

Fur Traders in Hawai'i: The Hudson's Bay Company in Honolulu, 1829-1861

Alexander Spoehr

Honolulu came into being as an artifact of commerce. Commerce remained the dominant economic theme in Honolulu's 19th Century transformation from a beach village into an increasingly cosmopolitan and much larger port town. When the Hudson's Bay Company entered the Hawaiian scene in 1829, Honolulu had already become a Pacific *entrepot*, despite its small size.¹

The Company was attracted to Hawai'i obviously not for furs but as a potential market for the products of the Company's posts in the Pacific Northwest. Here the Company's Columbia Department, encompassing what is now the province of British Columbia and the states of Oregon and Washington, was firmly established with its headquarters at Fort Vancouver on the north bank of the Columbia River. Fort Vancouver, a thriving depot, was the nerve center of the Company's network of posts throughout the Department. To reduce dependence of the posts on imported supplies, extensive agricultural projects were undertaken. And with an eye to diversifying beyond the fur trade, the Company set about exploiting the region's abundant timber and salmon resources, for which it sought an export market. Hawai'i was the closest market of promise.

The hierarchial organization of the Hudson's Bay Company needs to be briefly described.² At the top was the Governor and Committee in London, the seat of Company headquarters since the founding of the Company in 1670 (fig. 1.) London was responsible for the annual sale of furs brought from North America, procurement of the British trade goods and supplies sent by Company vessels to meet the needs of the North American fur-trading posts, fiscal management, and relations with the British government. The Company's North

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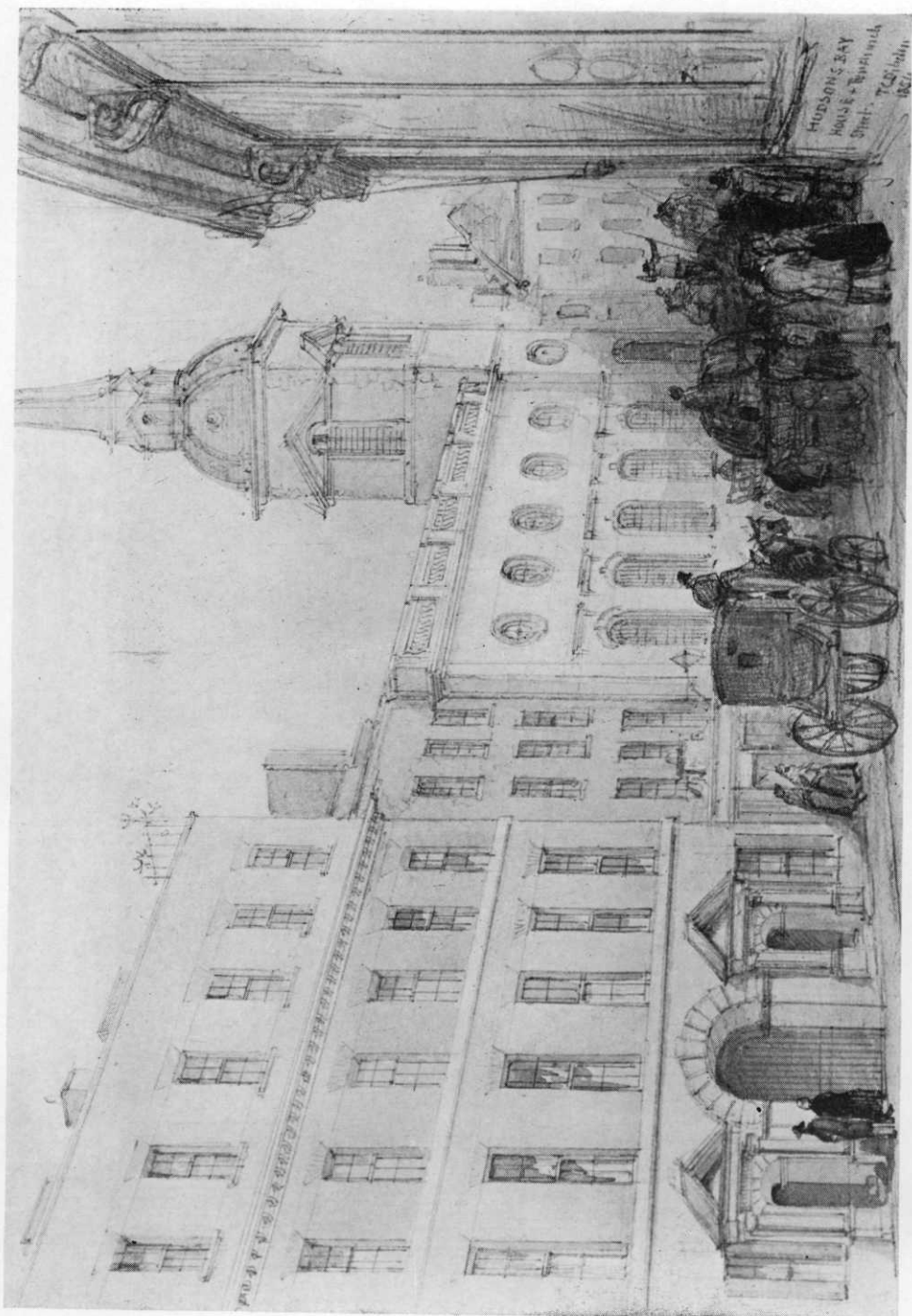
American operations were headed by the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, George Simpson, a man of notable ability, who guided the fortunes of the Company in North America and Hawai'i until his death in 1860. Simpson was assisted by a Council of commissioned officers. The Company's immense domain was divided into departments and districts of which the Columbia was one, headed by Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, builder of Fort Vancouver.

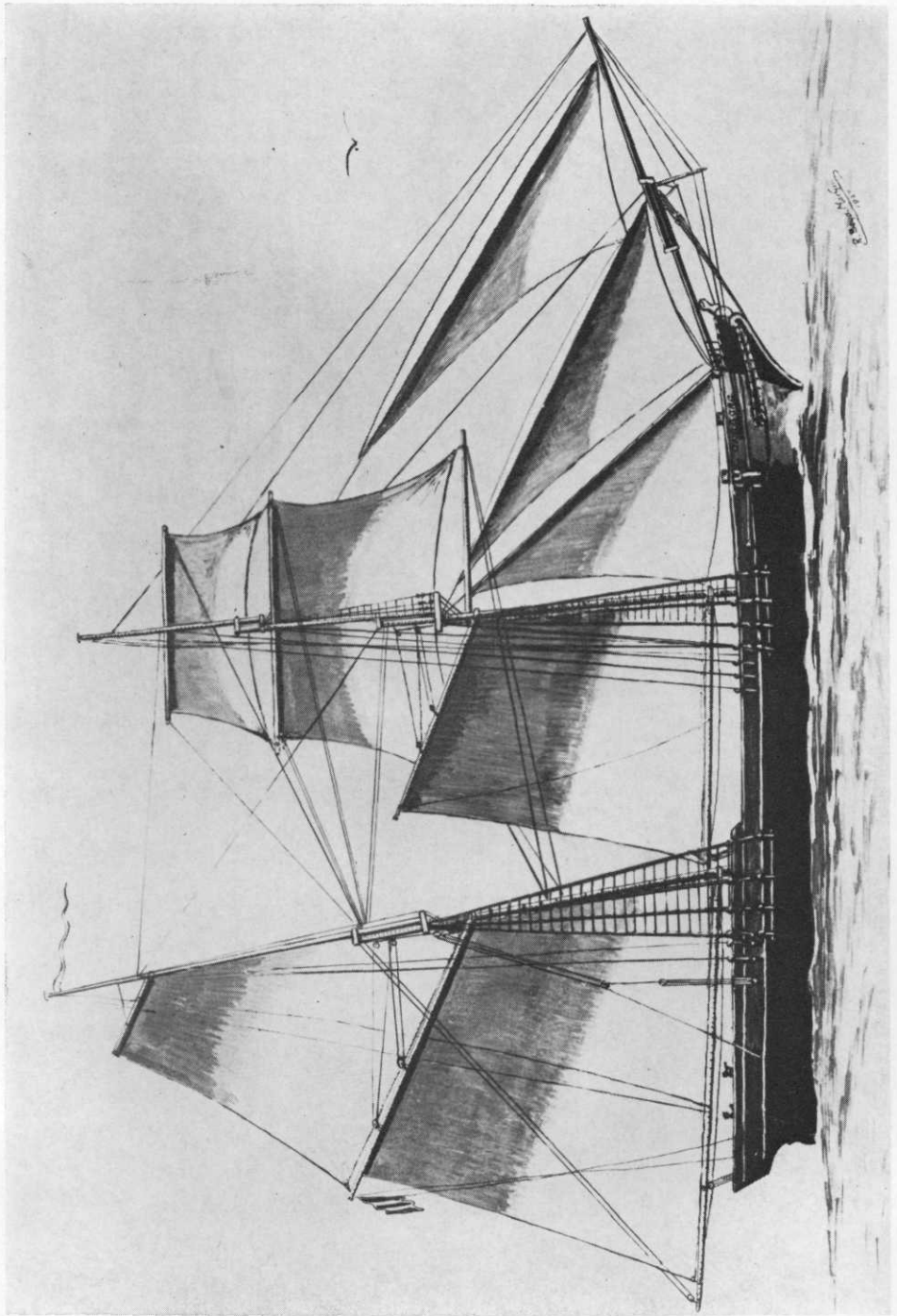
The Company's North American personnel fell into two main categories, Gentlemen and *Engagés*. The first was comprised of clerks and commissioned officers of two grades, Chief Traders and Chief Factors. Clerks were recruited as young apprentices and, depending on their abilities, in due course became eligible for promotion to commissioned rank. The *Engagés* were the labor force, consisting mainly of French Canadian *voyageurs*, Orkney Islanders, Iroquois Indians, and on the Northwest Coast also of Hawaiians and a few local Indian interpreters.

During the Company's time in Hawai'i, conditions in the Pacific Northwest changed dramatically. Beginning in the 1840s, Oregon and later Washington received first a trickle and then a flood of American settlers, which eventuated in the area becoming a part of the United States in 1846. In the face of American encroachment, the Company in 1849 moved its main depot and headquarters from Fort Vancouver to Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island. Fort Victoria was under the able direction of Chief Factor James Douglas, once McLoughlin's assistant at Fort Vancouver.

In addition to the sale of imported Northwest Coast produce, the Company's Honolulu Agency in the 1840s entered into the merchandising of English manufactured goods. However, the Company never attempted to gain a monopoly position in Honolulu. The Company was always considered a leading Honolulu merchant house, but what really distinguished it was its continuity. In those days Honolulu business firms other than the Company were either sole proprietorships or partnerships, which were easily formed and as readily dissolved. Of major firms only the line represented by Pierce and Hinckley, Pierce and Brewer, and C. Brewer and Co. was in business at the time the Company established its Honolulu Agency and when

FIG. 1. Hudson's Bay House, headquarters of the Company at Nos. 3 and 4 Fenchurch Street, London, 1854. From a water color by Thomas Colman Dibdin. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba photo.)





it withdrew from Hawai'i. The Company's Honolulu customers were both the whaling fleet and local business houses and individuals, including the Hawaiian population, all of whom appreciated the high quality of the products the Company offered for sale.

The Hudson's Bay Company's venture in Hawai'i was only a brief episode in the Company's long history. It is understandable that this episode has received only slight mention in the voluminous interpretive literature on the Company. However, from the point of view of Hawai'i, the Company's Honolulu Agency assumes a greater significance. In 1911 Thomas Thrum was the first historian to publish an article on the Agency,³ and thereafter Kuykendall, Morgan, and Bradley noted the importance of the Company's commercial role in 19th Century Hawai'i.⁴ A few informative articles have appeared in the Company's excellent journal, *The Beaver*.⁵ Yet historical treatment remains very limited. Using Thrum as a point of departure, this article focuses on the Company's Honolulu Agency and on the agents responsible for its activities.

THE HONOLULU AGENCY

On 21 January 1829 the Hudson's Bay Company schooner *Cadboro* (fig. 2), Aemilius Simpson master, arrived at Honolulu from Fort Vancouver with a small shipment of spars and sawn lumber.⁶ Aemilius Simpson had been instructed by Governor George Simpson to ascertain the Hawaiian market for lumber and salmon; test the market through the sale of the *Cadboro's* cargo; recruit a few seasoned seamen for Company service on the Northwest Coast, including "two good stout active Sandwich Islanders who have been to sea for 1, 2, or 3 years;" and use his discretion to appoint a Company agent for the sale in Honolulu of future shipments from Fort Vancouver.⁷ Aemilius Simpson's arrival marked the entry of the Hudson's Bay Company into the Hawaiian trade.

