in the fur trade, was sent out from England by the committee with a view to his taking charge of the vast Northern Department should the incumbent governor find it necessary to return to London. Simpson spent the winter of 1820-21 managing the Athabasca District, and there he observed how essential native

and half-breed women were to the conduct of the trade. It was not long before he was attempting to arrange an alliance between an employee about to be promoted to clerk and the daughter of a French-Canadian guide. The girl, he noted, could speak French, Cree and Mountainy fluently and thus would be of much use in advancing the company's business. "It is probable the old man [the guide] may talk of marriage and a Settlement," Simpson told his go-between, "you must endeavour to make these matters palatable to him by fair promises as we have no Clergymen in this Country."[8]

Several months later Simpson told the London directors that since "Connubial alliances are the best security we can have of the goodwill of the Natives, I have therefore recommended the Gentlemen [intended for New Caledonia] form connections with the principal Families immediately on their arrival." He went on to state that "the restrictions which the Honble. Committee have put on Matrimonial alliances and which I consider most baneful to the interests of the Company are tantamount to a prohibition of forming a most important chain of connections with the Natives."[9]

But during the next several years, after Simpson became governor of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land and after he had traveled extensively over the company's territories with a view to improving administration and reducing expenses, he came to have a quite different view of "connubial alliances." He early noted that officers sometimes placed the personal

comfort of their "Indian mistresses" ahead of concern for the company's business, even to the extent of leaving behind cargoes of trade goods so that the women might have more room in the canoes.[10]

At Fort Walla Walla in 1824 Simpson wrote that the Columbia District could be made profitable providing the "petty coat politicians" could be eliminated and if the chief factors and chief traders no longer allowed themselves to be influenced "by the Sapient councils of their Squaws or neglect their business merely to administer to their comforts and guard against certain innocent indiscretions which these frail brown ones are so apt to indulge in."[11] Simpson's observations convinced him that too often a deep attachment to a "swarthy idol" made employees less attentive to the trade, preoccupied with "jealous habits," and unwilling to accept transfers to other districts."[12] He also believed most troubles between the company and the natives were caused by "our interference with their Women or their intrigues with the Women of the Forts."[13]

Simpson's greatest concern with fur-trade families, however, was over the expense they entailed. Although the company did not ordinarily issue rations to dependents of employees during this period, the presence of these people in large numbers about the posts so increased the demand for provisions that the Indians, who were the chief suppliers, could raise the prices of foodstuffs traded to the company.

Simpson was determined to end this situation by large-scale transfers of the men and by sending the women and children to their Indian relatives. He was also appalled at the expense and inconvenience involved in transporting the families which often accompanied officers and, sometimes, servants during transfers or merely on business jouneys. "We must really put a stop to the practice of Gentlemen bringing their Women & Children from the East to the West side of the Mountain," he wrote in his journal during April, 1825.[14]

While Simpson was firming up his own ideas on country marriages, the governor and committee in London were also struggling with certain aspects of the question. Amalgamation with the North West Company in 1821 resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of fur traders throughout the Indain country. Since many, or perhaps most, of the discharged servants did not take their families back to Canada with them, there was a drastic increase in the number of deserted women and children who had to be supported at the various posts. The committee puzzled over the best method to dispose of this "burden on the Trade" and in 1822 directed Simpson to encourage the women, children, superannuated servants, and discharged employees to move to Red River, where the men could take up land. If necessary, transportation was to be supplied by the company.

This policy was not entirely motivated by monetary considerations. Several members of the committee, notably Benjamin Harrison, were interested in religious and charitable causes, and thus humanitarianism played an important role in the deliberations. Further evidence of this philanthropy was the committee's proposal to establish a school for orphan children at Red River. The directors also favored a proportional levy upon the remuneration of employees to establish a benefit fund for the maintenance of the wives and families of husbands who died or left the Indian Country. This idea eventually had to be abandoned because so many of the lower-paid men complained that they could not afford the charges, but the directors warned that "Gentlemen must distinctly understand that since they decline to contribute to such a fund, any family that may be left destitute can have no claim upon the Company."[15]

The committee's views, along with the convictions of Governor Simpson, were reflected in a series of resolutions passed by the Council of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land during the next several years. These directives, promulgated by the chief factors and certain chief traders in annual conclave, regulated the conduct of the fur trade from Hudson Bay to the Pacific Ocean.

In 1822 the council took preliminary measures to comply with the committee's wish to remove excess families to Red River, but the first major step to ameliorate the condition

of the traders' wives and children came during the next year when a series of resolutions concerning "moral improvement" and education was passed. These provided that religious services should be held on Sundays at all the company's posts and that "every man woman and child resident must attend." Between Sundays "all irregularity, vicious or indolent habits, particularly among the women & children," were to be checked and "their opposites encouraged and rewarded." Attempts were to be made to keep children regularly employed. Parents and children were to converse in either English or French, depending upon the "vernacular dialect" of the father. Men were to be encouraged to devote part of their leisure time to teaching their children "their A. B. C.," and catechism and a prayer were to be "punctually repeated" on going to bed.[16] These resolutions were passed anew each year until 1828, when they were incorporated in the company's "Standing Rules and Regulations."[17] They remained in force for decades.

The minutes of the council for 1824 contained two additional important resolutions concerning families;

> 119. That no Officer of Servant in the companys service be hereafter allowed to take a woman without binding himself down to such reasonable provision for the maintenance of the woman and children as on a fair and equitable principle may be considered necessary not only during their residence in the country but after their departure hence -- and that all those whose engagements expire and who retire from the service, leaving children in the country be required to make

> such provision for the same as circumstances call for and their means permit; and
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> 119. That all those desirous of withdrawing their children from the country, be allowed every facility and encouragement for that purpose.[18]

Admittedly, these regulations contained a number of loopholes and provided ample opportunity for a father to evade his responsibilities, but the words were more than mere pious expressions of moral intent. They apparently were the legal basis upon which many officers denied employees permission to marry or refused to let others leave the Indian country. These two resolutions, with minor alterations, were likewise incorporated in the "Standing Rules and Regulations" and long remained in force.

In 1826 Governor Simpson, with the backing of the London committee, was able to push through a resolution directing all officers and clerks appointed to the Columbia and New Caledonia "to encumber themselves with no families or unnecessay private luggage" on the journey across the Rocky Mountains.[19] This rule was renewed only in 1827 and seems to have had minor effect. Another resolution concerning country families was adopted by the council in 1830. It encouraged the company's officers to employ half-breed "lads" over fourteen years old as apprentices in various trades, but such boys were not to live in the same districts as their fathers or families.[20]

As has been seen by Simpson's remarks when he schemed to arrange an alliance between a clerk and the daughter of a guide, even by the early 1820s some European fathers at least had already begun to feel that a marriage á la façon du pays was not something they desired for their own children. The company adjusted to this growing sentiment and gradually introduced a marriage contract.[21] These documents varied somewhat from time to time and from place to place, but generally they recognized the woman as a legal wife, they declared the economic responsibilities of the husband, and they often required that the couple be remarried by a clergyman when an opportunity should present itself. The certificate was signed by the officer or clerk in charge of the post, who may or may not have been a justice of the peace under the laws of Upper Canada. One authority has stated that "in retrospect, since the Hudson's Bay Company was vested with governmental power over Rupert's Land, these contracts can be seen as an early form of civil marriage."[22] At any rate, a union formalized by such a certificate was as close to a legal marriage as most people could achieve in the more remote corners of the Indian country.

Both the customs which defined the nature of marriage á la façon du pays in general and the rules, regulations, and practices of the Hudson's Bay Company in particular served as basic determinants of the role of women at Fort Vancouver. But there were modifying influences at the Columbia depot.

Among these were the nature and number of the neighboring Indians, the institution of slavery so widespread among the natives of the Pacific Northwest, the relatively large number of white female visitors and residents after the mid 1830s, but most of all, the prejudices, the temperament, and the humanity of Chief Factor John McLoughlin, who from 1825 to 1845 ruled the daily life of the post with a nearly absolute power which extended into the most minute details of domestic affairs.

The general standard of morality at Fort Vancouver was strongly influenced by the exemplary marital lives of its two chief personages, McLoughlin and his longtime principal assistant and his successor, James Douglas. As a youthful physician and clerk of the North West Company at Fort William and several posts north and west of Lake Superior, John McLoughlin had formed a fur-trade alliance with a Chippewa woman who gave him a son, Joseph, in or about 1809. Dr. McLoughlin acknowledged the boy, but for a reason still unkown the union with Joseph's mother was terminated shortly after his birth. Soon McLoughlin appeared before Kenneth McKenzie, a wintering partner at Fort William, and executed a formal attestation of marriage with Marguerite Wadin McKay. The bride was the daughter of a Swiss fur trader and an Indian or part-Indian woman generally described as of Ojibwa descent.[23]

Marguerite was nine years older than McLoughlin, and she

already had borne four children as the result of her country marriage to Alexander McKay, a North West Company partner. McKay had joined John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company venture and was killed in the Indian attack on the Tonquin on the Northwest Coast during the summer of 1811. Whether McKay had deserted Marguerite or whether the parting was by mutual consent is not known, but it is clear that she and McLoughlin were married before her first husband's death.[24]

Contrary to certain accounts, Marguerite was not an educated woman. As late as 1842 she could not even sign her name.[25] But in 1836 Narcissa Whitman noted that Mrs. McLoughlin had "a fine ear for music" and could speak "a little French" but conversed mostly in "Cree, her native tongue." She was, however, a woman of character. "She is one of the kindest women in the world," wrote Mrs. Whitman.[26] And when the Reverend Herbert Beaver attempted to sully her reputation, James Douglas sprang to her defense, telling the governor and committee in London that she was "deservedly respected for her numerous charities, and many excellent qualities of heart."[27] But perhaps Anna Maria Pittman paid her the highest compliment of all. Upon reaching Fort Vancouver with a party of Methodist missionaries during May, 1837, Miss Pittman was introduced to Mrs. McLoughlin and pronounced her "very clever," meaning, presumably, that she was highly intelligent.[28]

Whatever were the qualities that attracted young Dr. McLoughlin to Marguerite McKay, he remained devoted to her as long as he lived. Although he is reported to have been particularly fond of conversing with women and to have enjoyed their company, there is no record that he ever wavered in his loyalty to his wife.

When the Reverend Herbert Beaver, an Anglican clergyman who had been appointed by the company as chaplain for the Columbia Department, arrived at Fort Vancouver in September, 1836, he soon professed to be shocked at the "state of Concubinage" in which the officers and servants lived, since to him a fur-trade marriage was no marriage at all.[29] Beaver undoubtedly hoped to persuade McLoughlin, as chief officer of the establishment, to set a good example by becoming legally wed through a religious ceremony, but the "Big Doctor" never asked the chaplain to render such a service. The reason for McLoughlin's attitude is not known for certain, but several motives suggest themselves. First, the chief factor and the clergyman were quickly at loggerheads over a number of issues -- quarters, food, and the school among others -- and communication between the two men was reduced to a minimum. Second, McLoughlin at that time was becoming increasingly interested in the Roman Catholic Church and may not have desired a Protestant marriage, as he had not wanted a Protestant chaplain at Fort Vancouver; certainly he displayed little sympathy for Beaver's

ministry. Third, and perhaps most important, McLoughlin undoubtedly believed, as did most other company employees, that, in the words of James Douglas, "the woman who is not sensible of violating, and [any] law, who lives chastely with the husband of her choice, in a state approval [approved] by friends and sanctioned by immemorial custom, which she believes strictly honourable, forms a perfect contrast to the degraded creature who has sacrificed the great principle which from infancy she is taught to revere as the ground work of female virtue."[30] In short, he perhaps saw no reason for disquieting Marguerite by insisting on a religious ceremony when she already considered herself adequately married, particularly if to do so would give satisfaction to the chaplain and appear to justify his position.

Nevertheless, the aspersions and insults hurled by the uncharitable and uncompromising Mr. Beaver must have had an effect. The "Big Doctor" and Marguerite were soon quietly remarried by James Douglas, acting in his capacity as a justice of the peace. Significantly, the Reverend Mr. Beaver was not informed of this event.[31] The arrival of Catholic missionaries in November, 1838, hastened McLoughlin's turn toward that church, and on November 19, 1842, he abjured the "heresy" of Protestantism and openly professed the Catholic faith. Of course it was considered necessary to have any former "consent of marriage" renewed and blessed by a priest, and

Father F. N. Blanchet performed this service on the same day he received the "Big Doctor's" abjuration.[32]

Thus thrice married, Chief Factor McLoughlin and his wife were indeed shining examples of traditional morality in a country and at a time when formal legal marriages were, as Hubert Howe Bancroft later observed, "not the rule."[33] And McLoughlin was an example in another way. One pioneer woman who knew the couple in Oregon City after 1845 stated: "In public and in private he was as loyal to her as if she had been a daughter of Queen Victoria . . . . He would suffer no indignity or slight to her." Even in later years, when Marguerite was "coarse, bent, fat, and flabby, he treated her like a princess . . . . His gallantry to her knew no bound."[34] Relatively few fur-trade wives could have the same said of them.

James Douglas fully equalled McLoughlin in his adherence to both the form and substance of the marriage contract and in his honorable conduct toward his wife. He was approaching his twenty-fifth birthday and was already an experienced clerk when he and sixteen-year-old Amelia Connolly were married "according to the custom of the country" at Fort St. James far up in the present British Columbia on April 27, 1828. Amelia was the daughter of Douglas's superior, Chief Factor William Connolly, and Suzanne Pas-de-Nom, a full-blooded Cree. Douglas's "Little Snowbird" was an attractive child -- energetic and industrious but quiet and neat. In later life she was

much respected for her kindness and many acts of charity. But she also had some traits which must have somewhat pained her status-conscious husband. It is reported that she was "awfully jealous" and that throughout her life she was "very fond" of bitterroot, camas, and buffalo tongue and that she was "much bored" by the dishes of the European dinner table.[35] In short, she remained at heart a good deal of an Indian.

Douglas was transferred to Fort Vancouver in 1830, and there he remained for the next nineteen years, rising to the rank of chief trader and then chief factor. Amelia, or Nelia as she was often called, formed a fast friendship with Marguerite McLoughlin, a fortunate circumstance because the two families long shared the "Big House" and were unavoidably in intimate contact.[36] After the arrival of the Reverend Mr. Beaver, Douglas -- always a stickler for form and one to do "the proper thing" -- and Amelia were remarried by the chaplain on February 28, 1837. Beaver performed the ceremony with "heartfelt feelings of joy at this unexpected move in the cause of religion," but he made it clear that in his opinion Amelia and the wife of a clerk whom he also married, "though very respectable women in their way," were "little calculated to improve the manners of society" and were not raised by the mere act of legal marriage to the same moral and social level as "married females" of full European blood.[37]

As long as she remained in the close-knit and hierachical society of the Hudson's Bay Company, Amelia was largely immune from such discrimination, protected by the relative isolation in which she lived and by the high rank of her husband. But when Douglas was made governor of British Columbia she, in the words of one writer, "knew the full ugliness of snobbery, snubs, and gossip."[38] Even when she became Lady Douglas, wife of Sir James Douglas, there was not complete acceptance despite her many services to others and the general respect in which she was held. But, like McLoughlin, Douglas remained a devoted husband as long as he lived.

With two such men at the helm of the Columbia Department, the company's policies and regulations concerning the marriages, morals, and education of its employees were certain to be enforced. But McLoughlin and Douglas were realists. They recognized that casual sexual encounters and temporary liaisons could not be entirely prevented, though such contacts were not encouraged and sometimes they were actively discouraged. The "Big Doctor's" attitude is perhaps best summed up in the reply he sent to the governor and committee to W. A. Slacum's charges that the company "find it to their interest to encourage their servants, to intermarry or live with the native women." While perhaps not entirely honest, since he ignored the advantages that accrued to the firm through unions with daughters of the

country, McLoughlin was undoubtedly sincere when he wrote:

> . . . we do all we can to prevent our Servants taking Indian Wives, as a single man in consequence of his having no family can be moved from one place to another with greater facility than a married man and for my part, I never allow any man at this place to take an Indian woman unless he took her to Wife and I granted this leave to as few as I possibly could. Still there are very few men here, but have Indian women and of which we take no notice, and I would wish to know . . . how we can prevent it in such a place as this, where the men at their work in the field, are surrounded by Indian women.[39]

But there were very definite limits to this laissez-faire attitude. In 1838 James Douglas told the London directors that "no person is permitted to make fancy visits [inside Fort Vancouver], and I neither have nor would suffer any person, of whatever rank, to introduce loose women into this Fort, an attempt which, to the honor of every gentleman here, was never made."[40] The ways of men and women being what they are, however, Douglas was not entirely correct, at least as regards the last part of his statement. When Governor Simpson visited the depot in 1829 his manservant smuggled a "lewd Indian woman" into the post. When the "Little Emperor" discovered this impropriety he knocked the servant down. "I never saw a man get a neater blow," later wrote the admiring McLoughlin. "He richly deserved what he got."[41]

McLoughlin also attempted to prevent native women from visiting the Company's vessels, at least on more than a casual basis. In 1830 he learned that three women were rumored to be

living on board the Dryad, which had recently arrived at the depot from England. He directed the ship's captain to send ashore "immediately" the one woman he knew for certain was there and added, "I hope no woman on any pretence will be allowed to reside on board the Dryad."[42]

But in this case the "Big Doctor" was fighting a losing battle. Once the vessels were out of sight of Fort Vancouver he had little control over them, and it is reported that "all the Co's ships admitted any number of the Indian women on board the canoes returned for them and no troubles came in this way."[43] By 1839 it was no secret that the natives in the Indian village a short distance from the depot were transporting their female slaves in canoes out to vessels anchored in the river and striking bargains for their services. There was even a procuress who organized this commerce in human bodies.[44]

It is also clear from a number of sources that sailors were not the only employees to seek the favors of female slaves, or even of the wives and daughters of the natives. As Governor Simpson cynically remarked of conditions at Fort George, "a price will command the Princess of Wales [Chief Concomly's daughter] downwards." At Fort George in 1824 and 1825 slaves belonging to the wives of company employees were also being "let out" for this notorious traffic, and it is reasonable to suppose that the practice continued at least to some extent at Fort Vancouver.[45] Presumably all these matters were among

the conditions of which the company's officers took "no notice."

