

ROBERT FIRTH DIARY

Belle Vue farm was initially put under the charge of Robert Firth (1831-1901), a native of Scotland who was listed as a shepherd in the Company records. Firth was born in Kirkwall on Pomona, the largest of the Orkney Islands. When he was 19, he went to Edinburg to become engaged in the Hudson's Bay Company ("The Company"). On May 12, 1851, he arrived in Victoria, where he farmed at Fern Hill. In 1857, he requested a leave of absence to return to Scotland to marry Jessie Grant (1830-1889), returning with her the next year. (They would eventually have nine children, two of whom were born in Victoria and the rest at Belle Vue Farm.) Firth arrived on San Juan Island on January 7, 1862 to assume management of the farm. In the spring of 1864, the Company leased the farm to him for three years, and subsequent leases ran up to the year 1873—coincident with the 1872 decision for the United States in regard to the possession of the Islands. Firth became an American citizen on February 5, 1878, and applied for and was awarded two land patents: a cash sale of 40 acres in 1880 and a homestead entry of 186.1 acres in 1884.¹

Robert Firth kept diaries, and the years 1865 and 1866 are extant. Written in a nice hand with often unconventional spelling, the entries record his continuation of many of the farming practices of his predecessor. He mentions both the little and big fields, which he planted in oats, peas, and potatoes. Place names such Sheep Station, New Station, Chandler's Prairie, and Bald Hill indicate that Firth was still using many of the original Belle Vue Sheep Farm pastures and stations. However, the introduction of a growing number of new names of American settlers—Fleming, Hannah, Hubbs—as well as San Juan Town—the rough grouping of stores, bars, and brothels that serviced the soldiers of American Camp—indicates the future outcome in the settlement of San Juan Island.

After his wife Jessie died in 1889, Firth rented the farm to his son, Robert Jr., and lived in the American officer's quarters ('Pickett's House') with his youngest daughter, Mary Jane (Maimie). One of his grandchildren recollected that Belle Sheep Vue Farm at that time consisted of "a number of log houses in a hollow square with quite an orchard in the center".² Eventually, the buildings were used for storage of equipment as well as hay and other crops. On October, 1927, Mary Jane and her husband Joe Chapelle sold the farm to Robert McRae for

¹ Several of the Firth children married into local families; for instance, Robert Firth, Jr., married Lila Hannah, the daughter of an American farmer on the island (Firth Family file, San Juan Historical Museum, Friday Harbor).

² "Inez Calhoun Shaffer", 1960 paper in Firth Family file, San Juan Historical Museum, Friday Harbor.

\$13,000. The property included 160 acres along with all the livestock and farm equipment.

This copy of the Diary was transcribed and annotated by Boyd C. Pratt, based on a copy of the original manuscript in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia (E/B/F51), Victoria. The transcription follows this method: the abbreviations, punctuation, and spelling are Firth's; questionable words are followed by a bracketed question mark ([?]); illegible words are represented by two hyphens followed by a question mark (--?); illegible words that are conjectured are represented by bracketing of the conjectured word followed by a question mark ([went?]); cross-outs are crossed out (~~We fine~~); and notes are italicized and bracketed ([*notes*]).

ROBERT FIRTH DIARY

Jan 1 1865

January

- 1 Sundy rather quiet wether every thing quiet
- 2 Mo fine wether working in the barn Dick out at the sheepery --?
- 3 Tu Raining very hard all day working in the barn Dick came home and brought dear with him
- 4 We Blowing very hard all day mee an Dick haling fire wood
- 5 Th fine wether mee and Dick thrasing
- 6 Fr rather dull wether still thrashing
- 7 Sa fine wether I went to peter's³ after an ox yoke Dick⁴ usefully employed
- 8 Sundy Dull wether every thing quiet
- 9 Mo fine wether ploughing in the garden
- 10 Tu Dull wether and cold Comensed to plough in the little field⁵
- 11 We fine wether plowing
- 12 Th fine wether plowing
- 13 Fr fine wether went to the went to the Sheep Station⁶ Dick halling fire wood
- 14 Sa fine wether plowing
- 15 Su fine wether every thing quiet Dick went to the Sheep Station with a fortnight provishons to the sheeperd
- 16 Mo raning hard all day working about the house
- 17 Tu fine wether went to the to the new station⁷ after some pigs
- 18 We cold rain and sleet threshing
- 19 Th fine wether ploughing
- 20 Fri fine wether ploughing
- 21 Sa fine wether frosty bought my cart home took down my pigs from the quarters and lock[?] home a lod of wood
- 22 Su fine hard frost went to the Chandler prary⁸ after the pebly mair

³ Peter Lawson, a neighbor along the coast to the northwest, established a farm in 1859.