Richard Charlton, British consul in Honolulu since 1825 and later a *bête noire* of Hawaiian history, was friendly and helpful to Simpson, whereas the American merchants were apparently mistrustful. Simpson appointed Charlton the Company agent and returned to Fort Vancouver.⁸ Thereafter, Charlton handled consignments of

FIG. 2. The Hudson's Bay Company schooner *Cadboro* brought the first cargo of Company lumber from the Northwest Coast to Honolulu. (Provincial Archives of British Columbia photo. HP604.)

lumber and salmon until the Company established its own agency on the recommendation of Governor Simpson.

On 23 October 1833 the Governor and Committee in London appointed George Pelly the Company agent in Honolulu. Pelly had previously served as a captain in the East India Civil Service and was a first cousin of John Henry Pelly, Company Governor in London, to whom he no doubt owed his appointment. George Pelly arrived in Honolulu from England in August 1834. His instructions from London outlined his duties, paramount of which were the sale of Company produce from the Northwest Coast, provisioning of Company vessels passing through Honolulu, and providing freight for Company vessels homeward bound to England. Pelly was 43 years old and unmarried.⁹

For the next six years Pelly was the sole Company agent. Others came later. Before the agents are introduced, certain aspects of Agency operations should be noted.

DECISION-MAKING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Honolulu Agency was put under the administration of Chief Factor John McLoughlin, head of the Columbia Department. In 1844 the Agency was detached and made a separate charge responsible directly to Governor George Simpson and the Governor and Committee in London. Despite this administrative change, the Agency necessarily had to maintain as close communication as possible with Fort Vancouver and after 1849 with Fort Victoria, for these posts organized the shipments of Northwest Coast produce to Hawai'i.

The awesome distances over which the Company operated and the difficulties of communication required delegation of authority to local Company officers in the conduct of their business. Yet Governor Simpson and the Governor and Committee in London insisted on being kept informed of local trading conditions and on exercising tight policy and fiscal control. Consequently, the Honolulu agents were expected to report regularly to both Simpson and to London headquarters. The agents' dispatches included information on sales, remittances to London, arrivals and departures of Company vessels and the freight they carried, the state of local trade, requisitions, accounts, and miscellaneous information. The Agency subscribed to the *Polynesian* and the *Friend*, copies of which were occasionally forwarded.

There was only one Company vessel a year to England, but the Honolulu agents were expected to report on a near-monthly basis. The irksome uncertainty in communications led the agents to send letters to London in duplicate. Often one copy was dispatched by way of Manila or China and the other through Mazatlan. After about 1838 the Mazatlan route was favored by Honolulu merchants for letters either to the East Coast of the United States or to Europe, although this route was disrupted by the Mexican War. After the California Gold Rush, a regular shipping service was established between the East and West Coasts of the United States via the Isthmus of Panama, and during the 1850s, with the rapid growth of San Francisco, mail service to and from Hawai'i was greatly improved. In 1860 Agent Bissett sent letters to London by Wells Fargo Express, which had opened a Honolulu office. Letters to Simpson went by way of the mainland East Coast or the Company's famous express across Canada.¹⁰ Simpson's winter headquarters were at Lachine, now a part of metropolitan Montreal.

SHIPPING

The Company's role in Honolulu's merchant shipping forms a considerable chapter in Hawaiian maritime history, and only a few points can be touched upon here.

Shipping was the lifeline of the Agency. Company cargo, with only a few exceptions, was transported in vessels owned or chartered by the Company. Adverse winds and storms might disrupt voyages, but the Company's control of its own shipping meant that the Agency could depend on a fairly regular shipping schedule.¹¹ This gave a competitive advantage to the Agency and benefitted the community through the dependable arrival of imports.

The Company's maritime establishment was never large nor were the size of its vessels. Barks and brigs were favored for their maneuverability in coastal waters and because they had the right cargo capacity. One small, paddle-wheel steamer, the *Beaver*, plied between the Northwest Coast trading posts, entering service in 1836 as the eventual successor to the schooner *Cadboro*. The *Beaver* came out from England under sail by way of Honolulu, where it created a bit of a stir.

Each year a Company vessel carrying trade goods and supplies was sent from England around Cape Horn to the Northwest Coast, usually stopping at Honolulu. It generally arrived in the early spring after a passage of about 135 to 160 days. In December a vessel, not

necessarily the same one as had come out from England, left the Northwest Coast for London carrying the year's furs. This vessel also stopped at Honolulu if it had lumber or salmon to drop off and any cargo to load. The vessel that had come out from England was employed with any others on the Northwest Coast station in coastal trade and in bringing products to O'ahu. In the 1840s, when the Company supplied the Russian American Company at Sitka with agricultural produce and was also engaged in the California trade, the maritime establishment was at its height, with some three vessels calling at Honolulu. In the 1850s the number of Company vessels declined.¹² Between 1854 and 1858 the Agency relied for lumber and salmon shipments primarily on the brig *Recovery*, which was put on a regular Fort Victoria-Honolulu run.¹³

SIZE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE AGENCY

Honolulu business firms between 1834 and 1861 were not large. The Agency was no exception. It got along with a small permanent staff, and the agents were in fact often hard pressed for clerical, bookkeeping, and supervisory assistance. Available records give little information on the organization of the Agency, but the outlines can be reconstructed.

George Pelly as sole agent until 1841 must have had some locally employed bookkeeping assistance, as shown by handwriting differences in his accounts. In June 1841 William Wood, apprentice clerk, and an apprentice postmaster were sent from Fort Vancouver to assist Pelly. The same year George Allan arrived as clerk and junior agent, and Wood returned to the Columbia.¹⁴ Thereafter, the agents usually seem to have had at least one clerk or apprentice to assist them. George Simpson Jr. served as an apprentice from 1842 to 1846. Mentioned as clerks are J. W. Davis in 1849 and William Bowden from 1849 to 1853. Joseph Hardisty arrived as clerk in 1853. To what degree the Agency employed locally recruited office assistance cannot be documented but seems to have been minimal.

From its inception the Agency employed local native Hawaiians on an as-needed basis for loading and unloading Company vessels, transferring shipments between the wharf and the Agency premises, and, when necessary, to haul vessels through the channel. On 30 November 1847 the Agency paid \$12.50 to 50 Hawaiians to pull the *Cowlitz* into the harbor.¹⁵ Hawaiians were also employed on a permanent basis for necessary manual tasks. In the late 1840s and early 1850s two Hawaiians were in overseer positions in the lumber

yard and store, for which they received \$10 a month.¹⁶ These positions were likely continued. As a sidelight on employee relations, the Agency accounts show that on 31 July 1844, \$5 was given to the “boys employed by the Company to enjoy themselves on this day being that of the Restoration” [of Hawaiian independence].¹⁷

HAWAIIANS IN COMPANY SERVICE ON THE NORTHWEST COAST

Well before the founding of the Agency, Hawaiians were employed by the Company on the Northwest Coast, serving on Company vessels and ashore at Company posts.¹⁸ About 35 Hawaiians were in the service of the Columbia Department in 1825, only four years after the Company had established its presence on the Coast. After 1834 the Agency became the Company’s channel for recruiting Hawaiians, and their numbers in Company service markedly increased. Yet how many Hawaiians entered Company service and exactly how many were employed at any given time between 1834 and 1860 remains a matter of conjecture. Wyllie made a considered guess that in 1844 between 300 and 400 Hawaiians were in Company service on the Columbia, both in vessels and at posts, but his estimate seems too high, granted that Hawaiians had become an indispensable component of the Company’s work force.¹⁹

Just how the Agency’s recruitment process worked in Honolulu is also a matter of conjecture. An agreement between Governor Kekuanaoa and George Pelly, dated 11 February 1840, permitted the Company to recruit 60 Hawaiians on three-year contracts. Thrum believed there must have been previous agreements of a similar nature, which is a reasonable inference.²⁰ By 1849 the contract period was in at least some cases reduced to two years. The Company was obligated to return Hawaiian employees to Honolulu at the expiration of their contracts, but it was not unusual for them to renew their contracts and remain in the Northwest.

The Agency was responsible for paying any amounts due Hawaiians on their return to Honolulu at the end of their contracts, or to their beneficiaries if they had died in service. The Agency likewise made a small cash advance of \$20 to \$70 to each outbound Hawaiian at the beginning of his contract period. In at least one case the Agency equipped a small group of Hawaiians, presumably bound for sea duty, with blankets, seaman’s boots, and cold-weather clothing.²¹ In October 1852 the *Pekin*, homeward bound for London, found it necessary to ship 15 Hawaiian crewmen, for which Agent Clouston had to sign a government bond for their return in 12 months. He

was understandably relieved when they arrived back in Honolulu on the outbound *Mary Catherine* the following September 1853.²²

THE AGENCY PREMISES

The earliest location of the Agency in Honolulu was on the north side of Nuʻuanu Street close by King Street, where it occupied a two-story, shingle-sided building.²³ In 1846 the Agency moved to a new site closer and more convenient to the waterfront at the corner of Fort and Queen Streets. Here, in one of the most spacious business quarters in Honolulu, the Agency remained until it closed its doors. Across Queen Street and slightly to one side was the shipyard of James Robinson and Company, where Company vessels were refitted.

Agent Bissett had the premises surveyed in 1860 and a plan prepared (fig. 4). Also reproduced is Emmert's 1854 drawing of the Agency's main building, built in 1846, but possibly not completed until early 1847 (fig. 3). This was a two-story, stone and adobe structure with a slate roof and verandas at each end. The ground floor served as the retail store, modernized and newly equipped by Agent Clouston in 1857.²⁴ The upper floor accommodated the Agency offices. On his arrival in 1859, James Bissett penned a letter to his parents in Montreal from his new office:

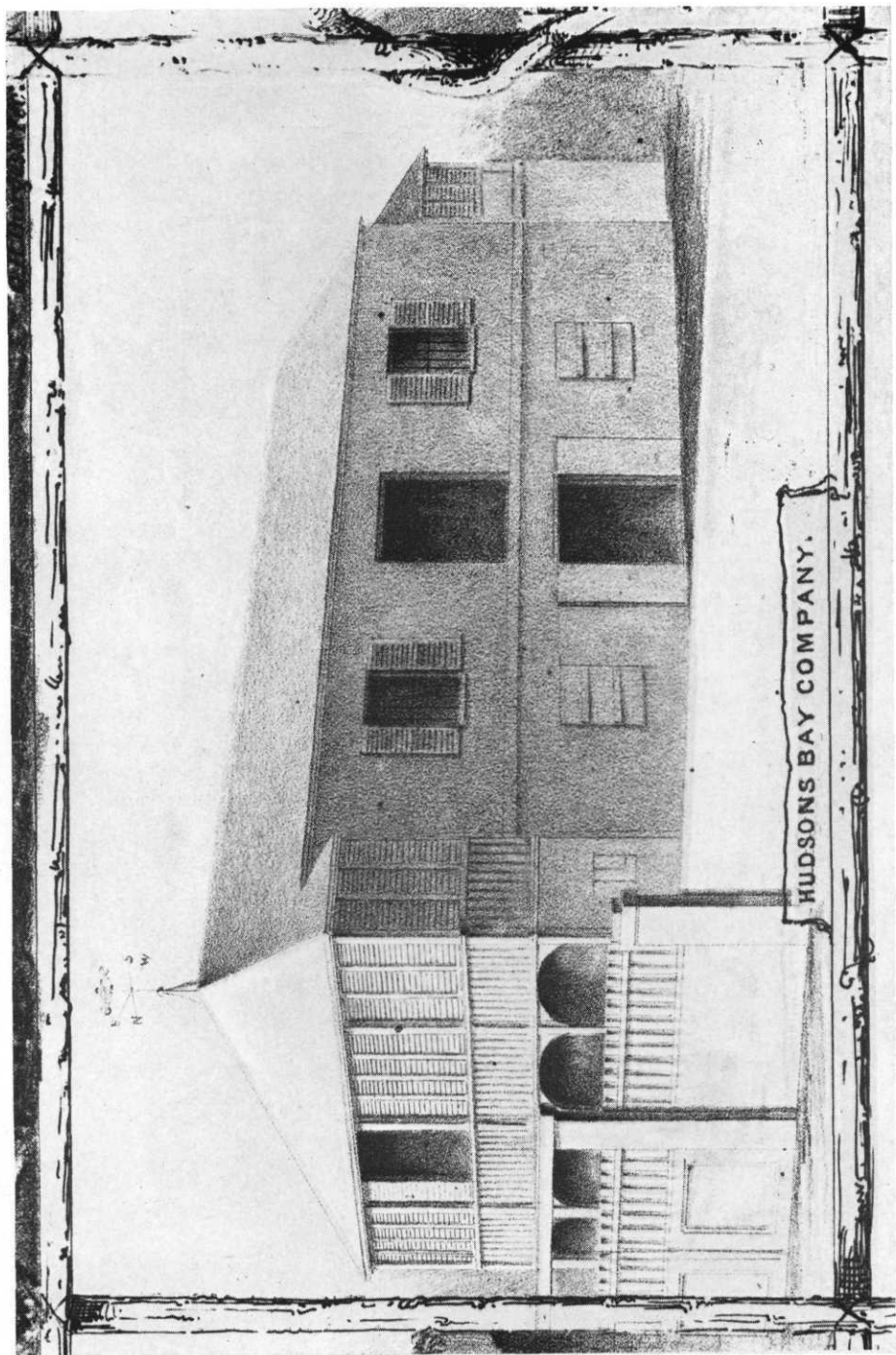
Our store is beautifully situated on the front street facing the sea and from where I am now writing I can see any vessel which comes or goes out of the harbor. I have a very nice office, it is as large as your drawing room, the floor is covered with China matting which gives it a cool appearance. . . .²⁵