On the more positive side, McLoughlin and Douglas did turn their attention to mitigating certain of the conditions which were almost inevitable given the circumstances under which the employees lived. And despite the cries of moral outrage raised by a few observers like the Reverend Mr. Beaver and Purser W. A. Slacum, the officers were reasonably successful. Outwardly, at least, Fort Vancouver presented the appearance of a well-ordered and decorous community. Lieutenant Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition, who spent some time at the depot during 1841, could see little amiss as far as personal conduct was concerned. "An opinion has gone abroad, I do not know how," he wrote, "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 obliged to state that every thing 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; and that I saw no instance in which vice was tolerated in any degree. I have, indeed, reason to believe, from the discipline and the example of the superiors, that the whole establishment is a pattern of good order and correct deportment."[46]

Since the regulations of the Northern Department required that no employee could take a woman without showing himself willing and able to provide for her and any resulting children, the permission of an officer theoretically had to be obtained before any such union could be contracted. There is ample evidence that this requirement was taken seriously in the Columbia Department.[47] As has been seen, McLoughlin did not freely grant employees permission to take wives, but when conditions warranted he evidently encouraged the men to regularize their relationships either "in the manner of the country," by witnessed marriage contracts, or, particularly in the case of "gentlemen," by declarations before an officer who was also a justice of the peace.[48] At least the "Big Doctor" was sufficiently liberal in this regard to cause Herbert Beaver to denounce the "execrable system of granting permission to the common men to live in a state of fornication, which they are almost taught to look upon as marriage." The chaplain virtually accused McLoughlin of encouraging such unions by adding that "if a man wants to buy a woman, and has permission to do so, he can procure out of the store any articles, which on any other pretence he would be refused" and if necessary would be granted credit to complete the purchase.[49] Clearly, McLoughlin favored marriage, even if it was only "after the fashion of the country."

It sometimes happened, of course, that "servants" -- the laborers, voyageurs, artisans, and other lower ranks of employees -- "married" without permission. In 1841 Archibald McDonald, in charge of Fort Colvile, complained to McLoughlin about one Antoine Duquette. "He never was good for anything, & a Silly marriage of his which he entered into here last Summer much against my will, completed his uselessness," McDonald wrote, adding, "His wife left him twice since."[50]

Almost surely Duquette would not have dared defy the formidable McLoughlin or the yet stricter Douglas in this manner. The "Big Doctor's" treatment of even an officer under similar circumstances was a nerve-shattering experience. Early in 1838 Captain William Brotchie, commander of one of the company's vessels, desired to marry the mixed-blood daughter of a retired servant living in the Willamette Valley. McLoughlin, knowing of the girl's "infamous character," refused to give his consent but did not deign to give Brotchie an explanation. The distraught captain took his troubles to Chaplain Beaver who, also not knowing of the prospective bride's reputation, was only too happy to defy the departmental manager by published the banns at Sunday service. That same afternoon, at "a public tea-table" -- probably in the mess hall -- McLoughlin "introduced the subject" and ordered Brotchie from the room. When the captain did not respond quickly enough, McLoughlin grabbed him by the collar "before

guests and servants" and "dragged" him into a dark room, from whence he was sent to the Bachelors' Quarters for a week's confinement.[51]

Dr. McLoughlin was absent from Fort Vancouver when the first Catholic priests, Fathers Francis N. Blanchet and Modeste Demers, arrived from Canada during November, 1838, but Chief Trader James Douglas, the acting manager, gave them every possible assistance in beginning their ministry. One of the first objects of their attention was the moral condition of the community. The good fathers believed quite as strongly as had Mr. Beaver that fur-trade marriages -- and for that matter those of Catholics performed by justices of the peace and Protestant ministers as well -- were sinful, but they were more diplomatiic in saying so. Instead of loudly denouncing "concubinage" they began counseling the French-Canadians, most of whom had at least been baptized as Catholics, to "reinstate" or "rehabilitate" their marriages. Soon the priests circulated through the village west and southwest of the fort patiently but firmly separating the men and women whose marriages appeared qualified for rehabilitation. Presumably the couples were only permitted to reunite after receiving formal "nuptail benediction." In this task, as well as their other work, the priests acknowledged receiving the "help of the commandant."[52]

From the Catholic Church records at Vancouver, however,

it appears that it was between late December, 1838, and mid February, 1839, before any significant number of marriages was sanctified, and even then the number was not great compared to the total Catholic population.[53] It evidently took a considerable amount of instruction before the fathers were able to return to the men, in more than token numbers, "the women that did not belong to them, by legitimate marriage."[54] The priests complained that the company's employment contracts, requiring servants not to marry and to return to Montreal for discharge, were impediments to the "chastity" of the Canadian employees, since the men were tempted to form irregular connections rather than legitimate marriages. The present writer has not yet been able to examine a specimen of the contracts used when hiring Canadians to see if the servants really were forbidden to marry, but it is indisputable that a good many of them were granted permission to do so in the Columbia Department. Perhaps the chief reason for the somewhat less than universal rush for legal marriage was the fact that the priests did not consider many of the men qualified to receive the nuptial blessing. "The missionaries have the grief," reported one of them, "of seeing those who, trampling on the sacred vows of marriage, live with native women, while they have in Canada or on Red River their legitimate wives and children engulfed in poverty."[55]

Not only did McLoughlin and Douglas encourage marriage whenever it was justified, they did everything possible to prevent such alliances from breaking up and to force employees to meet their obligations as husbands and fathers. How the pressure was brought to bear is shown by an order the "Big Doctor" sent to the master of Fort Nisqually: "There is an Indian woman lawfully married to one Tetreau, but who ran away and left him. This woman has lived with Vizeau here, but if she goes to Nisqually, you will not allow her to live with him."[56] In another case, the contract of an employee of Fort Langley named William Brown had expired, and he came to Fort Vancouver early in 1837 to go overland to Canada with the annual express. But McLoughlin learned that Brown had left an eight-month-old child in untrustworthy hands at Langley. Confident that the infant would die under such circumstances and since it was against regulations for parents to leave the Columbia without making adequate provision for their children, the chief factor urged Brown to return to Langley for another year, at the end of which time the child would be old enough to travel to Canada with him. Brown positively refused despite warnings of grave consequences. Thus defied, McLoughlin had the stubborn servant tied to one of the cannons in front of the Big House and flogged. After three blows Brown capitulated.[57]

Other instances in which Columbia Department officers attempted to promote the sanctity of marriage and elevate

the general moral tone might be cited, but it is apparent that Fathers Blanchet and Demers were correct when they said that a large proportion of the servants preferred "irregular connections." But the "irregular connections" of the priests were largely fur-trade marriages. Thus there is no inconsistency in Governor Simpson's observation in 1841 that "most" of the men at Fort Vancouver were "married to aboriginal or half-breed women" whose "swarms" of children were conspicuous in the adjoining village.[58]

Unfortunately, there is little information available to show how the women felt about these connections, regular or irregular, moral or immoral. Most of them married, for the first time at least, when very young. Sarah Julia Ogden, daughter of Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden, was only fourteen when she married Clerk Archibald McKinlay in fur-trade fashion at Fort Vancouver in 1840.[59] One of Clerk James A. Birnie's daughters was escorted by Ogden from the depot to New Caledonia in 1837, when she was "under sixteen years of age," to marry Clerk A. C. Anderson, whom she had not seen for nearly four years. Under the circumstances, there probably was some truth to Herbert Beaver's charge that Miss Birnie was "a perfect automaton" in the affair.[60]

It seems evident that even among the company's "gentlemen" -- officers and clerks -- marriages were often matters negotiated

between the would-be groom and the girl's parents. And sometimes unions were arranged by high-ranking officers without much regard for anything but the good of the service and perhaps relief from some of their own personal burdens. In 1829 Governor Simpson attempted to persuade one of the Columbia Department clerks to shake off his Indian mate and marry a mixed-blood young woman who would be sent to him from east of the mountains. As for Indian girls, they were "sold by their parents for a gun, for cloth, for some blankets."[61] It would appear, then, that daughters often had relatively little to say about whom they married.

But it is not to be supposed that romance did not enter into these connections. Take, for example, the case of eighteen-year-old Pierre Pepin, who reached Fort Vancouver as a newly recruited "middleman" and blacksmith in the last days of 1836. As was routinely the case when brigades or expresses reached the depot, Dr. McLoughlin quartered the voyageurs and "pork-eaters," as novice employees were termed, without so much as a "by your leave" among the servants in the village. Pepin and two other men were assigned to a house in which lived Nancy Goodrich, a full-blooded native of "The Dalles Nation" and the former country wife of an American trapper who had once been associated with the company. Nancy's daughter by Goodrich, Susanne, could scarcely have been more than a child at the time, and one foot had been so damaged in an accident

that she had to walk with a stick. But Pecin must have been strongly attracted to her, because five years later, after he had become free from a temporary and unhallowed relationship with Josephte Pattenaude, he returned and asked Susanne to marry him. She was willing, so Pierre approached her mother on the subject. Nancy replied that if the marriage was what Susanne wanted, the arrangement was fine with her. "Only, I live here with this girl, you'll have to keep me," she added. It is recorded that the union of Susanne and Pierre was "long and congenial, though beset with poverty."[62]

As for the female Indian slaves whose services were sold to sailors and other servants, it is difficult to judge their feelings. From the time of Lewis and Clark and extending through the entire fur-trade period, there is abundant testimony as to the enthusiasm with which native prostitutes solicited business. But since the women, who according to Father Demers were often treated worse than dogs, could be cruelly punished if they did not produce revenue, these demonstrations cannot be taken as evidence of their true attitudes. The facts in one case, however, are instructive. Father Demers told of an "unfortunate creature" whose native master was about to force her into prostitution. She managed to run away but was recaptured, beaten, and slashed on the feet with a knife. When McLoughlin heard of these "horrors," he took the woman from the Indian and placed her in the depot hospital. As to her eventual fate the

record is silent.[63] Evidently she, at least, was not willing to exhibit for hire those "amorous propensities" so frequently attributed to the damsels of the Columbia River Valley.

There are no accurate records of the number of women living at Fort Vancouver at any period during its long history.[64] In fact, it is difficult, even impossible, to determine more than roughly how many employees were in residence. Very precise rolls of officers and servants exist for each year from 1825 to 1860, but a number of men listed as at Fort Vancouver or under "General Charges" of the Columbia Department were in reality stationed elsewhere than at the depot. They were officers, clerks, voyageurs, trappers, laborers, or artisans who were regularly absent for long or short periods. Sometimes these men, particularly if they were attached to the Snake Expedition or the Southern Party, took their families with them. Perhaps more often the wives and children remained behind at the fort.

No comparable rolls were kept for the women, at least at Fort Vancouver as far as is known. As has been seen, the company did not quite ignore the existence of employees' families, but neither did it, with some notable exceptions, show much interest in them. At York Factory a young clerk who asked that a trifling alteration be made in his quarters so as to give him and his well-bred wife more privacy was told by his superiors

the "the Company did not recognize families"; they were merley tolerated.[65]

A reflection of this attitude can be seen in McLoughlin's annual report on the status of Fort Vancouver for the year 1826-27. During the winter, he wrote, there were three "Commissioned Gentlemen," seven "officers" [clerks?], and sixty-eight men at the post, including those attached to two expeditions, the coastal trade, the annual express, and river communication. Then he added: "Two Women and two children on the Establishment."[66] In view of Governor Simpson's remark only two years earlier that nearly all the gentlemen and servants on the Columbia then had families, it is unrealistic to believe that there were only two women at Fort Vancouver in 1826.[67] It must be concluded that McLoughlin meant there were only two women, wives of officers or clerks, living inside the pickets; the families of the servants were simply ignored.

In October, 1838, James Douglas reported that only 86 men remained at the post after the people on detached service had departed, and this reduced number included 26 at the sawmill, 7 invalids, and 7 tending the cattle and dairies.[68] Three years later Governor Simpson said the force at Fort Vancouver varied according to the season from about 130 to more than 200, excluding officers and native laborers.[69] Theoretically there were at times 10 or more officers and clerks assigned to Fort Vancouver, but as McLoughlin complained in 1843 he then had only 5 actually present and fit for work, too few for the

proper operation of the depot.[70] It must be remembered, however, that there were almost always a number of "goers and comers," both officers and men, visiting at headquarters, and some of these visitors, particularly the officers, brought their families with them. Thus it becomes virtually impossible to make an accurate statement of the population.

A fair estimate for 1845, when Fort Vancouver was almost at the peak of its activity, might be approximately 210 men, about 160 women, perhaps 210 children, and perhaps 30 or 40 Indian slaves of both sexes belonging to employees. There evidently were additional slaves who belonged to the wives of employees, but their number is not known.[71] This total population of more than 600 souls constantly changed as men retired, were transferred, or died, and as their women moved with them, died, ran away, or were deserted. And after the discovery of gold in California the number of officers and servants dwindled rapidly until in 1860 there were but fourteen left.[72]

It seems impossible to determine the proportion of the women who were pure Indians as against those who were of mixed blood. One recent analysis of Catholic and Protestant marriage records at the post would appear to indicate that native women outnumbered female half-breeds by about five to one.[73] This estimate seems reasonable although, as has been seen, many employees preferred or found it necessary to continue their unions in the fur-trade manner and eschewed judicial or

religious marriage ceremonies. Since most of these informal alliances undoubtedly were with native women, the actual percentage of Indians, at least in the early years, probably was even higher than indicated by the marriage statistics. On the other hand, as the many mixed-blood children grew to marriageable age, the proportion of half-breed wives certainly increased.

Beginning in the 1830s a very few European women resided at Fort Vancouver for varying periods. Though their number was insignificant statistically, their social impact was great. These alien intruders will be treated in a later section. For the present the discussion concerns the large majority, the "daughters of the country."

The native women at Fort Vancouver came from a great diversity of tribal backgrounds. But if marriage records reveal even an approximation of the true situation, about a third of the Indian wives spoke lower Chinook dialects and came from the region bordering the Columbia River from about the Cascades to the sea. This estimate appears to be supported by a statement of George B. Roberts, who long served as an apprentice and clerk at the depot. "The flower of the lower Columbia Women were wives to the companys labouring men," he wrote in 1878.[74] When those who spoke the upper Chinookan tongues of the groups from about the Cascades to The Dalles are included, almost half of the native women were Chinookan

speakers, although it is not certain that the two groups could understand one another.[75] Apparently proximity was as strong a force in mate selection then as it is today.

The next largest linguistic block among the native wives was composed of speakers of the various Coastal Salishan tongues from the Cowlitz, Chehalis, Nisqually, Klallam, Tillamook, and related groups. The Walla Wallas and Nez Percés were also rather strongly represented. This distribution is to be expected, since the company had long-established posts in the Puget Sound and upper Columbia regions. But there was also a wide scattering of tribes and languages which had only from one to a few representatives at Fort Vancouver. The marriage records show, for example, a Shasta from California, a Stikine from Alaska, a Snake from the present Inland Empire, and a Nipissing from the Great Lakes vicinity.[76] Native women from east of the Rockies were few, since it was a rare servant who was allowed to bring his family with him to the Columbia.

The mixed-blood women at the depot were, for the most part, the offspring of unions between European men and native or part-native women. By far the greater number of the fathers were French-Canadians, and the daughters were usually raised speaking both French and the Indian tongues of their mothers. There seems to be no record of one of these part-European

daughters being married to a Hawaiian or an Iroquois employee at Fort Vancouver, although what may have been such a union to a man who probably was not an employee was celebrated near the post in 1845. For the most part the mixed-blood daughters married Canadians. Thus French tended to be the language spoken in households where the wives were half-breeds (in British North America during the nineteenth century almost all part-Europeans were called "half-breeds" regardless of the percentage of Indian blood).

When the father of a mixed-blood daughter was British, the girl often was brought up speaking the languages of both parents. For instance Eloisa McLoughlin, daughter of John McLoughlin of Irish and Scottish descent and Marguerite McLoughlin of Swiss-Ojibwa ancestry, was described in 1837 as speaking "french and english."[77] But her mother in 1836 still only spoke "a little French, mostly Cree" -- and evidently very little English -- after having been married, successively, to two English-speaking men for perhaps forty years.[78] In fact, a British naval officer who visited the Columbia in 1839 noted that, in general, the wives of the officers and clerks, who were mainly Scotsmen, had not learned to speak English.[79] And Narcissa Whitman in 1836 gained the impression that French was the prevailing language. "English," she noted, "is spoken only by a few."[80]

Given the great diversity of tongues, particularly on the part of the Indian wives, many of the women must have had a difficult time communicating. As the Catholic missionaries discovered after their arrival in 1838, a large number of the Indian women and their children spoke neither French nor English, and their native languages were often mutually unintelligible.[81] But the priests also reported that "a good part" of the diverse Indian groups which visited and lived at the fort understood the Chinook jargon, that simple, abbreviated, eclectic composite which so facilitated trade in the Pacific Northwest. By 1840 it was reported to be the "means by which the whites generally can make themselves understood by the Indians frequenting Fort Vancouver."[82] A year later a linguist noted that the "general communication" at the depot was "maintained chiefly by means of the Jargon, which may be said to be the prevailing idiom." This same observer stated that the jargon was in some cases the only means of communication between wives and husbands, as surely it must have been between many of the women also.[83]

It is not to be supposed, however, that merely because the language barrier could be overcome, there was free social intercourse between the women who lived inside the pickets and those who dwelt in the village. Even when the wives in both cases were Indians or mixed-bloods, there was little opportunity to bridge the gap which existed between "gentlement" and

"servants" and their respective families. Throughout the company's service a quite rigid caste system held sway, based on custom and regulation. Tradesmen, voyageurs, and laborers -- essentially the class of employees who lived in the village -- were not permitted, even when invited, to enter the quarters of the officers, clerks, and postmasters who were housed in the fort. "Gentlemen" were cautioned against making prolonged, frequent, or conspicuous visits to the dwellings of the servants.

There were exceptions: Protestant services in the Big House were open to all who wanted to come, even neighboring Indians evidently; certain holidays were celebrated by open houses in which all personnel participated; and occasionally dances were given by the officers to which "all" the ladies of the establishment were invited, although whether the establishment included the village in such cases is not entirely clear. Other opportunities for mingling came on such occasions as horse races and the theatrical performances given on board H.M.S. Modeste, and the ladies of the fort may have made visits of mercy to the homes of ill families in the village or assisted in instructing the schoolgirls in domestic arts. But on the whole the women of the village and those of the fort revolved in different spheres, although they shared many of the tribulations of frontier life.[84] For this reason it is perhaps best to consider each group separately.

In 1839 the village consisted of about fifty-three wooden houses scattered over the plain west and southwest of the fort. Nine years later the number of these dwellings appears to have increased to somewhat more than sixty. According to some witnesses these structures were arranged neatly along several roads or paths, but available maps appear to show a more haphazard distribution. One observer claimed that Canadians, Hawaiians, and Britons lived on separate streets, though maps seem to provide only partial evidence of such segregation. The houses were generally small and one story high. Some, however, had one and a half stories. A number were ceiled on the inside, and by 1849, at least, some were papered or plastered with clay. They generally contained two or three rooms, although many consisted of only a single chamber.