⁴ The full name of Dick, who appears to be Firth's farm hand, is not known.

⁵ There were several fields established by the Hudson's Bay Company ("The Company") at Belle Vue Farm: a little (approximately six acre) field to the west and downhill of the "Establishment"; a large field of some 40-60 acres across the ravine; an upper field to the east of the compound and a lower field below that. In general, the former two were planted in oats and carrots, while the latter two were planted in potatoes and turnips.

⁶ The sheep station was probably the one at Friday Harbor.

⁷ The "New Station" was originally established by the Company in late September, 1854. Its precise whereabouts are unknown, although it was probably near Park Hill, just south of Friday Harbor.

⁸ Chandler's Prairie was the open grassy north of Friday Harbor near the University of Washington Labs; also identified as "Sheep Hill" on later maps.

23 Mu fine hard frost Dick went to the sheep station I went to hobs⁹
and sold the white horse
24 Tu fine hard frost halling wood
25 We fine hard frost halling wood
26 Th fine hard frost haling wood heavy snow all night
27 Fr raining hard all day threshing
28 Sa raining in the fornoon afternoon fine went to Hobs after a calf
29 Su driziling rain all day
30 Mu fine wether working in the barn
Tu Blowing very hard all day down town paying the indian woman

~~1 We fine wether avode about four unches of snow upon the ground
went to the Consu[?]
2 Th fine frost and snow working about hay stack[?]
3 Fr fine still frost and snow~~

February

1 We still blowing filling potatoes for MCy[?]¹⁰
2 Th fine above with plenty of snow went to the Qanakas¹¹
3 Fr frost and snow working about the sha[?]
4 Sa frost and snow threshing
5 Su hard frost went to the sheep station with Dick to be shephard
6 Mo still frosty thrashing
7 Tu still frosty went to the new station to seperate the sheep stayed
all night
8 We still frosty came home and finished the day amongst the sheep
9 Th fine wether at plough
10 Fr fine wether at plough with Capten wolfs¹² boy ~~little man went to
the station~~
11 Sa fine wether at plough in the fore noon filling up and sending
down Fletts¹³ potatoes little man¹⁴ went to the sheep station with
rations to Dick

⁹ Paul K. Hubbs, Jr. (also herein spelled Hobs, Hubs, and Hobes, both capitalized and not) first came to San Juan Island as the US customs inspector in 1857; later, he established a farm on the southern tip of San Juan Island. Apparently Hubbs had at least three wives, several of whom were Native American. It is not clear which one the Mrs. Hubbs referred to is.

¹⁰ If this is "McKay", it could be John Hunter McKay, an early American settler on the island.

¹¹ This probably refers to Kanakas, who were Hawaiians brought by the Company to the Northwest as laborers, particularly shepherds. After the Company abandoned operations on the island, many left, but those that stayed settled near Kanaka Bay on the west side.

¹² Captain Wolf is unidentified at this time.

¹³ Fletts is unidentified at this time.

¹⁴ There is a "Little Man" referred to in Griffin's Journals; perhaps this is the same person.

- 12 Su Fine wether all quiet
- 13 Mo raining and bowing very hard working in the barn
- 14 Tu blowing very hard threshing
- 15 We blowing very hard threshing
- 16 Th blowing very hard threshing
- 17 Fr blowing very hard threshing
- 18 Sa fine wether plowing in the fore noon halling wood in the
afternoon
- 19 Su fine wether went to town¹⁵ with the cart for a barel of fish
- 20 Mu fine wether went to the new station with little man as sheperd
- 21 Tu fine wether did nothing
- 22 We fine wether working in potatoes
- 23 Th blowing cold finished plough in the little field
- 24 Fr fine wether comensed plough in the big field
- 25 Sa fine wether plough in the fornon Dick went to the new station
with provishons to the shepard
- 26 Su blowing very cold me and Dick went to the Chandler for cows
- 27 Mu blowing hard with snow showers taking in potatoes Dick
halling wood
- 28 Tu Snow with very hard frost

March

- 1 We very cold frost and snow threshing
- 2 Th very cold frost and snow with high wind halling wood for
Barker¹⁶
- 3 Fr rather milder comensed to thaw working about[?]
- 4 Sa High wind with havy showers of slet halling wood Dick went to
the sheep station
- 5 Su high wind heavy dashes of sleet and rain
- 6 Mu heavy snow and frost halling wood for Barker
- 7 Tu snowing and blowing very hard cleaning oats
- 8 We hard frost and snow cleaning oats
- 9 Th slet and snow all day went to hobes point¹⁷ to look for a cow no
good
- 10 Fr sleet and rain Dick found the cow and calf I went to new station
in the afternoon stoped all night
- 11 Sa high winds with showers of rain I went to the lime kill¹⁸ found a
sheep killed by dogs

¹⁵ San Juan Town, a collection of stores, bars, and brothels that grew up near the Company's former wharf on Griffin Bay.

