

# **FORT GEORGE RESEARCH INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT**

ASTORIA, OREGON

*A Special Report, produced as part of*

A Special History Study for Lewis and Clark National Historical Park for the Purpose of Documenting Historic Properties within the Columbia-Pacific Region in Washington and Oregon

Roy Watters, Douglas Deur, Douglas Wilson, and Robert Cromwell

Portland State University  
Department of Anthropology

*and*

Fort Vancouver National Historical Site  
Vancouver, WA

December 2009

A project completed under Task Agreement J8W07080013, Modification 01 between the National Park Service and Portland State University under Cooperative Agreement H8W07060001.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Located in what is today Astoria, Oregon, Fort George (also known as “Fort Astor” or “Fort Astoria”) was a fur trading post of particular importance in the history of the Pacific Northwest. Established in 1811 – only five years after the departure of Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery - by employees of John Jacob Astor’s Pacific Fur Company, the fort would become the first permanent American settlement west of the Rocky Mountains. This fort, commonly called “Fort Astor” or “Astoria” in honor of its founder, quickly became the hub of a regional fur trade centered on the lower Columbia River. A diverse polyglot of Native peoples converged at this fort, which was operated by Pacific Fur Company employees who, themselves, represented French Canadian, Scots, American, Native Hawaiian and various eastern Native American ethnicities. During the War of 1812, this fort became the focal point of international tensions in the region, and by 1813 the Pacific Fur Company employees transferred ownership of the fort to representatives of the British-owned North West Company. The fort continued operation as before, under the name of “Fort George.” In 1818, the fort was ceremoniously returned to the United States at the end of that war, under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent, but the North West Company continued to operate the fort largely uninterrupted after that date. In 1821, the North West Company was merged into the Hudson’s Bay Company, which assumed management of the fort and used it as the company’s principal depot in the region until the construction of Fort Vancouver in 1825. Fort George was gradually eclipsed in its regional significance by Fort Vancouver, but continued to operate as a HBC fort until 1848, when the Oregon Treaty designated Astoria as indisputably American territory. Despite its gradual decline, the fort served as a key trading center for Native peoples of the Pacific coast and lower Columbia region, and as a cornerstone of Anglo-American settlement in the region. As such, the Fort George story is fundamentally linked to many of the historical events, characters, and resources that are managed and interpreted by Lewis and Clark National Historical Park.

In the years following HBC abandonment of Fort George, the lands formerly occupied by the fort were gradually reoccupied and redeveloped as part of the urban fabric of Astoria, Oregon. Today, the site is commemorated in a small city park, but the bulk of the fort site underlies roadways, residential and commercial structures, parking lots, parks, and private yards.

With the imminent bicentennial of the fort’s founding, scheduled for spring of 2011, the community of Astoria and the National Park Service are exploring avenues for cultural resource documentation and interpretation related to the fort’s history. Simultaneously, private landowners who possess portions of the

fort site have expressed interest in possible archaeological reconnaissance at the fort site; NPS staff and PSU faculty have made initial assessments of the site and determined that potentials may yet exist for archaeological investigations in relatively undisturbed portions of Astoria's urban fabric.

In response to these opportunities, as well as the encouragement of the private owner of much of the former Fort George site, the National Park Service determined that an assessment of information regarding materials regarding Fort George was needed. In particular, the NPS is seeking information regarding the availability of historical or archaeological information that might help to precisely locate the historic fort site to guide possible future archaeological reconnaissance at the site. In addition, the NPS is seeking information regarding the whereabouts of information that might be used in the larger documentation and/or interpretation of the Fort George site as part of the larger management and interpretive mandates of Lewis and Clark National Historical Park. Therefore, the NPS approved initial reconnaissance research on these themes. The report that follows presents a basic overview of findings from a reconnaissance level research survey. The report also presents a prospectus of research opportunities, suggested by reconnaissance research findings, that might guide future archaeological, historical, and ethnographic research of Fort George.

## METHODS

This reconnaissance research project undertook the task of reviewing key archival collections in northwest Oregon in order to document physical characteristics of Fort Astoria, established in 1811. The project also sought to determine the fort's configuration over time, beginning with its founding by John Jacob Astor under the United States flag, its subsequent rechristening as Fort George and transfer to the British controlled Pacific Fur Company, its eventually return to U.S. jurisdiction, and its continued used as a trade outpost of the British controlled Hudson's Bay Company. The project also collected materials which illustrate the incorporation of the fort site into the City of Astoria as well as subsequent discoveries of material remains present at the site.

Research for this project involved visiting the collections of key archival repositories and reviewing all available maps, images, and other relevant materials related to the Fort George site. Relevant documents were located using available collection catalogs, indexes, and through consultation with archival staff. These collections included:

- 1) Oregon Historical Society Library (Portland, OR)
- 2) Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (Salem, OR), and
- 3) Clatsop County Historical Society Museum (Astoria, OR)

A small number of relevant documents were also reviewed in the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Archives. The primary aim was to obtain documents which showed the configuration of the fort over time, and thus early maps and graphic illustrations of the fort were the primary materials sought. Some first person narratives of the establishment and occupation of the fort also provide details of the fort's configuration and utilization. Because we also wanted to understand the development of the site after the fort was abandoned, photographic and published materials documenting the early growth of the city were also identified. This project sought to identify primary documents associated with the site, although a select number of secondary sources were identified which have compiled information relevant to the utilization of the site over time.

Research primarily focused on the archival collections of the Oregon Historical Society in Portland and the Clatsop County Historical Society in Astoria. Both institutions hold useful but limited collections on the fort itself, although documents from the first half of the 19th century are almost exclusively copies of originals held in other collections, including the National Archives in

Washington, DC. Archival materials related to the incorporation of the fort site into the city include, historic newspaper accounts, GLO maps, survey plats of the area, photographs, and select secondary sources which document the site itself. Research at the State Historical Preservation Office in Salem confirmed that there have been no academic or professional archaeological excavations undertaken at the site.

In addition, the research team consulted with archivists at certain regional repositories regarding the availability of pertinent materials, including:

- 1) Columbia River Maritime Museum (Astoria, OR)
- 2) Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Archives (Vancouver, WA)
- 3) Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Archives (Warrenton, OR)
- 4) Washington State Historical Society (Olympia, WA)

The methods utilized in this research project were primarily dictated by the limited resources allocated for this initial reconnaissance research project. The primary constraint on this project was the small number of hours budgeted for archival research. Research staff at the Oregon Historical Society has been drastically cut due to recent reductions in state funding. Limited access to key archival staff and incomplete archival catalogs at both historical societies complicated the identification of relevant materials held in those collections. The materials presented in the following pages are not exhaustive but are rather representative of the locally available documentation of the Fort George site.

## OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

This project sought to identify and compile primarily cartographic and graphic depictions of Fort George and 19<sup>th</sup> century Astoria. A large number of maps, plans, illustrations, and photographs were collected through extensive searches of regional depositories. In addition to maps and illustrations of the fort site, a few primary sources from the 19<sup>th</sup> century were identified. A number of newspaper article clippings were also obtained through the Clatsop County Historical Society. Finally, a handful of secondary sources documenting details of the site were obtained. All of these categories are explained in more detail below. A summary description of these findings is included in the narrative description following this section and many of the sources identified have been included in the appendices to this report.

### Maps, Lithographs, and Other Graphical Materials

A large collection of maps and illustrations of the Fort George site were compiled during the course of this research. The map data include plan maps of the fort, regional maps of the Columbia River, and maps of the town of Astoria. The earliest non-narrative documents related to the fort site are illustrations which were mass produced in narrative accounts of individuals visiting or stationed at Fort Astoria. Illustrations of the fort and the town of Astoria were regularly published throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A few photographs from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were located at the Oregon Historical Society (OHS), and many more likely exist in various collections.

Interestingly, only three plan maps of the fort and stockade were located. The earliest is of Fort Astoria in 1811, but the OHS has no provenance for this plan stating only that it may have been published in 1860. It is included in the appendix but not included in the description of findings below. The first authoritative plan was produced by Lt. T. Saumaros in 1818 as part of the proceedings which returned the fort to American sovereignty. An original journal kept by Chief Factor Alexander Lattie, stationed at Fort George in 1846, is held at the Clatsop County Historical Society. The first page of this journal has a plan map of the fort, which at that time simply functioned as a trading post.

A large number of river charts and maps from the 19<sup>th</sup> century document the location of the fort with varying degrees of detail. The earliest is 1837 Chart by the United States Navy which generally shows the location of the fort but lacks shoreline details which accurately depict the location of the fort. As mapping

and charting improvements came to the region the location of the early fort was more accurately depicted. By 1839 a more detailed map was produced by Sir Edward Belcher that not only depicted shoreline details, but also noted the location of several buildings and included an inset illustration of the fort. After 1850 a number of river charts include a surprising amount of detailed information about the city, including street grids and building locations.

The first map of the future city was a Plan of Astoria executed by J.M. Shively in 1844 as part of preparing his land claim. This first map is useful because Shively used standard survey methods to develop the future city grid and because he depicted the location of the government property upon which the fort had been built. The first GLO map dates from 1856 and it depicts three structures at the fort site. Sanborn Insurance Maps of the city were first produced in 1884 and they precisely document the development of the city upon and around the site of the fort from the 19<sup>th</sup> century into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest illustration of the fort is dated 1813 and comes from the 1819 publication of Gabriel Franchere's, a clerk for John Jacob Astor, account of his time at Fort Astoria. This illustration shows the stockade, two bastions, and two long buildings inside the stockade. The American flag flies above four cannons on the bank above the river. By 1839, an illustration by Sir Belcher depicts a cluster of houses without defensive structures. Examining 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrations together, one can begin to observe periods of stability and periods of change at the site of the original fort. By 1854 these illustrations show the community expanding well beyond the original fort site.

Just a handful of photographs were obtained from the Oregon Historical Society for this project. A circa 1855 photograph shows the fort site surrounded by the growing town. It also documents the shifting of commercial activity away from the fort site to the commercial center developing to the west. Photographs from 1866 to 1885 further document the growth of the city and commerce centered around the quickly expanding wharf.

### Eyewitness Accounts of Fort George and Early Astoria

This reconnaissance research survey was principally focused on cartographic and graphic documents related to the fort site. During this undertaking a number of early descriptions of the fort and early settlement were also identified and an assortment of these was collected. These accounts were published during the nineteenth century in book form or in newspaper articles. Other recollections are undoubtedly documented in private journals or unpublished narratives, some of which may be available in dispersed archives and libraries.

A number of these first hand descriptions have been quoted in the following pages and a representative sample has been included in the Appendix E. The selections cited here are only a representative sample, as a systematic search for narrative descriptions of the site was not part of this reconnaissance study. A larger collection of these accounts could be readily assembled for use in future interpretive or archaeological efforts.

### Accounts of Inadvertent Archaeological Discoveries at the Fort George Site

The Clatsop County Historical Society has collected a number of newspaper accounts of inadvertent archaeological discoveries reported in local newspapers. Copies of the articles collected are located in Appendix F. A more systematic search for these accounts may uncover additional details which could be compiled into GIS data file and utilized to facilitate future archaeological investigations of the Fort George site.

### Secondary Literature Documenting the Fort Site and Early Astoria

Three short articles summarizing historic information about the configuration and development of the area were identified during the course of this project. Grace Morris (1937) collected descriptions of the fort and early settlement to document the configuration and evolution of the site between 1811 and 1850. Liisa Penner (1993) collected descriptions of burial sites and inadvertent discoveries of human remains to compile a list of cemeteries and gravesites related to the early period of European occupation. Jerry Carter (2007) documents the early development of the city grid and describes a recent cooperative effort between volunteers and the City of Astoria to successfully locate the Shively's 1844 survey monument in a city sewer access tunnel. These articles have been included in Appendix G.

## MAPS AND IMAGES OF THE FORT SITE, 1811-PRESENT

The following discussion links a selection of illustrations and maps collected during this reconnaissance research survey. These images have been selected to demonstrate some of the key periods of stability and change at the Fort George site. This discussion makes no attempt to provide a narrative history of Fort George, but rather presents a series of images which document the evolution of the site during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Additional images and maps are included in the appendices which accompany this report. The reader is encouraged to review the documents in the appendices which provide more details relevant to understanding site formation at Fort George over the last 200 years.

On the fourth day after our landing, we planted some potatoes and sowed a few garden seeds, and on the 16th of May (1811) we laid the foundations of our first building...eight men were harnessed, and they conveyed in six days all the timber required for a building or store of sixty feet long by twenty-six broad. On the 18th, as soon as the foundation was complete, the establishment was named Astoria, in honour of Astor, the projector of the enterprise.