It is apparent that if there were only a few more than fifty houses but about 150 married couples, there was a certain amount of sharing despite the fact that a number of employees on the fort rolls lived at the mills, on the farms, and in various structures scattered at other locations near the depot.[85] In fact, William A. Slacum definitely stated in 1837 that "two or three families" generally lived in each of the "good log cabins" of the village.[86] Although the men were required to build their homes themselves on their own time -- Sundays and

holidays were their only days off -- the company assisted by donating slabs from the sawmill and perhaps in other ways. At any rate, the firm claimed ownership of these structures and probably allotted them to other occupants when they fell vacant.

Wages for servants were relatively low even by European standards of the 1840s, ranging from £17 per annum for laborers to a top of about £40 for most artisans, although a very few received more. Since most of these generally meager amounts went for clothing, bedding, and a few luxuries such as tobacco, tea, and sugar, it may be imagined that there was little available for elaborate or even adequate furnishings. Surviving Fort Vancouver inventories of company owned furnishings list no items in the village; thus it may be assumed that the men provided their own. Undoubtedly locally manufactured or "country made" furniture prevailed, supplemented by cooking and eating utensils, tinware, earthenware, and other articles purchased at the trade shop.

At least one visitor in 1841 described the village homes as "comfortable," and certainly some of them were. But a house of the smaller type, the residence of a company farmer living near the fort, may have been more typical. This structure, an observer noted during the same year, was "a wretched log hut, containing one room only, about 10 feet square . . . it

contained no other furniture than a pine table and an iron pot; the bed, if it could be called one, consisted of rough pine logs covered by a single blanket . . . and in this house ate drank and slept the farmer, his wife, their three children and the farm servant."[87] Such were the homes over which the village women presided.

As Susan Kardas has pointed out, the role of these women was not too much different from that of wives in Indian society.[88] They were responsible for the domestic chores -- housekeeping; cooking; sewing; treating furs and hides; making moccasins and other items of clothing and equipment; gathering roots, berries, and other vegetal foods; and caring for the children. The Reverend Herbert Beaver summed up the position of the women living with "the lower class of the Company's servants" by saying that they "were much in the condition of slaves."[89]

Except in cases where the husbands were of British or French extraction and the mothers of mixed blood, the techniques employed for household tasks were probably also largely native. After all, the Indian women and some of the mixed-bloods knew no other way of life than that they had learned from their mothers. Undoubtedly there were exceptions. Those wives who as children had attended the Fort Vancouver school and those whose husbands took the trouble to teach them were better acquainted with European domestic techniques.

There exist statements by reliable witnesses that the Indian and mixed-blood wives of fur-traders often were neat and industrious housekeepers, and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of such observations in many cases. But there were also some contrary opinions. In 1834 American naturalist John Kirk Townsend was at first impressed with the "fastidious cleanliness" of the village at Fort Vancouver, and he admired the manner in which the women swept the streets and scrubbed the doorsills. Upon closer acquaintance, however, he changed his mind and admitted that his earlier judgment had been "too high."[90] Eight years later Father J. B. Bolduc reported that the native wives of the Canadians in the Willamette Valley had "no proper knowledge of how to keep a household in order," and it is not to be supposed that the situation at Fort Vancouver was too much different.[91] When the Reverend Mr. Beaver requested a "female" servant to attend his wife within the fort, James Douglas claimed that he could not find a suitable unmarried woman, "not from scarcity, but from their want of polish."[92] A visitor of 1845 reported that the Indian wives of the villagers could not be persuaded to adopt European notions of housekeeping, preferring to sit on floors rather than chairs and believing bodily cleanliness to be superfluous. The only safe conclusion seems to be that some wives were qualified to keep tidy homes and did so, and some, perhaps a majority, were not, at least by European standards.

The matter of food preparation also involves conflicting evidence. By the time Fort Vancouver was established in 1825 the company had discontinued the practice of issuing food allowances for the families of servants. The weekly ration was designed to feed the male employee only, and each man picked up his weekly allottment from the post surgeon every Saturday evening. At Fort Vancouver the ration varied not only by the season but over the years. In 1838 the usual weekly issue of provisions per man amounted to 4 quarts of dried peas, 1/2 pound of tallow, 9 pounds of salmon, and 3 pounds of bread or potatoes.[93] By 1845 the ration was 21 pounds of salted salmon and 1 bushel of potatoes per week, though when the latter were not available 12 pounds of flour were issued. During the fishing season, however, one 10-pound salmon a day, without potatoes or flour, was the ration; and when fresh sturgeon was available, 8 pounds a day of that fish were substituted for the salmon. In addition, an occasional "mess" of wildfowl or venison was handed out.[94]

According to one account, these rations were issued already cooked, at least in part. But not only would such a procedure seem illogical, there is direct evidence to the contrary. In 1844 an overland immigrant, John Minto, was quartered in the the cabin shared by a blacksmith and a shepherd, and he observed that the "common fare" of his hosts was issued "to be cooked by the laborers."[95] It seems safe to assume, therefore, that

the meals of the married employees were prepared by their wives as was both the Indian and the European custom. Perhaps slaves were occasionally assigned the task of cooking, but there seems to be no direct evidence to that effect.

It appears obvious that, except for the fresh fish when issued on a daily basis, the ordinary ration would have been none too ample for an active laborer. And even in the case of single men there were complaints that a good proportion of the small wage had to be spent for additional food.[96] For workers with families supplemental provisions were a necessity. Although there seems to be no direct evidence that the women of the village took to the plains and woods to gather edible roots and berries, it is likely that some of them did so, since such was the native custom and since the vicinity of the depot was rich in that type of resource.

In actuality, however, there probably were few wives who went out in person to forage for food. According to Herbert Beaver twenty-four of the "common men" at Fort Vancouver owned Indian slaves in 1837.[97] But William Slacum gained the impression at almost exactly the same time that each family at the depot had from two to five slaves. From other sources it is known that most of these belonged to the wives of the village. Since Slacum was painting as black a picture of company operations as possible, there may be a good measure of exaggeration in his figures, but it seems clear that there

were few wives who had to dig wapato in person. According to Slacum there were plenty of slaves of both sexes available in most households to "cut wood, hunt, fish for the families," and perform "any extra work."[98]

There was one type of domestic task, however, which evidently was seldom delegated. The women of Fort Vancouver, of all classes, took pride in their needlework. They made moccasins, leggins, and other articles of clothing for their men and for themselves, and they kept the family's store-bought clothes in good order. A special object of their attention was the tobacco and fire pouch, an essential item of every voyageur's wardrobe. These bags, usually made of red or blue cloth, were ordinarily decorated with elaborate beadwork and further ornamented by "several long tails," worked with bright-colored silk.[99]

While the Indian and mixed-blood wives were skillful seamstresses, they did no spinning or weaving. Father Bolduc wrote in 1842: "Since the country has been inhabited not a bit of fabric has been made."[100] Such skills were alien to the cultures of most native groups in the Columbia Department, and in fact there was little need for such labor, because the trade shop contained a large variety of drygoods at reasonable prices.

Washing clothes was another task that was considered women's work. Visitors to other company posts occasionally

mention observing the wives and daughters of employees doing the laundry beside a river, but there seems to be no direct evidence as to where washing was done by the village women at Fort Vancouver.

Despite the fact that the wives were subordinate to their husbands, a number of them actually led lives of relative ease. "The women, indeed, do some little service for their keepers," reported Herbert Beaver, "but as soon as a man takes one, he is obliged, even if she was previously a slave herself, to buy one or two to wait on her."[101]

Not all of the village women were so fortunate, however. Undoubtedly there were a few who, married to brutes, actually were drudges. But there was still another group -- unmarried; widowed; allied with men who were on distant assignment, ill, or infirm; or married to certain classes of European servants--who had to work to keep from starving, to compensate the company for rations, or to fulfill the terms of their husbands' contracts. On the whole, these women were probably the most interesting in the entire Fort Vancouver establishment.

In 1838 James Douglas told the London directors that there were only five women at the depot to whom rations were issued:

> 1 of these was a Company's ward, and is regularly married
> 1 is a widow with a family of fatherless children
> 3 are the unmarried wives of old servants, who have claims to consideration

He hastened to reassure the committee that "every woman receiving rations is bound when required to work for the Company." He estimated that in a year the provisions issued to this small group cost the company only £16.18 over the value of their labor. "No other allowance or expense whatever, in the shape of maintenance or otherwise is made for any of these families," he added, "and the buildings they occupy have been erected entirely at their own charge."[102]

These words reveal a good deal concerning the company's attitude toward women. They show that despite the rather harsh policies favoring the removal of families of useless, deceased, or retired servants from the vicinity of the posts, there was in actuality a certain amount of compassion shown in individual cases. They also show that the firm did not, always at any rate, abandon the families of men -- and women in some instances -- who had rendered outstanding service. And they also reveal that the company's largesse had very definite limitations.

The names and stories of the five women mentioned by Douglas are not yet known with certainty, but the case of Mrs. Charlotte McIntosh will serve to illustrate the type of service which inspired the firm to extend its benevolence, however restricted, to this class of dependents. Mrs. McIntosh, the mixed-blood daughter of a company officer, was the widow of Clerk John McIntosh, also of part-Indian ancestry.

Her husband was in charge of the company's post at McLeod Lake in New Caledonia when on July 8, 1844, he was shot to death by a Sekanis Indian while tending his fish nets during a time of famine. Mrs. McIntosh made secure both the fort and the company's property, including the furs, before fleeing to safety with her family and the only other male employee.

On June 12, 1845, Clerk Thomas Lowe at Fort Vancouver noted in his journal the arrival of the annual brigade from the interior. With it was the "family of the deceased Mr. McIntosh" who were "brought down to be left here." The reason for her being taken to Fort Vancouver is not stated in the records thus far examined, but evidently the company felt an obligation to provide for her or at least to place her where her children could be educated. This last was a major consideration since she brought with her at least six, and perhaps seven, children of her own, all under the age of fourteen. In addition there was the infant daughter of her late husband by Nancy, a Carrier woman. Charlotte herself was about thirty-five at the time. Clearly Mrs. McIntosh was a brave and large-hearted person.

There seems to be no record that she actually received rations, but even if she did it does not appear likely that she could have reared this large brood on the company's provisions and on her own earnings alone. Very probably her husband had left an estate, or perhaps she received help from relatives. In any case, she did survive and raise her family,

augmenting whatever assistance she received by sewing for depot residents and visitors. At least two of her sons were later employed by the company, and two eventually had colorful, if tragic, careers on the American frontier.

There is no proof that Mrs. McIntosh and her children were assigned to a house in the village on her arrival. As the wife of a "gentleman" she may have lived within the pickets, as apparently she was doing five years later. She continued to reside at Fort Vancouver until her death in 1857. But, whether she lived in fort or village, her story undoubtedly was not too much different in basic outline from those of other and more humble women who received the company's ration.[103]

The type of services these dependent women were bound to render "when required" is not entirely clear. One thing is certain however: they were not employed as cooks, table attendants, or other types of domestic servants. At Fort Vancouver all the domestics were men.[104] The only references to household chores which might have been performed for the company by women at the post relate to washing, and then it is not clear whether the references are to laundering performed by the women for their own families or in the service of the establishment. It is possible that women served as laundresses for the firm as they did for private individuals.[105]

Also, there is no record whatever that women were ever employed as clerks or helpers in the shops, warehouses, or office. Sometimes youths of rather tender age were hired as

apprentices or assistants for such tasks but no women. Such duties were considered "men's work."

What sort of labor, then, might the women have performed to pay for their rations? In the very early 1820s and before, when the wives of all servants were expected to work in return for issued provisions, posts required women to perform such tasks as making all the moccasins required for the season's operations, or, in one instance, providing fifty bundles of watape (roots used for sewing birch bark canoes) each.[106] Gathering gum for canoes and boats was another common task. By the time Fort Vancouver was established, such general labor on the part of the females was no longer required, and the few women who received rations could not possibly have turned out the quantities of materials needed. In the Columbia Department such "country produce" seems to have been largely purchased from the Indians.

But the depot did manufacture locally a number of items such as candles, portage straps, tents, oiled cloths, and the like. It is possible, though not too likely, that women were employed in some of these enterprises. Women, particularly Indians, were also hired as farm laborers, especially for planting and harvesting potatoes. And they, probably all Indians, were employed to clean and salt salmon, although these operations did not take place immediately at Fort Vancouver. In later years, at certain eastern posts, the

"women of the fort" kept the grounds inside the pickets clean and scrubbed the floors of the Big House, but there is no record that the company required such duty at the Columbia headquarters.[107] All in all, none of these tasks would appear to have been particularly suitable for Fort Vancouver's female dependents, but given Dr. McLoughlin's penchant for keeping people busy, it is unlikely that these ladies had much idle time on their hands.

A little more is known about what was expected of the wives of the workmen who were hired in Great Britain. These men's articles of agreement, at least during the 1830s, required that their wives and children, "in consideration of being found in provisions by the said Company, if required to do so . . . render their services at hay-making, sheep-sheering, weeding, and such other light work as they may be equal to."[108] When a visitor reported finding a dairyman and his wife toiling day and night near Fort Vancouver to turn out milk, cream, and butter, it may be assumed that they were working under some such arrangement, although in this case there is no evidence that the persons in question were from Britain. The situation with Mr. and Mrs. William Cavendale was somewhat different. They were employed in England during 1835 at a joint salary of £50 per year, he as "bailiff" of the farm and she as manager of the "Dairy Department." In addition to her regular duties,

it was anticipated that Mrs. Capendale would superintend an "infant school" and "make herself useful in any way her services may be required."[109] Probably it was fortunate for the good lady that Dr. McLoughlin did not choose to find much for her to do and that he helped assure that her stay at Fort Vancouver was short.

But rations or no, there were a number of women at Fort Vancouver, mainly in the village but a few within the stockade, who found it necessary or desirable to augment their incomes by working on their private accounts for officers, clerks, or visitors. As early as 1833 John Ball, an adventurous young American who arrived with Nathaniel Wyeth, mentioned that he had been furnished with a good suit, "made by the ladies of the post."[110] The enterprise of Mrs. McIntosh in setting herself up as a seamstress has already been mentioned. Mrs. James Logie, who came to Fort Vancouver from the Orkney Islands with her dairyman husband, somehow found time between 1844 and 1846 to serve as nurse for Clerk George B. Roberts's wife and child and to do that family's washing.[111] It was a common practice throughout the Hudson's Bay Company's territories for bachelor officers and clerks to make annual contracts with women, usually natives, to do their laundry.[112] If the Roberts case was typical, it is evident that something similar occurred at Fort Vancouver.

Many differences in status and lifestyle distinguished the wives of the officers, clerks, and -- sometimes -- postmasters who lived inside the pickets from their sisters in the village. But the differences were not always as great as might be imagined and as has sometimes been claimed. In fact, a good deal of nonsense has been written about the position of officers' wives in the fur trade.

Walter O'Meara, for example, wrote: "The wife of the chief factor was the 'first Lady' of the post. It made no difference whether she was Indian, half-Indian, or white; she met and entertained the aristocracy of the country, presided over a gentleman's house, and reared his children to their father's station in life."[113] Another proponent of the theory that officers's wives had extensive business responsibilities is Jan Gould. In her Women of British Columbia she maintains that at smaller posts the wife of the manager "found herself dealing with numerous situations." She might have to receive a distinguished guest in the absence of the husband, "or act as interpreter, or sometimes oversee the trading."[114]

Undoubtedly examples can be found to support every word of these contentions. Letitia Hargrave, British wife of the chief factor at York Factory, surely was the "first lady" of that great depot; she even ate at the mess table during the winter, a most unusual breach of company custom.[115] ~~There are~~ (cont.)

there are numerous accounts by travelers, distinguished and not so distinguished, who passed pleasant evenings conversing with officers and their intelligent wives. And as the story of Charlotte McIntosh proves, women did sometimes take charge of affairs in emergencies.

But such illustrations often represent exceptional situations and not the daily rule. One story sometimes cited as an example of feminine influence is that of Mrs. Charles Ross, wife of the manager of Fort McLoughlin on the Northwest Coast. During the absence of her husband some Indians drew knives and started to attack her son in the trade shop, upon which she seized a pike and drove the "cowardly rascals" from the establishment.[116] When this account is analyzed, however, it is evident that it was the young boy, not the experienced half-breed wife, who had been left in charge of the shop by Ross. It is not the importance of fur-trade wives which is in question here. As has already been demonstrated they were practically essential to the successful prosecution of the business. But what is being challenged is the theory that officers' wives played a significant role in the management of the trade or even in official business entertainment. At Fort Vancouver, at any rate, the women were conspicuous by their inconspicuousness in such matters.