¹⁶ Barker is unidentified at this time.

¹⁷ "Hubb's Point" was probably the current Cattle Point, near where the Hubbs had their farm.

¹⁸ Lime Kiln, about midway on the west coast of the island, was the site of limestone mining and processing operations that was established by American settlers (including Lyman Cutlar) in 1860.

- 12 Su dry winds found Dick dead on the praire
- 13 Mu fine wether buried Dick one of my cows died
- 14 Tu high winds with heavy showers of rain halled down the cow and
and skinned her
- 15 We drisling rain went to peters for straw
- 16 Th dry wind halling wood
- 17 Fr fine wether plowing st pathric's day
- 18 Sa high winds with dashes of showers
- 19 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 20 Mu cold wins plowing
- 21 Tu high winds with havy dashes of snow plowing
- 22 We cold wind halling dung to Mr Mrc[?]
- 23 Th drisling rain all day halling dung
- 24 Fr fine wether
- 25 Sa fine wether plowing to Mr Mercer¹⁹
- 26 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 27 Mu fine wether plowing to Mr Mercer
- 28 Tu fine wether took fridy cow out of the mire in the fore plow in the
after non
- 29 We fine wether plow in the fore non put in some potatoes for Mr
Mercer in the afternon
- 30 Th fine wether plough all day
- 31 Fr fine wether at plough got a lod of straw

April

- 1 Sa blowing very hard halling wood to Barker in the fore noon went
to the sheep station in the afternoon
- 2 Su fine wether came home from the station[?]
- 3 Mu fine wether at plough all day
- 4 Tu fine wether at plough
- 5 We fine wether sowing oats in the litle field
- 6 Th fine wether finished sowing the litle field
- 7 Fr fine at harrow in the litle field
- 8 Sa fine wether planting potatoes
- 9 Su fine wether went to the newstation
- 10 Mu fine wether plowing at the newstation
- 11 Tu fine wether planting potatos at the station
- 12 We fine wether finished at the newstation
- 13 Th fine wether went to John W²⁰ after feed
- 14 Fr fine wether washing my old oxen
- 15 Sa fine wether planting potatoes
- 16 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 17 Mu very high winds working about the house

¹⁹ George Mercer was listed as a 41-year-old merchant in the 1866 "List of Residents".

²⁰ "John W" could be John Witty, who farmed to the west of Firth during this period.

- 18 Tu ~~very high winds~~ thinking to go to victoria
- 19 We fine wether went to victoria
- 20 Th in victoria
- 21 Fr fine wether came home from victoria
- 22 Sa fine wether taking up my thing from town
- 23 Su blowing hard Sent out a months flower to little man
- 24 Mu fine wether sowing pees
- 25 Tu fine wether repairing fainsing
- 26 We fine wether sowing oats
- 27 Th fine wether sowing oats an repairing fainsing
- 28 Fr raining all day
- 29 Th fine wether helping Capten Wolf to alter his lambs went to the newstation afternoon
- 30 Su fine wether at the newstation altering lambs

May

- 1 Mu fine wether finished harrowing the lar[g?]e field
- 2 Tu fine wether could not find my oxen
- 3 We fine wether plowing in the large field
- 4 Th fine wether planting potatoes
- 5 Fr very warm planting potatoes
- 6 Sa very warm finished planting potatoes
- 7 Su very warm took a walk to town
- 8 Mu fine wether sowing carrots
- 9 Tu very warm harowing potatoes and sowing turnips
- 10 We fine wether plowing in the litle field for turnips
- 11 Th fine wether sowing turnips
- 12 Fr fine wether plowing in the large field
- 13 Sa fine wether plowing
- 14 Su fine wether went to town with the slade[?]
- 15 Mu fine wether working about the house
- 16 Tu drisling rain all day helping Capten Wolf to turn over his sheep to Mr Bowker²¹
- 17 We fine wether at plough
- 18 Th fine wether sowing oats
- 19 Fr fine wether finished harow and roll
- 20 Sa fine wether working at the sheep wash
- 21 Su fine wether came home from the station and shiped 10 sheep for victoria
- 22 Mu fine wether taking licknesses[?] and working in the garding
- 23 Tu fine wether working at the sheep wash
- 24 We blowing hard working in the garding[?]