A second large stone and adobe structure with a slate roof but only one story in height was built along Fort Street. It was designated a store, but its specific use was not stated. It probably accommodated salmon barrels and naval stores. The remaining larger structures were no doubt used to store lumber.²⁶

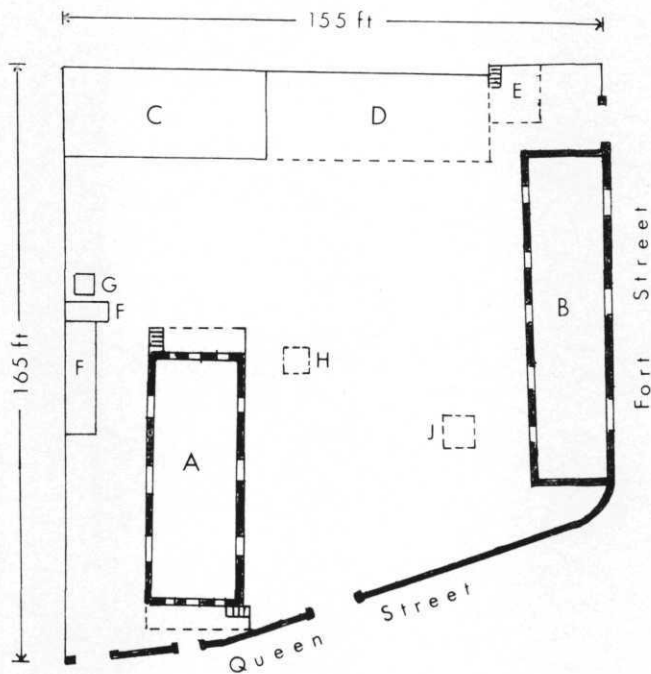
THE AGENTS, THE COMPANY, AND THE COMMUNITY

The merchants of Honolulu in the 1830s and into the 1840s are often portrayed as arrayed against the American missionaries, with the merchants factionalized into numerically dominant Yankees and less numerous British. The merchants could be a cantankerous lot.

FIG. 3. Main building of the Hudson's Bay Company Agency in Honolulu, from a drawing by Paul Emmert. The drawing is part of a side panel of a lithograph entitled *View of Honolulu from the Catholic Church*, drawn by Emmert and produced by Britton and Rey, San Francisco, 1854. (Bishop Museum Library photo.)



HUDSONS BAY COMPANY.



- A. Stone and adobe store, two stories, slate roof, with veranda at each end.
- B. Stone and adobe store, one story, slate roof.
- C. Enclosed timber shed, one story, slate roof.
- D. Open shed, part shingled, part slated.
- E. Covered storage, upper part floored, enclosed, and fitted as sleeping room.
- F. Enclosed sheds, shingled.
- G. Privy.
- H. Pump and well.
- J. Reservoir, covered.
- Four large outside gates.

George Pelly, newly appointed Company agent, enlivened but did not calm the Honolulu scene. Shortly after his arrival, he entered a free-for-all among the local traders, in which Kamehameha III also enthusiastically joined, over the salvage of the American whaler *Helvetius*, wrecked with her cargo of oil on the reef on the Waikiki side of Diamond Head. Hoyt's amusing description of the incident shows Pelly as aggressive as any of the other participants.²⁷ As Company agent he was not precluded from commercial activity on his own.²⁸

Pelly established his Honolulu home in 1835 through the purchase of a small house, enclosed by a high stone wall, on Hotel Street near Adam's Lane, where he lived throughout his years in Hawai'i.²⁹ In his personal relationships he seems initially at least to have harbored a dislike of most if not all Americans. He easily felt slighted, to which he was wont to make vocal objection. He expressed his opinions freely and could hardly be called diplomatic in his conduct. Yet Pelly became accepted as part of the merchant community. Stephen Reynolds, local American merchant, apparently entered in his Journal every dinner he attended and often listed Pelly as present on social occasions in which both Americans and British participated. The merchants seldom allowed their personal differences to get in the way of enjoying a good meal.

To Pelly's credit, beginning in 1839, he was for some years secretary of the trustees of the Oahu Charity School and may have been helpful in gaining support for the school in England.³⁰ He was less than community minded in declining to subscribe to making a road up Nu'uaniu Valley and in loud opposition to public road improvements that the town urgently needed.³¹ As acting British consul, in July 1839 he was numbered among the foreign merchants in forming a "Committee of Vigilance" for the protection of their property during the visit of the French man-of-war *L'Artemise* under Captain LaPlace.³²

Whatever Pelly's personal quirks may have been, he received in 1839 the approbation of Chief Factor James Douglas for his running of the Honolulu Agency.³³ And on his 1842 visit to Hawai'i, Governor George Simpson, commenting on Pelly's management, wrote,

FIG. 4. Plan of the Hudson's Bay Company's premises in Honolulu. Redrawn to scale by the author from the original plan prepared by J. G. Harding, surveyor, 26 July 1860. Legend incorporates additional information by James Bissett, 1860. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives.)

“ . . . it has not been characterized by a business like finish or neatness, but I consider . . . that great zeal has been manifested throughout his Agency. . . .”³⁴

By 1841 the Agency's business was expanding to the point where the Company assigned Alexander Simpson, then a clerk, to Honolulu. Alexander Simpson, cousin of Governor Simpson and half brother of Aemilius Simpson, was a bright young man of 30 with a reputation for contentiousness. He had previously made brief visits to Honolulu in 1839 and 1840 on Company vessels from the Columbia River. Young Simpson arrived in January 1841 on the *Vancouver* but decided almost immediately to leave by the same vessel for London, his reason being to clarify the circumstances surrounding the murder of his brother Thomas, a Company Arctic explorer. With Alexander Simpson gone, another young clerk, George Allan, was dispatched from Fort Vancouver to Honolulu as junior agent by Governor Simpson. The latter characterized Allan as “a Gentleman of highly exemplary conduct and character, of regular business habits and fair abilities.”³⁵

VISIT OF SIR GEORGE SIMPSON IN 1842

Governor Sir George Simpson, newly knighted (fig. 5), made his third and last trip across the North American continent to the Columbia in 1841. After his usual rigorous inspection of Company activities, he embarked at Fort Vancouver on the *Cowlitz* with Chief Factor John McLoughlin for Hawai'i, by way of San Francisco, Monterey, and Santa Barbara. The *Cowlitz* reached Honolulu on 11 February 1842.³⁶ Two days later the *Vancouver*, outward bound from London, arrived with debarking passenger Alexander Simpson, once again in Honolulu. The *Vancouver* sailed for the Columbia on 14 March, returning McLoughlin to his post.³⁷ Sir George remained in Honolulu until 17 March, when with Pelly and Charlton he left on the *Cowlitz* for a Lāhainā conference with Kamehameha III. On 25 March Simpson sailed on the *Cowlitz* for Sitka and his overland journey across Russia, arriving in London in October 1842.

In the five weeks he spent in Honolulu Simpson accomplished an amazing amount. In addition to appraising the Agency and giving Alexander Simpson, who expected to take it over, his walking papers,³⁸ Sir George investigated the social complexities, economic conditions, and political affairs of O'ahu with his accustomed thoroughness. He established friendly relations with Governor Kekuanaoa and Dr. Gerrit P. Judd, resident American medical missionary and informal

government advisor, and was helpful in practical ways to the Hawaiian government. More significantly, Simpson concluded that in view of extensive American influence, pressure from France, and the antics of British consul Charlton, for whom he had little respect, it was in the best interests of the Hudson's Bay Company that he support the Hawaiian government's attempts to gain international recognition of its independence.

Simpson's decision was formalized in his conference with Kamehameha III at Lāhainā and in the formation of the Hawaiian mission to Washington, D.C., London, Brussels, and Paris subsequently undertaken by William Richards, translator and advisor to Kamehameha III, and Timothy Ha'alilio, the King's private secretary, and member of the treasury board, with Sir George an active partner as a duly appointed commissioner of the Hawaiian government. Simpson arranged the financing of the mission with a £10,000 loan in the form of a letter of credit on the Hudson's Bay Company in London.

The details and the results of the mission are published elsewhere and need not be gone into.³⁹ The important point here is that Simpson laid down a firm policy for the conduct of the Agency—namely, that the agents support the Hawaiian government and not meddle in its affairs.

GEORGE PELLY AND GEORGE ALLAN

George Traill Allan was a conscientious young Scot, who after his assignment to the Agency faithfully followed Sir George Simpson's admonitions that he and Pelly "draw well together" and that he keep on "fair terms with all without reference to nationality."⁴⁰ Allan developed friendly feelings for Pelly and great loyalty toward his older colleague, at whose home he boarded. At the same time Allan gained the respect and liking of the community. He served faithfully as a juror in cases before the Court of O'ahu and in 1845-1846 as a member of a three-man committee appointed by Judge Lorrin Andrews to examine the conditions of prisoners confined in the old Fort. Gerrit P. Judd sent Allan his complements by letter: "No one can regret more than I do the local feuds which are apt to excite the community of Honolulu or appreciate more your highly honorable and gentlemanly conduct in avoiding those feuds and opposing them by your example."⁴¹ Allan was promoted to commissioned rank of Chief Trader in 1845.

Allan wrote all the official Agency correspondence, signed by both

agents. They were pleased to report to London in 1845 that R. C. Wyllie, former British proconsul in Honolulu and a friend of the Company, had been appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and in 1846 that the Hawaiian government had repaid the £10,000 loan made by Sir George Simpson with the agreed-upon interest.⁴² In the complexities leading to the Paulet affair, the agents supported the government by opposing the recognition of Alexander Simpson as British consul after Charlton's departure for London in 1842 in an attempt to thwart the mission of Richards, Ha'alilio, and Sir George Simpson. The agents immediately wrote London after Paulet's seizure of the Islands, which they considered irresponsible. Later, they certified that the claim of the Hawaiian government against Britain for damages resulting from Paulet's occupation was moderate and just.

In 1845 Rear Admiral Sir George Seymour aboard HMS *Collingwood* visited Honolulu. For some reason Seymour and British Consul-General Miller took umbrage at Pelly's and Allan's conduct, leading Seymour to send a dispatch to London questioning the agents' behavior and suggesting that a change in the Agency be considered.⁴³ Allan sprang to the defense of Pelly and himself, enlisted the support of local merchants and government officials, and satisfied the Company's London headquarters that Seymour's charges were misplaced.⁴⁴ The incident was in essence trivial, but it continued to prey on Allan's mind. Also, Sir George Simpson felt the agents did not act with sufficient tact in their relations with Seymour and Miller.