It has already been made clear that Chief Factors McLoughlin and Douglas treated their wives with respect and dignity and insisted that others do likewise. Peter Skene Ogden, John Work, and other factors who served with these two major figures or who followed them at the depot were equally determined that their wives should be considered their social equals, though privately at least one of them may have had some doubts. "I am aware that my family being natives of the country would not be fit for society," Work told a friend in 1836, "but that gives me little concern they are mine and I am bound to provide for them."[117]

This insistence on respect did not mean that the officers desired their wives to be their official hostesses or even to mingle freely with visitors no matter how distinguished. The words of Dr. McLoughlin's daughter, Eloisa, describe the position of the fort women in this regard very succinctly. "When my father had company," she told an interviewer in 1878, "he entertained them in the general mess room, and not in the family mess room. The families lived separate and private entirely. Gentlemen who came trading to the fort never saw the family. We never saw anybody."[118]

Visitors to the depot noticed this isolation of the families and remarked upon it. John Ball, speaking of conditions at Fort Vancouver during 1832-33, said: "We saw nothing or little of their women, except perhaps sometimes on Sundays out on a

horse-back ride, at which they excelled."[119]

Conditions changed somewhat after the arrival of the Whitman party of missionaries during September, 1836. The group included two American women, Mrs. Narcissa Whitman and Mrs. Eliza Spalding. Under the circumstances, McLoughlin could not continue with his usual all-male hospitality, and he at once brought the entire party to the manager's residence and introduced them to his wife and Mrs. Douglas. Since the women could not dine in the mess hall, the "Big Doctor" had the table in his sitting room enlarged, and Narcissa and Eliza ate there in company with Mrs. McLoughlin, Mrs. Douglas, Eloisa McLoughlin, two of the fort "gentlemen," and, most of the time, Marcus Whitman and perhaps Henry Spalding.[120]

The missionary ladies were also introduced to Mrs. William Capendale and Mrs. Herbert Beaver who were recent arrivals from England and residents of the fort. At first Narcissa was delighted at the prospect of having the company of these two "English Ladies," but evidently the acquaintanceship soon turned sour. The Reverend Mr. Beaver strongly objected when Narcissa began to tutor Eloisa McLoughlin and to help the children in the fort school with their singing. Also, neither Mrs. Capendale nor Mrs. Beaver would associate with the part-Indian "concubines" of McLoughlin, Douglas, and the other "gentlemen" of the fort. If Narcissa shared these prejudices

she showed no outward sign. She found Eloisa "quite an interesting young Lady" and seems to have genuinely liked Marguerite, going riding with her on at least one occasion.[121]

According to Eloisa, the arrival of the Whitmans and Spaldings helped to somewhat reduce the isolation in which the fort women had lived. "Then we mingled more," she said.[122] Thereafter there are several mentions of female visitors -- and occasionally male victors as well -- being entertained by the ladies of the Big House.[123] And when transient missionaries and immigrants were given temporary housing in the Bachelors' Quarters building, even the families of the subordinate officers and clerks who lived there joined in these extended social contacts. Josiah L. Parrish, long a member of the Methodist mission in Oregon and a frequent visitor to the depot, remembered that "the wives of the gentlemen, though they were native women and some half breeds they used to come out and occupy the parlor with our ladies."[124]

As the years passed it apparently became more and more usual to invite guests to participate in the picnics, horseback excursions, dances, and other entertainments which were regular features of life for the gentlemen of Fort Vancouver and their families.[125] In 1849 when United States Army officers paid courtesy calls upon Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden, who was taking over management of the establishment with the

departure of James Douglas for Victoria, they were introduced to his part-Indian daughter.[126] Clearly the women were far less cloistered than they had been prior to 1836, but this liberation had its limits. Not a shred of evidence has yet been found to show that the wives of the gentlemen were given any role whatever in depot operations, except to assist in the school.[127] Evidently they were not even consulted in many domestic matters, such as the planning of menus and the selection and supervision of the cooks. These functions, at one period at least, fell under the duties of the post surgeon.[128]

As far as housing was concerned, the women who lived inside the pickets had certain advantages over those who dwelt in the village. Both quarters and furnishings were provided by the company for officers, clerks, postmasters, the chaplain when there was one, and for a very few of the tradesmen and household servants whose duties required them to be constantly on hand near their places of work.

The two chief factors and their families who lived in the manager's residence or Big House were comfortably situated. Although no descriptions of their private living quarters are available, it may reasonably be assumed, from the dimensions of the building and from what is known of such residences at other posts, that each family had at least two bedrooms, a

sitting room, and, for Dr. McLoughlin at least, an office. Such privacy and space were unusual luxuries in the fur trade.

While the furnishings supplied by the firm ordinarily were of the plainest sort, the chief factors in the Big House had sufficient incomes to be able to import furniture, fine chinaware, silver table service, and other appointments from England. The fact that the factors could be reasonably sure of remaining at one post for a number of years and that Fort Vancouver was readily accessible by ship made such private purchases practicable. It may also be imagined that these officers could command the services of the skilled carpenters and joiners at the depot to make such furniture as was not imported. On one occasion when Douglas visited Fort Nisqually, for example, the post carpenter built a "four posted bedstead" for his use.[129] Assistant Surgeon Silas Holmes of the United States Navy undoubtedly was accurate when he noted in his journal in 1841 that the McLoughlin home was "well furnished."[130]

In recent years certain writers have advanced the romantic notion that the company's prominent officers lived with all the grace and refined surroundings of landed English gentry. And it is true that visitors to Fort Vancouver spoke of the "elegant queen's ware" and the "glittering glasses and decanters" in the mess hall and of the "table set with Blue" in McLoughlin's personal quarters; but the silver candelabra,

the heavy plate, and the pearl-handled knives and forks assigned by the romantics to the "Big Doctor's" table may not all have been owned by him prior to his retirement. And such expensive items seem to bear little relationship to the tin coffee pots, forebuck-handled tablespoons, and tin candlesticks listed in the Fort Vancouver pantry inventories. When weighing the enthusiastic comments of visitors, one must bear in mind that even the common "E[arthen]ware" dishes of the inventories were impressive, being Spode or Copeland pieces of the types so much treasured today. One must also remember how even a modestly furnished table must have appeared to travelers who had long been far from Canada or the United States. Clerk George B. Roberts shrewdly commented upon the enthusiasm with which visitors to Fort Vancouver described the Big House table settings. "The decanters & fine English glass set off the table," he wrote, "& made it look I suppose superb to those who had come across the country with hardly the commonest necessaries."[131]

Regardless of the exact dimensions of the "certain standard of life" observed in the manager's residence, few traces of luxury and elegance could be found in the homes of the other residents within the pickets. Most of the subordinate officers and clerks were housed in the long, seventeen-room dwelling known as the Bachelors' Quarters, which was actually a series of small, one-story cottages joined under one roof. The rooms

were Spartan in their simplicity. Walls and ceilings were lined with unpainted fir boards; the floors were merley rough, unplaned planks. Each "cottage" contained a stove, but these were removed during the summer, so that individual cooking was often impossible.

The lower grades of "gentlemen" had no opportunity to acquire their own furnishings, beyond a few pictures and articles of Indian handicraft. All they could bring with them when they arrived or take when they left, regardless of the size of their families, was what could be fitted into two or three cassettes, or small wooden trunks, and a few additional bundles of bedding, clothes, and other compressible items. They were, therefore, almost entirely dependent upon the furnishings supplied by the company, and those were few indeed. Each sleeping room usually contained a small pine table; a few stools, benches, or cane- or wood-bottomed chairs; one or more bunks built of boards; and an earthenware jug and water basin. One visitor described his bed as "infested with insects." Yet the inhabitants usually adjusted to the plainness, and some even considered the quarters "exceedingly comfortable."[132]

While the unmarried gentlemen found conditions in the Bachelors' Quarters reasonably tolerable, the families of the married officers often experienced real discomfort. The

Reverend Herbert Beaver in 1838 graphically described conditions in one dwelling:

> I have mentioned in my reports the indecent lodging for all classes. I will here give you an instance . . . . Mr. Ross, one of your clerks, came in with the Express, bringing a woman and four children. She has since been confined with the fifth, and the whole family have, ever since their arrival, been dwelling with Mrs. McKenzie, the wife of another of your clerks, (who is at Oahu for the recovery of his health . . .) and her three children, making eleven persons in the same room, which is undivided and thirty feet by fifteen in size and in which, with the exception of the man, who takes his meals at the mess, they all eat, sleep, wash and dry their clothes, none ever being hung out.[133]

The families assigned to other dwellings within the stockade often fared little better than those in the Bachelors' Quarters, and sometimes they were worse off. A few of these residences, such as the so-called Priests' House, probably had planed floors, interior walls and ceilings lined with dressed boards, and fireplaces; but most undoubtedly were finished in the same crude manner as the rooms in the Bachelors' Quarters. Furnishings certainly were no better. Mrs. Beaver found the Indian mats that were occasionally used for floor coverings "too filthy to step upon, or to be about the house."[134]

One of the greatest annoyances suffered by the families living in the fort was a lack of privacy. Herbert Beaver complained bitterly of the noise and dust caused by workmen "continually " moving the timber being seasoned in the loft

over his quarters. "At mealtimes and when we are in bed," he wrote, "if they please they can look down upon us."[135] The thin interior partitions permitted loud discussions and the cries of children in adjoining rooms of shared quarters to be readily heard, so much so that even the presence of a single officer next door bothered the Beavers.[136] Clerks frequently had to double up or move to other lodgings to make room for visiting officers of higher rank or even for outsiders whom the chief factor wished to shelter. Such inconveniences were nuisance enough for unmarried men, but they often caused real hardship for the wives and children of married clerks. One pioneer of 1843 said that when his party reached Fort Vancouver the "Indian squaw wives were hustled out of some of the houses, and they were cleaned up and prepared for the [immigrant] families."[137]

As far as domestic chores were concerned, the ladies of the fort had it much easier than those of the village. Presumably speaking of the wives of the officers, with whom she was more familiar than with those in the village, Mrs. Whitman wrote: "Indeed it is not very fashionable for women to do any kind of work, especially house work. This is done by men & servants." The male attendants kept the families supplied with wood when it was needed, "waited on" the gentlemen, and evidently did a certain amount of general cleaning, particularly in the Big House.[138] The wives of officers and clerks also were not

required to cook, and in fact were not ordinarily given an opportunity to do so, although most probably a number of them would have preferred it.

The company provided the food for most of the fort residents, and the meals were prepared in the kitchen immediately in the rear of the Big House. According to Herbert Beaver about fifty people were fed from this source, although in times of epidemics or when there were missionaries or other guests in residence the number must have been considerably higher.[139] In 1841 Lieutenant Charles Wilkes reported that these people ate at four tables: one in the mess hall for the gentlemen; one for the wives; another for the Protestant missionaries [and later for immigrants and patrons of the sale shop also]; and another for the sick and the Catholic priests.[140] Even at the time it was made this observation may not have been entirely accurate, for Wilkes may have had little opportunity to see how the families ate. And undoubtedly arrangements, particularly for the wives and children, varied from time to time.[141]

It is not clear, for instance, that even the wives and older children living in the Big House dined at the same table except when there were female guests to be entertained.[142] And there is a scattering of evidence which seems to indicate that the wives of the subordinate officers and clerks ate in their individual quarters. It has already been seen that

Herbert Beaver implied such was the case in 1838. Certainly Mr. and Mrs Beaver took their meals in their own apartment, and in 1836 Narcissa Whitman wrote that Mrs. Capendale ate "by herself in her own room . . . in one of the houses of the fort."[143]

There is ample testimony as to the abundance, great variety, and general excellence of the provisions served at all tables in the Big House.[144] And several visitors have left accounts of being "well provided with food" or receiving "an excellent English dinner of roast beef and vegetables" in the "strangers' room" in the Bachelors' quarters.[145] But the families of subordinate officers and clerks often did not fare so well. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Beaver during the entire two years of their stay complained frequently and forcefully of the poor food sent to them from the mess kitchen. "We have seldom anything good to eat," the chaplain told one of the company's directors in 1838, "and when we have, it is generally so badly cooked, as to be uneatable." On occasion they were not served vegetables or fruit when they knew such things were being enjoyed in the Big House, and food was sometimes received swimming in grease, or undercooked, or overcooked, or fowl were improperly plucked.[146]

Since the Beavers were chronic complainers and since Dr. McLoughlin certainly did not go out of his way to see that they were comfortable, one might be tempted to conclude that they exaggerated the situation or that theirs was an

exceptional case. But apparently the dependents of other gentlemen suffered similar treatment. After Clerk Thomas Lowe married in 1849 he gradually became dissatisfied with the social restrictions dictated by company custom. One thing that particularly angered him was having "to mess at public table myself and see the blackguard cook and steward neglect and treat the families in any way they thought proper."[147] Such conditions drove Mrs. Beaver to cooking her own meals on occasion, an action she could take because evidently there was a fireplace in her quarters.[148] Other wives seem seldom to have had the same opportunity.

The women who lived in the fort were not often under such economic pressure that they found it necessary to earn extra income by sewing or other types of work. Their domestic labors appear to have been largely confined to doing their own laundry -- although some of the ladies hired village women or Indians to do this chore as was the case when Mrs. Roberts employed Mrs. Logie as nurse and laundress -- and to keeping their own quarters tidy when the services of servants were not available to them.

Like their sisters in the village, the women of the fort were skilled seamstresses. Lieutenant Wilkes commented in 1841 upon the "great taste" displayed in the decoration of the tobacco pouches made by the officers' wives.[149] While fort women rarely sewed for hire, they occasionally came to the

assistance of bachelor clerks and visitors when tailoring was urgently needed. In 1833 Dr. William Fraser Tolmie, a newly arrived clerk and surgeon, required a few additional clothes before starting off for an assignment on the Northwest Coast. He "looked out cloth for two calico jackets & a tartan vest" in the sale shop and sent it to McLoughlin's "rooms," since the chief factor had "kindly offered to get them made up by his family."[150]

Very occasionally the wife of a gentleman did engage in employment for profit. In September, 1844, Martha Roberts, the English wife of Clerk George B. Roberts, undertook to conduct the Fort Vancouver school, making an annual charge of £5 per pupil. This project was short-lived if, indeed, it ever went into full operation. Catherine Pambrun, widow of Chief Trader Pierre Pambrun, moved to Fort Vancouver with her numerous children in 1841 and did "fine needlework" to support and educate her brood.[151]

Whether the daughters of the country lived in village or fort, whether they were Indians or mixed breeds, they shared a number of anxieties, attitudes, and problems. Probably the greatest worry, particularly on the part of those whose marriages were "in the fashion of the country," was the constant fear that their husbands would desert them. For years the wives at Fort Vancouver had in their midst constant reminders of the fragility of fur-trade unions, even those of mixed-bloods with the highest officers of the company. In 1836 three or four children of Governor George Simpson and Chief Factor John

George McTavish were sent from Canada to the Columbia depot to get them out of the way after their fathers had abandoned their mothers to marry British women six years earlier.[152] And in 1838 McTavish's cast off wife, Nancy McKenzie, turned up at Fort Vancouver, her second husband and three children having been drowned while descending the Columbia. When James Douglas offered her transportation back to Red River she refused, "saying she now had nothing for which to return."[153] Nelia Douglas's own father left his mixed-blood family in 1832 to find a more fashionable mate in the daughter of a wealthy Montreal merchant.[154]

Despite the efforts of McLoughlin and Douglas, desertions were not unknown in the Columbia Department, although there are no statistics to permit even a reasonable estimate of the percentage of broken unions. But mission records listing children such as Mary Ann Bastien, daughter of a French father "living in Canada, who[m] she has not known" and Louise Shasta, give some indication of a family tragedy which must not have been too untypical.[155] A more poignant piece of evidence to the same effect is the description by a company employee of the scene at Fort Colvile in 1838 as the express boat pulled away upstream. On board was a chief trader who had joined the party at that point bound for retirement in Canada. "On the beach stood his young half breed wife and babe in her arms both weeping . . . . The brute was as unconcerned at the parting or abandonment, as if he was only taking a few hours excursion."[156]

That news of such incidents seriously distressed the women in the Columbia Department is demonstrated by the words Archibald MacDonald wrote to a friend from Fort Langley in 1831. His wife, he said, had learned enough of the recent marriages of Governor Simpson and Chief Factor McTavish "to infer from their having changed partners that the old ones were deficient in bearing, and that her own case may be the same when tis my time to visit my Scottish cousins."[157] The anguish and anxiety of some fur-trade wives was so great that they were sometimes driven to infanticide or suicide, particularly while their husbands were absent on furlough.[158] There are no records to show the frequency of such occurrences at Fort Vancouver, but they were not unknown. Herbert Beaver stated that infanticide stood "foremost" among crimes committed by native women. It never occurred he said, "when the Indian is the father, [but] generally in consequence of the desertion of the white father."[159]

Another cause of tension in the wives was the fear that their husbands would not want to have children by them. As a general rule, the fur traders were well aware of the difficulties in life that awaited their progeny by native or mixed-blood women at a time when neither Indian society nor European society was prepared to welcome them. Therefore, children ordinarily were not desired by the men, although once

arrived, they often were deeply loved. This attitude is well illustrated by the words of John Work when he wrote to a friend in 1829: "My little partner presented me with another daughter in the winter which can not be considered a fortunate circumstance in this part of the world."[160] Apparently former Astorian and Nor'Wester Ross Cox was reflecting a widespread feeling when he noted that among the traders a sterile woman was "invaluable."[161] Some of the wives at Fort Vancouver were so depressed by this attitude that, according to Herbert Beaver, one would occasionally resort to abortion to relieve her mate of "the expense and trouble of maintaining his offspring."[162]

For a number of years before the establishment of Fort Vancouver another cause of infanticide or abortion was the cultural clash between European traders and their Chinookan wives over head flattening. For a Chinook woman to raise a round-headed child was considered a disgrace by her family and friends, since in her society only slaves did not have their heads pressed during infancy. The white fathers, on the other hand, refused to let their offspring be "disfigured" in this manner. So deep were the feelings in this matter that, as George Simpson remarked in 1824, a mother sometimes preferred to "sacrifice her child to having it ranked as a Slave." The governor went on to say, however, that the custom -- presumably of infanticide -- was so abhorrent to the Europeans that no instance of it had been known for some time.[163] But head

flattening still flourished unabaited among the Chinook tribesmen as late as 1846, and presumably the cultural conflict must have continued in the village.[164] There seems to be no record that any child of a mixed marriage at Fort Vancouver was subjected to head pressing, and it is possible that some of the infant murders mentioned by Herbert Beaver were in actuality due to the interdiction of this ingrained native practice.[165]

Further evidence of long-lasting cultural conflict is seen in the clothing worn by the women of the depot. Witnesses are in general agreement that the wives of officers and clerks dressed "after the English fashion," although Lieutenant Wilkes was unkind enough to remark that the styles were outmoded.[166] But even these highly placed ladies could not altogether give up the costume of their native forbears. John Dunn, who served as a postmaster at Fort Vancouver for about a year, said that the women retained "one peculiarity -- the leggin or gaiter, which is made (now that the tanned deer-skin has been superseded) of the finest, and most gaudy-coloured cloth, beautifully ornamented with beads."[167] Wilkes confirmed this observation, describing the leggins as "made of red and blue cloth, richly ornamented."[168] Although neither Dunn nor Wilkes so states, the leggins were displayed with particular prominence during horseback rides, when the

ladies universally and invariably sat astride in the native fashion.[169] Dunn appears to indicate that the gentlemen's wives wore a "low-quartered" European-style shoe, whereas Wilkes seems to indicate that "worked moccasins" were the universal feminine footwear.[170]

According to Dunn, the wives of the company's servants in the village imitated the dress of the officers' wives as much as they could, "but from their necessities of position, which exposes them more to wet and drudgery, they retain the mocassin." This type of shoe, he continued, was made of dressed deerskin, was "perfectly waterproof," and was so flexible that it could be drawn on like a stocking. It served the purpose of high shoe and stocking together. It was "open partly in front; one side lapping over the other; and fastened with a long strip of the same leather -- drawn upwards -- passing two or three times round the leg."[171]

Since a few of the village women undoubtedly were from Red River, the style of dress customary among the wives and daughters of the métis of that region may also have been represented at Fort Vancouver. An observer in 1859 described the women with a party of buffalo hunters west of Fort Garry as follows: "Tall and angular, long masses of straight black hair fell over their backs; blue and white cotton gowns, shapeless, stayless, uncrinolined, displayed the flatness of

of their unprojecting figures. Some wore a gaudy handkerchief on the head, the married bound one also across the bosom."[172]