²¹ John S. Bowker was a merchant and saloonkeeper at San Juan Town. Bowker, who began to have run-ins with the commanding officers at American Camp in 1860, went out of business in November 1865.

- 25 Th fine wether planting cabage
- 26 Fr fine wether repairing fansing
- 27 Sa fine wether hunting horses
- 28 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 29 Mu fine wether sent ten weders to Victoria
- 30 Tu fine wether washing sheep
- 31 We fine wether howing potatoes

June

- 1 Th fine wether fixing the barn for shearing
- 2 Fr fine wether comensed shearing sheep
- 3 Sa fine wether shearing
- 4 Su fine wether looking after the sheep
- 5 Mu raining a litle went to the electon
- 6 Tu fine wether shearing sheep
- 7 We fine wether shearring sheep
- 8 Th fine wether finished the sheep
- 9 Fr fine wether howing potatoes
- 10 Sa fine wether went out with the sheep
- 11 Su a litle rain went out with barker sheep
- 12 Mu fine wether went to town with the slade
- 13 Tu fine weather working in the garding
- 14 We raining in the morning plowing potatoes
- 15 Th fine wether howing potatoes
- 16 Fr fine wether working in the garding
- 17 Sa fine wether halled one load of bark and fixed my cart
- 18 Su a litle rain at noon went to the country with the cart
- 19 Mu fine wether halling bark
- 20 Tu fine wether halling bark
- 21 We fine wether halling bark
- 22 Th fine wether haling rails
- 23 Fr fine wether went to the country with my old oxen
- 24 Sa fine wether working about the ho[use?]
- 25 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 26 Mu fine wether fixing a cow[?] pend[?]
- 27 Tu fine wether sent of some pigs
- 28 We fine wether howing potatoes
- 29 Th fine wether howing potatoes
- 30 Fr fine wether working about the house

July

- 1 Sa fine wether went to the scool meeting from thair to the sheep station all night
- 2 Su fine wether came home from the station
- 3 Mu fine wethe working about the house
- 4 Tu fine wether some sport to day

- 5 We fine wether very litle work done
- 6 Th fine wether hunting rams
- 7 Fr fine wether went to the cuntry with Miss Fleming²² from thair to the station
- 8 Sa fine wether howing potatoes
- 9 Su fine wether went to peters a litle rain night
- 10 Mu fine wether working about the house
- 11 Tu fine wether ploughing potatoes
- 12 We fine wether working at the scool
- 13 Th fine wether working at the scool
- 14 Fr fine wether out in the cuntry with oxen
- 15 Sa fine wether out at the new station with sheep thunder and lightning in the evening with rain
- 16 Su raining hard all day
- 17 Mu fine wether comensed to cut oats in litle field
- 18 Tu fine wether cuting oats
- 19 We fine wether cuting oats
- 20 Th fine wether cuting in the large field
- 21 Fr fine wether cuting hay
- 22 Sa fine wether sacking up my oats
- ~~Su fine wether~~
- 23 Su raning in the morning
- 24 Mu fine wether cuting oats at the station
- 25 Tu fine wether racking hay
- 26 We fine wether cuting hay
- 27 Th fine wether cuting hay half a day
- 28 Fr fine wether racking hay
- 29 Sa fine wether at the new station racking oats took home spring²³ with a calf
- 30 Su fine wether packing woll
- 31 Mu fine wether cutting hay

August

- 1 Tu fine wether carting hay
- 2 We fine wether finished cuting
- 3 Th fine wether racking hay
- 4 Fr fine wether tacking in the mairs
- 5 Sa fine wether tacking in the mairs
- 6 Su fine wether toock in the last of the mairs
- 7 Mu fine wether working about the house
- 8 Tu fine wether shiped the mairs
- 9 We fine wether out with Bowker

²² Thomas (1819-1908) and Mary Jane (1822-1902) Fleming came to the San Juan Island in 1863 and homesteaded in San Juan Valley.

²³ "Spring" appears to be a person (see September 1st entry below).