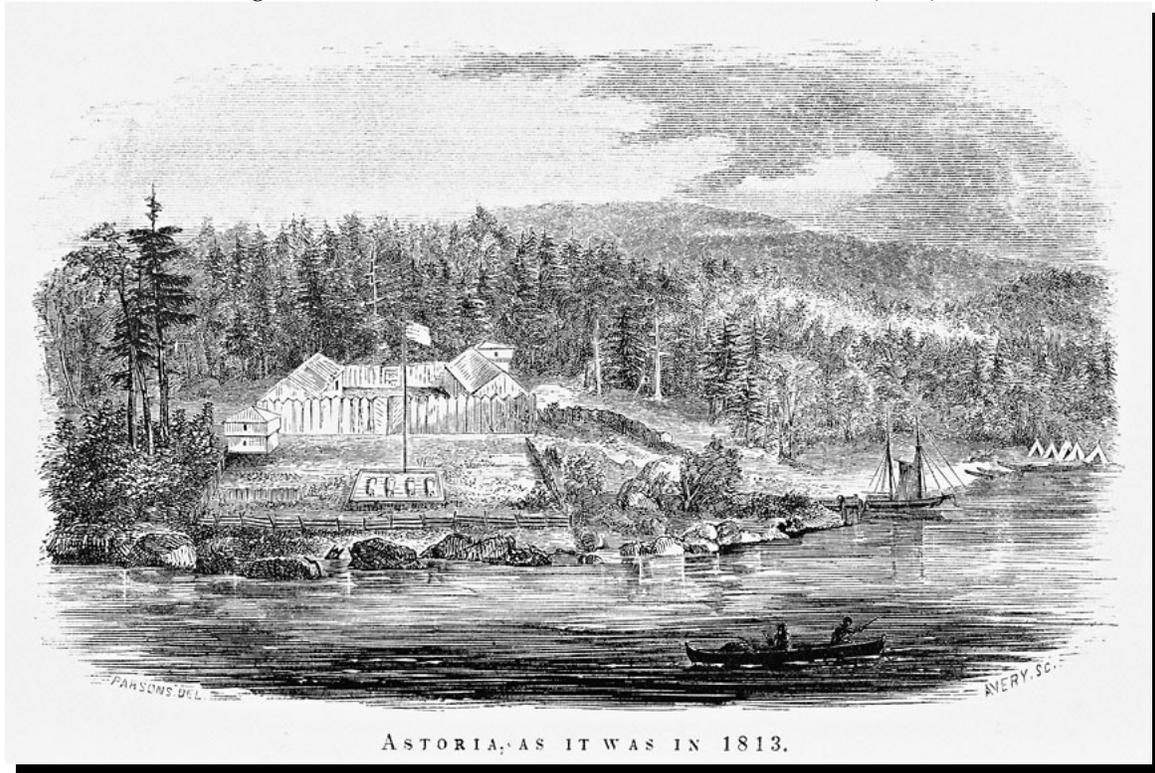
Alexander Ross (1849:80-81)

Having built a warehouse (62 feet by 20) to put under cover the articles we were to receive from the ship... The dwelling house was raised, parallel to the warehouse; we cut a great quantity of pickets in the forest, forming a square, with palisades in front and rear, of about 90 feet by 120; the warehouse, built on the edge of a ravine, formed one flank, the dwelling house and shops the other; with a little bastion at each angle north and south, on which were mounted four small cannon.

Gabriel Franchere (1854b: 116,123)

Narrative descriptions by members of that founding group of men are the only record we have of the selection of the site and design of the initial fort configuration. The founding of Fort Astoria was clearly back breaking work. This first iteration of the fort, having gone up in a matter of days, was the first of many configurations of the site. The expedient methods used to prepare the site and to obtain building materials would have been improved upon as time passed and access to more sophisticated building technology became available at this remote outpost of Euro-American interests.

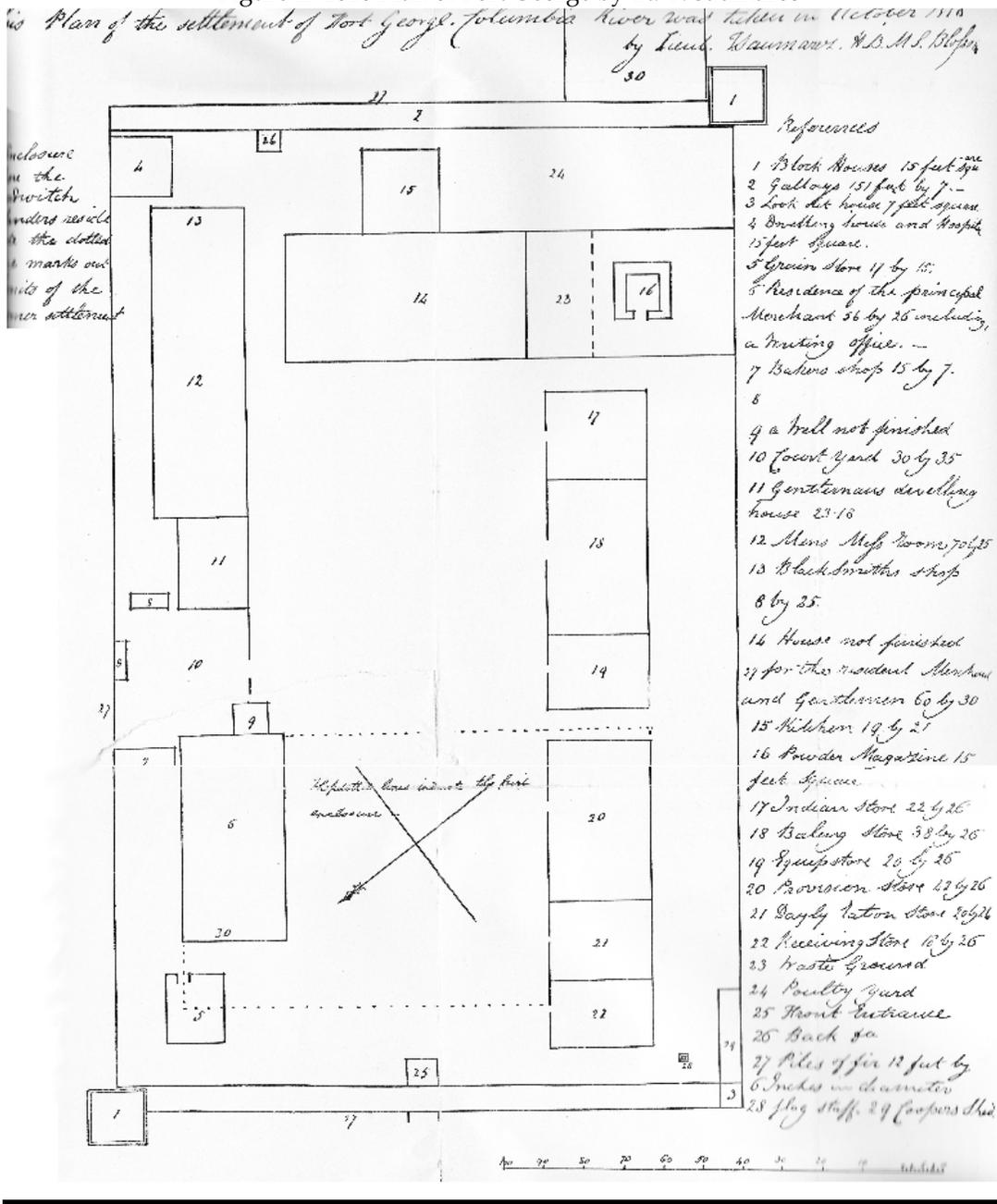
Figure I From Gabriel Franchere's Published Account (1819)



The earliest illustration of the fort this project identified was not executed until 1813 (Figure I), and the first plan drawing identified was not executed until 1818 (Figure II). It is likely that these are the earliest graphic representations of the fort in existence. Robert Stuart's description of the fort in June of the following year indicates that the size of the stockade was reduced to an area of 75 x 80 feet. New buildings had already been constructed that provided spaces for warehousing goods, a powder magazine, dwellings, a blacksmith's shop, a hospital, and a shed for trades work (Morris 1937:415-416). Grace Morris' article in the 1937 *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (see appendix G) compiled descriptions of many of these earliest configurations of the fort. The discussion below will primarily focus on the illustrations and maps identified during this preliminary research survey.

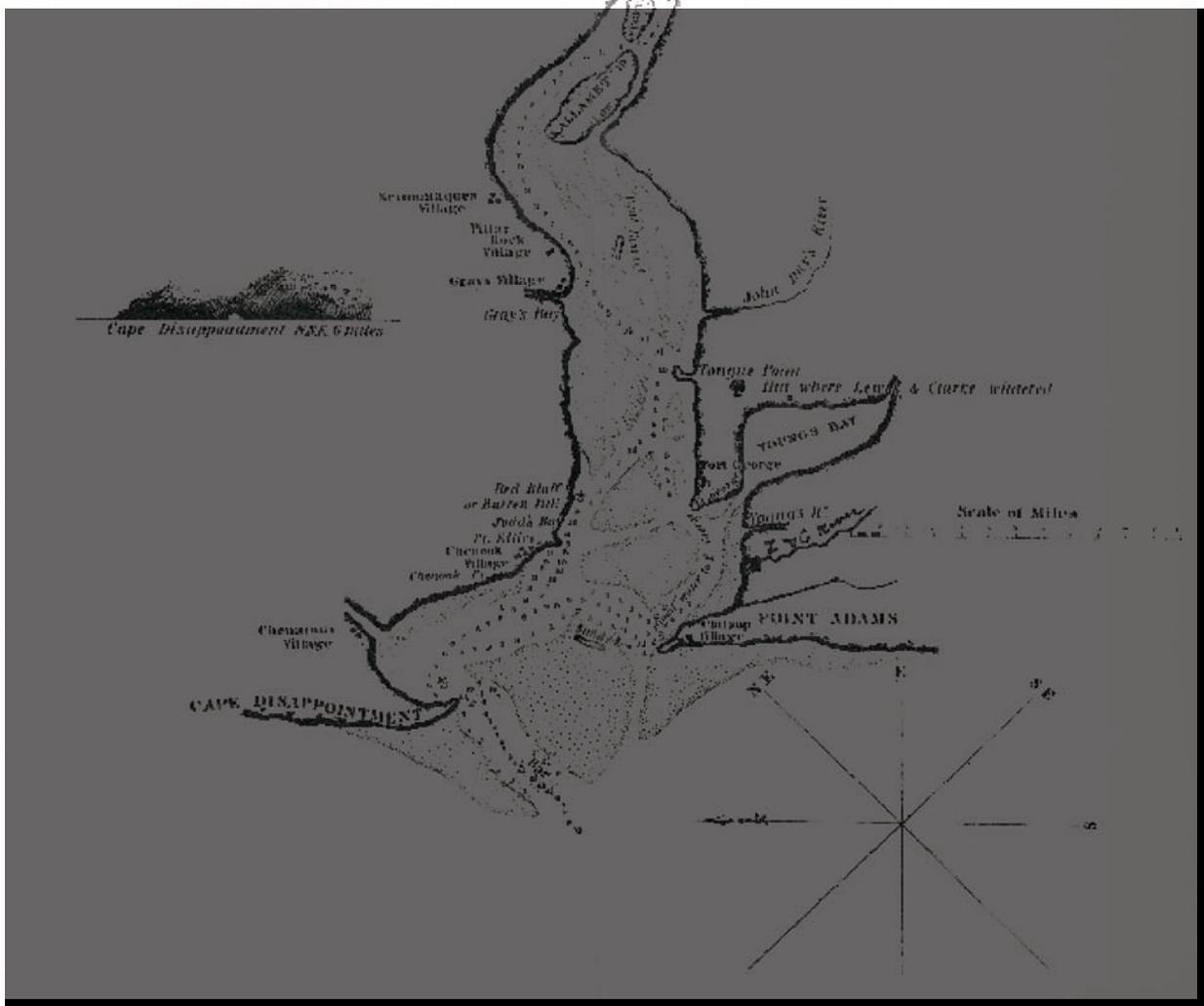
Franchere's 1813 illustration of the fort shows a configuration closely resembling the first hand details of the fort layout given by Robert Stuart in 1812. The first plan view of the fort executed in 1818 provides details of dimensions of various buildings within the stockade walls and it appears that the dimensions of the stockade have again been adjusted, this time expanding the area covered by the picket fence.

Figure II 1818 Plan of Fort George by Lt. T. Saumaros



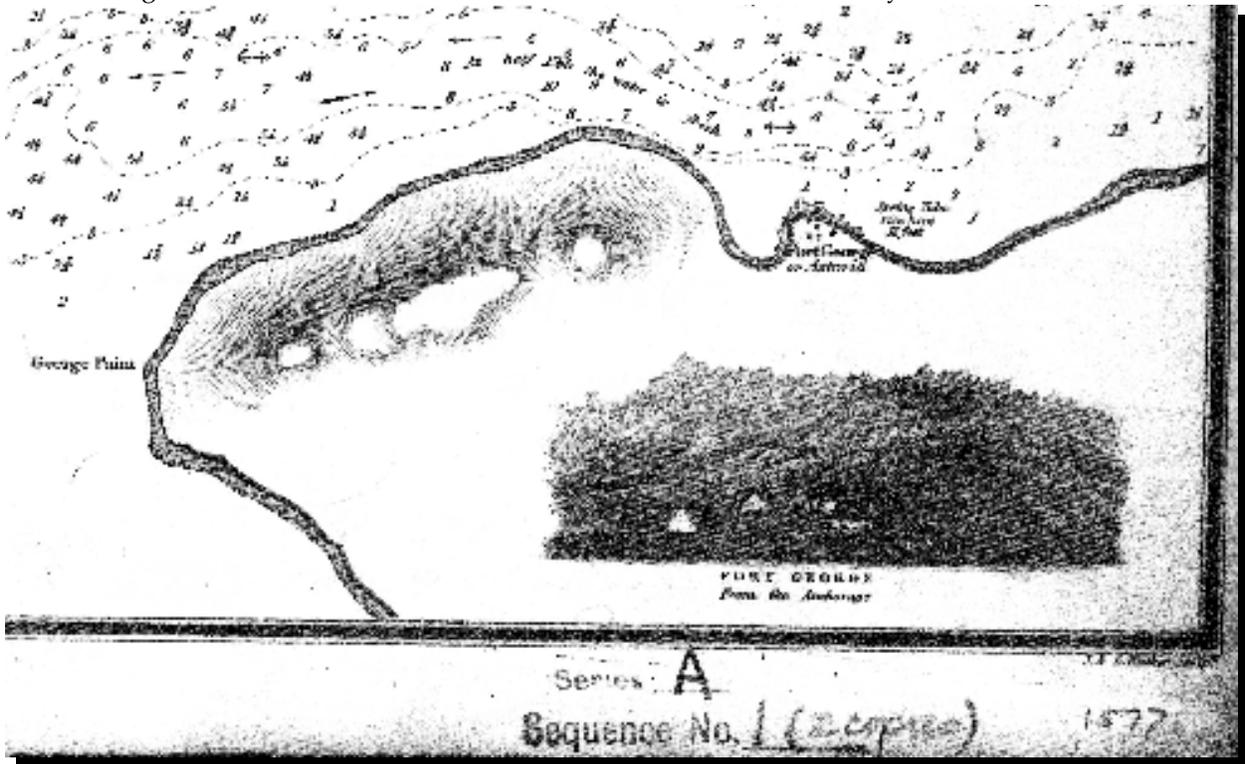
Comparing the 1813 illustration to the 1818 plan (Figure II) several more buildings have been added and the key to the plan gives a good description of the functions of each area within the stockade. By this time the fort had passed from American hands to British hands and back again to American control, if not American occupation. Fort Astoria had by then been rechristened as Fort George, although the settlement which began to build up around the fort retained the name Astoria.