To complete the picture, it might be desirable to give some idea of the costume of the Indian women from nearby native camps who were hired to work on the farm, clean salmon, and perform other chores connected with the depot. Most of them were from the Chinookan-speaking peoples of the lower Columbia River region. From the time of Lewis and Clark the scant clothing of the females of these groups was the subject of colorful descriptions by explorers and traders. The following account by Paul Kane reveals that by 1846 the situation had not changed much, at least in villages not in close proximity to the fort:

> The female dress consists of a girdle of cedar-bark round the waist, with a dense mass of strings of the same material hanging from it all round, and reaching almost to the knees. This is their sole summer habiliment. They, however, in very severe weather, add the musk-rat blanket. They also make another sort of blanket from the skin of the wild goose.[173]

According to John Dunn, contact with white traders "soon effected a change in the toilets of both sexes," and by the 1840s they arrayed themselves "in any article of dress, and use any ornament they can procure."[174] But the move toward modesty, if that is what Dunn intended to imply, does not seem to have advanced very far by 1833 if the scene observed by Dr. William Fraser Tolmie at a native encompment on the bluff

behind Fort Vancouver was typical. "The women," he said,"were all in a state of nudity except having the corner of a blanket round loins."[175] Clerk George B. Roberts said that during the early 1830s the native women wore a cedar petticoat, "either twisted into cords or frayed from the waist to the knees, this with a piece of green or escarlet Baize over the shoulders constituted their dress."[176]

But by 1838 the native women who had any close association with the fort appear to have been brought more into conformity with European standards of propriety. "The common dress of the Chinooks, both male and female," wrote Herbert Beaver, "is a blanket, to which the female add a kilt or short petticoat . . . . The Chinook women wear nothing on their heads."[177] Another group of natives which frequented the Fort Vancouver vicinity was the Klickitats, an up-river "tribe" with different cultural associations. The Reverend Mr. Beaver found these people more to his liking. Their women, he said, were "not unfrequently clothed in coarse cloth gowns . . . . the female Klickatack has always a cap of plaited grass."[178]

This trend toward more ample covering appears to be confirmed by the observations of a visitor during 1839. Evidently describing the Chinooks, he said that the Indians about Fort Vancouver wore blankets held together by a pin. The women wore the "petticoat" made of bark or other fiber and a shirt. The only native woman, other than the wives of

company employees, he observed in European dress was the local procuress.[179]

Other evidences of their native heritage long survived among the consorts of company employees both of high and low degree, although the existing records reveal very little concerning this subject. Only rarely does a casual remark in a letter or journal reveal the difficulty the women had in completely adapting to European ways. In 1836 Narcissa Whitman observed that there were several feather beds at Fort Vancouver but that the "Indian Ladies" -- a term she sometimes used to include both native and mixed-blood women -- made theirs of deerskin although there was brown linen sheeting -- admittedly not really suitable for ticking -- available.[180]

Relations among the women at fur-trading posts were not always harmonious. The Fort Langley journal for 1828 records an incident which cannot have been too unusual: "As late as 10 o'clock last night our eleven women in the Fort created a most unconscionable noise, and 2 couples proceeded to actual blows . . . . the heroines, on this occasion, are the enlightened ones imported from the Columbia -- 'tis impossible to learn the precise cause of their quarrels."[181] But despite such occasional differences there seems to be no evidence of racial disharmony, racial prejudice, or of distinction based solely on race, among the wives until the arrival of European

women in the Columbia Department in 1836. From that moment the earlier fears aroused by the marriages of such personages as Governor Simpson and Chief Factor McTavish to Britishers seem to have intensified, and the fur-trade wives had to come face to face with the fact that there were people in the world who considered them to be inferior simply because they were not all white. And although proof is lacking and although if he did have such a policy he was not always consistent in applying it, it appears that Chief Factor McLoughlin attempted to shield his own family and the other fort women from this trauma as long as he dared.

When first faced with the prospect of English women coming to Fort Vancouver, McLoughlin seems to have favored the idea. At a date as yet unknown, but probably about 1832 or 1833, Peter Corney, an officer in the company's maritime service and a veteran Pacific voyager, requested permission from the governor and committee in London to bring his wife to the Columbia Department. The directors told him to ask the chief factor in charge, and during November, 1834, the lonesome sailor bearded the formidable "Big Doctor." The result surely pleased him, for McLoughlin wrote to the directors two days after the interview:

> For my part, I see no injury to the service from the naval officers who will be kept in the employ having European wives here provided they are decent respectable women, but rather the reverse as men will have women

> and if they have not European wives they will have Indian ones. But if any Bring their wives they ought to be obliged to feed them themselves, which they can do by purchasing provisions from the Willamette freemen or from the Company.[182]

In consequence of this recommendation, qualified though it was, the committee acquiesced. On July 22, 1835, Corney was appointed chief mate of the company's new barque Columbia and given leave to take his wife and four children "out in the vessel to remain in the Country." The family was to be "no expence to the Company for their maintenance in the Country, it being understood that the Chief Factor in charge may engage Mrs. Corney in any capacity, for the education of the Natives or any other that she may be qualified for."[183]

But Fort Vancouver was never to see the well-educated Frances Corney. She, her husband, and their interesting brood boarded the Columbia a few weeks after the committee's permission was obtained and sailed from Gravesend bound first for the Hawaiian Islands and then Oregon. In company was the famous Beaver, making her maiden voyage under sail. While the vessels were still running down the English Channel, Peter Corney died on August 31, 1835. He was buried at sea the next day. Evidently it was not considered expedient to return his family to England, and the widow and children were carried to Honolulu and landed there. They found refuge in the house of a Hawaiian chief and his wife, presumably until one of the daughters, "at the tender age of 15 years and 9

months," married the French consul less than a year later.[184]

In the same dispatch that informed McLoughlin of Corney's appointment the committee dealt the "Big Doctor" a severe blow. The directors were dissatisfied with the results of farming at Fort Vancouver, particularly, in this instance, with the fact that McLoughlin could not guarantee to provision the company's vessels with pork. "In order to give the farming establishment a fair trial," they wrote, "we have engaged a well informed practical agriculturalist, William Capendal and his Wife; the one as Bailiff, the other to manage the Dairy Department, they bear most excellent characters, and have been strongly recommended to us as thoro'ly understanding the breeding and management of cattle of every description, and turning the produce to the best advantage, they are supplied with various articles for their respective departments . . . , and we hope under their management this branch of the Concern will prosper."[185]

These words must have been taken by McLoughlin as a direct slap in the face. He was proud of the manner in which he had developed the Fort Vancouver farm from almost nothing to a flourishing institution. Thus he almost certainly did not welcome the prospect of having a farm manager at his elbow telling him how to handle the stock. It is even possible that he did not pay too much attention to the further words of the committee telling him that Mrs. Capendale, as the name

apparently was correctly spelled, was also "competent to superintend an infant school," and was "very willing to make herself useful in any way her services may be required." The Capendales together were to receive £50 a year, and McLoughlin was enjoined to "take care that they are provided with house and suitable accomodation."[186]

In any case, McLoughlin certainly acted as if he had paid little heed to the committee's instructions. When the Capendales turned up at Fort Vancouver on one of the vessels which arrived during March, 1836, they were not placed in a house of their own but in "an apartment fellow to one" in which two officers and their families had spent a winter. Herbert Beaver described these accommodations as "only one miserable room, and no servant."[187] McLoughlin told the committee on November 15, 1836, that he could not build a dwelling for the Capendales without neglecting other important work but promised to do so for Mr. Capendale as soon as possible, Mrs. Capendale by that time having decided to return home.[188] As for Mrs. Capendale conducting an "infant school" or otherwise making herself useful, no effort to employ her services seems to have been made. Neither William Capendale nor his wife was allowed to assume fully the responsible positions for which they had been engaged. In fact, one historian who examined the materials in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives relating to the Capendales

concluded that McLoughlin "could find no use for them."[189]

Clerk George B. Roberts, who was at Fort Vancouver during the stay of "poor old Mr. & Mrs. Capendale," described them as "a very respectable couple" who came from the estate of Sir John Henry Pelly, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company.[190] Perhaps one of the reasons for Mrs. Capendale's difficulties was that she may have been too respectable. Nothing seems to be known of her relations with the ladies of the fort prior to the arrival of the Herbert Beavers on September 6, 1836, and of the Whitman-Spalding party six days later, but perhaps something can be inferred from the fact that Narcissa Whitman wrote to a friend on October 25 that Mrs. Capendale ate by herself in her room in the fort.[191]

One thing is certain, however: After she was joined by Mrs. Beaver, the two English ladies formed a fast friendship, based at least partly on the premise that they were superior to all other women in the establishment, legally married or not. Mr. and Mrs. Capendale, wrote Herbert Beaver on November 15, 1836, "are . . . the only persons, with whom we can associate, or have anything in common."[192] It would seem, then, that Mrs. Capendale and her ally, Mrs. Beaver, had set out to make plain that the irregular country unions of most officers, clerks, and servants were not condoned. In the words of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Mrs. Capendale, like Mrs. Beaver, "had a way with her, recognized in all Christian communities, of

calling such manner of living vile."[193] It may be imagined that Dr. McLoughlin might make life as uncomfortable as he dared for a person who threatened the happiness of his beloved Marguerite.

Even though her stay at Fort Vancouver was short, Mrs. Capendale did not fail to exert a positive influence on at least two lives. She undertook the care of a young mixed-blood girl whose Umpqua mother was dead and whose father, Michel Laframboise, was away with a trapping brigade. She also made a protégé of James Logie, a laborer who, perhaps due to her training, later served as a dairyman.[194] It may also have been because of her advice that he returned to his native Orkney Islands about three years later to marry a lass from that rugged land instead of a daughter of the Columbia Department.

By the first of November, 1836, the Beavers had become so discouraged with their situation at Fort Vancouver that they decided to return to England on the Columbia when she sailed toward the end of that month. Mrs. Capendale, also unable to reconcile herself to life at the depot, was determined to accompany them. Dr. McLoughlin gave her permission to leave provided her husband was willing. But then, at almost the last minute, the Beavers changed their minds. A petition from a number of their parishioners urged the couple to remain, convincing them that they could not leave those "poor souls to perish for a lack of that knowledge, which they expect to

receive from the Minister."[195] Evidently not wanting his wife to make the long voyage alone, William Capendale then requested and was granted leave to depart.[196] The pair placed their half-Umpqua ward in the hands of the Beavers and said farewell to Fort Vancouver forever. The unhappy eight-month residence of the first European woman known to have lived at the Columbia depot was ended.[197]

John McLoughlin viewed the departure of Governor Pelly's protégés with a remarkable outward complacency. "I dare say you will be surprised at seeing Mr. Capendal back in England," he wrote with all show of innocence to the company's secretary on November 18; "he is an excellent good man, and I am certain would have found himself very comfortable and happy, but his wife finds things she says, different to what she expected."[198]

The exact reasons for McLoughlin's failure to permit the Capendales to assume the positions intended for them probably never will be known with certainty. The "Big Doctor" himself said he did not put William Capendale in charge of the farm at once because he wanted him first to learn the language of the people he would be supervising and to gain a broad knowledge of all aspects of his duties. George B. Roberts, on the other hand, stated that the Capendales "had been accustomed to high farming & were quite out of their

element in a new country & . . . couldn't get into our ways nor we into theirs." But perhaps significantly Roberts added: "The change was too great & he [Capendale] wasn't altogether to blame."[199] It would almost appear that Roberts was in agreement with the Reverend Mr. Beaver, who told a member of the London committee that Mrs. Capendale was "driven away" from Fort Vancouver.[200] Under the circumstances, it is not unreasonable to suspect that the chief factor did not encourage the continued presence of one who was an upsetting element in the traditional fur-trade society of the depot.

The treatment accorded Jane Beaver, the second European woman to live at Fort Vancouver, was very similar to that given Mrs. Capendale, though it may have stemmed in part from different causes. Dr. McLoughlin deeply resented the fact that the London directors had chosen to send an Anglican chaplain and his wife to the Columbia instead of the Catholic priest he desired. He displayed this feeling from the very start by his failure to provide a church, proper housing, and decent furniture for the Beavers upon their arrival on September 6, 1836, although there had been ample previous notice of their appointment.[201]

Thus it is doubtful if Mrs. Beaver could have won the friendship and complete cooperation of the manager even if she had been charming, tolerant, democratic, and adaptable -- all of which she decidedly was not. Little is known of the

background of Jane Beaver before she reached Fort Vancouver. One knowledgeable student has surmised that she perhaps was of humble origin because Herbert Beaver once mentioned himself as a man who had "raised his partner by marriage to his own level."[202] Be this as it may, she insisted on recognition of her existing social position and on the perquisites she believed due an Anglican clergyman's wife. As has already been made clear, McLoughlin paid little attention to such demands.

Dr. William C. McKay, who was a fourteen-year-old pupil at the Fort Vancouver school in 1838 and who seems to have been a particular favorite of the chaplain, many years later remembered Mrs. Beaver as "a lady of fine attainments and education, high minded and very 'dressy' for this country at the time." He recalled that she was fond of wine and that she "did not come here to soil her fingers on the dirty brutes, as she called the Indians." According to McKay, Jane Beaver did not "assimilate" with the families of the fort gentlemen but rather "kept aloof from them." This attitude, he said, "was damaging to the little society of the Hudson Bay Company."[203]

While it is difficult to tell how much of this character sketch was drawn from McKay's own observation and how much from family gossip -- he was Mrs. McLoughlin's grandson -- his picture apparently was reasonably accurate. George T. Allan, who was a clerk at Fort Vancouver during the entire residence

of the Beavers, added another dimension to the portrait. Jane Beaver, he said, was "no less memorable" than her intransigent husband, being "rather fierce" and "masculine to such an extent as to be accused of wearing the breeches."[204] William H. Gray, whose acquaintance with her was fleeting, described her as haughty and condescending. She "held herself scornfully aloof," recorded Clerk George B. Roberts.[205] From such testimony, together with what can be garnered from her own writings and those of her husband, there emerges the impression of a forceful, demanding, self-centered, unbending, and snobbish woman.

Such a portrait is entirely too simplistic. As has been recounted, Jane Beaver suffered more discomforts and inconveniences than were necessary in view of depot facilities and resources. McLoughlin perhaps could have done little about some of the conditions that bothered the Beavers -- the winter mud, churned up by pigs and carts, that surrounded their quarters; the feeling of being "buried" behind the warehouses and palisade; the more than a dozen privies near their windows; and the noisy chopping of firewood in the fort courtyard -- but he could easily have provided better housing, more wholesome and appetizing meals, a more liberal allowance of wine and spirits, and more adequate attendance by servants as was demonstrated after his departure on furlough during March, 1838. James

Douglas, who served as manager of the depot in his absence, succeeded without evident strain in ameliorating several of the conditions which most distressed the Beavers.[206] It would appear, then, that Mrs. Beaver had cause to feel abused.

And she may have been less aloof than ordinarily painted. Apparently she and her husband remained on good terms with a few of the fort gentlemen, Duncan Finlayson and Archibald McDonald among them.[207] Even George B. Roberts admitted that both the Beavers were "very kind" to him, and he seems to have enjoyed dining occasionally at their "good table."[208] When John McLoughlin's youngest daughter, Maria Eloise -- usually called Eloisa -- was married to William Glen Rae by the Reverend Mr. Beaver on February 20, 1838, it was Mrs. Beaver who came forward to make certain that the affair was a "proper wedding ceremony." The flower girls, it has been said, all wore white dresses "made by Jane's own hands."[209] According to William McKay the Beavers occasionally unbent enough to invite into their quarters ordinary seamen of good character and religious feeling from the company's ships, a decided breach of regulations and custom.[210]

But there was at least one matter on which Mrs. Beaver refused to make any concession whatever. She joined her husband in considering all women married "in the fashion of the country" to be "living in a state of concubinage." It ate at her soul to see Mrs. McLoughlin, whom her husband very

injudiciously and wrongly described to the London directors as "the kept mistress of the highest personage in your service at this station," entertaining and associating with the missionary women, "respectable married and unmarried females from the United States of America, to the scandal of religion, to the retarding of morality, and to the indelible disgrace of all concerned in the transaction, except the ignorant and innocent sharers of it, who were, in a manner, compelled, by the exigency of their situation and the failure of other resources, to submit to the degredation."[211]

In judging Mrs. Beaver for her stand regarding fur-trade marriages and, in fact, toward the "women of the country" in general, it should be remembered that she was reflecting the ingrained social patterns and prejudices of her class, her times, and her country. She would indeed have been an exceptional English lady if she had freely and whole-heartedly mingled on terms of equality with the native and mixed-blood women of what was essentially a colonial society and if she had not agreed with her husband when he declared that every couple at Fort Vancouver "should be immediately married, or be regarded in the same light, as they would be in other countries."[212]

And she would have been still more remarkable had she not shared the Reverend Mr. Beaver's reaction when the London directors suggested that he might attempt to adjust a bit to the mores of fur-trade society. "Nor have I," he replied, "been able to discover anything so inviting or correct in the

customs of the country, as to recommend a better acquaintance or a greater conformity with them, than may be unfortunately compulsory on the part of those who visit it."[213]

The Beavers managed to stick it out at the Columbia depot for about twenty-seven months, but they finally left on the Columbia early in November, 1838, "for the purpose of seeking redress for an injury." After the departure of the Cavendales, Jane Beaver was for about a year and a half the only European woman regularly in residence at the post. Her longer sojourn and her equally unrelenting stand on the morals question made her even more of a disquieting influence on the community than Mrs. Cavendale had been. Thus it was by her, largely, that "the lever was applied to the foundations of the old society that was destined to overturn it."[214]

Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding remained at Fort Vancouver as guests of Chief Factor McLoughlin from September 12 to November 3, 1836, and as has been seen, their visit also had its impact on society at Fort Vancouver. From that time until 1849 and beyond, white women were occasional guests at the depot, and their stays were sometimes fairly extensive. At first these women were largely connected with the Methodist missions or with those of other denominations, but during the 1840s the families of American immigrants also figured prominently among those who were sheltered by the Company's officers. Since these women cannot be considered residents in

the same sense as were the wives and daughters of employees, they are not treated individually in this essay.