Allan was conscientious in his work for the Agency, but his letters to London and to Sir George Simpson were often characterized by discursive comments rather than by explicit information on the Agency's business transactions. Sir George became disturbed and was further concerned that Pelly and Allan had extended credit imprudently, had not been sufficiently circumspect in accepting bills of exchange, and had requisitioned too large a quantity of English goods for the Honolulu market to absorb.⁴⁵ In July 1846 Sir George sent a letter to Allan that he was being replaced by Dugald Mactavish. Allan felt hurt by this action but accepted it with reasonable grace. One can sympathize with Allan in that Pelly as senior agent should have borne the responsibility for any shortcoming in the Agency's affairs.⁴⁶ Allan requested and received a year's furlough. After Mactavish's arrival in March 1847, Allan spent most of his furlough exploring the neighbor islands, particularly Hawai'i.⁴⁷

DUGALD MACTAVISH AND GEORGE PELLY'S DEBACLE

Chief Trader Dugald Mactavish, like his predecessor George Allan, was a young Scot who had built his career in the service of the Company.⁴⁸ Mactavish arrived in Honolulu in 1847 fully empowered by Sir George Simpson to assume the entire management of the Agency. Although only 30 years of age, he had acquired in his previous posts a reputation for business competence and organizational ability.

Unfortunately, to the later detriment of the Company, Mactavish was not sustained in his new position by Sir John Henry Pelly, London Governor of the Company. In January 1848 London wrote George Pelly expressing fullest confidence in his management and assigning Mactavish to a subordinate role.⁴⁹ Mactavish, always loyal to the Company, made the best of an awkward situation. In the years following, so far as one can judge, Mactavish nevertheless conducted all the important business of the Agency. Beginning in 1848 Pelly's health began to deteriorate.

The year 1847 and extending into 1848 was a period of business stagnation in Honolulu, which was overstocked with goods of all kinds. Then came the news of the discovery of gold in California. The local merchants, including the Agency, lost no time in sending shipments of goods to the West Coast. George Allan, fresh from his furlough, was dispatched in August 1848 to San Francisco with a cargo of English manufactured goods, and more followed. Allan sold them at a handsome profit, remitting the proceeds in gold dust to the Agency.⁵⁰ Allan had an adventurous time in California before leaving for Fort Vancouver in 1849.⁵¹

After Mactavish's arrival George Pelly's principal function in the Agency was taking custody of the Agency's specie and bullion, kept in a safe housed in a vault in Pelly's home. Mactavish repeatedly suggested that the contents of the safe be transferred to the government vault in the Custom House for greater security, but Pelly put him off. On 30 October 1850 Mactavish wrote London:

It is my painful duty to advise you that on the 19th Inst. having applied to Mr. Pelly for a sum of Money from the Treasure Vault, on his premises, to meet the Agency disbursements, I received from him the following reply . . . 'I am sorry to inform you, on opening the Vault today noon—in presence of Mr. Bowden [Agency clerk], we found the iron chest had been opened—the contents, both gold and silver, had been stolen, with the exception of seven hundred and twenty two dollars, and fifty cents, which I send herewith.

Immediately on receipt of this astounding intelligence, knowing that there ought to be a very large amount of specie in the Vault, I proceeded to Mr. Pelly's house, in Company with the Marshall of the Islands, and another Gentleman, and arrested all the servants

on his premises, searched the vault, where I found only twenty two dollars, and placed Mr. Pelly's cash book in the hands of the Marshall, when I left the house, and have had no communication with Mr. Pelly since. . . .⁵²

Mactavish stated that \$36,514.32 was missing, in those days a very large sum. Pelly accused his servants of the theft. Asher B. Bates, Solicitor to the Hawaiian Crown, took charge in decisive fashion. Extracts from Bates' first report to Company headquarters in London follow:

On the 19th of October instant, I was advised that George Pelly, the Principal Agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at this place, alleged that the vault in his charge as such agent had been robbed of over \$36,000 and that all of his servants had been arrested and were in custody awaiting an examination upon the charge of Larceny. The large amount alleged to have been lost induced me to attend upon the examination and take the direction of it. Knowing the timidity of native servants, and thinking it improbable that they could have abstracted from a vault within twenty feet of Mr. Pelly's bed over a ton of specie, without his knowledge, my suspicions were immediately aroused that some other explanation of the deficiency would finally be developed. . . . The ensuing day I sought an interview with Mr. Pelly, and examined carefully his premises, ascertained the usual depository of the twelve keys necessary to effect an entrance to the principal money chest, and became satisfied that other hands than those of native servants had purloined the missing money. I then repaired to Mr. McTavish, the other agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, to ascertain what was the annual salary of Mr. Pelly, and upon being informed that he only received from the Company four hundred pounds per annum, I found an explanation to my mind of a portion at least of the amount gone, knowing as I did from my own expenses which are limited by an economical habit of living and a small income that two thousand dollars could not support Mr. Pelly's establishment. Mr. Pelly has been extravagant in his habits in many respects, and it is my opinion that \$7,000 or \$8,000 a year would not have covered his outgoes. Under that impression it was clear to my mind that though his servants may have stolen from him and lived liberally from his larder, that he must have had other sources of income. . . . Upon inquiry I could not learn that he held any productive property, and the conviction was forced upon my mind that he was alone responsible for the alleged loss.

On Saturday last I called upon Mr. Pelly and told him my convictions and said to him that as yet no legal evidence had been produced before me, but that unless he came forward and assumed the debt, and granted a Bill for it, and assigned all his property to secure it, and left the country by the "Cowlitz" now soon to sail, he must prepare for the worst, and that it was my opinion his conviction for embezzlement was inevitable. He listened calmly to my declarations and suggestions, and has never when alone with me alleged his innocence. I requested him to consider the matter until Monday. . . .

On Monday I called again and he suggested he doubted the propriety of his abandoning the prosecution of the servants, but after a discussion of the whole matter, and my assurance that it was my purpose to hold them responsible if I could fasten anything upon them, he assented to my proposal.

Upon being asked who he desired to hold the note and the assignment, he requested me to take the responsibility, and having made known to Mr. McTavish my plans and purposes; who made no objection to the arrangement proposed, I immediately sat down and drew the note and assignment, copies of which are herewith enclosed. On the following morning they were executed. . . . I propose to sell all the personal property at auction and hold the proceeds subject to the order of the Company. The real estate I shall not sell until I hear from the Company that they approve of the course I have taken. . . .

I immediately after the execution of the papers attended upon the continued examination of the servants, and had Mr. Pelly sworn, and enclosed I send you a copy of his evidence as given upon the stand. I regard it as improbable and in many respects clearly false. After taking his testimony, I had the examination still further continued but I have no hopes of eliciting anything that will establish the guilt of the servants.

I avoid giving you the details of Mr. Pelly's habits and recent outrages upon decency, though they have operated upon my mind in some degree, I must confess, to induce me to take upon myself the responsibility I have. I felt that I was acting wisely for the good morals of the town in inducing Mr. Pelly voluntarily to banish himself, and that justice to the Hudson's Bay Company . . . demanded of me that I should act as I have, and I hope and trust my course will be approved by the Gov. and Committee in London, as I doubt not it will be by the community here.⁵³

The *Cowlitz* sailed from Honolulu for London on 8 November 1850 with Pelly aboard. Bates allowed Pelly \$1,000 for personal expenses on arrival in London and provided him with a Hawaiian passport so that he could satisfy "his friends in London that he left this Kingdom without reproach."⁵⁴ The consideration shown Pelly by the Hawaiian government was more than he deserved and is probably to be explained by the government's regard for the Company.

Bates sold Pelly's real estate at auction in September 1851, but in a depressed market. In order to protect the Company's equity, Mactavish bought Pelly's home and premises on behalf of the Company for \$4,350.⁵⁵

Mactavish found his association with Pelly anything but pleasant.⁵⁶ The experience was exacerbated by his own inadequate salary and living allowance, eased somewhat by his promotion to Chief Factor in 1851. Like Allan before him, Mactavish participated constructively in community affairs. He is listed in 1850 as a member of the newly founded Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society and served on its Committee on the Introduction of New Fish Species. The same year he was also one of the organizers of the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce.

In October 1851 Chief Trader Robert Clouston arrived in Honolulu to give Mactavish much needed assistance. In August of the following year Mactavish sailed for San Francisco en route to London for a well-earned furlough.

ROBERT CLOUSTON AND JOSEPH HARDISTY

Robert Clouston was a native of the Orkney Islands, with 13 years in Company service when he arrived in Honolulu. He was a young widower in his thirties, having tragically lost his wife to tuberculosis at his previous post at York Factory on the shores of Hudson's Bay.⁵⁷ Just before coming to Honolulu, Clouston spent three months at

Fort Victoria, fell in love with Vancouver Island, and purchased 100 acres and a town lot, to which it was his plan eventually to return and to settle permanently.⁵⁸ With the departure of Mactavish in 1852, Clouston assumed charge of the Agency. He was joined in November 1853 by Joseph Hardisty, Company clerk. Hardisty was a personable young man in his twenties, whose family had long been involved with the Company, his father as Chief Factor and other relatives as Company officers.⁵⁹

In Honolulu Clouston faced some difficult business problems. One was increasingly fierce local competition. Agency competitors were receiving goods on consignment direct from manufacturers, selling these often at auction, and emphasizing prompt sales and quick returns. At the same time the Agency was experiencing difficulties in its wholesale business in pricing and in payments from retailers. Clouston's solution was an aggressive development of the Agency's retail trade. The Agency had always retailed, but not very systematically. Clouston wanted to rebuild and enlarge the facilities of the retail store, offer a greater variety of imported merchandise, keep the store open throughout the day on regular hours, and obtain a substantially greater sales volume even though at times prices might have to be adjusted. He recommended regular importing from China through Jardine Matheson, and from the U. S. East Coast as well. He also wanted a quality store. The retail store was remodeled, and Sir George Simpson was sympathetic, but Clouston never received the support he needed to carry out his ideas. He was well ahead of his time, for it was only years later that the Company committed major resources to Canadian retailing, for which the Company is best known today.

Clouston was concerned for the safety and security of the Agency's premises. In the wake of the Pelly incident, he asked for an extra strong iron safe to be installed at the Agency, so he would not have the inconvenience of keeping the Company specie in the Custom House vault, used since Pelly's abrupt departure. He also asked for a large English mastiff to protect the premises.⁶⁰ London sent the safe, but any record on the mastiff has proven elusive. In 1853 the Agency joined in a community subscription for the purchase of a fire engine.⁶¹

The devastating outbreak of smallpox in 1853 caught the Hawaiian government short of cash. The Legislature was not in session to make an emergency appropriation. To combat the epidemic, on 5 August 1853 Dr. Judd, now a health commissioner, asked Clouston for a

\$10,000 loan from the Company to the government, secured by a note signed by Kamehameha III and the members of the Privy Council. Clouston approved the loan without hesitation, made the cash available the following day, and alerted Fort Victoria that more might be needed.⁶² The loan was repaid the following March.⁶³ In January 1855 Clouston reported to London the death of Kamehameha III and the succession of Kamehameha IV. Of the latter he wrote: "The new reign gives promise of greater stability to the native government and of general improvement in the state of the Islands, as the present King, though very young, is a man of considerable ability and enlightened views. . . ."⁶⁴

By necessity Clouston and Hardisty lived very modestly. Clouston lodged with a family and regretted he could not afford to entertain commercial friends, although his competitors found it important for business to do so. Clouston and Hardisty were underpaid in high-cost Honolulu and overworked. Having been at his job in Hawai'i without a break for six years, Clouston in 1857 asked for a six months furlough to take effect the following year. By the end of 1857 he complained of poor health. When he boarded the American bark *Fanny Major* in August 1858 for San Francisco en route to his beloved Vancouver Island, he must have been seriously ill. Clouston died at sea on 14 August 1858.⁶⁵

On Clouston's departure, Hardisty became officer-in-charge of the Agency. Fortunately, Fort Victoria sent him some assistance. Hardisty discharged his responsibilities in exemplary fashion until January 1859, when James Bissett arrived from Sir George Simpson's headquarters at Lachine to take charge.