Figure III 1837 Detail from Chart of Columbia River by W.A. Slacum USN



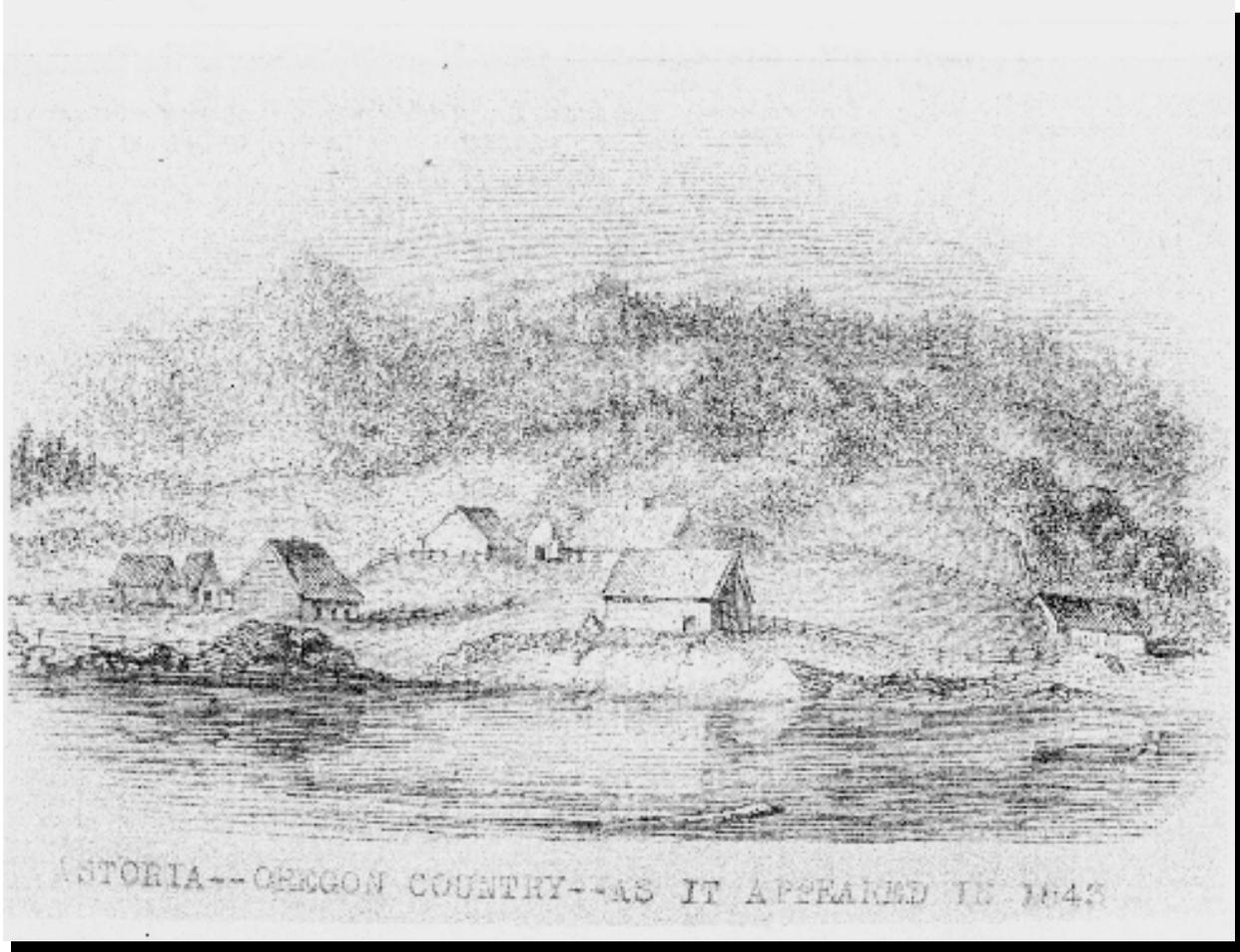
In 1825 Dr. John Scouler provided a description of the location of the fort as being situated 100 yards from the river and “surrounded by palisades and furnished with bastions” (Scouler 1825:166) with about 80 acres of land cleared for the planting of potatoes and a few cattle. It appears that after 1825 the fort may have been abandoned and completely destroyed in the late 1820’s after the establishment of Fort Vancouver, which became the center of regional trade (Morris 1937:420). An 1837 United States Navy map of the Columbia River (Figure III) is the first to show the location of the fort, but it is lacking detail of the shoreline. Clatsop Village is depicted on Point Adams and several other Indian villages are located across the river on the north shore.

Figure IV 1839 Detail from The Entrance of the Columbia River by Sir Edward Belcher



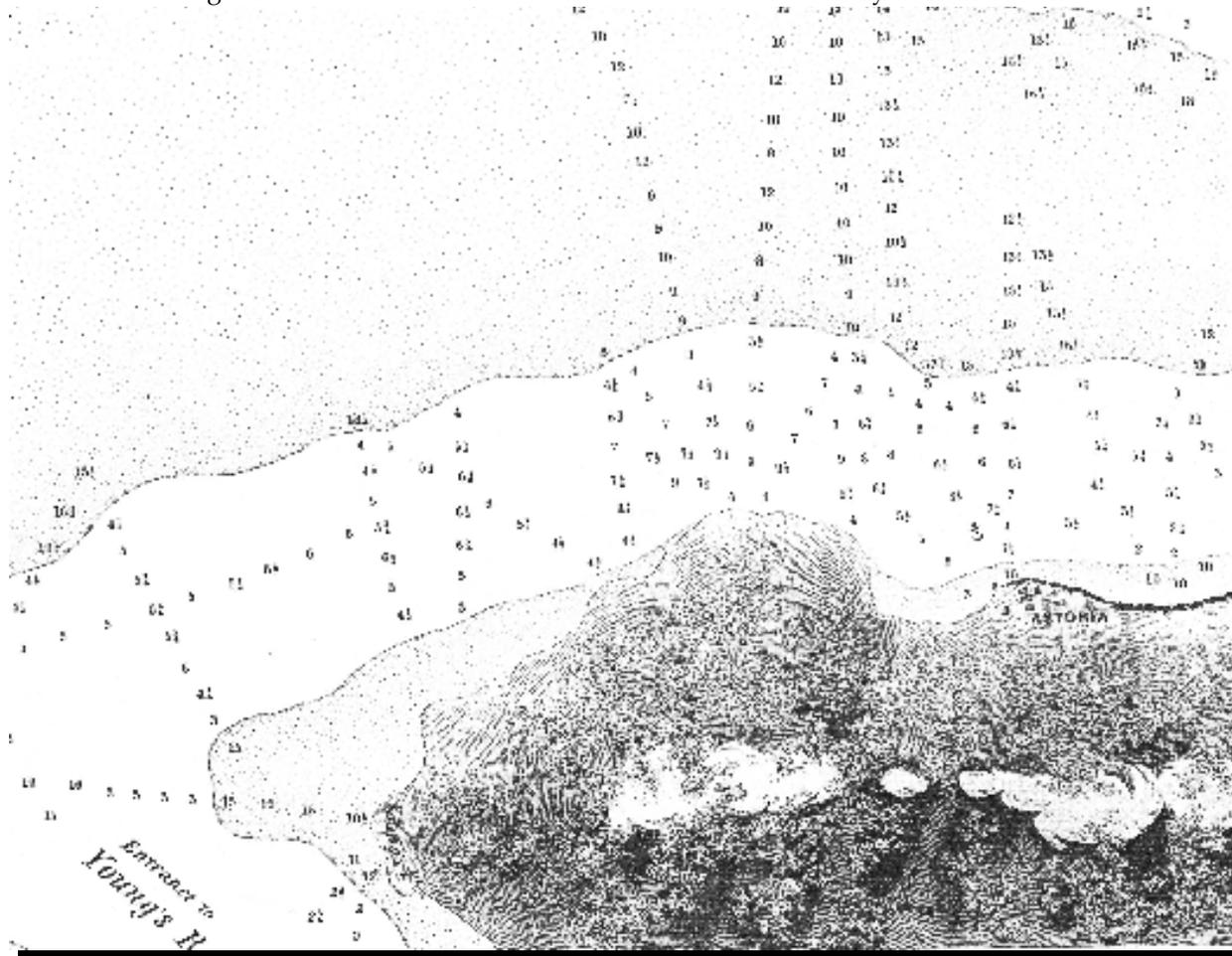
Sir Edward Belcher's 1839 map of the river mouth (Figure IV) provides a plan view of the fort location on the shoreline. The location of Fort George or Astoria is clearly illustrated on the point with a number of dispersed buildings depicted. The small bay to the west of the fort will eventually be in-filled as the city grows up around the original fort site. Sir Belcher's map also provides a small illustration of the fort site in the corner of the map.

Figure V View of Astoria by Sir Edward Belcher Published in His Narrative Account of 1839



A slightly different print of Belcher's illustration was published in a 1839 account of his visit to the fort site (Figure V). His illustration of the fort does not depict the presence of a stockade surrounding the fort site, but rather depicts a growing settlement which no longer requires the defenses that the first arrivals constructed as protection against the Indians. Sir Belcher's illustration clearly shows the future of the development of Astoria as a settlement rather than a fortified outpost.

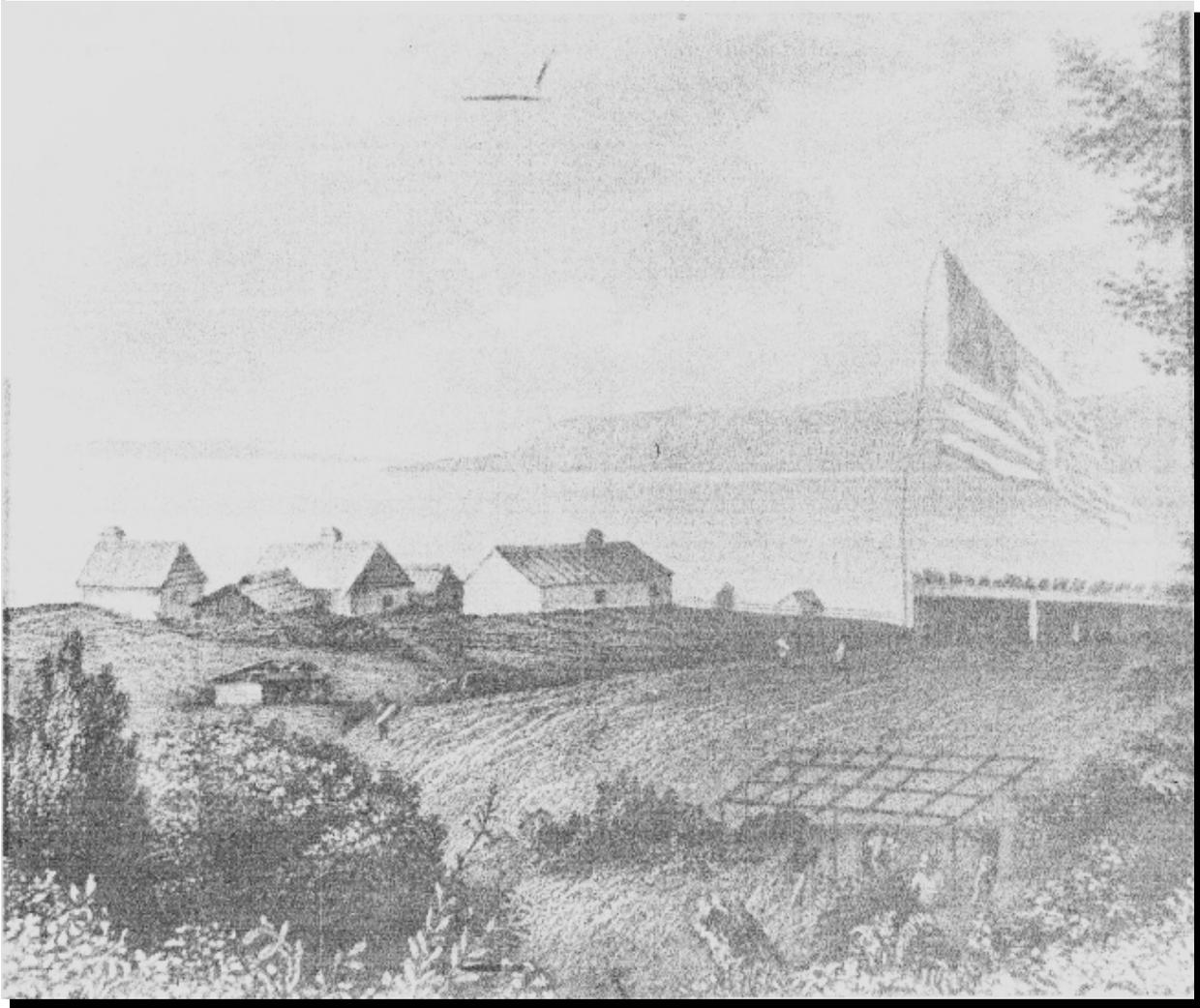
Figure VI 1841 Detail from Mouth of the Columbia River by Charles Wilkes



In 1841 Charles Wilkes arrived at Astoria and his chart of the river mouth (Figure VI) depicts the location of the settlement on the shoreline. He reports that any semblance of a fortification is long gone:

In the morning we had a view of the somewhat famous Astoria, which is any thing but what I should wish to describe. Half a dozen log houses, with as many sheds and a pig-sty or two, are all it can boast of, and even these appear to be rapidly going to decay. The Company pay little regard to it, and the idea of holding or improving it as a post, has long been given up (Wilkes 1844:550).