While these American women were not all free of prejudice by any means, they were, on the whole, less inclined to be censorious and aloof than the English wives. There was perhaps a slight feeling of superiority revealed in the words of Miss Anna Maria Pittman, a member of the Methodist mission, who reached Fort Vancouver by ship in May, 1837. On being introduced to McLoughlin's wife and daughter, she noted that Marguerite was "half while," but Eloisa, she wrote, "is as white as I am, a lovely girl."[215] For the most part, the Americans, and the missionary women in particular, seem to have accepted social conditions as they found them. Many of them came mentally prepared to live and work among the Indians, and for them the ladies of Fort Vancouver were a pleasant surprise. The Methodists, especially, were egalitarian in theory due to their fundamental religious doctrines, although the harsh realities of the Oregon frontier caused changes in their thinking, at least as far as the immediate application of their beliefs to social equality with the Indians was concerned.[216] And, as Henry Beaver noted, by placing themselves under obligation to the company, the visitors were not in a position to criticize the customs of their hosts.

In general, the words William H. Gray used to describe the conduct of Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding at Fort

Vancouver are applicable to most of the missionary women. They came among the fur traders, wrote Gray, "expecting nothing but rough treatment; any little mistakes were overlooked or treated as a jest. They knew no distinction in classes; they were polite to the servant and the master; their society was agreeable and refining."[217] The American missionary women, recalled William McKay, "associated and assimilated with every one that was worthy."[218] As has been discussed, the influence of the Americans was largely in the direction of breaking down the isolation in which Fort Vancouver's women had lived. McLoughlin must have been pleased with this result, because he and his successors never ceased to welcome these sociable visitors.

When the "Big Doctor" reached London on a working furlough late in 1838, he was soon faced by a proposal of the governor and committee for sending several British laborers and their wives to the Columbia Department. Little is known concerning the origins of this idea, but the seed may have been planted by Herbert Beaver. The chaplain had been anxious to train the older boys in the fort school by apprenticing them to depot tradesmen, but he reported to one of the directors that most of the artisans were "leading such lives as render them unfit to have apprentices in their charge," meaning, evidently, that they were living with native or mixed-blood women "after the fashion of the country." For that reason he suggested that

"a few respectable English families of the labouring class" be shipped out to improve the moral tone of the place.[219]

How far this plea influenced the committee is not yet apparent, but when McLoughlin arrived back at Fort Vancouver in October, 1839, after an overland trip with the fall express, he had with him four "European Servants" and their wives.[220] The chief factor distributed the families to four of the department's largest agricultural establishments, one each to Fort Vancouver, Cowlitz Farm, Fort Nisqually, and Fort Langley. He assigned them to farm labor, but he intended that by the next summer each should be in charge of a dairy.[221]

The experiment was not a success. On March 20, 1840, McLoughlin told Governor Simpson that all four laborers had given notice of their intention to retire at the expiration of their contracts in the spring of 1841. The "Big Doctor" added that it would be impossible to send men with wives and children across the mountains at that season, but the trio could be made in the fall of that year. He preferred, however, to send them home by ship or to encourage them to settle in the country if the men would not change their minds and reengage. Meanwhile, he added, "I hope you will send no European family till you hear from me." Since admittedly there had been no complaints concerning the work of the men, it may be presumed that McLoughlin's objections were based

upon the presence of the families.[222] Perhaps some of their wives had demonstrated, as had Mrs. Cadendale and Mrs. Beaver, an inability to adapt to frontier conditions. Certainly they limited the company's options in transferring and transporting its employees. At any rate, McLoughlin's attitude toward European wives had undergone a change since he had given Peter Corney permission to bring out his mate in 1834.

The worker whom McLoughlin retained at Fort Vancouver in 1839 may have been John Johnstone, called "Johnstone(á)" because there was another John Johnston or Johnstone on the depot rolls at that time. But if so, he had left Fort Vancouver by the next year. Nothing about his wife has yet been found. Another "farm servant" in the same group was William Baldero. McLoughlin appears to indicate that he at first sent Baldero to Cowlitz Farm, but if so the new hand was soon back at Fort Vancouver, where he seems to have worked as a dairyman until he retired and settled at Nisqually on December 1, 1841.[223] Evidently his wife did not make enough of an impression at the depot to be recalled in later years by those who were her neighbors.

Regardless of how McLoughlin felt about European wives, he was soon to be faced by more of them. On December 5, 1839, the London directors employed Joseph Carless as an engineer for its shipping in the Columbia Department. He was a "rough

diamond" who had been employed by the firm which made the engines for the steamer Beaver. A condition of his contract provided that his wife could accompany him and that his family was to be fed and housed, ashore if desired, without charge on the same basis as those of officers and clerks. The new engineer and his English wife, Maria, sailed from London in January, 1840, on the chartered ship Forager and arrived at Fort Vancouver on October 8 of the same year. McLoughlin assured the committee that he would make the Carlesses as comfortable as possible, but he was not put to the test for long, at the depot at least, since the couple left in the Cowlitz on October 14 for Nisqually, where they took up residence on the Beaver. They never returned to Fort Vancouve.[224]

Undoubtedly Fort Vancouver society was the poorer for not having Maria Carless as a long-term resident. From all available evidence she was a woman of considerable charm and spunk. She sailed the dangerous and forbidding Northwest Coast with her husband until 1846, and during those years she gave birth to two children. Almost certainly she was the English woman on board the Beaver in late 1841 who was ardently but unsuccessfully wooed by an amorous native chief, much to the amusement of an eminent witness, Governor George Simpson.[225] The Carlesses returned to London in 1847.

The date of Isabella Logie's arrival at Fort Vancouver has not yet been searched out of the company's records. George B. Roberts asserted, many years later, that she reached the Columbia about 1839 or 1840, but her husband, James Logie, was not listed on the depot rolls for those years; and in fact his second term of service there does not seem to have begun until Outfit 1842 (the business year beginning June 1, 1842). There the matter must rest for the present.[226]

James Logie was born about 1814 at Westray in the Orkney Islands. He entered the company's employ as a young man and served for a number of years as a "middleman" or laborer and, beginning about 1837, as a dairyman at Fort Vancouver. There he was befriended by Mrs. Capendale in 1836. During this first engagement he gained a certain notoriety -- and much sympathy from Mr. and Mrs. Beaver -- due to a beating he received from William Glen Rae for not taking milk to the latter's cat. For this reason or some other he left the service about 1839 and returned to his native islands. There he married an Orkney woman, Isabella, whose maiden surname still eludes searchers, and the couple eventually returned to Fort Vancouver, where James once more worked as a laborer.

Clerk George B. Roberts was in charge of "outdoor operations" at the depot from about the date of McLoughlin's departure on furlough in March, 1838, until about November, 1842. He later stated that at some time during that period he put the Logies in charge of one of the company's dairies

on Sauvie Island, which was bounded by the Columbia River and the two mouths of the Willamette. And there, evidently, the Orkney couple remained for about seven years. As has been seen, when Roberts returned from England in 1844 with a British wife of his own, Mrs. Logie helped them as nurse and laundress. Otherwise Isabella Logie seems to have participated little in the life at the post.

Affairs seem to have gone on quietly with the Logies until James, like so many of his fellow employees, felt the call of the gold fields and left the company on March 1, 1849. Nothing is known of his adventures in California, but presumably he made at least a modest pile, for Roberts said that after "the glut of money in 49 & 50" Mrs. Logie returned to the Orkneys. But the "poor" woman found everything so changed that "she was very glad to hasten back" to her James and Sauvie Island. Her husband died on March 24, 1854, and Isabella subsequently married Jonathan Moar.[227]

If the memory of George Roberts is to be trusted, another British bride may have reached Fort Vancouver at about the same time as Mrs. Logie. William Burris was a native Londoner who evidently served on the Beaver and perhaps other company vessels on the Northwest Coast before he appeared on the Fort Vancouver rolls as cook for Outfit 1839. The next year he was listed as a steward, but he went home to England on the company's barque Vancouver during the fall of 1840. He

returned in the same vessel, evidently during the spring of 1842, and took up his former position as steward, although his wages of £30 a year did not begin until November 1 of that year.[228]

According to Roberts, Burris was "allowed" to bring his wife with him from England. While the clerk did not say specifically that Mrs. Burris was British, he seems to have implied that such was the case by mentioning her in a discussion of several wives who definitely were white. In any case Burris, and presumably his bride, settled down at the depot, probably living in the kitchen behind the manager's residence. On December 4, 1844, Burris left the company's service and retired to a claim he had purchased on the Tualatin Plains in the Willamette Valley.[229]

Roberts said that "poor" Burris, once he was no longer guided by the "familiar discipline" of company routine, "soon ran riot" and lost control of himself. Other evidence would appear to indicate that, at times at least, he was a religious, civic-minded citizen.[230] At any rate, during 1857 the deranged former steward murdered his wife and children because, as he said, he wanted them to die "while they were still good, so they would be sure to go to heaven."[231] He "ended his days a maniac in Portland prison."[232]

There is certain evidence tending to show that the wife Burris killed was an Indian.[233] If additional research should confirm this view, the question arises: Did Burris's English wife die before 1857, or did he have an Indian wife whom he took to England with him in 1840? Undoubtedly there is a solution to this problem in the company's archives and in census records, and diligent search may yet produce a more complete picture of the unfortunate Mrs. Burris. One thing appears certain, however: she made little impression upon the social life of Fort Vancouver.

It is possible that another white bride reached the depot in or about 1843. Pierre Pepin, a Columbia servant from Montreal who claimed to be of pure French descent, returned to Canada with the express at about that time. When he visited his family his tales so intrigued his thirty-two-year-old unmarried sister that she begged to be taken west with him. Pepin arranged a marriage with a fellow voyageur whose name is given only as Jean, and the sister "came with the brigade."[234] Whether this adventurous woman ever lived at Fort Vancouver is unknown.

Fortunately, the story of another English wife who reached the Columbia depot in the mid 1840s is better documented. George Barber Roberts was born in Aldeburgh on the east coast of England in 1816. After three years of training at the Greenwich Hospital naval school, he was apprenticed to the

Hudson's Bay Company when only fourteen and sailed for the Columbia in the Ganymede in 1830. Destined for maritime service on the Northwest Coast, Roberts was taken ill on the lower Columbia and was left behind at Fort George. In February, 1832, he was sent to Fort Vancouver, where for the next ten years -- with several interruptions for sea duty and detached service -- he filled successively more responsible positions, one of which was that of school teacher.

By 1842 Roberts had reached the rank of postmaster and was supervising the work of the men on the farms and about the depot. McLoughlin was so pleased with his "steady application" and "zealous discharge of his duty" that he recommended him for promotion to clerk, the necessary preliminary to rising to the high estate of officer.[235] But the London directors did not grant this first request, and a discouraged Roberts determined to return to England. He left for home as a passenger on the Cowlitz on November 10, 1842.

After reaching London early in May, 1843, Roberts went to Aldeburgh to visit his parents and to consider his future. "I was soon tired of home where I was out of place & a nobody," he later recalled, and he decided to apply to the governor and committee for reinstatement. The company did not often give a second chance to retiredd "officers" -- although Roberts had by no means reached that rank -- but because of McLoughlin's

recommendation the directors decided to make an exception in Roberts's case and engaged him as a clerk.[236]

Meanwhile the former Greenwich apprentice had become, to use her sister's words, "enamored with" his first cousin, Miss Martha Cable, also of Aldeburgh, and the two were married on September 27, 1843.[237] The wedding must have been somewhat hurried, since as late as that very day the chartered ship Brothers, which was to carry the bride and groom to the Columbia, was due to sail on October 1.[238] It seems to have been early December, however, before the vessel actually left Cowes, and the Robertses were safely on board.

At Honolulu the Brothers picked up the Reverend and Mrs. George Gary, Methodist missionaries, as passengers for the Columbia. Mr. Gary remarked in his journal that the Robertses were "very agreeable" fellow passengers. "They appear as very moral persons," he added, "respecting religion and ~~moral~~ things, as though well educated and religiously disposed." But he remarked that Mrs. Roberts was "much out of health" during the voyage.[239]

The Brothers reached Fort Vancouver late in May, 1844, and Chief Factor McLoughlin was glad to have the former apprentice back in the country.[240] Evidently Roberts was put promptly to work, since he was entered on the depot rolls as a clerk for the entire Outfit 1844, and on July 8 he was placed in charge of the warehouses, a highly responsible

position.[241] Yet on November 24, 1844, the "Big Doctor" wrote to the firm's secretary as follows: "Mr. Roberts remains in the company's employ, to take his chances of the service, in preference to taking a farm at Nisqually, and I think he has made a wise decision."[242] It would appear that Martha Roberts narrowly escaped being a pioneer housewife on what was at the time a very primitive frontier indeed.

As it was, the Robertses seemingly were as comfortable as could be expected at the depot, since apparently they were not assigned to the Bachelors' Quarters as were most clerks but were given a house of their own.[243] Martha quickly entered into the social life of the post, showing none of the snobbishness and prejudice which had characterized Mrs. Capendale and Mrs. Beaver. It is recorded, for example, that on one occasion she went riding with a group that included Mrs. Forbes Barclay, the part-Indian wife of the post surgeon.[244] As a friend wrote a few years later, it was a pleasure to know Martha Roberts; "she was not only a kind and good wife, but also a fond and an affectionate mother."[245]

During September, 1844, Mrs. Roberts "consented" to open a school for the children of the fort. She was to receive "about £5" per year for each pupil. Only ten scholars were enrolled at the outset, and until more could be mustered the school was to be kept in Mrs. Roberts's "own house."[246] Since

it is not likely that many servants could have afforded the fee, this incipient institution probably was intended for the offspring of the gentlemen. Certainly it was not long-lived, for late in July or early in August, 1845, Mrs. Roberts gave birth to her first child, a son, and she required nursing for some time thereafter.[247] Then, in December, 1846, George Roberts was transferred to Cowlitz Farm, and Martha went with him. She died there of "a Typhoid or Camp Fever" on July 27, 1850, leaving her husband and three young children.[248]

The next English woman known to have lived at Fort Vancouver was neither the wife of an employee nor was she herself an employee. But the passage of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Covington from Britain on company vessels and their residence in company quarters obviously was with the consent of the firm, although the exact nature of the arrangement has not yet been determined. It is generally said that the Covingtons were brought out to Vancouver "by the Hudson's Bay Company to teach the children of their employees at the fort."[249] There undoubtedly is a certain amount of truth in this hypothesis. The firm had for some time been interested in providing more adequate schooling at Fort Vancouver, and beginning in 1847 the Council for the Northern Department voted a subsidy for that purpose. But certainly there was more to the matter than the company's desire to obtain teachers, as is shown by

the actions of Richard Covington upon his arrival at the Columbia depot.

The Covingtons were both native Londoners. Richard was born in 1820 and his wife, Anne Charlotte, about 1825. Both were well educated and "were musical in voice and with instrument." Richard was a civil engineer by profession and had some talent as an artist.[250] For a reason still not entirely clear, this gifted young couple embarked in the fall of 1845 on the company's chartered vessel Admiral Moorson for the Columbia River. When the ship reached Honolulu, both the Covingtons debarked, Anne Charlotte to remain there for several months, her husband to transfer to the firm's barque Vancouver for the final leg of the voyage to the Columbia depot.[251]

On July 11, 1846, Clerk Thomas Lowe noted in his diary the arrival of "a Mr. Covington" at Fort Vancouver. "He is a civil Engineer," continued Lowe, "and has come to this Country to see what he can do for himself."[252] Five days later Richard left the depot for the Willamette Valley "to have a look at the Country." What he was seeking is revealed by Lowe when he recorded on September 19 that by then Covington had already taken up a land claim on Fourth Plain, about seven miles northeast of the fort at today's Four Corners near Orchards. But no improvements had yet been made, since by

that time Covington "was engaged in giving lessons to the children of the Fort."[253]

About a month and a half later Richard left for Fort Victoria in the belief that his wife might have arrived there in the Vancouver from Oahu. His surmise was correct, for on December 16, 1846, he was back at the Columbia depot with Anne Charlotte.[254] The couple took up residence within the pickets, and very soon both were busily engaged superintending the "Vancouver School." Whether or not this institution was operated on the subscription principle is not yet clear, but certainly the officers at Fort Vancouver were blessed with the results and looked forward with confidence to the time when their children would develop into "ornaments to society."[255]

From all indications Anne Charlotte Covington was a great addition to social life at the post. One who had known her in the Hawaiian Islands described her as "a lady of intelligence and refinement," and apparently she was on the best of terms with both the gentlemen and their families.[256] But on August 14, 1848, the Covingtons moved to their claim, and apparently the Vancouver school fell into another of its many intervals of quiescence.[257]

The post had not seen the last of Mrs. Covington, however. Her husband was seized by the gold mania and went off to the mines in California. Evidently to keep body and

soul together during his absence, Anne Charlotte opened a boarding school in the log cabin on the Covington claim. As early as May, 1849, a visitor found her "usefully and happily employed in teaching several pupils."[258] Undoubtedly most of the children then, as later, were the offspring of fort residents, so it could have been no surprise when, on a rainy December 22, 1849, "Mrs. Covington arrived from the 4th plain with all her pupils to spend the Christmas holidays."[259]

The interesting story of Anne Charlotte and her school after 1849 cannot be a part of this essay. She and her husband continued to live at their "Kalsus Farm" until 1867, seven years after the Hudson's Bay Company had abandoned Fort Vancouver. Their home, with its piano, violin, and guitar, was a center of local hospitality, and it is quite probable that Anne Charlotte remained as popular with the post gentlemen as she was with the army officers at nearby Columbia Barracks.[260]

Another European woman known to have resided at the old depot was Sarah Crate, although she could not have lived directly at the fort for more than brief intervals, if at all. William Frederick Crate was a native of London who came to Fort Vancouver in the mid 1830s as a miller and millwright.[261] In the spring of 1843 he left with the express to go home for the purpose of settling "family affairs" and expected to return at the first opportunity. He ~~took~~ arranged his personal business care of his private

by getting married, but instead of sailing for the Columbia during the fall of 1844 as he had arranged with the Governor and committee, he and his wife Sarah went to Vermont, where they settled for several years and where two children were born to them.[262]

Perhaps the Crates were not happy in the East, for when the position of miller at Fort Vancouver fell vacant William Crate reengaged with the company. He reached the old depot during November, 1849, and presumably went almost directly to the gristmills.[263] At least such an inference can be drawn from the fact that he and his wife filed for a donation land claim of 640 acres at the mill site before the end of the year. But Crate acknowledged that the mills belonged to the company, and he continued to operate them as an employee until the firm left Fort Vancouver in June, 1860.[264] The Crates remained on their claim until they moved to British Columbia in 1863. Sarah Crate seems to have made little impression on the other residents of Fort Vancouver; no comments upon her personality or activities at the post have yet been found.

It is definitely known that there were at least two other European women who resided at Fort Vancouver over the years of its existence, and there are hints that there were still more. And of course white women were no rarity there from the time

of the first female missionaries in 1836. The establishment of a United States military post in the immediate vicinity of the fort in 1849 eventually made contact with European women -- wives of officers and enlisted men and laundresses -- commonplace.