JAMES BISSETT AND JOSEPH HARDISTY

As the year 1859 opened, the Agency's commercial position was not favorable, owing both to local circumstances and to developments on the Northwest Coast. In Honolulu whaling ships no longer bought their supplies on the open market. Instead, the New England whaling owners sent out needed supplies under the care of their own agents.⁶⁶ And as Pacific whaling entered its decline, the Agency's competition in the importation of goods increased. Janion Green and Co. (forerunner of Theo H. Davies), Hackfeld and Co., C. Brewer, and Castle and Cooke were by now all established firms. They also acted as agents for the sugar plantations, in which they held ownership interests. The Honolulu market was overstocked with goods, and trade was dull.

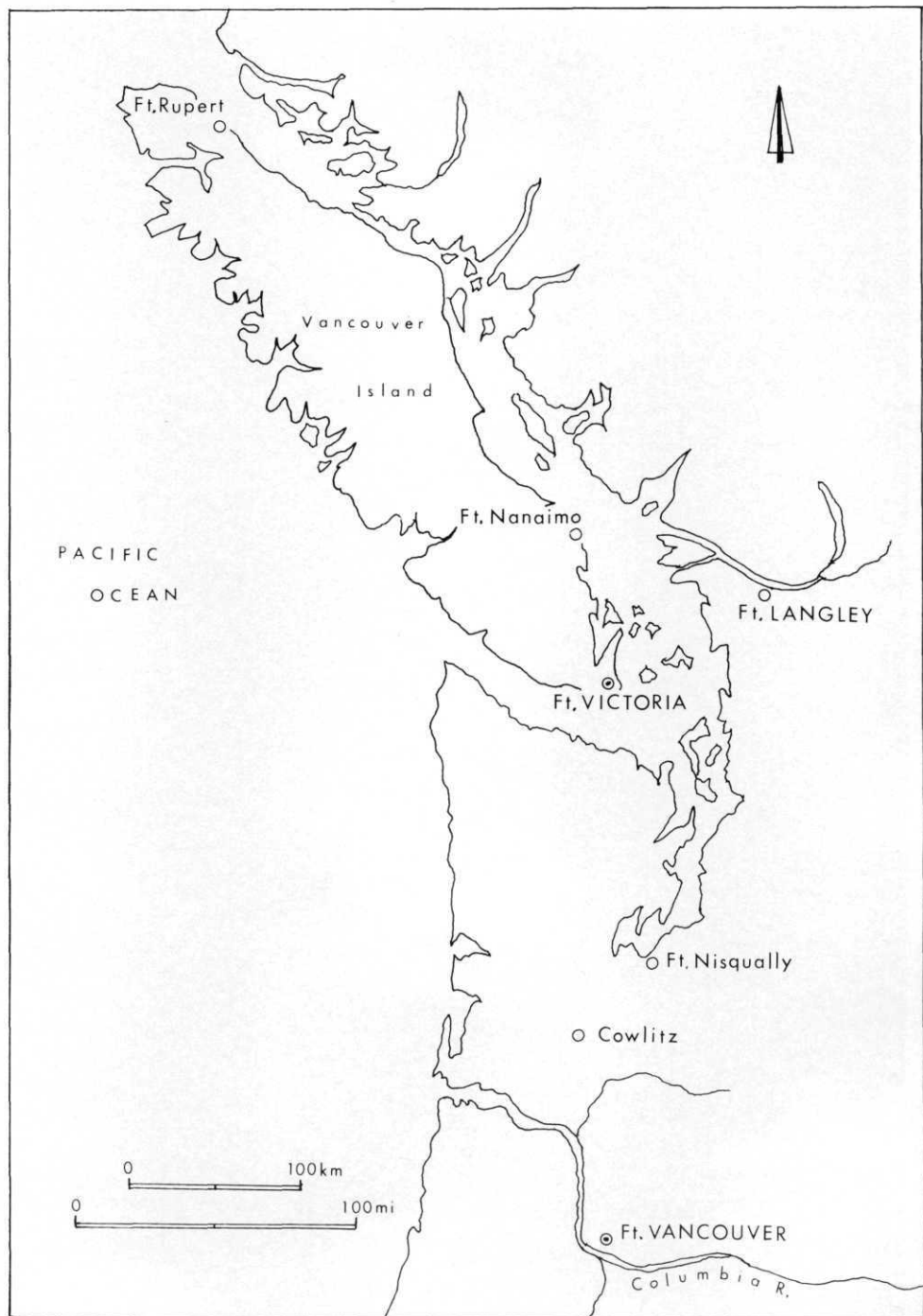
On the Northwest Coast, after the division in 1853 of the Company's old Columbia Department into the Oregon Department, comprising the posts south of the U. S. border, and the Western Department, the fortunes of the former declined, and it ceased to play a role in the Hawaiian trade. Hawai'i continued to be supplied with sizeable shipments of Oregon and Puget Sound lumber, but the producers were American and the importers the Agency's competitors. Fort Victoria, headquarters of the Western Department and main depot since 1849, had supplied the Agency with Fort Langley salmon and with lumber, especially shingles. But the Fraser River Gold Rush of 1858 marked the end of Fort Langley as a source of salmon and also affected lumber production for export. The Agency was founded primarily to sell Company lumber and salmon. It was apparent there soon would be no Company lumber or salmon to sell. Furthermore, the Company was preoccupied with the development of Vancouver Island and British Columbia. In 1858 Chief Factor James Douglas resigned from the Company to become the distinguished governor of both colonies. He was succeeded at Fort Victoria by A. G. Dallas.

Sir George Simpson was aware that the Agency's days were probably numbered. Nevertheless, in December 1858 he dispatched James Bissett to Honolulu as Clouston's successor, with Hardisty to be second in command. Bissett arrived the end of January 1859. In March Simpson wrote Bissett that the Governor and Committee were disposed to close the Agency but that Simpson had recommended they delay until hearing from Bissett and from Dallas at Fort Victoria.⁶⁷

In letters distinguished by their clarity, Bissett analyzed the Agency in relation to commercial conditions in Hawai'i for the benefit of Simpson and London.⁶⁸ Bissett was impressed by the potential of the Agency's retail trade, partly because he believed that the Company's future lay with merchandising rather than fur trading. He was optimistic about Hawai'i's long-term economic future. But he was not optimistic about the Agency's immediate prospects. Dallas was of the same opinion. In July 1859 London instructed Bissett to wind up the Agency's business.⁶⁹ This was followed by a similar letter from Simpson, further directing Bissett and Hardisty to report in person to Fort Victoria after they terminated

FIG. 5. Sir George Simpson. Engraving by James Scott after a painting by Stephen Pearce, 1857. (Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba photo.)





the Honolulu business. In November 1859 Bissett announced the withdrawal of the Hudson's Bay Company from Hawai'i.

James Bissett was a senior clerk, 28 years of age when he arrived in Honolulu.⁷⁰ He left behind in Montreal a pregnant wife, who, after the birth of her child, joined her husband with her infant and a woman companion in June 1859. Either the Company gave Bissett a generous living allowance, or he had independent means, or both. He and his family lived simply but graciously. The young couple rented a home in Nu'uaniu Valley, and Bissett provided his wife with a horse and carriage, a cook, and other amenities. They took part in the parties, *lū'au's*, picnics, social calls, weddings, and funerals of Honolulu social life. Bissett was the only married agent in the history of the Agency.

Although his residence in Hawai'i was brief, Bissett was active in service to the community. He was made a trustee of Queen's Hospital and devoted much time to the plans for this new and greatly needed institution.⁷¹ The Company subscribed \$300 and Bissett \$50 to the fund for the construction of the hospital building. He served as a juror in cases before the Supreme Court and was active in the Chamber of Commerce. In 1859 the Company contributed \$50 and Bissett \$25 toward the erection at Kealakekua Bay of a monument honoring the memory of Captain Cook.⁷²

Closing the Agency's affairs took time. The stock of the store was sold at auction in April 1860, realizing \$10,000.⁷³ The lease of the Agency premises from the guardians of Lunalilo still had a number of years to run. With the permission of the lessors, the Company subleased the premises to W. A. Aldrich.⁷⁴ By the summer of 1860 Bissett decided he could depart Honolulu, leaving Hardisty as officer-in-charge to care for the remaining details. Bissett and his family sailed on 25 August on the barkentine *Jenny Ford* for Victoria. Hardisty followed in March 1861, bringing to a close the Hudson's Bay Company's venture in Hawai'i. Bissett and Hardisty were both promoted to Chief Trader in recognition of their services.

IMPORTS, EXPORTS, AND SALES

Hudson's Bay Company imports into Hawai'i fell into two categories: "Columbia Produce," consisting of lumber, salmon, and

FIG. 6. Hudson's Bay Company posts on the Northwest Coast supplying the Company's trade with Hawai'i. (Drawing by the author.)

agricultural products; and "European Manufactures," imported in Company vessels from England. Agency sales were at their height with the appearance of the whaling fleet in the spring and again in the fall, but the Agency also relied on sales to local customers to sustain it during the balance of the year.

COLUMBIA PRODUCE

In 1829 Governor Simpson and Chief Factor McLoughlin believed that the timber and salmon resources of the Columbia Department could be developed into major exports whose profitability could equal or even exceed that of the fur trade. Their expectations were never fully realized, but lumber and salmon became the backbone of Company imports into Hawai'i from the Northwest Coast (fig. 6).⁷⁵

The value of all Northwest Coast imports, including Sitka, into Honolulu for the years 1834-1860 is presented in the accompanying table. However, the table has limitations. The figures prior to 1844, the only ones available, are estimates by the compilers, H. A. Pierce and C. Brewer. Those after this date are from Custom House reports, whose official nature is no guarantee of their accuracy. From 1853 on imports from Oregon and Washington were merged into a Customs category called "United States, Pacific Side," making it impossible to determine the value of substantial imports from those two states. Finally, the figures are declared invoice values, not sales values.

TABLE 1
VALUE OF NORTHWEST COAST IMPORTS INTO HONOLULU 1834-1860

<i>Year</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Listed Import Source</i>
1834-1835	\$33,000 ^a	Russian Settlements & Columbia River
1836	21,000 ^b	Norfolk Sound (Sitka), Columbia River, NWC
1837	8,000	Norfolk Sound (Sitka), Columbia River, NWC
1838	5,000	Norfolk Sound (Sitka), Columbia River, NWC
1839	5,000	Norfolk Sound (Sitka), Columbia River, NWC
1840 to 8/17	4,000	Norfolk Sound (Sitka), Columbia River, NWC
1840 (8/17)- 1841 to 8/17	12,000	Columbia River
1842-1843	NA	
1844	11,988	Columbia River ^c
1845	34,870	Columbia River
1846	23,101	Columbia River

TABLE 1—cont'd

Year	Value	Listed Import Source
1847	54,784	Oregon
	4,952	Sitka
1848	14,986	Columbia River
	2,395	Sitka
1849	12,672	Columbia River ^d
1850	15,942	Vancouver Island ^e
1851	14,290	Vancouver Island & Columbia River
	10,460	Oregon
	15,473	Sitka
1852	8,836	British America ^f
	7,688	Oregon
	545	Sitka
1853	12,043	British America
1854	8,167	Vancouver Island
1855	10,307	Vancouver Island
1856	11,771	Vancouver Island
1857	4,270	Vancouver Island
1858	11,552	Vancouver Island
1859	NA	
1860	4,591 (6,926) ^g	Vancouver Island
	7,639 ^h	Russian Possessions

Sources:

- a. Estimate by H. A. Pierce in W. S. W. Ruschenberger, *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World During the Years 1835, 36, and 37* (London: Richard Bentley, 1838) 385.
- b. Estimates for 1836–1841 by H. A. Pierce and C. Brewer in the *Polynesian*, 12 September 1840 and 4 September 1841.
- c. Custom House Reports 1844–1860, in the *Polynesian*.
- d. Sitka figure merged into "Other" category and hence not available.
- e. Sitka and Columbia River figures merged into "Miscellaneous" category and hence not available.
- f. Oregon and Washington merged into "United States, Pacific Side." British America is present British Columbia.
- g. Both figures from Custom House Reports, but published separately.
- h. No doubt includes Russian Asiatic ports.

The Hudson's Bay Company seldom lacked competition in the Northwest Coast trade, but the Company was the principal importer and carrier of Northwest Coast products, excluding Sitka, until about 1851. After that date it was the main carrier from sources listed as British America or Vancouver Island. An accurate assessment of

Company imports of lumber, salmon, and agricultural products is not possible, as only a few cargo invoices have survived. Company correspondence indicates that in the latter 1830s two to three cargoes a year were annually sent by the Company from the Northwest Coast to Hawai'i. In the 1840s these increased to some three to six cargoes a year, with some decline through the 1850s.