Figure VII 1841 Drawing of Fort George by Lt. Charles Wilkes



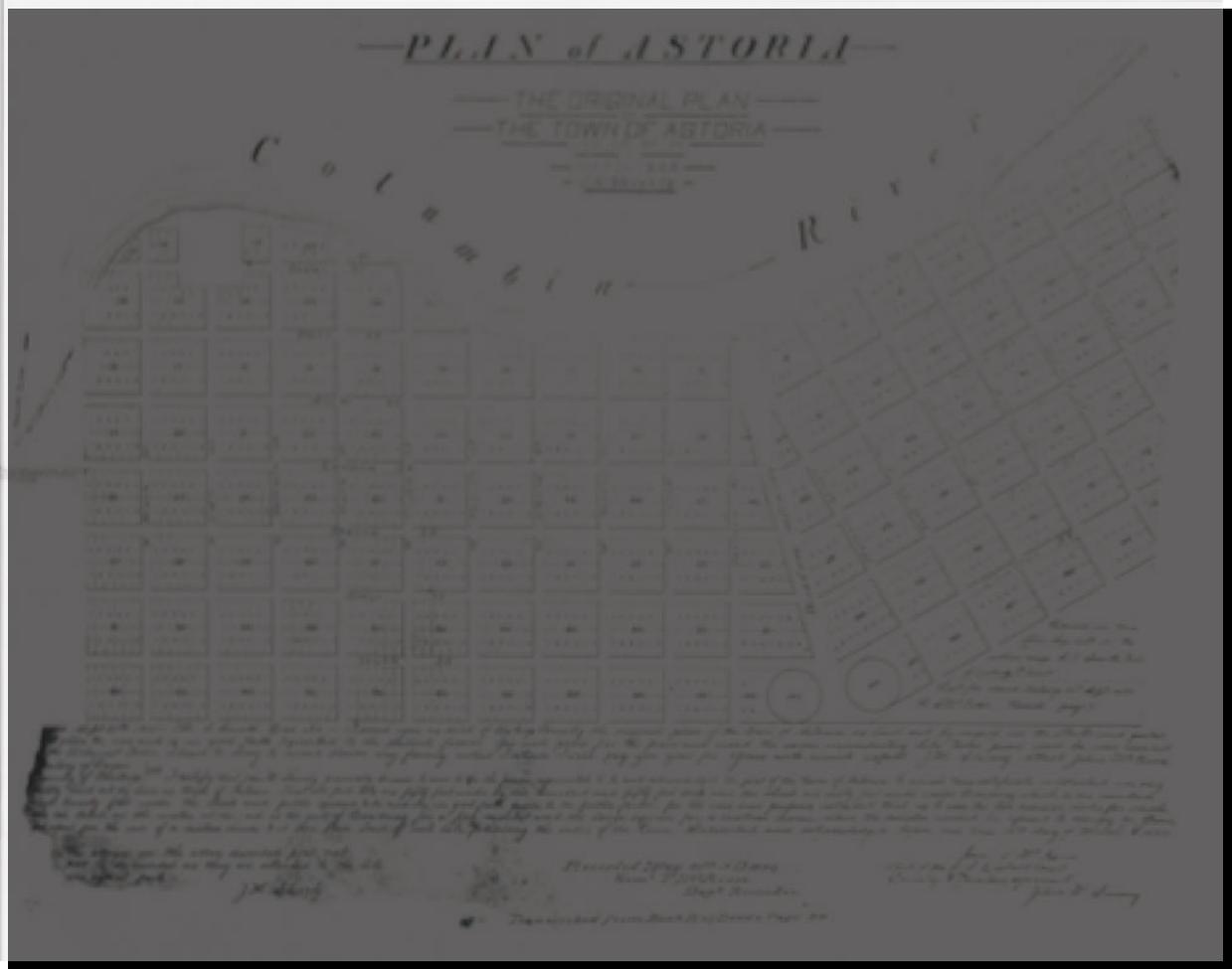
Wilkes' illustration (Figure VII) from that visit depicts a seemingly contradictory view of the settlement, showing the expansive gardens and a bucolic view across the river. Whether the settlement was pitiful or bucolic, the character of the Astoria site had dramatically shifted in just 30 years, largely due to Fort Vancouver's dominance in the region.

Figure VIII 1841 Fort George from George Point by Charles Guillou



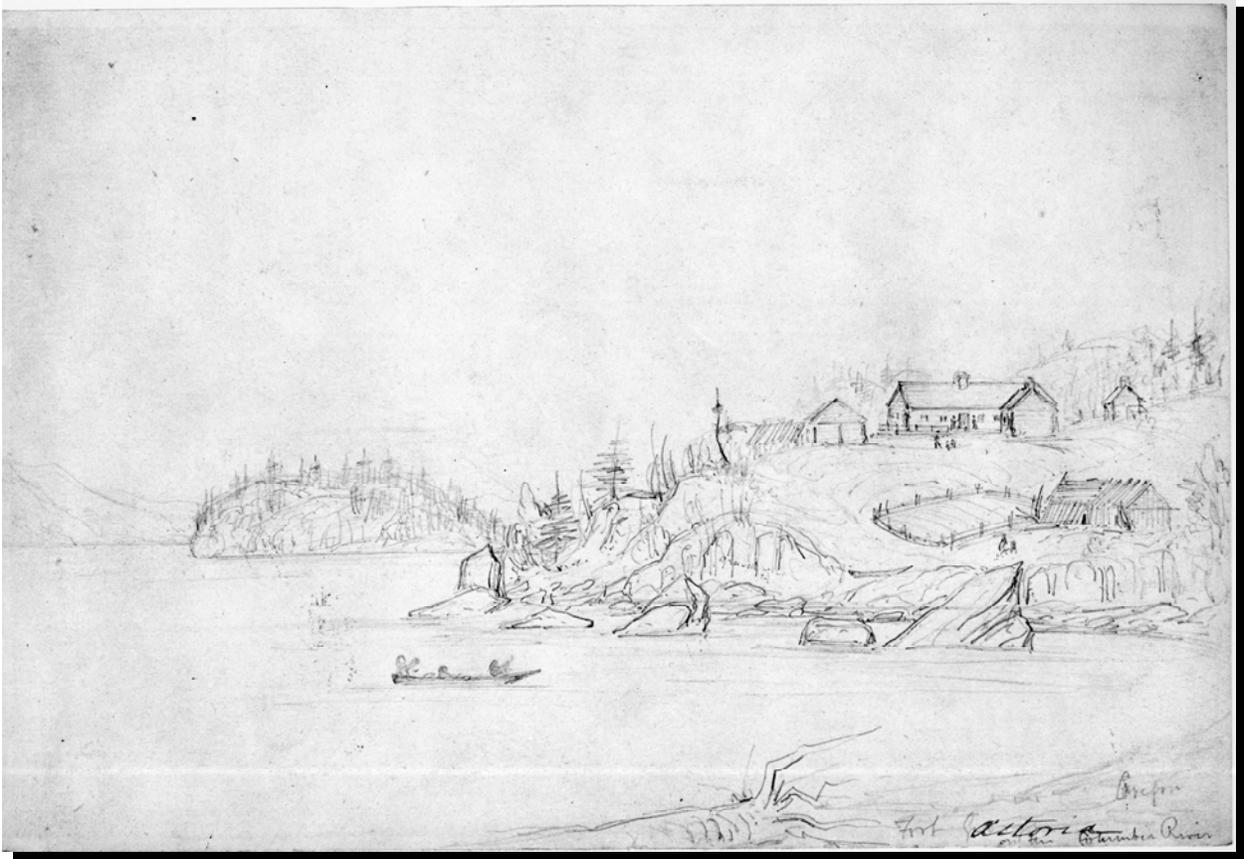
Charles Guillou also visited Fort George in 1841 and he produced two interesting views of the fort site. The view (Figure VIII) from across the small bay to the west shows the rocky shoreline and a small cluster of buildings and a ship at anchor in the river. No evidence of a wharf can be seen. His view of the settlement from the hillside (see Appendix B) depicts almost the exact same configuration of buildings as in the Wilkes illustration.

Figure IX 1844 J.M. Shively Plan of Astoria



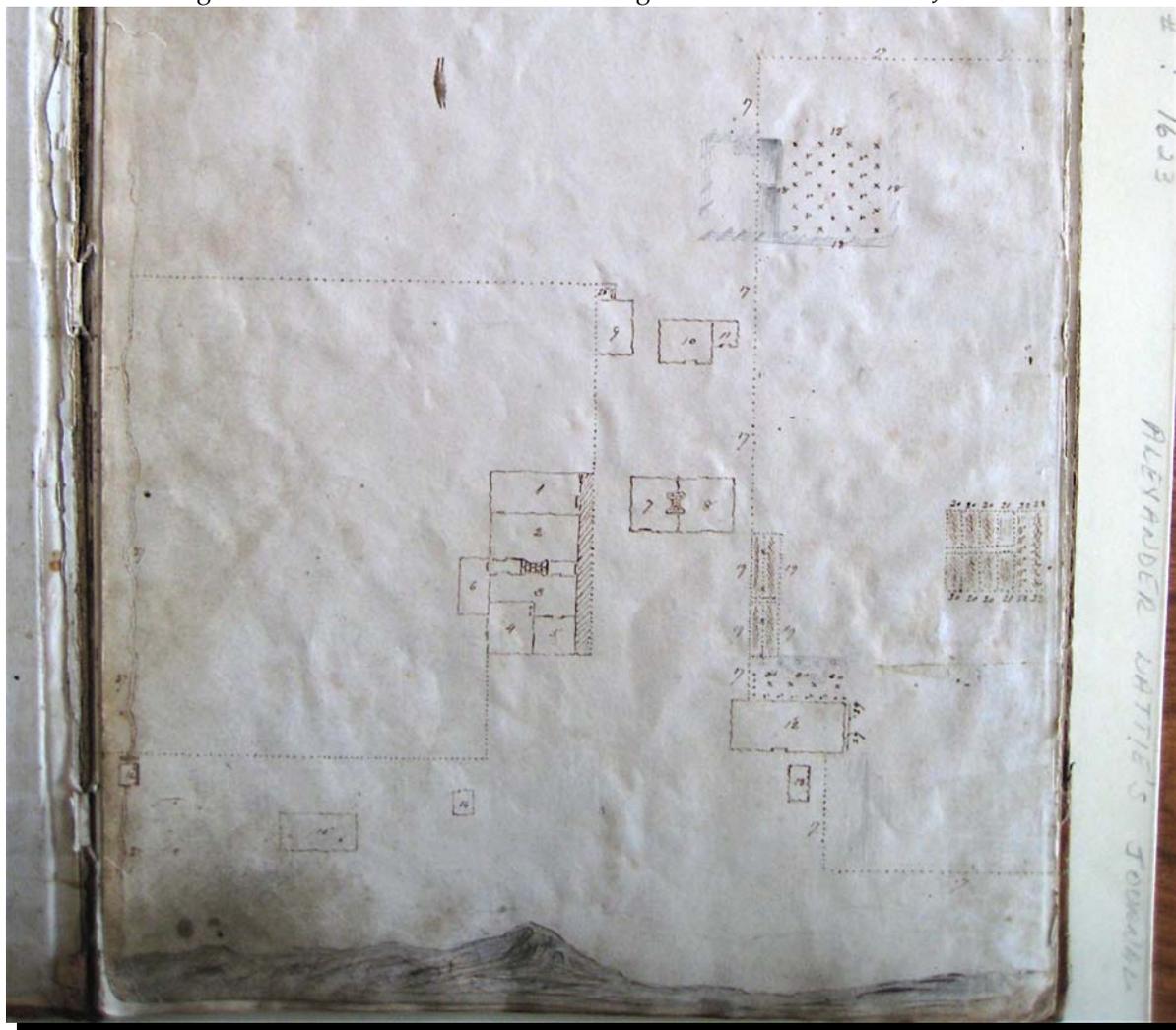
In January 1844 J.M. Shively arrived in Astoria, and together with the only other American settler there, established a land claim in the area around the fort site (Carter 2007). His plat for the Town of Astoria (Figure IX) depicts the government property on which the fort was located by excluding the site from his grid of the city. Shively's grid for Astoria is eventually adopted and gradually the city begins to inhabit streets and blocks, which in 1844 only exist in Shively's imagination.

Figure X 1845 Fort Astoria on the Columbia River by Captain Henry Warre



An illustration by Captain Henry Ware in 1845 (Figure X) clearly illustrates that Shively's city grid, which will come to define the growth of the city, is still just an idea on paper. The fort site looks little unchanged from 1841 views. The temporary nature of outbuildings can be seen in the foreground structure that appears to be a lean-to barn or storage shed. The following year, in a report from Lieutenant M. Vavasour to the Commander of the Royal Engineers in Canada, Fort George is described as "a few old wooden buildings, but not even surrounded by a picket fence. This establishment is about being abandoned and a new one formed on Cape Disappointment" (Vavasour 1846b:148).