It is difficult to estimate the full impact of this long-continued and ever-increasing presence of white women upon the close-knit and structured society at Fort Vancouver. After the lure of the California gold mines really made itself felt in 1849 and 1850, the number of employees fell off dramatically, until by 1860 there were scarcely more than a dozen officers and men at the once-proud depot. Thus at the time when the impact from neighboring settlers and military dependents was greatest, there were relatively few company employees and their families to be influenced.

One trend seems apparent, however. Beginning with the visits of Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding in 1836, the native and mixed-blood women of Fort Vancouver appear to have enjoyed a freer social life and more contacts with visitors. Thomas Lowe's journal demonstrates that by the late 1840s the wives and daughters of the gentlemen were included in many picnics, riding excursions, parties, and other entertainments organized to honor or amuse guests. In 1849, for example, Chief Factor James Douglas and retired Clerk James Birnie brought their daughters along when they escorted the Reverend

Samuel C. Damon on a visit to Mrs. Covington on Fourth Plain.[265]

From the incomplete and unsatisfactory marriage records available, it does not appear that the arrival of European women was an important factor in inducing company employees to seek white wives instead of those of native or mixed blood, at least to a greater extent than might have been expected from the increased number of Europeans in the nearby general population. On August 14, 1848, the widower fort baker, Joseph Pétrain, married Catherine Dolan, "a girl from Ireland."[266] Pétrain, however, evidently lived in the village, and he left the company's employ to go to California in the spring of 1849.[267] John Murray, a native of Scotland and a laborer at the company's "Mill Farm," married Anne Fitzgerald, widow of a sergeant in the Fourth Infantry, at Fort Vancouver on July 19, 1853.[268] Undoubtedly the newlyweds lived at Mill Plain, a good six or seven miles east of the post. It is probable that these examples had little influence upon the pattern of marriages among the employees.

Indeed, the sketchy information existing seems to indicate that gentlemen and servants alike continued to prefer the "daughters of the country" for their mates even after Fort Vancouver fell within the limits of the United States and for as long as the company remained at Fort Vancouver. Clerk James Allan Grahame, a young man very much on the rise in the

firm's ranks, married mixed-blood Susan Birnie on September 5, 1847; and Clerk Thomas Lowe was united with Rose Birnie at Fort Vancouver on May 26, 1849.[269] Records of the Catholic mission at the old depot between 1846 and 1856 list a number of marriages between servants and Indian or mixed-blood women.[270]

The major change observable was the decline in the old custom of fur-trade marriages, at least at Fort Vancouver and its vicinity. Of course statistics on such unions are not available, but the increasing number of regular marriages seems evident from the records. This development cannot be attributed entirely, or perhaps even largely, to the ever-eroding influence of European women as residents, visitors, and neighbors. The work of missionaries of several denominations, the social pressures of a surrounding non-fur-trade population, and the requirements of land laws and other legal matters all combined to place the old customs under tremendous attack.

Yet one cannot overlook the fact that the arrival of Mrs. Cadendale and Mrs Be ver first really drove home to John McLoughlin and his associates the point that so-called civilized society and the "Christian community" were on their way to the Oregon Country and that they were essentially hostile to unions <u>á la</u>

façon du pays. In the words of Sylvia Van Kirk: "The coming of white women to the Indian Country brought into disrepute indigenous social customs of the fur trade . . . [and] symbolized the coming of a new era. The old fur-trade order was gradually giving way to agrarian settlement which was unquestioningly equated with civilization"[271]

NOTES

1. Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and W. L. Sublette to John H. Eaton (Secretary of War), St. Louis, October 29, 1830, in 21 Cong., 2 Sess., Senate, Ex. Doc. No. 39 (Serial 203), pp. 21-23.

2. E. E. Rich, ed., Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821 . . . (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. I, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1938), 387-88.

3. E. E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1870 (2 vols., Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vols. XXI, XXII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1958-1959), I, 604.

4. Archie Binns, Peter Skene Ogden: Fur Trader (Portland, Ore.: Binfords & Mort, 1967), 355-358; Gloria Griffen Cline, Peter Skene Ogden and the Hudson's Bay Company (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 214-216. The country wife and children of another famous Hudson's Bay Company officer, Samuel Black, had to fight Scottish relatives in the courts for at least eleven years after his murder in 1841 for their share of his estate, and research has thus far not revealed the final outcome of the case. E. E. Rich, ed., A Journal of a Voyage from Rocky Mountain Portage to the Sources of Finlays Branch . . . in Summer 1824, by Samuel Black (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. XVIII, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1955), xcvii-c.

5. Although be no means an ignored subject and although a large amount of scattered source material was available, the general topic of women and the fur trade received little serious attention until Walter O'Meara published his pioneer work, Daughters of the Country: The Women of the Fur Trade and Mountain Men (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1968). A recent and excellent study, more directly focused upon the Hudson's Bay Company, is Sylvia Van Kirk's article, "Women and the Fur Trade," The Beaver, Outfit 303:3 (Winter, 1972), 4-21. Brief but informative discussions are in G. P. V. Akrigg and Helen B. Akrigg, British Columbia Chronicle, 1778-1846 (Vancouver, B. C.: Discovery Press, 1975), 200-204; and Jan Gould, Women of British Columbia (Saanichton, B. C.: Hancock House Publications, Ltd.,

1975), 41-43. A basic work on the legal position of fur-trade marriages is "Decisions des tribunaux -- Cour D'Appel, Julia Woolrich vs. John Connolly," in La Revue Légale de Montreal, 1870, pp. 253-400.

6. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, I, 102.

7. O'Meara, Daughters of the Country, 241; E. E. Rich, "The Fur Traders," The Beaver, Outfit 307:1 (Summer, 1976), 49-50. For an excellent and most interesting account of the company's early efforts to educate and employ the native-born children of its employees see Jennifer Brown, "'A Colony of Very Useful Hands,'" The Beaver, Outfit 307:4 (Spring, 1977), 39-45.

8. Rich, Journal of Occurrences . . . by George Simpson, 244-45.

9. Ibid., 392, 395-96.

10. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 377.

11. Frederick Merk, ed., Fur Trade and Empire; George Simpson's Journal . . . 1824-1825 (Harvard Historical Studies, XXXI, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), 58.

12. Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 453.

13. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 127.

14. Ibid., 89-90, 131-32.

15. R. Harvey Fleming, ed., Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31 (Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. III, London: The Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), 32-36, 224n, 311, 314-15, 354, 358-59; Rich, History of the Hudson's Bay Company, II, 418, 429; Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," 7.

16. Fleming, Minutes of Council, 60-61.

17. Ibid., 217n, 218-31.

18. Ibid., 94-95.

19. Ibid., 153-54.

20. Ibid., 264-65.

21. There was a precedent for such agreements in a practice of the North West Company under which at least some partners and employees formally made attestations of marriage before a wintering partner or other person of rank.

22. Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," The Beaver, Outfit 303:3 (Winter, 1972), 7.

23. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 1792-1887 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1887), 300n; Fred Lockley, Oregon's Yesterdays (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1928), 41 (based on testimony of Thomas McKay's granddaughter). McLoughlin also appears to have had a [illegible] daughter from his connection with the Chippewa woman or from another early alliance. Her name in 1838 was Mrs. Catherine O'Gorman. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Second Series, 1839-44 (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. VI, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1943) (hereafter cited as HBRS VI), 219.

24. T. C. Elliott, "Marguerite Wadin McKay McLoughlin," in Oregon Historical Quarterly (hereafter cited as OHQ), XXXVI (December, 1935), 338-347.

25. Ibid., 342.

26. Clifford M. Drury, ed., First White Women Over the Rockies . . . (3 vols., Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1963-1966), I, 111. It is not clear that Mrs. Whitman could distinguish between Cree and Ojibwa, both Algonquian tongues.

27. Thomas E. Jessett, ed., Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 1836-1838 (Portland, Ore.: Champoeg Press, 1959), 141.

28. Theressa Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee (Portland, Ore.: Metropolitan Press, 1936), 153.

29. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 35.

30. Ibid., 147-48.

31. George B. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII (June-September, 1962), 208n, 216. Despite Beaver's assertions to the contrary, a marriage by a justice of the peace was by 1837 perfectly legal under the laws of both Canada and Great Britain. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 46, 115. It is perhaps significant, however, that McLoughlin permitted his daughter, Maria Eloise, to be married to William Glen Rae by Rev. Beaver.

32. Mikell de Lores Wormell Warner, trans., and Harriet Duncan Munnick, ann., Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest: Vancouver, Volumes I and II, and Stellamaris Mission (St. Paul, Ore.: French Prairie Press, 1972). Vancouver II, p. 6.

33. Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 300n.

34. Elizabeth Wilson, Oregon Sketches Gathered in 1878, MS, 19-21, in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Despite this attention from her husband, Mrs. McLoughlin was reported by one who knew her well to have been "by no means a happy woman" because of the prejudice shown by "many" white women. J. A. Grant, An Unsung Pioneer: Life and Letters of James Murray Yale, MS, 46, typescript in Yale Family Papers, Public Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B. C. The Public Archives of British Columbia are hereafter cited as PABC.

35. This sketch of Amelia Connolly is based on the following: Gould, Women of British Columbia, 47-48; John Sebastian Helmcken, The Reminiscences of Doctor John Sebastain Helmcken, ed. Dorothy Blakey Smith ([Vancouver, B. C.]: University of British Columbia Press, 1975), 120; Kenneth L. Holmes, "James Douglas," in LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West, IX (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1972), 139-146; Angus McDonald, "Angus McDonald: A Few Items of the West," Washington Historical Quarterly, VIII (July, 1917), 225.

36. Bancroft, History of British Columbia, 289; Gould, Women of British Columbia, 49.

37. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 34-35.

38. Gould, Women of British Columbia, 47.

39. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Third Series, 1844-46 (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. VII, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1944) (hereafter cited as HBRS VII), 275-76.

40. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 145.

41. HRBS VI, 175-76.

42. Burt Brown Barker, ed., Letters of Dr. John McLoughlin, Written at Fort Vancouver, 1829-1832 (Portland, Ore.: Binfords & Mort, 1948), 129-30.

43. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 193.

44. George Barclay, Journal, 1832-1838 [1839], MS, [n. p.], microfilm in the Oregon Historical Society, Portland, from the original in the British Museum, London. At least two recent writers have concluded that this procuress was the "Princess of Wales," favorite daughter of the great Chief Comcomly of the Chinooks. They may be in error, however, since their source, Simpson's 1824-25 journal, in which the Princess is mentioned as the principal procuress among the Chinooks, relates to conditions at Fort George and not Vancouver. But there definitely was a procuress at the latter post.

45. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 99,101.

46. Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842 (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1845), IV, 332-33.

47. For example, see George Simpson, An Overland Journey Round the World during the Years 1841 and 1842 (2 vols. in 1, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1847), I, 134-35.

48. For texts of typical marriage agreements, see Alexander Caulfield Anderson, Miscellaneous Papers Relating to Marriage Certificate, 1838, MS, in PABC; T. C. Elliott, "A Hudson's Bay Company Marriage Certificate," OHQ, X (September, 1909, 325-328; Margaret Arnett MacLeod, ed., The Letters of Letitian Hargrave (The Publications of the Champlain Society, vol. XXVIII, Toronto: The Camplain Society, 1947), 286-87.

49. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 86.

50. Archibald McDonald to John McLoughlin, Fort Colvile, June 6, 1841, in Archibald McDonald, Fort Colvile Correspondence, MS, in PABC.

51. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 75-77. Brotchie did not press the matter further once he learned that his little wood nymph was not all she seemed to be, but his troubles with the company over marital affairs were not ended. In 1844, on the point of sailing from London for the Columbia, he resigned because the directors would not allow his wife to accompany him. Brotchie did return to the Northwest Coast not too long thereafter, however, although the exact nature of his relationship with the company from then until he went into the lumber business for himself is not yet known to the present writer.

52. Carl Landerholm, trans., Notices & Voyages of the Famed Quebec Mission to the Pacific Northwest . . . 1838 to 1847 (Portland, Ore.: Oregon Historical Society, 1956), 10, 11, 13-14.

53. Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, Vancouver I, pp. 18-36.

54. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 29.

55. Ibid., 32-33, 184-85. Herbert Beaver listed six reasons given by the men for not formally marrying the women with whom they were living. They seem to boil down to the fact that many already considered themselves to be adequately married and that they wished to be free to separate should they desire to do so. Jessett, Reports and letters of Herbert Beaver, 118-120.

56. O'Meara, Daughters of the Country, 248; this quotation does not appear to be in the source cited by O'Meara. One Oregon pioneer intimated that McLoughlin was not too much bothered by how many mates employees kept "unlawfully," but he saw to it that "they had only one lawful woman." If they had more than one, said the observer, "old Dr. McLoughlin would hang them." These words are an exaggeration, of course, but they illustrate the force of the chief factor's feelings on this subject. François Xavier Matthieu, Refugee, Trapper and Settler, MS, 17, in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

57. HBRS VI, 1-3; Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 36-37.

58. Simpson, An Overland Journey, I, 142.

59. Elliott, "A Hudson's Bay Company Marriage Certificate," OHQ, X (September, 1909), 325-28.

60. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 48-51.

61. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 188. Susan Kardas has concluded that the Indian wives probably had a "fair understanding" of the chances against permanent unions with fur traders and "attached themselves to the white men for the short-term advantages in order to enjoy the novelty and prestige associated with it and to further their trade network." She added that the women realized "they were getting something of no permanent value" and, "more importantly from their viewpoint, did not gain a relationship with a new affinal kin, which . . . was greatly desired in marriage." Susan Kardas, "The People Bought This and the Clatsop Became Rich": A View of Nineteenth Century Fur Trade Relationships on the Lower Columbia between Chinookan Speakers, Whites, and Konakas (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1971), 154.

62. Harriet D. Munnick, "'Grandma Was an Indian': An Interview with David Pepin," The Pacific Historian, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter, 1968), 45-53; Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, pp. A-18, A-63, and Vancouver I, p. 6. For confirmation of the statement that newcomers were quartered in "the already indecently crowded huts" in the village, see Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 121.

63. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 188.

64. The 1850 Census seems to provide the best record available, but it is difficult to ascertain exactly which women were occupying company quarters from the schedules.

65. Robert Clouston to Donald Ross, York Factory, September 28, 1848, in Robert Clouston, Correspondence to 1849, MS, in Ross Collection, PABC.

66. E. E. Rich, ed., Part of Dispatch from George Simpson . . . 1829 (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. X, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1947) (hereafter cited as HBRS X), 235-36.

67. Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 108. This conclusion is supported by Jedediah Smith's observations of 1828-29 already noted.

68. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, First Series, 1825-38 (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. IV, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1941) (hereafter cited as HBRS IV), 260.

69. Simpson, An Overland Journey, I, 142.

70. HBRS IV, 162-63.

71. The number men is based upon an analysis of employee rolls, although as has been stated the number actually assigned to the post at any given time cannot be determined. The number of women is based upon statements, already noted, that most men had alliances of one type or another, tempered by the fact that certain men are known to have been temporary or permanent bachelors. The number of children is a rough estimate based upon Susan Kardas's analysis of family sizes, 1836-54. Kardas, "The People Bought This", 206-207. The number of slaves is drawn from Herbert Beaver's apparently accurate counts in 1836-37. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 20,31. It is probable, however, that the number had declined by 1845.

71. John A. Hussey, The History of Fort Vancouver and Its Physical Structure ([Olympia]: Washington State Historical Society, [1957]), 101.

73. Kardas, "The People Bought This", 207-209. According to Herbert Beaver there were also, at times at any rate, a "few" Hawaiian women resident at Fort Vancouver. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 131.

74. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII (June-September, 1962), 193.

75. Kardas, "The People Bought This", 210-11.

76. Ibid., 210-212.

77. Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 153.

78. Drury, First White Women, I, 111. McLoughlin, and undoubtedly McKay also, spoke fluent French.

79. Edward Belcher, Narrative of a Voyage Round the World . . . 1836-1842 (2 vols., London, 1843), I, 294.

80. Drury, First White Women, I, 102. The Catholic priests reported in 1840, however, that some of the children had been taught to speak, and even read, English in the fort school. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 12.

81. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 11-12.

82. Ibid., 13-19.

83. Kardas, "The People Bought This", 224.

84. The company's caste system is a subject too large to be treated in any detail in this essay. A few citations of sources dealing with this matter will be found in John A. Hussey, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Historic Structure Report, Historical Data (processed, 2 vols., Denver, Colo.: National Park Service, 1972-76), II, 135.

85. For information on the village and its structures see Hussey, History of Fort Vancouver, 216-219.

86. William A. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon, 1836-7," OHQ, XIII (June, 1912), 186.

87. John A. Hussey, "'Unpretending' but not 'Indecent,' Living Conditions at Mid-19th Century HBC Posts," The Beaver, Outfit 305:4 (Spring, 1976), 15.

88. Kardas, "The People Bought This", 216.

89. Nellie B Pipes, ed., "Indian Conditions in 1836-38," OHQ, XXXII (December, 1931), 341.

90. John Kirk Townsend, Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains . . . (Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Early Western Travels, vol. XXI, Cleveland, Ohio, 1905), 299. For examples of statements that the mixed-blood and Indian wives were good housekeepers, see John Dunn, The Oregon Territory, and the British North American Fur Trade (Philadelphia: G. B. Zieber & Co., 1845), 104-105.

91. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 145-46. Mrs. Whitman in 1836 also reported that "the wives here are not first rate housekeepers." Drury, First White Women, I, 110.

92. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 140.

93. Ibid., 142. For the ration in 1837, with seasonal changes, see Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon," OHQ, XIII, 186.

94. Simpson, An Overland Journey, I, 142. Certain higher grade servants and European employees hired under special agreements were allowed modest additions to the ration, such as one pound of tea a month and 1/4 gallon of molasses a week. Dugald Mactavish to Angus McDonald, Fort Vancouver, June 11, 1847, in Fort Nisqually Collection, MS, Box 1, in The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California. See also Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 238.

95. John Minto, "Reminiscences of Experiences on the Oregon Trail in 1844 -- II," OHQ, II (September, 1901), 234. For the reference to cooked rations see Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 197.

96. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 329.

97. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 31.

98. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon," OHQ, XIII, 186, 192; Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 352-56. The subject of Indian slavery is too large to be treated at any length in this essay. For a brief outline of this institution and of the steps taken by the company to ameliorate it see the pages in Merk's work cited immediately above.

99. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 370. For additional testimony as to the skill of the Vancouver wives as seamstresses, see Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 104.