- 10 Th fine wether working in the hay
- 11 Fr fine wether halling hay
- 12 Sa fine wether halling hay
- 13 Su fine wether went to town with the slade
- 14 Mu fine wether halling hay
- 15 Tu fine wether finished halling hay
- 16 We fine wether went to the new station with the cart
- 17 Th fine wether finished at the station
- 18 Fr fine wether looking after my rams
- 19 Sa fine wether went to the station with a month provishons to the sheperd
- 20 Su fine wether went to captain thorenton[?]²⁴
- 21 Mu fine wether waiting for captain thorenton all day Sent my pigs of in the evening
- 22 Tu rather damp
- 23 We rather wet
- 24 Th fine wether binding oats to freser²⁵
- 25 Fr fine wether cuting peas
- 26 Sa fine wether cuting peas
- 27 Su blowing very hard took a walk to town in the evening
- 28 Mu fine wether cuting peas
- 29 Tu fine wether finished the peas
- 30 We fine wether cuting oats
- 31 Th fine wether cuting oats

September

- 1 Fr rather damp working in the peas Spring went away
- 2 Sa fine wether house keeper
- 3 Su fine wether went to the new station
- 4 Mu fine wether took in my lambs
- 5 Tu wet wether
- 6 We fine wether turning and halling peas
- 7 Th fine wether sorting my sheep
- 8 Fr fine wether finished halling peas and racked some oats
- 9 Sa raining went to the new station
- 10 Su fine wether took a walk to town
- 11 Mu wet wether blowing very hard at night
- 12 Tu rather damp cutting a litle oats
- 13 We raining working about the house
- 14 Th raining working about the house

²⁴ This could be Thomas Thornton, who appears in the 1870 census as a 42-year-old seaman.

²⁵ Robert H. Frazer (1825-1912), a ship's carpenter, arrived on San Juan Island in 1859. He married Mary Jane, daughter of Thomas Fleming (f.n.21), and eventually farmed at the old Cutlar place to the northwest of American Camp.

- 15 Fr rather damp went to town afternoon --?
- 16 Sa fine wether went to the new Station with a months provishon to shep^d
- 17 Su fine wether came home from the station
- 18 Mu fine wether racking oats
- 19 Tu fine wether racking oats
- 20 We raining Mary Jane came acroos
- 21 Th fine wether turning my oats
- 22 Fr fine wether taking in my oats
- 23 Sa dull wether went to Mr fraser rain in the after noon
- 24 Su fine wether every thing quiet
- 25 Mu damp full wether
- 26 Tu fine wether working about the house
- 27 We fine wether cuting oats
- 28 Th fine wether working about
- 29 Fr fine wether working about
- 30 Sa dull wether working about

October

- 1 Su fine wether took a walk to town.
- 2 Mu fine wether working about
- 3 Tu fine wether took the rams from the ewes
- 4 We fine wether racking oats
- 5 Th fine wether carting oats
- 6 Fr fine wether working about
- 7 Sa fine wether marking and sorting shep
- 8 Su fine wether went to the new station with the lambs
- 9 Mu fine wether working about --?
- 10 Tu fine wether the steembot came for the troops²⁶
- 11 We fine wether the steembot took away the troops
- 12 Th fine wether out with Mr Fraser
- 13 Fri fine wether out with Mr Fraser
- 14 Sa fine wether helping Cap Smith²⁷ to brand some catle
- 15 Su fine wether went to lopes island²⁸
- 16 Mu working about the house
- 17 Tu Dito
- 18 We Dito
- 19 Th Dito
- 20 Fr Dito
- 21 Sa Dito
- 22 Su went to the country with Irvine²⁹

²⁶ US troops departed ??

²⁷ Captain William Smith was one of the first dozen American settlers on San Juan Island.

²⁸ Lopez Island.

23 Mu went to victoria
24 Tu in Victoria
25 We in Victoria
26 Th in Victoria
27 Fr left Victoria
28 Sa took up my things from --?
29 Su sorting my rams and [went?] in to the cuntry after after the p[?]
30 Mu blowing went out with my ra[ms?]
31 Tu fine wether went to the cuntry --?