Figure XI 1846 Sketch Plan of Fort George from Alexander Lattie Journal



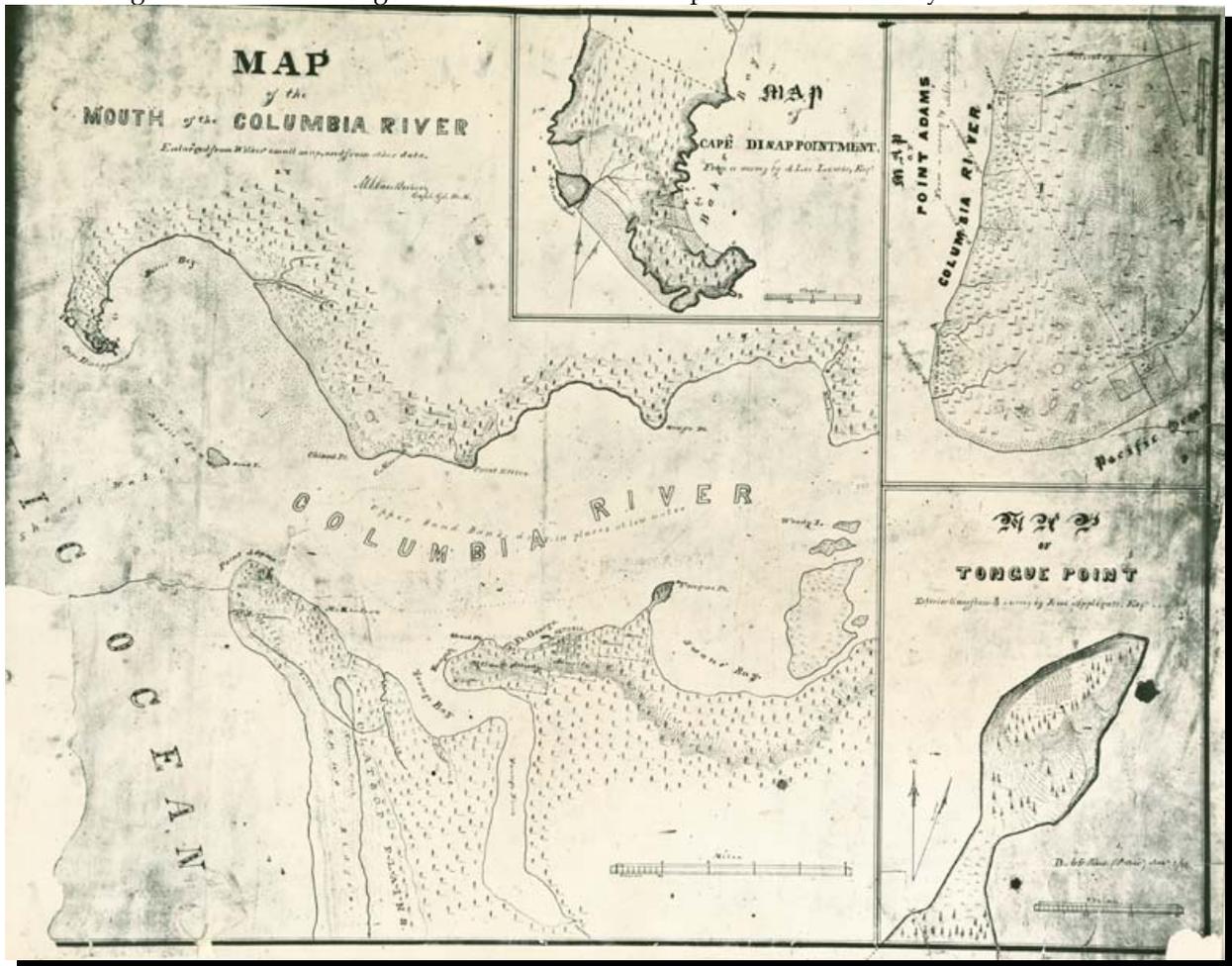
An original sketch (Figure XI) of the plan of Fort George from the Alexander Lattie Journal of 1846 documents a complex of buildings and gardens at the site. Lattie was appointed Chief Factor there in 1845 and his journal documents activities at the trade depot (Millard 1977). Along the bottom of the page of his plan of the fort he includes a depiction of the far shore of the river. Unfortunately the journal does not include a key to decipher the series of numbers he assigned to features on the map.

A manuscript by Samuel McKean Jr., written in 1886, describes his first view of Astoria as he arrived by ship in 1848:

There seemed to be nothing but forests and hills on the one side and water on the other. Upon closer inspection, however, I found that was not all there was to be seen. Looking to the eastward, there was an open grass-covered tract where there were four or five small buildings. These houses were occupied by some of the Hudson Bay Company people, one as a store, others as dwellings, ect., and were situated just south of where St. Mary's Hospital now stands. A little nearer the hills, looking about southeast, I discovered another little green spot like an oasis in the desert of forests, upon which stood a house of very good size, but plain in appearance... the residence of Mr. James Welch. In the foreground, looking in the same direction, was a little cluster of Indian shanties, ranging from the water's edge up the side of the hill, near where the Ferrell saw mill since stood" (McKean 1886:7).

His recollection of the settlement focuses more on the location of various habited areas in the area rather than on the fort site itself. Henceforth, descriptions of Astoria focus on the burgeoning settlement and not the fort site.

Figure XII 1850 "Enlarged from Wilkes' Small Map and Other Data" by M.E. Van Buren

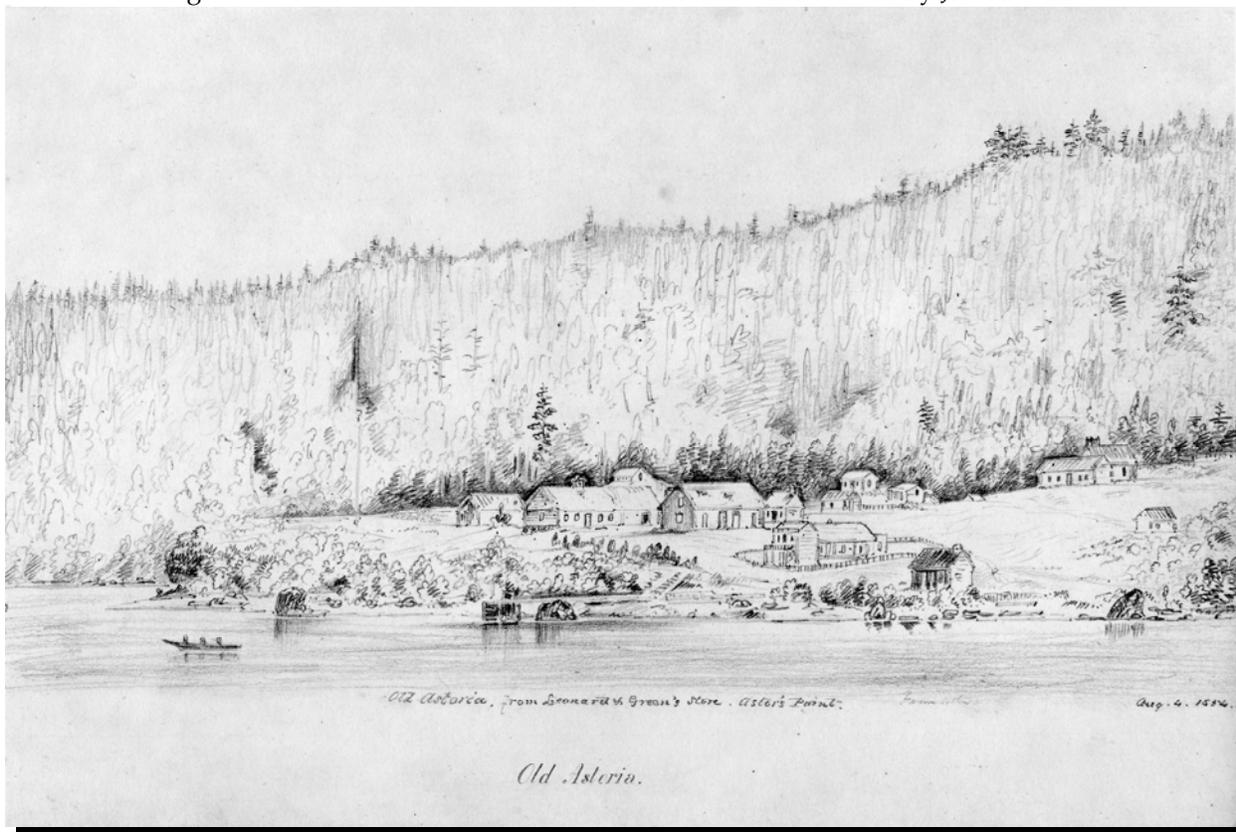


An 1850 map of the Mouth of the Columbia River (Figure XII) illustrates for the first time a city grid rather than a collection of buildings. This grid depicts New Astoria being established to the east while the area around the fort site seemingly has less development occurring. An early settler of Astoria, P.W. Gillette, remembered seeing remnants of the fort in about 1852:

J.M. Shively settled on Astor Hill, the original Astoria. It had been occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company's people up to about the time Shively took possession. Portions of the walls of the old fort and a number of old houses of the company's people were standing when I first went to Astoria (Gillette 1895b).

Gillette also recounts that in 1852, there were only 2 stores, a saloon, a small sawmill, and a single hotel in the original area of Astoria near the fort site (Gillette 1895a).

Figure XIII 1854 "From Leonard & Green's Store. Astor Point" by James Alden



An official government announcement in the Oregonian newspaper in May 1853 marked the end of an era:

Will be sold at public auction on Wednesday, the 15<sup>th</sup> day of June 1853 for cash, all the public buildings formerly occupied for military purposes at Astoria: among which are the following, viz:

- 1 Barrack Building about 60 x 18 feet
- 1 Store House about 50 x 18 feet
- 1 Guard House about 24 x 30 feet
- 1 Company Kitchen about 18 x 30 feet
- 1 Magazine about 12 x 20 feet
- 1 Stable about 60 x 20 feet

(Grant 1853)

A fine illustration of the "former" fort site in 1854 (Figure XIII) gives a familiar view of Point George with little evidence of development a year after the sale of the property. The list of buildings that were publicly auctioned may give us some idea of the original uses of the buildings still standing in 1854.

Figure XIV Astoria 1855-1856 Wharf and Fort Site in Background [OHS Collection]



An early photograph (Figure XIV) of the fort site, taken from the budding commercial center across the small bay to the west, shows the establishment of a wharf. It also shows that the fort site has not yet been developed. A series of illustrations and maps of the area show this trend of commercial development expanding west of the small bay and the fort site remaining removed from the main town site. The 1856 GLO map (Figure XV) shows just three building on the fort site, with two large clusters of buildings to the west across the bay. James Alden returned to Astoria in 1857 and his illustration of that visit (Figure XVI) shows the fort site little changed but significant development to the west across the bay. Another early photograph from 1866 (Figure XVII) shows expanding wharfs in the new commercial district but seemingly unconnected from the fort side of the bay. A detail from the 1868 US Coast Guard Survey (Figure XVIII) shows coastal features of Astoria and the expanding town grid. While streets in the new section are clearly drawn in, the grid around the fort site still remains a series of dotted lines and a scattering of buildings. An illustration from this same year (Figure XIX) confirms the unchanging landscape on the fort side of the bay with an ever changing view across the bay to the west.

Figure XV 1856 Detail from GLO Map Township 8N, Range 9W

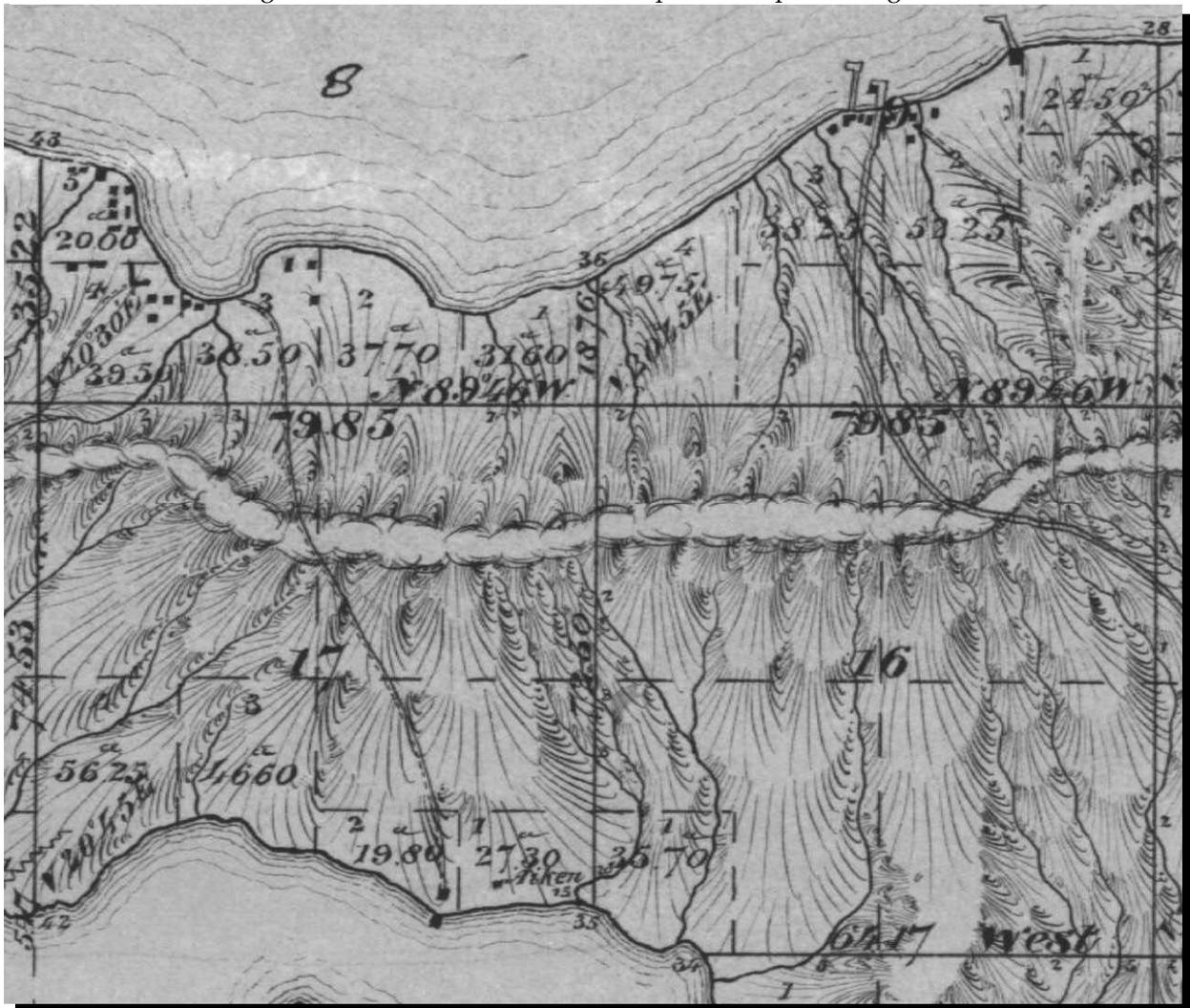


Figure XVI 1857 "Old Astoria or Fort George is in the foreground" by James Alden



Figure XVII 1866 Astoria from Fort Site Across Bay to Wharf [OHS Collection]