LUMBER

Apart from some oak logs sent in the 1830s, the lumber destined for Hawai'i from Fort Vancouver was cut from the tremendous stands of Douglas fir that covered much of western Oregon. Douglas fir has been known by other names, such as Oregon pine, yellow fir, and red fir, but these vernacular designations all refer to a single species named after the talented young naturalist, David Douglas, who visited Fort Vancouver in the course of his botanical exploration of the Columbia River area in 1825 to 1827.

After the establishment of the Honolulu Agency, lumber production at Fort Vancouver was increased through the construction in 1838 of a new sawmill, working from six to ten saws and employing about 25 men. When Lieutenant G. F. Emmons of the Wilkes Expedition visited the mill in 1841, he reported that it could cut 2,500 feet daily, provided there were no breakdowns, and that the mill was manned mostly by Hawaiians.⁷⁶ The lumber produced at the mill consisted of boards, termed "deals" in the trade, rafters, and beams. Another important item was spars, for which the whaling fleet provided a ready market on O'ahu.

The spars from Fort Vancouver could exceed 70 feet in length, much too long to load through a vessel's deck hatches. The Company's bark *Cowlitz* was accordingly fitted with a "raft port," a port cut under the vessel's counter. On 26 June 1841 the *Cowlitz* offloaded at Honolulu what must have been the largest timbers to have come from the Northwest. They consisted of five immense beams, 83 feet long and 12 x 14 inches, for the construction of KawaiaHa'o Church.⁷⁷

On the recommendation of Pelly and Allan, in 1845 a planing mill was sent out from England and put into operation at Fort Vancouver. The same year a new Company lumber item made its appearance. This consisted of cedar shingles, first produced at Fort Vancouver, then at Fort Nisqually on Puget Sound, and thereafter at Fort Victoria, Fort Rupert, and Fort Nanaimo on Vancouver Island.⁷⁸ In the 1850s, when Fort Victoria had become the main depot, emphasis was placed on shingles for export.

How much Company lumber reached the Honolulu market can only be estimated from figures on shipments mentioned in Company letters. In 1836 at least 160,000 feet of boards and 2,000 rafters were landed. In the 1840s construction was brisk in Honolulu, and some 200,000 to 300,000 feet of sawn lumber were shipped each year. Thus, in 1844, McLoughlin stated that he had sent during the year 260,000 feet of lumber and 60 masts from Fort Vancouver to O'ahu.⁷⁹ In 1850 the Company put at least 250,000 cedar shingles on the Honolulu market, with increasing amounts in the years following. For the 12 month period ending 31 May 1858, 450,000 shingles were landed, but only 72,926 feet of lumber.⁸⁰ By modern standards these are miniscule shipments, but for the small but growing port of Honolulu they provided a dependable supply of an essential construction item, also used for the repair of the whaling fleet and merchant vessels.

Production costs and price trends are also difficult to estimate, although until the 1850s markups were usually substantial. In 1845 the *Cowlitz* landed 52,000 feet of boards at an invoice cost of \$15 per thousand feet and 53,000 shingles at an invoice cost of \$4 per thousand.⁸¹ The boards were sold at \$55 to \$60 per thousand feet. What the shingles brought in 1845 is undetermined, but in 1849 they were selling at \$10 per thousand.⁸² In 1844 spars were invoiced at \$30 each but were selling in Honolulu at \$75 to \$375, depending on length.⁸³

The lumber trade, however, was subject to ups and downs. Between 1835 and 1838 prices were depressed, and an 1835 shipment of 122,000 feet was said to have been sold at a loss. After 1839 trade improved as competitors dropped out of the market and demand began to increase. Until 1852 Agency prices for boards ranged from \$50 to \$60 per thousand feet except for short periods of depressed prices. From 1850 to 1852 shingles averaged about \$12.50 per thousand, but increasing competition forced prices down, the Agency receiving only \$9 per thousand on an 1856 shipment. With the emergence of San Francisco as a major city and with the growth of population in California, Oregon, and Washington, an expanding market for lumber was created. Production was likewise stimulated. By 1857 large importations into Hawai'i of lumber and shingles from Puget Sound and California by the Company's competitors made the lumber branch of the Agency's business of increasingly doubtful profitability.

SALMON

Salmon was a mainstay of life of the Northwest Coast Indians. Fresh or preserved salmon, in turn, became a staple food for Company posts west of the Rocky Mountains. By 1830 the Company was preserving salmon on the Columbia River and at Fort Langley on the Fraser River as well, mainly to feed Company personnel, but with some 200 to 300 barrels of Columbia River salmon exported that year, presumably to Hawai'i. Preserved salmon found a ready market on O'ahu, particularly among native Hawaiians. Just when that notable dish, *lomilomi* salmon, first made its appearance is unknown, but if it was in fashion by the 1830s, the Company can take credit for being the main provider of the principal ingredient for many years.

The Company itself did not fish for salmon, but instead entered into a symbiotic relationship with the Indians, whereby the latter with their long expertise were the fishermen. The Company then exchanged trade goods for fresh salmon. Company letters are silent on the preferred species of salmon for export, until 1860, when Bissett and Hardisty complained that the last consignment was of inferior quality, consisting mainly of "pale" fish, which the Hawaiians would not buy if "red" salmon were available.⁸⁴ This suggests that of the five species of North Pacific salmon, sockeye salmon was preferred for export, in conformity with Hawaiian tastes. Native Hawaiians also expressed a preference for Fraser River rather than Columbia River salmon. Fort Langley on the Fraser became noted for the quality of its product and, according to Cullen, became "the single largest exporter of salmon on the Pacific Coast."⁸⁵

Company records do not give a precise description of the method of salmon preservation, although it is clear they were pickled, the earliest commercial method used on the Pacific Coast. Writing in 1910, Cobb described the method as follows:

In dressing salmon for pickling the heads are removed, the fish split along the belly, the cut ending with a downward curve at the tail. The viscera and two thirds of the backbone are removed, and the blood gurry, and black stomach membrane scraped away. The fish are then scrubbed and washed in cold water. They are next placed in pickling butts with about 15 pounds of salt for every 100 pounds of fish. The fish remain here for about one week, when they are removed, rubbed clean with a scrub brush and repacked in market barrels, one sack of salt being used for every three barrels of 200 pounds each.⁸⁶

The Company standardized its barrels at 180 pounds and also produced half-barrel casks of 90 pounds. Barrels were made at Fort

Vancouver, Fort Langley, and later on Vancouver Island. Coopering became a year-round activity.

During the 1830s the Company sold several hundred barrels of salmon a year in Honolulu. The 1840s saw a major increase in sales. In 1846 Chief Factor Douglas reported he had shipped 1,530 barrels the past season to Hawai'i and would try to increase salmon exports to 2,000 barrels annually.⁸⁷ Cullen states the peak year was 1849, with 2,610 barrels exported to Honolulu.⁸⁸ The high point for a single shipment appears to have been the simultaneous arrival of the Company's *Cowlitz* and *Una* in July 1850 with 2,000 barrels. In June 1851 Douglas reported that Company salmon exports to Hawai'i for the preceding 12 months had been 4,000 barrels, bringing net proceeds of \$54,000.⁸⁹ This number was split between two calendar years.

The Honolulu Agency during the 1850s began to feel increasing competition of salmon imports from the Russian American Company at Sitka and of American imports from Puget Sound. The 1853 smallpox epidemic that decimated the Hawaiian population caused a great falling off of salmon sales. Problems of product quality also arose, which Clouston attributed to inferior salt used in preserving the fish. He recommended Liverpool salt, 40 tons of which were imported to Fort Victoria in 1854, but the salmon cured with Liverpool salt during the 1855 season proved unacceptable to Hawaiians. Despite these problems, between 1851 and 1854, an average of 1,660 barrels were marketed annually, and for the 12 months ending 31 May 1858, 1,332 barrels and 150 half-barrels were imported.⁹⁰ Thereafter, regular shipments apparently ceased.

From time to time the Company attempted unsuccessfully to export salmon to ports more distant than Honolulu to broaden the market. In 1843 a trial shipment to London was badly deteriorated by the time it reached its destination. The following year 150 barrels sent to China brought only \$3 a barrel, paid for in tea shipped to Fort Vancouver.⁹¹ Salmon sent to Sydney in 1853 was bad on arrival, possibly because the barrel hoops were wood, resulting in leaky barrels.⁹² By 1854 two-thirds of the Fort Langley barrels had iron hoops, but 30 barrels consigned to Tahiti in 1855 were also spoiled on arrival, and 100 barrels shipped to London were of unacceptable quality.⁹³

Data on production costs of preserved salmon are very limited. The cost of production and shipment to Honolulu in 1845 was put at \$5 a barrel, matched against a sales price of \$9 to \$10 a barrel.⁹⁴

In the following year the cost was reported at \$4 a barrel, and the sales price in Honolulu had risen to \$10 to \$11 a barrel.⁹⁵ The Agency sold salmon at both wholesale and retail, the discount to retailers apparently ranging from \$1 to \$2 a barrel. The following table, based on Agency letters, gives the trend of Honolulu retail prices of Company salmon.

TABLE 2
HONOLULU SALMON PRICES PER BARREL, 1835-1860

1835 - \$6.00	1849 - \$12-13.00	1855 - \$12-14.00
1838 - \$9.00	1850 - \$12.50-15.00	1856 - \$12-14.00
1839 - \$9-11.00	1851 - \$13.50-15.00	1857 - \$12.50
1845 - \$9-10.00	1852 - \$14.00	1860 - \$7-10.00
1846 - \$10-11.00	1853 - \$17.00	
1847 - \$10.00	1854 - \$8-10.00	

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Agriculture early became an important Fort Vancouver activity. Honolulu Agency records for 1835 show the sale of 50 barrels of flour at \$10 a barrel and in 1836 the sale of 12 kegs of butter at \$18 a keg.⁹⁶ Similar small shipments continued for the next few years. The Company entered in 1839 into an agreement with the Russian American Company to provision the latter's establishment at Sitka. This led to an increase in Company agricultural production at Fort Vancouver and Cowlitz, and to Company purchases of farm products from settlers in the Columbia and Willamette. Butter exports to Hawai'i appear to have ceased in the face of Russian demand, but flour exports to Hawai'i increased. In 1843 McLoughlin allocated 10,000 bushels of wheat to be processed into flour for export to O'ahu.⁹⁷ In September 1845 the *Cowlitz* offloaded 720 barrels of flour which sold in Honolulu at "fair prices."⁹⁸ A single Company shipment in 1847 of 400 barrels was sold by the Agency at from \$8 to \$10 a barrel.⁹⁹ Yet, by the end of the decade, flour shipments appear to have ceased, probably because for a short period Fort Vancouver developed a market for flour in San Francisco. Fort Victoria, the Company's new base, was an importer rather than an exporter of flour.

EUROPEAN MANUFACTURES

The importation of manufactured goods into Hawai'i was not in the mind of the Company's management when the Agency was

founded. The Agency's entrance into this field owed much to circumstance. In 1836 Pelly in Honolulu asked to have a small stock of manufactured trade goods on hand as a medium of payment for stores he had to procure for the Columbia Department and for provisioning Company ships passing through Honolulu, instead of drawing bills of exchange on London. Pelly's sensible request was approved, and subsequently the Company gradually moved into Honolulu merchandising. By 1838-1839 the Agency was selling small quantities of miscellaneous manufactures, and Pelly was informing London of a large local demand for anchors, anchor chain, and sheet copper for sheathing vessel hulls.

FIRST STEPS AND BECOMING ESTABLISHED

By 1840 the Company decided that the Agency should form a mercantile establishment, and Pelly sold a shipment of goods from the Company-chartered *Forager* for \$8,970, at a profit stated to be about 45 per cent.¹⁰⁰ His 1841 requisition of English goods in the amount of £3,458 was approved by Sir George Simpson.