November

1 We fine wether start for the c[?]
2 Th fine wether diging potatoes
3 Fr fine wether diging potatoes
4 Sa fine wether diging potatoes
5 Su fine wether house keeping
6 Mu ~~fine wether~~ drisling rain helping Mr Bowker to sort his sheep
7 Tu fine wether halling wood
8 We fine wether halling wood
9 Th fine wether repairing fainsing
10 Fr fine wether repairing fainsing
11 Sa fine wether repairing fainsing
12 Su fine wether every thing quiet
13 Mu raining very hard went out with Bean Valpy³⁰ to ball hull³¹
14 Tu fine wether helping the Canacs[?]
15 We cold wind digin potatoes
16 Th rainaing all day
17 Fr fine wether digin potatoes
18 Sa a havy fall of snow catching pigs for Mr Mercer
19 Su blowing very hard with rain
20 Mu blowing very hard al day hunting after a bull
21 Tu blowing hard with rain
22 We fair wether working in the potatoes
23 Th working in the potatoes
24 Fr working in the potatoes
25 Sa fine wether working in the potatoes Peter helping
26 Su raining went to ball hill after oxen
27 Mu high winds with torants of rain
28 Tu high winds with torants of rain
29 We fine wether working in the potatoes

²⁹ Irvine is unidentified at this time.

³⁰ John Valpey appears on a list of residents in 1866 submitted to the commanding officer at American Camp.

³¹ Bald Hill, located on the north end of Griffin Bay, is the site of a modern gravel mining operation that has reduced the hill to a pit.

30 Th raining all day
~~31 Fr raining working at rot house~~

December

1 Fr raining working at the root house
2 Sa hard frost
3 Su hard frost
4 Mu hard frost
5 Tu hard frost halling wod for B Velpy
6 We drisling rain working at the rothonsens[?]³²
7 Th high cold wind hunting for Indians
8 Fr cold wind diging potatoes
9 Sa cold wind diging potatoes
10 Su cold wind and snow went to the new station with a month
provisions
11 Mo very cold with black frost
12 Tu very cold black frost
[numbering is off at this point]
12 We cold frost
13 Th very cold hunting for a mair
14 Fr a havy fall of snow al day
15 Sa cold frost and snow
16 Su cold frost went to the new station
17 Mu came home still cold frost
18 Tu snowing all day
[correct numbering resumes]
20 We still cold
21 Th a havy fall of snow all day the the sheep shade broke down
22 Fr a litle milder went to the sheep station
23 Sa blowing and raining very hard came home from the scheep
station
24 Su blowing hard and very cold at the sheep station
25 Mu Christmas day blowing very hard
26 Tu fresing went to the chandler prary after the pebly mair
27 We cold frost working about the house
28 Th cold went to the country after a stear
29 Fr brought home my stear from wedys³³
30 Sa cold wether working about the house
31 Su every thing quiet

January the 1st 1866

1 Mu very frosty wether New years day

³² This could be either Martin Brown Rethlefson or Siegfried W^m Rethlefson, both of whom were enumerated as farmers in the 1866 list of residents on San Juan Island.

³³ Wedys is unidentified at this time.

- 2 Tu at home all day
- 3 We still frosty went to the sheep station
- 4 Th brought my rams home from the station
- 5 Fr fine wether working at the shade
- 6 Sa fine wether working at the shade
- 7 Su fine wether curing my sheep
- 8 Mu fine wether dito
- 9 Tu fine dito
- 10 We fine halling from the shade
- 11 Th fine halling from the shade
- 12 Fr fine wether halling from the shade
- 13 Sa dito
- 14 Su blowing and very cold
- 15 Mu Snowing and blowing
- 16 Tu fresing and snowing very hard
- 17 We cold frost at home all day
- 18 Th still cold went to the sheep station
- 19 Fr a litle milder came home from the station
- 20 Sa rainin all day
- 21 Su warm rain went to the new station
- 22 Mu thick fock all day came home from the station
- 23 Tu cold wind and rain went to town and got some salmon and
flower
- 24 We cold wind with havy showers clening out the barn
- 25 Th fine wether halling from the shade
- 26 Fr cold wind and rain thrashing peas
- 27 Sa ditto
- 28 Su cold wind with some snow
- 29 Mu fine wether repairing fainsing
- 30 Tu light frost diging potatoes
- 31 We still frosty digin potatoes

February

- 1 Th cold black frosty wind thrashing peas
- 2 Fr cold and frosty thrashing peas
- 3 Sa cold wind went to town with my oxen to hall a boat
- 4 Su snowing all day
- 5 Mu cold dry wind filling potatoes out of the pit
- 6 Tu fine wether shiping potatoes and sheep ~~and~~ for victoria
- 7 We blowing and raining very hard all day
- 8 Th blowing hard halling my small potatoes into the root house
- 9 Fr a litle milder went to the sheep station
- 10 Sa snow again working about the house