Figure XVIII 1868 Enlargement from US Coast Survey Map at Clatsop County Historical Society



Figure XIX Clatsop County Historical Society Image (source unknown)

The first Sanborn Map of Astoria was produced in 1884 (Figure XX) and it depicts a group of buildings occupying the eastern half of block 118, the section of the block not depicted on Shively's original plan because it was within the government-owned fort site. The area around this cluster on block 118 is sparsely occupied at this date, but clearly development has reached the east side of the bay. The principle feature of this new development is the railroad line and warehouse which have been built offshore. The map also clearly shows the original shore line and how the city grid has been extended offshore by building upon piers. The block immediately west of the fort site has yet to be built and the exposed shoreline is depicted there. It is unclear if any of the structures on block 118 are those depicted in images from the 1850's and 1860's. The 1888 Sanborn Map (Figure XXI) shows that the blocks to the north and northeast of the fort site at block 118 are only partially developed with much of the original shoreline still visible. Also present are the first structures associated with St. Mary's Hospital, also within that area original excluded from Shively's plan. During modifications to the hospital in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, local newspapers reported the discovery of features associated with the fort. The structures on the eastern end of block 118 are little changed on Sanborn Maps between 1884 and 1908. The site of St. Mary's Hospital on block 119 (later block 519) undergoes a number of alterations between 1884 and 1908. The hospital first appears along the western face of the block on the 1888 map, expanded into the interior of the block on the 1896 map (Figure XXII), and moved to the eastern half of the block on the 1908 map (Figure XXIII). Early 20<sup>th</sup> century newspaper accounts document changes to the urban fabric and provide clues about the location and orientation of the early fort buildings.

Figure XX 1884 Sanborn Map of Astoria. Fort Site is in Block 118 at 8th and Cedar.

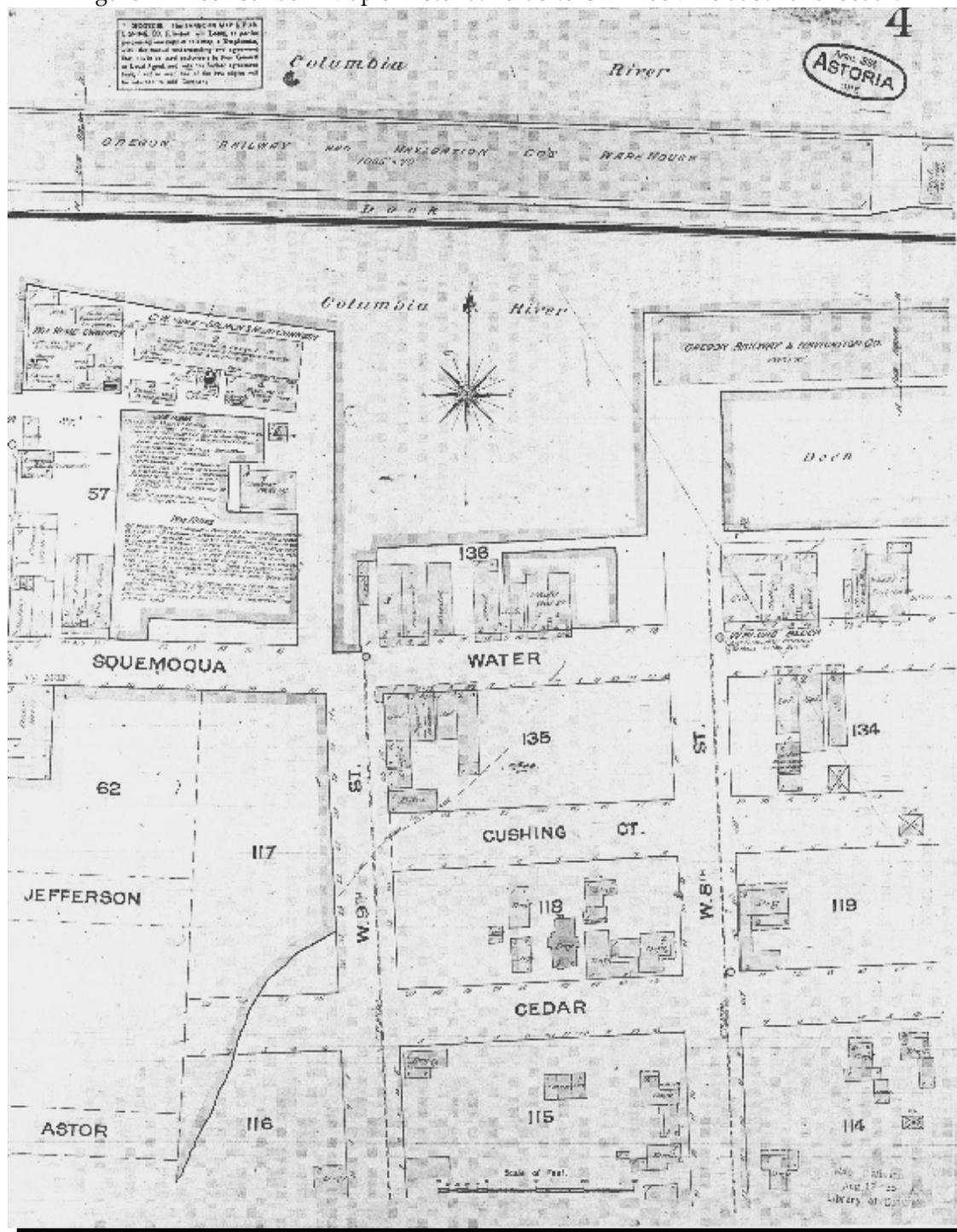


Figure XXI 1888 Sanborn Map of Astoria. Fort Site is in Block 118 at 8th and Cedar

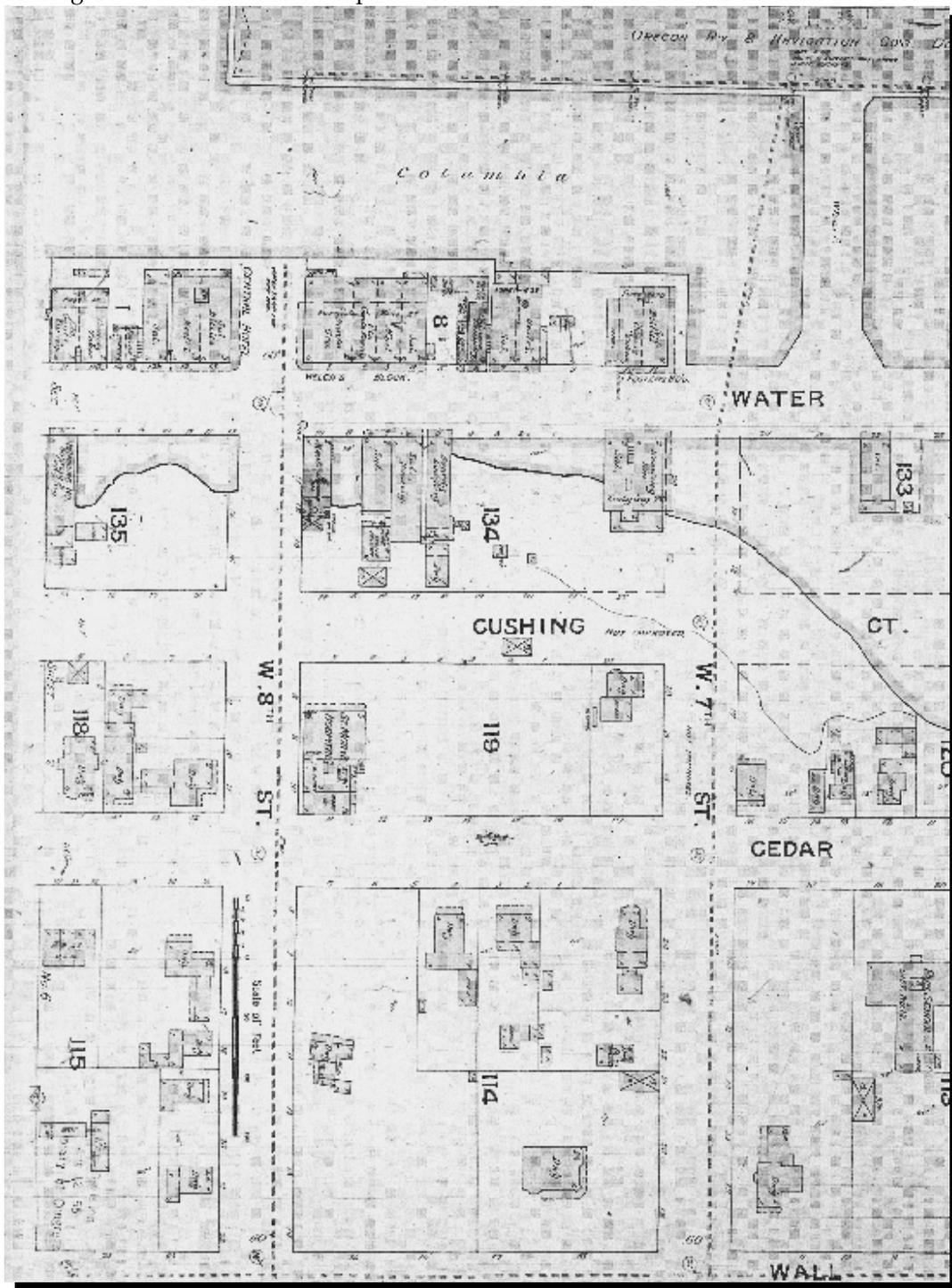
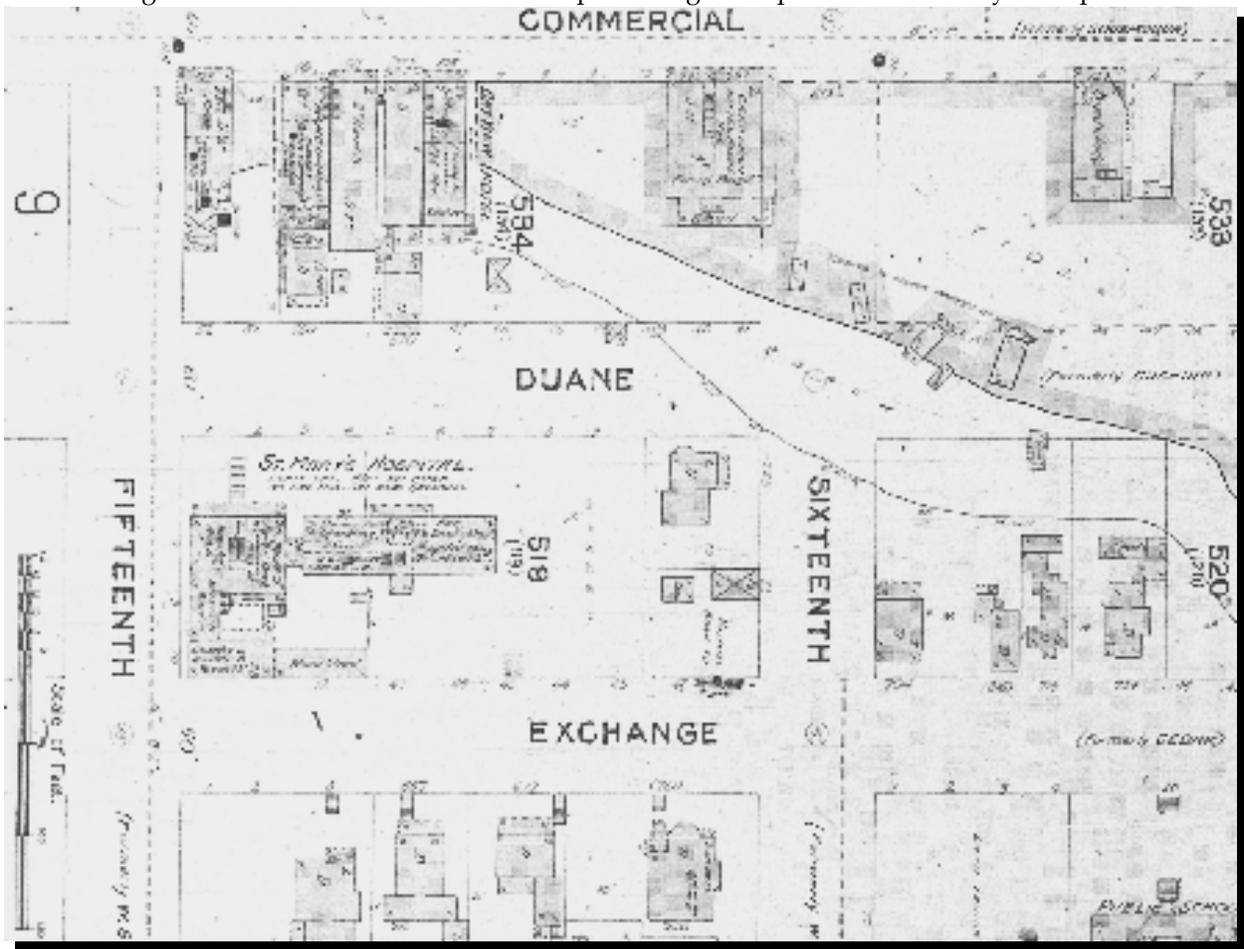