When Sir George arrived in Honolulu in 1842, he estimated the six leading business houses, besides the Agency, had received consignments of manufactures with an invoice value of about £50,000 during the preceding 12 months. He also noted that the local market was overstocked. While fully supporting the Agency's entering the trade in manufactures, Simpson advised caution, stating that requisitions of English goods for several years to come should be confined to £4,000 to £5,000 per annum. He also believed that the assistance provided Pelly and Allan was sufficient and that the Agency could "conduct a more enlarged business without incurring any material additional outlay for premises and management." Sir George envisaged a profitable, but not a very large expansion of the Agency's business.¹⁰¹

Pelly and Allan had to rely considerably on trial and error in gauging demand in Honolulu. In testing the market, they kept London informed, as shown by their 1845 comments on the recently arrived cargo of the *Nepaul*:

The checked coats went off very rapidly and are still on great request—a large assortment to be sent. . . . The Wellington and Hessian boots and the gentlemen's and ladies shoes . . . ought to be of slighter make and more elegant style—a greater variety of sizes. . . . Of the trousers received too great a quantity are woolen . . . instead of light stuff adapted to the climate. . . . A few of the best articles of clothing should be of large size say about No. 9 to suit the chiefs who prize highly the Company's goods and are good customers.¹⁰²

The agents' requisition for the following year included "5 fine blue dress coats . . . and 5 fine blue frock coats, 3 of each to be of large size." High chiefs Governor Kekuanaoa, Abner Paki, father of Princess Bernice Pauahi, and Charles Kanaina, father of Lunalilo, were among the prominent Hawaiians who became regular patrons of the Agency's retail shop.

In March 1846 the agents sent off their annual requisition, amounting to an invoice value of about £4,000 for goods to be delivered the following year.¹⁰³ Provisions consisted of only six categories but included the "Best Durham Mustard in bottles," a long-time best seller. "Stationery" had 16 categories, from sealing wax to writing and record paper. "Naval Stores" had 70 categories, from nautical almanacs to anchors and sheathing copper. The largest class of software and hardware goods comprised 181 categories too various to describe in brief terms. Selling at retail and wholesale, for both the local and whaler's market, the Agency was now established in merchandising, despite local competition.

QUALITY CONTROL AND CUSTOMERS' PREFERENCES

These aspects of successful merchandising continued to concern the agents and enhanced the high reputation that the Company's imports enjoyed. Culled from agents' letters to London are the following comments:

The gloves we want are of shamois [chamois] leather . . . and no worsted about them . . . those received could not be given away. . . . Clothing received is excellent. Instead of sending checked coats next season, send some other fancy pattern of coat. . . . Pink prints from Louisa Hamilton and Co. sell well, but those from Caldecott a complete failure. . . . The bleached drill and fine cloth trousers from Messrs. Favell and Bousfield's are altogether too small in the legs.¹⁰⁴

Items that sold steadily through the years included: Wellington boots; men's dress and utilitarian clothing, especially storm and pea jackets for sailors; yard goods of great variety to appeal to feminine tastes; and cotton and silk umbrellas. The increasingly sophisticated wants of Honolulu were reflected in 1853 and 1855 requisitions asking for damask table cloths, linens, lace, perfume, and much china tableware. A full line of saddles, bridles, spurs, and whips was carried. Provisions expanded to include Crosse and Blackwell's pickles, salad and olive oil, jams, wine vinegar, tinned sardines, preserved oysters and lobsters, and Westphalia and English hams. Honolulu's elite was eating well.

Sir George Simpson cancelled the Agency's 1842 order for brandy and gin as being contrary to Company policy, which eliminated spirits from the Columbia trade as soon as the fur-trading Yankees with their rum for barter disappeared from the Northwest Coast. But by the 1850s the Agency was purveying quality claret, port, sherry, Martell's brandy, and Holland and Geneva gin. The largest seller seems to have been ale. We note the agents writing in 1849, "The ale from Mr. Byass' is much better than Mr. Dowding's, but it is still very inferior to Mr. Abbott's."¹⁰⁵ The next year Abbott ale was not equal to Byass, which held top spot until about 1855, when, it gave way to Bass ale in popularity. Marzett ale in quart champagne bottles was also in demand.

In North America the Company's most famous product down to the present day is the Hudson's Bay blanket. Offhand, one would not associate the Hudson's Bay blanket with tropical Hawai'i, but it became a perennially sold item of the Agency. Imported in scarlet, blue, green, and classic white, usually in 4 point but also 3½ and 4½ point sizes, the Hudson's Bay blanket found appreciative buyers in Hawai'i. In 1854, Clouston expressed concern that one shipment was not up to standard quality, and wrote, "The blankets imported by the Hudson's Bay Company are prized very much by the natives, on account of their softness and weight."¹⁰⁶

SPECIAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Hawaiian government was a regular customer of the Agency, buying stationery, sealing wax, a scale for weighing gold dust, and the like for the conduct of its business. On occasion the government made special requests. The Agency's requisition for the 1846 shipment included a government order for one ton of saluting powder and 320 square yards of carpeting of "fast colors and rather gay." Possibly the carpeting was for Kamehameha III's palace. The saluting powder was a necessity in those days, when protocol demanded an exchange of salutes between the Honolulu Fort and foreign men-of-war on their arrival and departure from Honolulu harbor.

Thrum describes the government's 1845 request of the Company for a cost estimate for cast iron and lead pipe, with associated fittings, for a connection with a planned Nu'uaniu reservoir.¹⁰⁷ In a less practical vein, in 1847 Pelly and Mactavish wrote London, "Dr. Judd is anxious to procure for the S. I. Government five hundred hand of arms, that is to say muskets with bayonets and scabbards,

cartridge boxes, cross belts, etc. complete, and would feel much obliged by your informing him, through us, for what sum they could be procured in London. . . .”¹⁰⁸ London replied, reasonably enough, that the price depended on the quality desired, which apparently involved a greater cost than the government was willing to consider.

Also in 1847 a more sensible request came from Dr. T. C. B. Rooke, English-born Honolulu physician and foster father of the future Queen Emma. Dr. Rooke was in need of an extensive list of medicines and medical supplies, a requisition for which was promptly forwarded to London by the Agency. In June of the following year Dr. Rooke’s order arrived safely in three cases and one cask. The agents reported to London that the medicines were correct as to invoice and “have given much satisfaction to Dr. Rooke.”¹⁰⁹

SALES, MARKUPS, AND PROFITABILITY OF THE AGENCY

As in the case of Columbia Produce, quantitative data are fragmentary on sales and markups of manufactures. The agents’ letters occasionally report figures on individual shipments. Thus the sale of the cargo of the *Princess Royal* in 1854 amounted to \$31,209, giving a net above invoice cost and freight charges of about 52 per cent.¹¹⁰ In 1853 Clouston sent London a list of markups on invoice cost on a number of staple articles of trade, a few of which are listed below.¹¹¹ The markups appear substantial, but so were Agency costs.

Blankets	71½%	Printed muslims	86 %
Guernsey frocks	60 %	Handkerchiefs	75 %
Jackets	170 %	Earthenware	110 %
Sauce pans	75 %	Sherry	72½%
Saddles	58½%	Brandy	102 %
Shirts	67-81 %	Byass’ ale	125 %
Trousers	87 %	Feathers	400 % ¹¹²

The only comprehensive Honolulu Agency account books that have survived run from 1845 to 1853. Although they contain much useful information, they raise numerous accounting questions pertaining to overall Agency profitability, including actual net income derived from the sale of both English manufactures and Columbia Produce. Clouston reported that for the year ended 5 July 1851, the Agency accounts showed a profit of \$10,000 besides a net of \$36,000 on the sales of Columbia Produce credited to the Columbia Department.¹¹³ This seems fairly typical except for the Agency’s final years. One is led to conclude that the Agency for most of its life must have

been moderately profitable, or the Company would have closed it sooner than it did.

EXPORTS

SUPPLIES FOR THE NORTHWEST COAST

After delivering their cargoes of lumber and salmon in Honolulu, Company vessels did not return empty to the Northwest Coast. Sugar, molasses, coffee, and salt were Island products regularly sent to provision the Company's posts, although in the early days these did not make a full cargo. As Oregon began to fill with settlers in the 1840s and with the growth of Victoria in the 1850s, Company shipments of sugar and molasses produced by Hawai'i's infant sugar industry grew substantially.

Asia was a source of manufactured goods not heretofore mentioned. As a Pacific Island emporium, Honolulu early received imports from China and the Philippines. These included Manila (abaca) cordage, fiber floor matting, straw hats, rattan furniture, lacquered boxes and tables, silk, cigars, and tea. Some of these were, in turn, exported to the Northwest Coast. Pelly wrote London in 1839 that he had in hand all goods ordered from China by Fort Vancouver, but he did not say what they were. Clouston was more specific. He dispatched the *Vancouver* to Victoria in April 1853 with the always essential Manila rope, 10,000 Manila cheroots, 10 rolls of China matting, and 12 China baskets. In addition, the cargo included island products to the extent of 30,037 pounds of sugar, 3,593 gallons of molasses, 1,333 pounds of coffee, and 1,102 barrels of salt, as well as other items.¹¹⁴

Hawaiian salt is of special interest, for it was used in preserving the salmon destined for Hawaiian consumption.¹¹⁵ The source of the salt shipped by the Company to the Northwest Coast in the 1830s and early 1840s is not recorded, but could well have come from the Moanalua salt lake on O'ahu, whose salt, according to Wilkes, was considered the best for salting provisions and as a table salt in Honolulu. In 1842 the *Cowlitz* and the *Vancouver* took more than 2,000 barrels of Hawaiian salt to the Columbia River.¹¹⁶

In 1847 the Pu'uloa salt works at Pearl Harbor were leased by M. Kekauonohi to Isaac Montgomery and in a short time became a major producer. A half interest in this lease was assigned to George Pelly. This secured a reliable supply of salt for the Company and probably enriched Pelly on his personal account as well. The Pu'uloa works were later bought by Montgomery and then sold to Charles Vincent.¹¹⁷ In 1854 production was from 10,000 to 15,000 barrels

annually.¹¹⁸ The previous year the Company shipped some 2,700 barrels to Fort Victoria.¹¹⁹ Clouston estimated the annual Company requirement at a lesser figure of about 1,800 barrels, delivered to the Honolulu wharf at \$1.75 a barrel.¹²⁰

By 1857 the Company had made its experiment with the importation of Liverpool salt, which led Daniel Montgomery, by then the energetic owner of Pu'uloa with agents in California and Oregon, to attempt to recapture the trade with the Company. But the 1858 Fraser Gold Rush virtually ended Fort Langley's salmon curing, and shortly thereafter the Company's salmon shipments to Hawai'i ceased.

EXPORTS TO ENGLAND

The most valuable part of the cargo of the Company's annual homeward-bound vessel from the Northwest Coast to England was, of course, the furs she carried. Yet additional cargo space remained, which the Company endeavored to fill with supplementary exports. Some of these passed through the hands of the Honolulu agents.

In the 1830s and early 1840s the Company engaged in the California hide and tallow trade, so graphically described by Richard Henry Dana in his *Two Years Before the Mast*. The hides and smaller amounts of tallow were deposited either at Fort Vancouver or Honolulu to await shipment to England. In addition, the Honolulu agents purchased a few sea otter and beaver skins that occasionally appeared on the local market, as well as pearl shell eventually to be made into English buttons. Pelly in 1838 reported the arrival from Fort Vancouver of the homeward-bound *Columbia*, noting that the 300 bullock hides on board were in such bad shape they had to be unloaded and salted. He then added as export cargo 979 bullock hides, 4,209 bullock horns, 8 barrels of tallow, 10 casks of arrowroot, and 5 bales of wool. Also put on board was 27,514 pounds of pearl shell shipped for Honolulu merchant William French, a good customer of the Company.¹²¹

The hide trade continued, not without problems. In 1843 the *Vancouver* arrived from Fort Vancouver en route to London, again with wet hides which had to be unloaded and dried so as not to damage the furs. Unfortunately, the Honolulu agents had on hand 5,000 California hides for which there was no cargo space left on the *Vancouver*. These they eventually disposed of locally.¹²² In fact, if they could do so, Pelly and Allan preferred to sell their California hides in Honolulu for re-export, as "we always fear sending them with the furs."¹²³

The California hide trade was a thing of the past for the Agency by the 1850s, but the agents purchased whalebone and walrus teeth brought to the Honolulu market. The decimation of the walrus was a particularly unfortunate consequence of the hunting of sea mammals in the North Pacific. Clouston sent 11 cases of walrus teeth in October 1854 and an additional 48 cases in 1855 to Fort Victoria for shipment to London, as in those years the homeward-bound Company vessel did not touch at Honolulu.¹²⁴

CONCLUSION

In retrospect, one is led to question why the Hudson's Bay Company took what was essentially a short-run view of Hawai'i in closing its Honolulu Agency. Granted intense local competition, the Company had the resources, or could have acquired them, and had the skilled managerial personnel to have become as influential in the future economic development of Hawai'i as Theo H. Davies or Hackfeld and Co., both European merchant houses. To have done so, however, the Company would have had to give almost complete freedom of action to its Honolulu agents, as well as substantial financial support. This was not the Company's managerial style.