- 11 Su fine with some snow went to Mr hang[?]³⁴
- 12 Mu fine came home went to ball hill after the pebly mair
- 13 Tu hard frost working about the house
- 14 We fine wether with frost helping to ship catle for Mrs Hobs agreed
Tlx[?] Mcdang[?]
- 15 Th frosty halling fire wood
- 16 Fr frosty comensed thrashing
- 17 Sa frosty tharishing in the farm and after noon went to town after a
bbl of salt beef
- 18 Su fine wether went to Mr Blacks³⁵ after a cow
- 19 Mu fine thrashing and diging potatoes
- 20 Tu fine thrashing and diging potatoes
- 21 We fine repairing fainsing
- 22 Th fine ploughing went to a party a night
- 23 Fr fine very litle work done
- 24 Sa fine ploughing in the garding
- 25 Su cold and damp every thing quiet
- 26 Mu fine wether went to the sheep station to docter the sheep
- 27 Tu cold wind washing the sheep
- 28 We fine wether gathering and counting the sheep 23 short

March

- 1 Th fine wether working about the house
- 2 Fr fine wether went out to hanas with Bowker finished plowing in
the litle field
- 3 Sa fine thrashing at hobses plowed mouses[?] garden
- 4 Su drisling rain went to hobses to look at some pigs
- 5 Mu damp and foggy plowing below the government garden³⁶
- 6 Tu fine at plow
- 7 We fine at plow in the fore noon killed a beef in the after noon
- 8 Th fine at plow
- 9 Fr drisling rain all day
- 10 Sa still raining
- 11 Su went after my bull
- 12 Mu fine attack[?] at the sheep station at plow in the after noon
- 13 Tu fine at plow all day
- 14 We fine at plow alack[Alex?] at John W thrashing
- 15 Th ditto
- 16 Fr fine finished plow in the loer field

³⁴ This could be "Hannah". James and Minerva Hannah moved to the island in 1864 and homesteaded in San Juan Valley. Their daughter Lila (1865-1954) married Firth's son, Robert Jr.

³⁵ This could be R. Blake, one of the subscribers to the 1865 Portland Fair School House.

³⁶ The "Government garden", which was farmed by US troops at American camp, was located just to the north of Firth's place.

17 Sa fine went to tarols[?]³⁷ after potatoes
 18 Su rather cold huting after a bull
 19 Mu cold wind helping Cy Smith to get up some cattle
 20 Tu plowing for Mr Bowker
 21 We blowing hard plowing for bowker
 22 Th raining and blowin all day
 23 Fr plowing for bowker
 24 Sa fine wether went to hubes after pigs
 25 Su fine went to peter losans
 26 Mu fine shiping potatoes
 27 Tu fine shiping potatoes
 28 We blowing hard plowing for hannas[?]
 29 Th cold halling fire wood
 30 Fr rather cold planting potatoes in the garden
 31 Sa fine halling logs in the fore noon drilling up the litle field in the
 afternoon

April

1 Su fine Mr and Mrs hana came to visit us
 2 Mu fine planting potatoes and plowing for hegings³⁸
 3 Tu fine plowing for hegings
 4 We fine finished hegings plowing
 5 Th wet wether cuting potatoes
 6 Fr mild sowin oats
 7 Sa dry went to hubbs point
 8 Su cold went to mount dales³⁹
 9 Mu cold rain clening oats for Mrs Hubbs
 10 Tu cold halling logs
 11 We cold halling logs
 12 Th fine cuting lambs for Barker
 13 Fr fine finished sowing the lower field
 14 Sa cold wind fixing one of the houses
 15 Su fine went to the sheep with a month rations
 16 Mu high wind put the fence up roun the lower field
 17 Tu fine sowed the uper field
 18 We fine driling for potatoes
 19 Th fine planted the uper patch of potatoes
 20 Fr fine planting potatoes in the lower end
 21 Sa rather damp finished planting potatoes
 22 S fine every thing quiet

³⁷ This could be Benjamin Tirrel, a 54-year-old farmer listed in the 1870 census.

³⁸ J. D. Higgins was postmaster at San Juan Town and farmed near there. In 1867 he was evicted from the island by the US military commander Captain Gray.

³⁹ Mount Dallas is a high prominence on the west side of San Juan Island. The Company had a sheep station called "Mountain Station" during the 1850s.