Figure XXII 1896 Detail of Sanborn map showing the expansion of St. Mary's Hospital



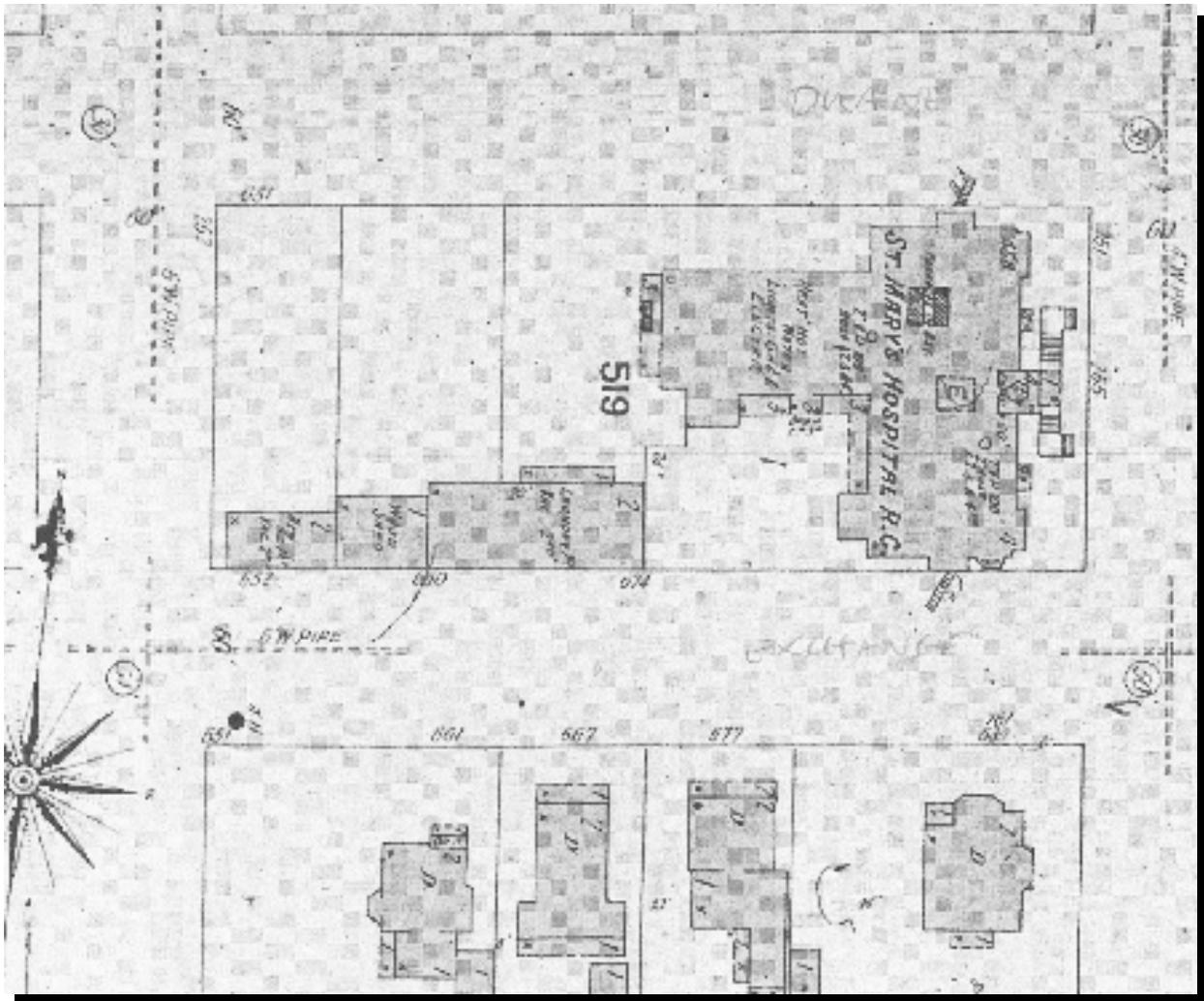


Figure XXIII 1908 Detail of Sanborn map showing new orientation of St. Mary's Hospital

The location of the site of Fort George has always been known to be in the vicinity of 15<sup>th</sup> and Exchange Streets, the site of a modern city park and partial reconstruction of the fort erected in 1956 by the Clatsop County Historical Society and the City of Astoria. The principle source of this knowledge has been the grid originally platted by Shively in 1844 which marked the location of the fort property by excluding that area from his city grid. Shively's grid was resurveyed in 1876 and preserved, although there was little development of the area at that time. After the 1922 fire that destroyed the downtown area, the city used his original survey reference points to resurvey the town along the same grid. Volunteers in 1996 worked with the city to locate an original Shively stone survey monument under a city sewer lit (Carter 2007). This continuity of the town plat has resulted in much certainty about the general location of the fort site over 200 years of development and change to the fabric of the city.

This knowledge has been reinforced by numerous inadvertent archaeological discoveries over the last 100 years:

... about 12 years when a sewer was being constructed along the east side of Fifteenth street. As the men were digging the trench they found the ruins of an old stockage [sic] at a point about 15 feet north of the corner of Fifteenth and Exchange streets.

Astoria Daily Budget, 10/28/1903

At one time some grading was being done just west of St. Mary's hospital, which uncovered a number of pieces of piling...Section of the original stockade...was exposed to view when the first excavations were made in the block where the original stockade stood...

Astoria Budget, 10/20/1930

The steam shovels were busy removing earth for the basement site of the new hospital when they struck a row of uprights, made from logs, which old timers assert to be the northern wall of the famous fort. This discovery definitely locates the northern wall as running from Fifteenth to Sixteenth street between Duane and Exchange streets.

Astoria Budget, 10/20/1930

...the finding of a refuse dump containing bone, crockery and clay fragments at the foot of one of the stockade timbers recently discovered at the St. Mary's hospital excavation.

Astoria Evening Budget, 10/22/1930

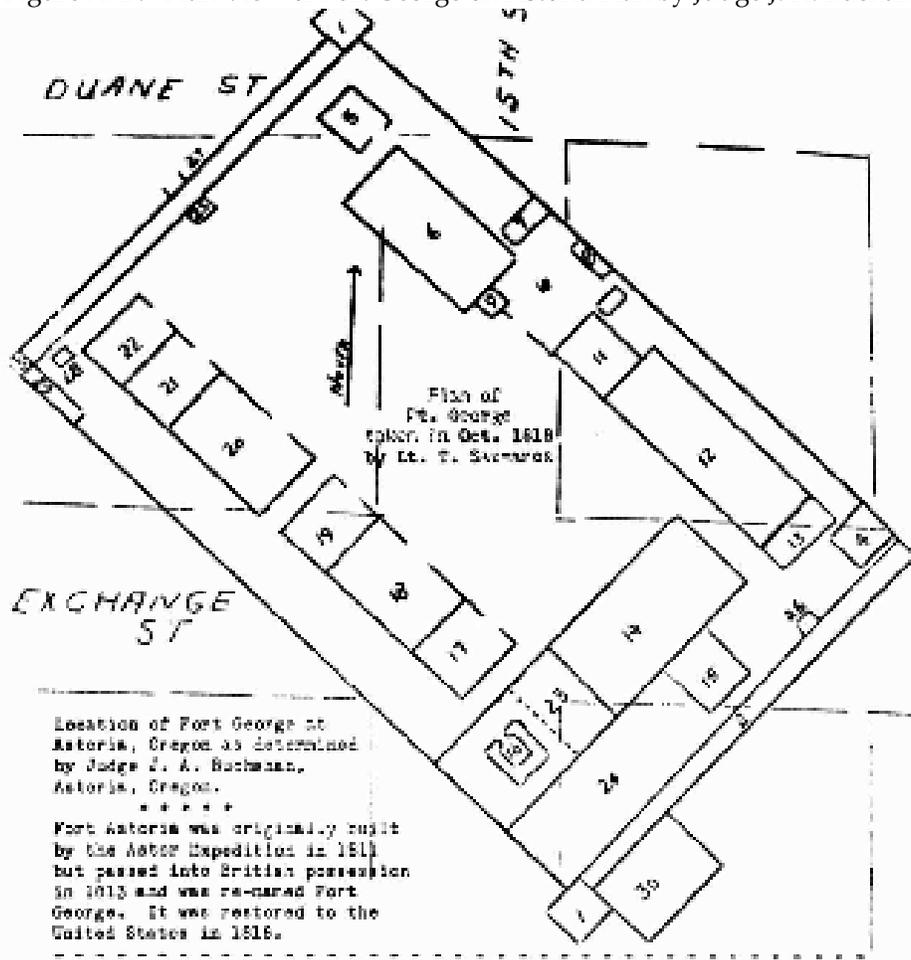
...Robert Carruthers, found cedar posts of the original Fort Astoria stockade in 1885 when he was digging the basement for his new red brick

house on Exchange Street...The Lovell property covers other relics of Fort Astoria...when the present lubrication rack was being built on the main floor of the garage building, workmen excavated the top of a rock-lined well, filled with rubble...

The Daily Astorian, 5/4/1971

These reports of finding long lost features that were once part of the Fort George site provide interesting anecdotal evidence of the existence of deeply buried elements from early Astoria. These discoveries were part of the evidence used to overlay the 1818 plan map of Fort George over the modern city grid (Figure XXIV). As tantalizing as all these discoveries are for the public and city boosters, they cannot with certainty locate and provide the orientation of an early stockade configuration within the modern city grid.

Figure XXIV Plan View of Fort George on Astoria Plan by Judge J. A. Buchanan



References to numbers shown in plan above

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Block House - 15' square  | 26. Powder Magazine 15'x15'                       |
| 2. Galleries - 16 1/2' x 7'  | 27. Indian Store 22'x26'                          |
| 3. Lookout House - 7' square   | 28. Haling Store 32'x25'                          |
| 4. Dwelling House & Hospital 15'x15'                                   | 29. Equipment Store 20'x26'                       |
| 5. Grain Store - 17'x15'   | 30. Provision Store 42'x26'                       |
| 6. Residence of the principal merchant 16'x22' and writing office.     | 31. Daily Fatice Store 23'x24'                    |
| 7. Bakers' Shop 16'x7'   | 32. Receiving Store 18'x23'                       |
| 8.   | 33. Waste Ground                                  |
| 9. A well, not finished  | 34. Poultry Yard                                  |
| 10. Court Yard - 30'x20'   | 35. Front Entrance                                |
| 11. Gentleman's Dwelling House 22'x18'                                 | 36. Back Entrance                                 |
| 12. Mess Mess Room 70'x25'   | 37. Pile of fir 12'x25" diameter                  |
| 13. Blacksmith Shop 8'x25'   | 38. Flag Staff                                    |
| 14. House not finished for the resident merchant and gentlemen 40'x30' | 39. Coopers Shed                                  |
| 15. Kitchen 18'x21'  | 40. Escapours where the Sandwich Islanders reside |

Copy of mimeographed map published by Astoria chamber of commerce showing size and location of chambers and rooms of old Fort George. This plan of Fort George was taken in October 1818 by Lt. T. Saumarez.

(Oregon collection, University of Oregon photo)

## RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

The story of Fort George is intimately interwoven with the Lewis and Clark story and the larger regional history of the lower Columbia River region. As such, the story of this regionally and nationally significant site is integral to the mission of both two National Park Service units – Lewis and Clark National Historical Park (LEWI) and Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (LECL) – as well as the proposed Columbia-Pacific National Heritage Area. While the current report is merely the outcome of a reconnaissance effort, it clearly suggests that further research would aid considerably in illuminating the human history of the Fort George site. In turn, such efforts can aid both resource management and interpretation efforts by existing NPS units, as well as in the proposed NHA. Opportunities for cooperative partnerships may also exist, involving private landowners, the City of Astoria, and other entities with shared interests in documenting and preserving the history of Fort George.

Relatively little effort would be required to create map/GIS overlays that would juxtapose historical map images of the Fort site with existing roadways, structures, and other landmarks. Indeed, this was done experimentally during the current reconnaissance effort to good effect, using maps included in this report, but would require the involvement of a GIS technician to complete the task. National Park Service or Portland State University GIS staff may be able to coordinate with the Astoria Planning Department in the use of preexisting GIS layers for this portion of the City.