100. Landerholm, Notices & Voyages, 146. Two years later the Fort Vancouver depot inventory listed four spinning wheels, but they may have been for sale to the European wives of employees, to missionaries, or to American settlers. But in 1838 Myra Eells wrote that at that time "there was not a spinning wheel in this whole country." Drury, First White Women, II, 119.

101. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 81.

102. Ibid., 142.

103. The story of Mrs. McIntosh and her family has not yet been completely assembled, although a number of persons have been interested in it. For citations of several of the main sources, see Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, II, 160.

104. There is an abundance of evidence upon this point, and it is unanimous. The words of McLoughlin's daughter, Eloisa, should be considered the best authority, however, since she lived in the Big House for many years and knew the fort routine well. "At Fort Vancouver the servants were all men," she stated in later years. Eloisa Rae Harvey, Life of John McLoughlin . . ., MS, 15, in the Bancroft Library.

105. For citations concerning the use of the wash house in the fort by women, see Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, I, 84.

106. Rich, Journal of Occurrences . . . by George Simpson, 174, 342.

107. Isaac Cowie, The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874 . . . (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 213; Gould, Women of British Columbia, 44.

108. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 536-39.

109. HBRS IV, 161n.

110. Archer Butler Hulbert, ed., The Call of the Columbia: Iron Men and Saints Take the Oregon Trail (Overland to the Pacific, vol. IV, [Denver], 1934), 180-83.

111. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 225.

112. George Simpson McTavish, Behind the Palisades: An Autobiography (Victoria, B. C.: Colonist Printers, Limited, 1963), 42.

113. O'Meara, Daughters of the Country, 188.

114. Gould, Women of British Columbia, 44.

115. MacLeod, The Letters of Letitia Hargrave, 87.

116. Gould, Women of British Columbia, 44; Simpson, An Overland Journey, I, 121.

117. John W. Hakola, ed., Frontier Omnibus (Missoula: Montana State University Press; Helena: Historical Society of Montana, 1962), 33.

118. Harvey, Life of John McLoughlin, MS, 12-13. Since Mrs. Harvey did not write these words herself but dictated them, minor corrections have been made in spelling and punctuation.

119. John Ball, Autobiography of John Ball, Compiled by his Daughters, Kate Ball Powers, Flora Ball Hockins, Lucy Ball (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1925), 93.

120. Drury, First White Women, I, 101, 106n; Harvey, Life of John McLoughlin, MS, 13. According to William H. Gray, who was with the Whitman party, Mrs. McLoughlin was not considered, presumably by herself or Dr. McLoughlin, "sufficiently accomplished, at first, to take a seat at the ladies' table," and neither was Mrs. Douglas, but in a short time Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding, "in opposition to the wish of the governor and his chief clerk, brought them both to the ladies' table." William H. Gray, A History of Oregon, 1792-1849, Drawn from Personal Observation and Authentic Information (Portland, Ore.: Harris & Holman, 1870), 151. This account does not agree with that in Mrs. Whitman's diary, but it undoubtedly is true to the extent that it credits the missionaries with breaking down the social isolation of the officers' wives.

121. Drury, First White Women, I, 101-102, 105, 105n-106n, 107.

122. Harvey, Life of John McLoughlin, MS, 13.

123. For examples see Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 153; Lydia Nye, Journal, MS, 69.

124. Josial L. Parrish, Anecdotes of Intercourse with the Indians, MS, 102-103, in the Bancroft Library.

125. For examples, see Samuel C. Damon, A Journey to Lower Oregon & Upper California, 1848-49 (San Francisco: John J. Newbegin, 1927), 22; Thomas Lowe, Private Journal Kept at Fort Vancouver, Columbia River [1843-1850], typescript, 24, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 44, 45, etc., in PABC.

126. Theodore Talbot, The Journals of Theodore Talbot, 1843 and 1849-52 . . . , ed. Charles H. Carey (Portland, Ore.: Metropolitan Press, 1931, 88.

127. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 332.

128. Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, II, 45.

129. Victor J. Farrar, ed., "The Nisqually Journal," Washington Historical Quarterly, X (July, 1919), 216.

130. Silas Holmes, Journal Kept . . . During a Cruise in the U. S. Ship Peacock and the Brigs Porpoise and Oregon, 1838-1839-1840-1841-1842, MS, II, 306, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. The physical structure and furnishings of the Big House have been discussed in detail, with full citations of authorities, in Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, I, 120ff.

131. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 195. This theme of romantic tradition vs. reality in the furnishings of the manager's residence is discussed at some length in Hussey, "'Unpretending' but not 'Indecent,'" The Beaver, Outfit 306:4 (Spring, 1975), 12-17.

132. For an extended discussion of the furnishings of the Bachelors' Quarters, with full citation of authorities, see Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, I, 137-38; II, 173-86.

133. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 81-82.

134. Gray, A History of Oregon, 163.

135. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 73.

136. Ibid., 140.

137. Harry N. M. Winton, ed., "William T. Newby's Diary of the Emigration of 1843," OHQ, XL (September, 1939), 240n.

138. John Warren Dease, Memorandum Book, 1829, MS, entry for November 1, 1829, in Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa; Drury, First White Women, I, 110.

139. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 79.

140. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 328.

141. In the reminiscences of McLoughlin's daughter, Eloisa, there is a phrase which appears to support Wilkes's account. "The ladies who were there then," she said, "lived separately in their own mess-room." Harvey, Life of John McLoughlin, MS, 12. The diary of a Protestant missionary

in 1844 may shed additional light on the matter. "The men and women in this place -- I mean those belonging to the Hudson Bay Company, never eat together, and all visitors either are provided by themselves when they eat together, or are separated, the man being taken to the hall where the men eat, and the women eat with other women belonging to those who are in the employ of the Company." Charles Henry Carey, ed., "Diary of Rev George Gary," OHQ, XXIV (March, 1923), 79.

142. Drury, First White Women, I, 101, 106n.

143. Archer Butler Hulbert and Dorothy Printup Hulbert, eds., Marcus Whitman, Crusader, Part One, 1802 to 1839 (Overland to the Pacific, vol. VI, [Denver, Colo.], 1936), 240-42.

144. For examples, see Drury, First White Women, I, 106; Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 153; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 328-29.

145. For examples, see John Minto, "Reminiscences of Experiences on the Oregon Trail in 1844 -- II," OHQ, II (September, 1901), 235-36; E. Ruth Rockwood, ed., "Diary of Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., 1847-1858," OHQ, XL (June, 1939), 180-81.

146. R. C. Clark, "Editorial Comment: Reverend Herbert Beaver," OHQ, XXXIX (March, 1938), 70; Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 79.

147. J. M. S. Careless, "The Lowe Brothers, 1852-70: A Study in Business Relations on the North Pacific Coast," BC Studies, no. 2 (Summer, 1969), 1-18.

148. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 79.

149. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 370.

150. William Fraser Tolmie, The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie, Physician and Fur Trader (Vancouver, B. C.: Mitchell Press Limited, 1963), 174-75.

151. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 4; Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, II, 73.

152. John S. Galbraith, The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), 104; Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 66, 84.

153. Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, p. A-54.

154. W. Stewart Wallace, Documents Relating to the North West Company (The Publications of the Champlain Society, vol. XX, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), 433; Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," The Beaver, Outfit 303:3 (Winter, 1972), 21.

155. Harriet D. Munnick, "Mission Roll Call," Marion County History, XI (1972-76), 23.

156. A. D. Pambrum [Pambrun?], Autobiography of A. D. Pambrum, typescript, 44, in files of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

157. Hakola, Frontier Omnibus, 32.

158. Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," The Beaver, Outfit 303:3 (Winter, 1972), 14.

159. Pipes, "Indian Conditions in 1836-38," OHQ, XXXII (December, 1931), 335.

160. Hakola, Frontier Omnibus, 31.

161. Ross Cox, The Columbia River . . . , ed. Edgar I. Stewart and Jane R. Stewart (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 362.

162. Pipes, "Indian Conditions in 1836-38," 336.

163. Mark, Fur Trade and Empire, 101. It is difficult to tell which practice, head flattening or infanticide, Simpson intended to say had ended.

164. Paul Kane, Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America . . . (Toronto: The Radisson Society of Canada, 1925), 123-24.

165. In 1839 a visitor to Fort Vancouver stated definitely that the heads of half-breed children were never flattened. Barclay, Journal, MS, [n. p.]. The subject of

child raising and education at Fort Vancouver is of much interest and involves additional cultural conflicts, but it is far too large to be treated in this essay.

166. Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 104; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 370.

167. Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 104.

168. Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 370.

169. Drury, First White Women, I, 107.

170. Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 105; Wilkes, Narrative, IV, 370.

171. Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 105. For confirmation of the fact that the wives of all classes of the company's employees wore European dress, see Barclay, Journal, MS, [n. p.].

172. James Carnegie, Earl of Southesk, Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains, A Diary and Narrative of Travel . . . during a Journey through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, in 1859 and 1860 (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1875), 44.

173. Kane, Wanderings of an Artist, 126.

174. Dunn, The Oregon Territory, 89.

175. Tolmie, The Journals of William Fraser Tolmie, 178.

176. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 193. It should be noted that the "petticoat" was sometimes made of rushes or dried grass rather than cedar bark. See Merk, Fur Trade and Empire, 97.

177. Pipes, "Indian Conditions in 1836-38," OHQ, XXXII (December, 1931), 335.

178. Ibid.

179. Barclay, Journal, MS, [N. p.].

180. Drury, First White Women, I, 102-103.

181. Gould, Women of British Columbia, 43.

182. HBRS IV, 130-31.

183. HBRS IV, 130n. The committee authorized McLoughlin to pay Mrs. Corney a fair remuneration for her services.

184. Peter Corney, Early Voyages in the North Pacific, 1813-1818 (Fairfield, Wash.: Ye Galleon Press, 1965), 10, 11, 34-35, 39, 40, 44.

185. Governor and Committee to J. McLoughlin, August 28, 1835, HBRS IV, 161n.

186. Ibid.

187. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 21.

188. HBRS IV, 160-61.

189. Clark, "Editorial Comment: Reverend Herbert Beaver," OHQ, XXXIX (March, 1938), 69.

190. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII (June-September, 1962), 225.

191. Hulbert, Marcus Whitman, Crusader, Part One, 240-42.

192. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 21.

193. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Oregon (2 vols., San Francisco: The History Company, 1886-1888), I, 51.

194. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 30-31, 43.

195. Ibid., 5-6.

196. HBRS IV, 165.

197. Clark, "Editorial Comment," OHQ, XXXIX, 69. The Columbia evidently left Fort Vancouver on November 20, 1836.

198. HBRS IV, 183.

199. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 225.

200. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 68.

201. Ibid., xviii, 21.

202. Ibid., xv-xvi.

203. Thomas M. Anderson, Army Episodes and Anecdotes; or Life at Vancouver Barracks: The Romance and the Reality of the Frontier, 1853-1893, typescript, appendix, 467-68, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, xiv-xv.

204. "George T. Allen [sic]," The Pacific Express (Portland, Ore.), April 12, 1888.

205. Clark, "Editorial Comment," OHQ, XXXIX (March, 1938), 69.

206. For Herbert Beaver's enumeration of the physical conditions to which he and his wife objected, see Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 67, 68, 73, 79-80, 80-81.

207. Clark, "Editorial Comment," 69.

208. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII (June-September, 1962), 196.

209. Clark, "Editorial Comment," 70. The usually accurate Dr. Clark confused Eloisa McLoughlin's wedding in early 1838 with the double ceremony of about a year earlier at which James Douglas married Amelia Connolly and Benjamin McKenzie married Katherine Campbell. Therefore, his references to the white dresses may be related to the 1837 ceremony. It is known that Mrs. Beaver did make a white dress for a young girl in connection with the earlier wedding, but where Clark obtained the information that "all" the flower girls wore white dresses is not yet apparent to the present writer. See Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 34, 35, 43; Gray, A History of Oregon, 162 (Gray also confuses the two weddings). Jessett repeats the story of the white dresses at Eloisa's wedding but does not give a source. Thomas E. Jessett, "The Origins of the Episcopal Church in the Pacific Northwest," OHQ, XLVIII (September, 1947), 239.

210. Anderson, Army Episodes, MS, 467. It seems evident that Beaver was taken to task by both McLoughlin and the London directors for this type of hospitality.

211. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 57, 58.

212. Ibid., 86.

213. Ibid., 111.

214. Bancroft, History of Oregon, I, 50.

215. Gay, Life and Letters of Mrs. Jason Lee, 153.

216. For an excellent discussion this subject, see Robert J. Loewenberg, Equality on the Oregon Frontier: Jason Lee and the Methodist Mission, 1834-43 (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1976).

217. Gray, A History of Oregon, 164.

218. Anderson, Army Episodes, MS, 468.

219. Jessett, Reports and Letters of Herbert Beaver, 85-86.

220. It is not yet certain that these families traveled from England to New York and then on to Red River with McLoughlin. They may have been sent via Hudson Bay, or they may have been recruited in Canada or at Red River. It is possible that men recruited in America could have had native or mixed-blood wives. The weight of evidence thus far examined, however, points to recruitment in Britain.

221. John McLoughlin to George Simpson, Fort Vancouver, March 20, 1840, in HBRS VI, 234.

222. Ibid.

223. Ibid., 77, 234. Johnstone probably was the "Johnston" who turned up as a free settler at Nisqually about early 1842. Ibid., 77n. Baldero soon found Nisqually unsatisfactory for farming and moved on to the Tualatin Plains. Ibid., 120. John Flett, one of the settlers brought by the company from Red River to Puget Sound in 1841, many years later appeared to indicate that "John Johnson" and "William Boldro" joined that party "soon after" the first group of settlers made their agreement at Red River and came overland with that party. However, company records prove that Johnstone and Baldero were in the Columbia Department prior to 1841 and that they joined those settlers who established themselves at Nisqually at the end of 1841 or very early in 1842. [John Flett], "Interesting Local History," Tacoma Daily Ledger (Tacoma, Wash.), February 18, 1885.

224. HBRS VI, 19, 20-21, 387-88; Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 225, 232.

225. Simpson, An Overland Journey, I, 112.

226. Mr. and Mrs. Logie may have been one of the couples the London directors planned to send out as dairymen for the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company in the fall of 1839, in which case they may have been stationed at Nisqually or Cowlitz before coming to Fort Vancouver about 1842. However, George B. Roberts said many years later that he thought Mrs. Logie and Mrs. Burris arrived during the same year. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 225. It is known that Mrs. Burris arrived in the barque Vancouver probably in the spring of 1842, although her husband's wages at Fort Vancouver do not seem to have begun until November 1, 1842.

227. For the story of Isabella Logie see Lewis A. McArthur, "Oregon Geographic Names: Fifth Supplement," OHQ, XLIV (December, 1943), 350; Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 225, 227; Omar Spencer, The Story of Sauvies Island (Portland, 1950), 58-59.

228. Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, I, 171.

229. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 10. However, his wages were paid until December 31, 1844.

230. OHQ, XXXVI, 379.

231. Lockley, Oregon's Yesterdays, 22.

232. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 225; Weekly Oregonian (Portland), April 4, 1857, p. 2, col. 3.

233. Lockley, Oregon's Yesterdays, 22.

234. Kunzick, "'Grandma Was an Indian,'" Pacific Historian, vol. 12, no. 1 (Winter, 1968), 50.

235. For Roberts's early life and his experiences at Fort Vancouver to 1842, see Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII (June-September, 1962), 102-103, 181, 226-27; for McLoughlin's recommendation and explanation of Roberts's reasons for returning home, see HBRS VI, 81. For Outfit 1842 Roberts was carried on the Fort Vancouver rolls as a clerk, but as McLoughlin made clear he was actually classed as a postmaster, from which rank there was no possibility of direct promotion to clerk without the approval of the London directors.

236. HBRS VI, 315.

237. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," OHQ, LXIII, 227, 237. Martha Cable was born July 21, 1810.

238. HBRS VI, 315.

239. Charles Henry Carey, ed., "Diary of Rev. George Gary," OHQ, XXIV (March, 1923), 71,72.

240. E. E. Rich, ed., The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Third Series, 1844-46 (The Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, vol. VII, London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1944) (hereafter cited as HBRS VII), 13, 30.

241. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 1.

242. HBRS VII, 64.

243. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 4.

244. Ibid., 11.

245. Oregon Spectator (Oregon City), August 22, 1850, p. 3, col. 2.

246. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 4.

247. Ibid., 21; Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 225.

248. Roberts, "The Round Hand of George B. Roberts," 212-13, 228.

249. Carl Landerholm, "The Covingtons and Covington House," Clark County History (1960), 5.

250. Ibid.

251. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 43, 44, 55.

252. Ibid., 43.

253. Ibid., 44, 49. Evidently Covington did not formally file claim for this property until April 11, 1848. Landerholm, "The Covingtons," 5. Fourth Plain at that time was also known as "Calsas" or "Kalsus" Plain.

254. Lowe, Private Journal MS, 53, 55.

255. Affidavit of Richard Covington, August 22, 1863, MS, in General Land Office, Old Townsites Series, Docket 1 (165), in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.; Landerholm, "The Covingtons," 5.

256. Damon, A Journey to Lower Oregon, 22-23.

257. Affidavit of Richard Covington, August 22, 1863, MS.

258. Damon, A Journey to Lower Oregon, 22-23.

259. Lowe, Private Journal, MS, 70. During her stay at Vancouver on this occasion there is abundant evidence that Mrs. Covington mixed socially with the part-Indian families in the fort. Ibid., 70, 72.

260. Landerholm, "The Covingtons," 6; Vancouver Women's Club, Covington House (broadside, n. p., n. d.).

261. HBRS VI, 23n.

262. For information concerning the story of the Crates in Vermont the writer is indebted to Professor William R. Sampson of the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

263. British and American Joint Commission for the Final Settlement of the Claims of the Hudson's Bay and Puget's Sound Agricultural Companies, [Papers] (14 vols., Washington, D. C.; Montreal, 1865-69), [II], 109.

264. Hussey, History of Fort Vancouver, 206.

265. Damon, A Journey to Lower Oregon, 22.

266. Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, p. A-64, and Vancouver II, p. 99.

267. Hussey, Fort Vancouver . . . Historic Structure Report, Historical Data, I, 50. Pétrain later became a rather prominent citizen of Clark County, Washington, and thus his second wife must have been a good influence on him, but no description of her is yet known to the present writer.

268. Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, Vancouver II, pp. 138-39.

269. Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria, B. C., Parish Register, Marriages, 1837-1872, MS, 4, 6, photostat in PABC.

270. Warner and Munnick, Catholic Church Records, Vancouver II, pp. 68-159.

271. Van Kirk, "Women and the Fur Trade," The Beaver, Outfit 303:3 (Winter, 1972), 21.