23 Mu fine went out after last of beans potatoes and killed fox
24 Tu raining picking potatoes
25 We fine working about the house
26 Th fine sowing some peas
27 Fr fine plowing in some peas
28 Sa fine ditto
29 Su fine killed litle Dick
30 Mu fine unwell

May

1 Tu fine went to hobes point with the cart
2 We fine went to Capten Valpy to plow
3 Th fine Dito
4 Fr fine Dito baby sow
5 Sa fine finished at valpyes
6 Su fine went to the shep station
7 Mu fine planting potatoes and harowing peas
8 Tu fine comensed roling
9 We fine shearing my rams
10 Th fine shearing sheep
11 Fr fine finished
12 Sa fine working about
13 Su fine every thing quiet
14 Mu fine went to the shep station
15 Tu fine work about
16 We fine went to the island⁴⁰ with the rams
17 Th fine plowing for Mr Mercer
18 Fr fine finished Mr Mercer field
19 Sa a litle rain start for the sheep station
20 Su fine cut my lambs
21 Mu fine plowing at the sheep station
22 Tu Dito
23 We Dito
24 Th fine finished and came home
25 Fr fine howing potatoes
26 Sa raining all day picking potatoes
27 Su fine out and cut my bull
28 Mu fine cleaning potatoes
29 Tu fine cleaning potatoes
30 We fine finished howing the litle field
31 Th fine washing sheep

⁴⁰ Although the island to which Firth took his sheep is not named, it could have been Dinner Island, which the Township and Range surveyors said was being used for rams in 1874.

June

- 1 Fr fine howing potatoes
- 2 Sa fine howing potatoes
- 3 Su fine every thing quiet
- 4 Mu fine shearing sheep
- 5 Tu fine Dito
- 6 We fine Dito
- 7 Th fine finished sheep sharing
- 8 Fr fine boiling tobacco
- 9 Sa fine went to the island to see the rams
- 10 Su fine very quiet
- 11 Mu fine went out after the pebly mair
- 12 Tu rather cold dipping sheep in tobacco
- 13 We fine Dito finished
- 14 Th fine working about the house
- 15 Fr raining went out with the sheep and shipped some shee[p?] in the evening
- 16 Sa fine went to victoria
- 17 Su fine out at Irvines
- 18 Mu high wind sold my sheep
- 19 Tu came home from Victoria
- 20 We fine working about the house
- 21 Th fine howing potatoes
- 22 Fr fine howing potatoes and sowing turnips for Mr Mercer
- 23 Sa high wind howing potatoes
- 24 Su fine out at Cap Smiths at the meeting
- 25 Mu fine cleaning turnips at the new station
- 26 Tu fine Dito
- 27 We fine fixing the rase track⁴¹
- 28 Th fine making binches for the scool⁴²
- 29 Fr fine plowing potatoes
- 30 Sa fine plowing potatoes

July

- 1 Su fine every thing quiet
- 2 Mu fine down town all day
- 3 Tu fine cleaning up round the house
- 4 We fine along with the excusion party⁴³
- 5 Th fine at home all day
- 6 Fr fine working about the house

⁴¹ The racetrack was located on Home Prairie, the large expanse of open land to the south and east of American Camp and Firth's place.

⁴² School House Number 1 was built at Portland Fair this year by volunteer labor.

⁴³ A Fourth of July excursion party ca. 1875 is described in the reminiscences of Lila Hannah Firth.

- 7 Sa fine howing potatoes at the new station
- 8 Su fine every thing quiet
- 9 Mu fine out after the valpy cow
- 10 Tu fine cuting three hands
- 11 We fine cuting tow[two?] hands
- 12 Th fine Dito
- 13 Fr fine Dito
- 14 Sa fine halling hay 6 load
- 15 Su fine killed a steer for Mrs Hubs
- 16 Mu fine halling hay 7 loads
- 17 Tu fine Dito 3 load
- 18 We fine after Mrs Hobs cow
- 19 Th fine cuting hay
- 20 Fri fine cuting hay and a pees[?] of oats
- 21 Sa fine broke my cart halling wood for Mr Mercer[?]
- 22 Su fine at home all day every thing quiet
- 23 Mu fine halled 4 lodes hay
- 24 Tu fine cuting oats for hay
~~We fine halling wood for Mr Mercer~~
- 25 We dull hunting after the valpy cow
- 26 Th fine halling wood for Mr Mercer
- 27 Fr fine Dito halling wood for Mr M
- 28 Sa fine working amongst the oat hay
- 29 Su fine went out to Capten thurstons⁴⁴ with the ox cart
- 30 Mu ~~fine halling oat hay~~ very foggy went to the sheep station
- 31 Tu fine ~~Dite~~ halling oat hay

August

- 1 We fine Dito
- 2 Th fine halling wood for Mr Mercer

⁴⁴ Captain Thurston is unidentified at this time.