We also recommend that the archival work undertaken in this pilot study be expanded to allow for the acquisition of more detailed information and the inclusion of collections not visited in the current effort. Certain topics, related to the NPS mission, could be explored more thoroughly, such as the apparent relationship of Fort George fur traders to Native communities and their leaders (through such venues as exchange, marriage, cohabitation, etc.), or the relationship of Fort George to the Station Camp/Middle Village Unit of LEWI.

Based on these expanded investigations, NPS and PSU researchers can collaborate in the preparation of a scope for the archaeological survey of the Fort George area. Archaeological reconnaissance at the site would be appropriate use of the NPS/PSU/WSUV archaeological field school for a summer 2011 project. New GIS and remote sensing data could help to guide this work, which would help to ground truth GIS overlays and identify excavation opportunities on both public lands and the lands of consenting private parties.

Simultaneously, NPS and/or PSU researchers could learn much through an effort to identify artifacts associated with the Fort George site in local repositories and in the collections of the Oregon Historical Society. Such

artifacts are known anecdotally in a number of local collections, but little systematic effort has been made to compile information regarding these materials. On the basis of such an effort, researchers could develop an inventory of existing collections, and conduct an analysis of diagnostic artifacts to compare with other early fur trade sites (including the Middle Village at LEWI's Station Camp).

Moreover, it is anticipated that more focused ethnographic or ethnohistorical research may yield information about the significance of Fort George in both regional and tribal history. The authors of this document have found that Native American communities in the area still recall stories of visiting Fort George, and the Fort retains a prominent position in their accounts of the cultural and economic transformations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some possess artifacts that are said to have originated from trade at the Fort. A focused ethnographic effort, perhaps developed as an expansion of the proposed LEWI Traditional Use Study, might allow researchers to document these associations in a way that would aid NPS interpretive efforts. Meanwhile, ample published and unpublished documentation exists of interactions between Fort employees and the tribes of the Columbia-Pacific region. A focused ethnohistorical documentation effort could pull these references together into a single source that would be of much value to NPS staff and the interested public alike.

In addition to helping mark the bicentennial of the founding of this nationally and regionally significant Fort, these projects are expected to yield additional benefits. These projects will help immensely in illuminating the historical diversity of the Columbia-Pacific region and engaging the Native American communities tied to the fur trade history of the Fort. The field school will allow the active involvement of youth in the documentation of this history, introducing a new generation to the history of this region and providing training in skills that will last a lifetime. And, in a community such as Astoria, with chronic economic troubles but a strong sense of pride in local history, such projects help to foster mutually beneficial partnerships between NPS units (LEWI, LECL, and possibly the Columbia-Pacific NHA) and the local community that will endure long after the Fort George bicentennial has passed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrus, Fred

1971 Original Fort Astoria Posts Found in 1885. *In* The Daily Astorian, May 4, 1971. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

1849 Sketch of Fort George, or Astoria, Columbia River - Site of the Hudson's Bay Company's Establishment. London: London Illustrated News. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1855 Astoria Circa 1855-56 Wharf and Fort Site in Background. *In* OHS Photographic Collection. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1866 Astoria View from Fort Site Across Bay to Wharf. *In* OHS Photographic Collection. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1868 Astoria in 1868. *In* (Original Source not Identified). Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1873 Astoria View from Hill. *In* OHS Photographic Collection. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1885 Astoria, Ore. Looking West; Flavel House Under Construction. *In* OHS Photographic Collection. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1890 View of Fort Astoria. *In* West Shore Magazine. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Anonymous

1903 Article Describing Location of Fort Astoria Based on Discovered Timbers. *In* Astoria Daily Budget, October 28. Astoria. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

1930a Earthenware Relic in Fort Site is Uncovered. *In* Astorian Evening Budget, October 28, 1930. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

1930b Fort George Site Yields More Relics. *In Astorian Evening Budget*, October 22, 1930. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

1930c Ft. George Discovery Stirs Interest Among Historians of Oregon. *In Astorian-Budget*, October 20, 1930. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

1930d Ft. George Thought Found: Workers Find Buried Ruins of Stockade. *In Astoria Budget*, October 20, 1930. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

ND-a Astoria: From the Hill Looking Upstream *and* A River View. *In* [Original Source not Identified]. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

ND-b Finding of Abandoned Well Seen as Link to 1811 Fort: Unknown Local Newspaper. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Anonymous

ND-c Fort Astoria, Oregon, in 1811. *In* (Original Source not Identified). Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Astoria Daily Budget

1911 Astoria Pioneer: Early Days in Clatsop. *In* The Astoria Daily Budget. Astoria. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Bancroft, Hubert Howe

1888 History of Oregon, Vol. II 1848-1888. Volume XXX. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & company.

Belcher, Sir Edward

1839 The Entrance of the Columbia River: Surveyed by Sir Edward Belcher, C.B. in H.M. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Belcher, Sir Edward

1843 Astoria--Oregon Country--As it Appeared in 1843 [1839]. *In* Narrative of a Voyage Round the World, Vol. 1. London. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Bowlby, Judge Q A

1903 Location of The Astor Fort. *In* Astoria Daily Budget, October 30. Astoria. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

- Buchanan, Judge J A  
ND Fort George Located. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- Carter, Jerry  
2007 Shively's Survey Monument: Search for a Boundary Marker. *Cumtux* 27(3):39-52.
- Cooper, John  
1989 To: Jim Flint and City Council. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- Cumtux  
1991 Fort Astoria. *Cumtux* 11(2).
- Ewing, M. C.  
1837 [1980] Chart of the Columbia River for 90 miles from its mouth. Drawn from several surveys in the possession of W.A. Salcum, U.S.N. *In Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920: Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.*
- Farnham, T J  
1847 Astoria. *In Travels in Oregon In Life, Adventure, and Travels in California.* New York: Cornish, Lamport & Co. Obtained digital copy at Google Books.
- Franchere, Gabriel  
1854a Astoria, as it was in 1813. *In Narrative of a Voyage to The Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814.* New York: Redfield. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Franchere, Gabriel  
1854b Narrative of a Voyage to The Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814. J.V. Huntington, transl. New York: Redfield. Obtained digital copy at Google Books.
- Gearhart, Hayden  
1876 [1980] Plat of Shively's Astoria. *In Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920: Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.*
- General Land Office (GLO)  
1856 Plat of Survey, T8N, R9W. Obtained at <http://www.blm.gov/or/landrecords/survey>.

General Land Office (GLO)

1876 Plat of Survey, T8N, R9W. Obtained at <http://www.blm.gov/or/landrecords/survey>.

Gillette, P W

1852 Diary [unpublished]. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Gillette, P W

1895a Astoria in Early Times: Some of the Recollections of an Old Settler. *In* The Morning Oregonian, December 12. Portland. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Gillette, P W

1895b Stories of Clatsop: Interesting Reminiscences By an Early Settler There. *In* The Morning Oregonian, November 20th. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Grant, U. S.

1853 Public Auction [of Fort Astoria buildings]. *In* The Oregonian, May 21. Portland. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Guillou, C F, and Emily Blackmore

1961a Fort George from George Point, September 10th, 1841. *In* Oregon and California Drawings, 1841 and 1847. San Francisco: Book Club of California. Obtained from The Evergreen State College Library.

Guillou, C F, and Emily Blackmore

1961b Fort George or Astoria, July 22nd, 1841. *In* Oregon and California Drawings, 1841 and 1847. San Francisco: Book Club of California. Obtained from The Evergreen State College Library.

Henry, Alexander, and David Thompson

1897 New Light on the Early History of The Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and of David Thompson 1799-1814. 3 vols. Volume II. New York: Francis P Harper. Obtained from Google Books.

Jackson, Helen

1891 Glimpses of Three Coasts. Boston: Roberts Brothers. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Lattie, Alexander

1846 Plan Sketch of Fort George. *In* Fort George Journal. From Original Journal at Clatsop County Historical Society.

- Lattie, Alexander  
1846 [1963] Fort George Journal. *In Oregon Historical Quarterly*. Pp. 197-245, Vol. 64.
- McKean, Samuel T  
1886 [1992] Memoirs of Samuel T McKean. *Cumtux* 1992 1(3). Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- McKithan, Cecil N  
1977 Fort Astoria National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form *and* Supporting Documents: National Park Service. Obtained at Oregon SHPO.
- McManama, Roger  
1993 Letter from Roger McManama to Clatsop County Historical Society. Seattle. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- Millard, Leonard  
1977 Lattie Family, Dates and Places. *In "The Seaside", Lattie-Cloutrie-Coffman-Bain Families*. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- Miller, Emma Gene  
1958 Location of Fort George at Astoria, Oregon. *In Clatsop County, Oregon: A History*. Portland: Binfords & Mort. Obtained at Portland State University.
- Morris, Grace P.  
1937 Development of Astoria, 1811-1850. *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 38(4):413-424.
- Osborn, Burr  
1846 Map of Astoria in 1846 as I Remember it. Digital copy obtained from Oregon Historical Society.
- Penner, Liisa  
1993 Cemeteries and Gravesites in Astoria. *Cumtux* 13(3):38-43. Obtained at Oregon SHPO.
- Ross, Alexander  
1849 Adventures of the First Settlers on the Oregon or Columbia River. London: Smith, Elder and Co. Obtained digital copy at Google Books.
- Sanborn Map Company  
1884 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

- Sanborn Map Company  
1888 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Sanborn Map Company  
1892 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Sanborn Map Company  
1896 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Sanborn Map Company  
1908 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Sanborn Map Company  
1954 Astoria, Oregon. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.
- Saumaros, Lt. T.  
1818 Plan of the Settlement of Fort George, Columbia River. *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* XIX(4):271. Obtained at Portland State University.
- Scouler, Dr. John  
1825 [1905] *Journal of a Voyage to N. W. America. The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society* [1905] 6(2):157-205.
- Sharp Jr, Craigie  
1883 Astoria [early development]. *In The West Shore, June, Vol. 9. Portland.* Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.
- Shively, J M  
1844 [1980] Plan of Astoria. *In Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920: Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.*
- Shively, J M  
1854 [1980] Plan of Astoria. *In Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920. Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.*
- Stenzel MD, Franz  
1975a Astoria [1857]. *In James Madison Alden: Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast 1854-1869. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum.* Obtained from Western Oregon University Library.
- Stenzel MD, Franz  
1975b Grave Yard - Astoria, Oregon [1854]. *In James Madison Alden: Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast 1854-1869. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum.* Obtained from Western Oregon University Library.

Stenzel MD, Franz

1975c New Astoria, Oregon [1854]. *In* James Madison Alden: Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast 1854-1869. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum. Obtained from Western Oregon University Library.

Stenzel MD, Franz

1975d Old Astoria, Oregon [1854]. *In* James Madison Alden: Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast 1854-1869. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum. Obtained from Western Oregon University Library.

Stenzel MD, Franz

1975e Old Astoria. From Leonard & Green's Store. Astor's Point [1854]. *In* James Madison Alden: Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast 1854-1869. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum. Obtained from Western Oregon University Library.

Stevens, Charles

1853 Letters of Charles Stevens. *In* Oregon Historical Quarterly [1936], Vol. 37. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

Swan, James G

1857 [1972] The Northwest Coast, or Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

U.S. Coast Survey

1851 [1980] Mouth of the Columbia River from a Preliminary Survey, W.P. McArthur, U.S.N. *In* Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920: Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.

U.S. Coast Survey

1868 Detail from Columbia River from Young's Bay to John Day's River with Liisa Penner CCHS Notations. Obtained at Clatsop County Historical Society.

U.S. Coast Survey

1868 [1980] Columbia River from Young's Bay to John Day's River Sec. XI:OGN Surveyed in 1868 by Cleveland Rockwell. *In* Columbia's Gateway: A History of the Columbia River Estuary to 1920: Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission for OHS.

U.S. Coast Survey

1870 Columbia River Sheet No. 1. Obtained from <http://historicalcharts.noaa.gov/historicals>.

Van Buren, M. E.

1850 Map of the Mouth of the Columbia River, enlarged from Wilkes' small map and other data. Digital copy obtained from Oregon Historical Society.

Van Dusen, Caroline Childs

1849 Caroline Childs Van Dusen. *Cumtux* 3(1).

Vavasour, Melvin

1846a Plan of Tongue Point on the south shore of the Columbia River.

Vavasour, Melvin

1846b Sketch of Tongue Point showing its Command over the Ship Channel.

Vavasour, Melvin

1846 [1912] Report of Lieutenant Vavasour. *The Washington Historical Quarterly* 1912 3(2):131-153.

Warre, Captain Henry J.

1970 Fort Astoria on the Columbia River [1845]. *In Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory*. Barre, Massachusetts: Imprint Society. Obtained at Portland State University Library.

Wilkes, Charles

1841 Sheet No. 1 Mouth of the Columbia River, Oregon Territory Surveyed by the U.S. Ex. Ex. Charles Wilkes Esq. Commander. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

Wilkes, Charles

1844 [1974] Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842. *In Life in Oregon Country Before the Emigration*. R.E. Moore, ed. Ashland: The Oregon Book Society. Obtained from Western Oregon University.

Wilkes, Charles

1849 Drawing by Lt. Charles Wilkes of Ft. George of Astoria, Oregon, 1841, Showing Fields, Houses and River. *In A Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838-1842*. Philadelphia. Obtained at Oregon Historical Society.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Historic Maps

Appendix B: Historic Illustrations

Appendix C: Historic Photos

Appendix D: NRHP Nomination Form and Supplemental Information on File at  
Oregon SHPO

Appendix E: Select Eyewitness Accounts of Fort George and Early Astoria

Appendix F: Accounts of Inadvertent Archaeological Discoveries

Appendix G: Select Secondary Sources