A more important reason for the closing of the Honolulu Agency was that for nearly 200 years Canada had been the grand theater of Company operations. By the 1860s Canada was forming as a nation, with accompanying political, economic, and social changes of major proportions. It took all the staying power the Company could muster to adapt to these changes and to survive and prosper. Finally, the death of Sir George Simpson in 1860 marked the end of an era in the Company's history in Canada, matched in London by a takeover in 1863 of the ownership and top management of the Company by new personnel.

The contribution of the Hudson's Bay Company to Hawai'i can be simply stated. First, the Company provided a stability to the commercial sector at a time when stability was greatly needed. In the words of the *Polynesian*, "It [the Company] was for years a sort of commercial moderator, a mercantile balance wheel when fluctuations seized on others." Second, the Company gave valued support to the Hawaiian government without becoming involved in local political issues. And third, the Company's agents as individuals, even George Pelly in his early years, contributed their personal services for the improvement of Honolulu as a community.

NOTES

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- ¹ An invaluable comparative study of the early history of Pacific Island port towns is Caroline Ralston, *Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities of the Nineteenth Century* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1978).
- ² Company organization in the Columbia is concisely described by G. P. V. and Helen B. Akrigg, *British Columbia Chronicle, 1778-1846* (Vancouver: Discovery Press, 1975) 180-208.
- ³ Thos. G. Thrum, "History of the Hudson's Bay Company's Agency in Honolulu," *HHS 18th Annual Report* (1911): 35-49. Thrum published a slightly expanded version under the same title in *HAA* (1912) 43-59. The following notes refer to the 1912 title.
- ⁴ Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1 *1778-1854 Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1947); Theodore Morgan, *Hawaii: A Century of Economic Change* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1948); Harold W. Bradley, *The American Frontier in Hawaii; The Pioneers 1789-1843* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1942).
- ⁵ Flora H. Burns, "Holiday 1856 in Honolulu," *The Beaver* (Autumn 1965): 4-11. Alfred L. Lomax, "Dr. McLouhlin's Tropical Trade Route," *The Beaver* (Spring 1964): 10-15; James McCook, "Sir George Simpson in the Hawaiian Islands," *The Beaver* (Winter 1976): 46-53; William P. St. Clair, Jr., "Beaver in Hawaii," *The Beaver* (Sept; 1941): 40-43; Robert Watson, "HBC in the Hawaiian Islands," *The Beaver* (June 1930): 6-8.
- ⁶ Stephen Reynolds, Journal, 31 January 1829. Aemilius Simpson retired from the Royal Navy with the rank of Lieutenant in 1816. He entered HBC service in 1826 and became superintendent of the Company's shipping on the Northwest Coast. He was 36 years of age when he brought the *Cadboro* to Honolulu.
- ⁷ George Simpson, letter to Aemilius Simpson (undated), Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter HBCA) D4/16, f.4. The instructions were published in part by Frederick Merk, ed., *Fur Trade and Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1968) 298.
- ⁸ E. E. Rich, ed., *Part of Dispatch From George Simpson, Esqr . . . To The Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company . . .* (Toronto: Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Company, 1947) 109-110.
- ⁹ Minutes of Governor and Committee, London, 23 Oct. 1833, All/62, f.91, HBCA; Governor and Committee, letter to George Pelly, 26 Nov. 1833, A6/23, fos. 44d-45, HBCA.

- ¹⁰ For Hawai'i's mail service see Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2, 1854-1874 *Twenty Critical Years* (Honolulu: U Hawaii P, 1953) 26-32. As late as 1848 transit time of letters from Honolulu to London ranged from 70 to more than 150 days. By 1856 transit time was reduced to 60 to 70 days.
- ¹¹ There were some disasters. Wrecked on the Columbia Bar were the *William and Ann* in 1829, the *Isabella* in 1830, and the *Vancouver* in 1848. The *Una* was wrecked near Cape Flattery in 1851.
- ¹² In 1850 Chief Factor Douglas considered the *Mary Dare*, *Una*, and *Beaver* sufficient for the coastal trade. See Hartwell Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1979) 108.
- ¹³ P, 23 Jan. 1858.
- ¹⁴ Glyndwr Williams, ed., *London Correspondence Inward from Sir George Simpson, 1841-1842* (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1973) 124.
- ¹⁵ B191/d/7, 1847-1848, HBCA.
- ¹⁶ B191/d/10, 1849-1850, HBCA.
- ¹⁷ B191/d/3, 1844-1845, HBCA.
- ¹⁸ On Hawaiians in Company service see Janice K. Duncan, "Kanaka World Travelers and Fur Company Employees, 1785-1860," *HJH* 7 (1973): 93-111; *Minority Without a Champion: Kanakas on the Pacific Coast, 1788-1850* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1972); Yvonne M. Klan, "Kanaka William," *The Beaver* (Spring 1979): 39-43.
- ¹⁹ Robert C. Wyllie, "Notes on the Shipping, Trade . . . of the Sandwich or Hawaiian Islands," *F*, 4 Sept. (1844): 79.
- ²⁰ Thrum, "History of the HBC Agency": 48; George V. Blue, "A Hudson's Bay Company Contract for Hawaiian Labor," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 25 (1924): 72-75.
- ²¹ B191/d/10, 1849-1850, HBCA.
- ²² Robert Clouston, letter to London, 11 Sept. 1852, All/62; 30 September 1853, All/63 f.23, HBCA. Clouston paid off 11 rather than 15 crewmen. Unfortunately, the smallpox was raging when they returned.
- ²³ Thrum, "History of HBC Agency": 46; Gorman D. Gilman, "Streets of Honolulu in the Early Forties," *HAA* (1904): 76.
- ²⁴ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 4 March 1857, All/63 f.244, HBCA.
- ²⁵ James Bissett, letter to Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Bissett, 4 Feb. 1859, ms. collection Bishop Museum Library.
- ²⁶ The 1849-1850 accounts of the Agency show a disbursement of \$64 to build a shed for the storage of spars. The Agency beaver weathervane now atop C. Brewer and Company's building in downtown Honolulu was mounted on the roof of the two-story stone and adobe structure. The carved wood beaver that once graced the Merchants Grill on Fort Street could have been a wall ornament in the retail store. For the history of the weathervane and the carved wood beaver after the departure of the Company from Honolulu, see Richard A. Greer, "The Beaver's Pedigree," *Hawaiian Historical Review* (April 1964): 136-141.
- ²⁷ Helen P. Hoyt, "The Wreck of the 'Philosopher' *Helvetius*," *HJH* 2 (1968): 69-75.
- ²⁸ Pelly was also the agent for Lloyd's. He was never a commissioned officer of the Company, though receiving more than a Chief Trader's salary.
- ²⁹ Thrum, "History of the HBC Agency": 45; Gilman, "Streets of Honolulu": 87. In 1838 Pelly and William French joined in building a small cottage as a retreat in Nu'uau Valley at Luakaha. Several years later Pelly became the sole owner.

- ³⁰ Thrum, "History of the HBC Agency": 48. On behalf of the Oahu Charity School Trustees, Pelly published the following item in the *SIG*, 12 May 1838: "The Trustees of the Oahu Charity School beg to tender their gratitude to those kind Friends in England who have so warmly interested themselves on behalf of the Charity and to acknowledge the receipt of donations through Mrs. Taylor, the proceeds of which amount to \$453.50." Another donation to the School of goods from Mrs. Sarah Saunders of London were sold for \$892. They were brought on the Company bark *Columbia*. By 1844 Mrs. Saunders' contributions reached upwards of \$2,500.
- ³¹ Stephen Reynolds, Journal, 24 Dec. 1840 and 18 Feb. 1841; Thrum, "History of the HBC Agency": 48.
- ³² Stephen Reynolds, Journal, 9 July 1839; *SIG*, 13 July 1839.
- ³³ E. E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin From Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Second Series, 1839-1844* (London: Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1943) 4.
- ³⁴ Rich, ed., *Letters of John McLoughlin . . . , Second Series*, 280.
- ³⁵ G. Williams, ed., *London Correspondence . . . 1841-1842*, 124.
- ³⁶ Published accounts, including Simpson's own, contain discrepancies as to the dates of Simpson's visit. I have relied on the following eyewitness sources: Stephen Reynolds, Journal, and William Paty, Journal, AH; Thomas Lowe Journal, HBCA. For Simpson's subsequent journey see George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journey Around the World During the Years 1841 and 1842*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1847).
- ³⁷ In Honolulu Simpson and McLoughlin parted ways over the conduct of the Company's trade on the Northwest Coast and the establishment of Fort Victoria as a successor to Fort Vancouver.
- ³⁸ Sir George Simpson believed that Alexander Simpson and George Pelly could not work together and that it would be unwise to recall George Allan. Sir George recommended that Alexander Simpson be sent to the Northern Department, which the latter rejected. Alexander Simpson resigned from the Company but remained in Honolulu to conspire unsuccessfully with Charlton for British annexation of Hawai'i. See Alexander Simpson, *The Sandwich Islands . . .* (London: Smith, Elder, 1843).
- ³⁹ Bradley, *American Frontier in Hawaii* 408-413 and 441-465; Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom* vol. 1, 191-206.
- ⁴⁰ George Allan, *Reminiscences of Sojourns in the Sandwich Islands*, ms., Provincial Archives of British Columbia (hereafter PABC). Allan entered the service of the Company in 1830. His salary in Honolulu was £100 a year and an additional £120 for lodging and board.
- ⁴¹ Allan, *Reminiscences*.
- ⁴² George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 14 March 1846, All/62, f.123, HBCA.
- ⁴³ Sir George Seymour, letter to H. T. L. Corry, *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 61 (1960): 423-424. Seymour charged that Pelly and Allan offered him "no information or assistance on arrival," that "neither of these Agents associates with the English," and that "Mr. Pelly, after following about a Band playing American Tunes—in a state of intoxication, which, I am told—is habitual to him, at a dinner to celebrate the independence of the United States, insulted Admiral Thomas and the British Navy. . . ."
- ⁴⁴ Pelly and Allan forwarded reams of correspondence on this incident to London. Seymour's charges were incorrect, except that Pelly did refuse to toast Admiral Thomas at the 4th of July dinner, on the grounds that Admiral Thomas injured Pelly's pecuniary interest by obliging the government to remove an attachment on Charlton's property, pursuant to a court decision in Pelly's favor in a suit Pelly had brought against Charlton. Wyllie upbraided Pelly on his behavior. See Robert C. Wyllie, letter to George Pelly, 15 Aug. 1846, F&O Book 5, 252-260, AH.

- ⁴⁵ Sir George Simpson, letter to George Pelly and Dugald Mactavish, 28 June 1847, All/62, fos. 244–247, HBCA. Thrum in his “History of the HBC Agency” implies that the visit to Honolulu in 1846 of David McLoughlin, “a prominent officer of the Company,” was one of “supervision and inquiry” of the Agency and hence related to the replacement of Allan. In this, Thrum was in error. David McLoughlin was never a prominent officer of the Company and resigned in 1845. His mission was to buy English goods from the Agency on credit for sale on his own account in Oregon, which he did privately through Pelly. In 1852 the Agency was still trying to collect McLoughlin’s debt.
- ⁴⁶ Pelly followed a turbulent path. In 1844 he won a suit against Charlton for slander but relinquished the monetary damages awarded. He complained strongly to Judd about the building of a bowling alley next to his house and also got into a fracas with merchant W. Skinner.
- ⁴⁷ Allan, Reminiscences: George Allan, letter to Donald Ross, 22 Dec. 1847, Donald Ross Collection, PABC.
- ⁴⁸ Mactavish, born in 1817, entered Company service as an apprentice at the age of 15.
- ⁴⁹ Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 3 June 1851, All/62, f.622, HBCA.
- ⁵⁰ George Allan, letter to George Pelly and Dugald Mactavish, 9 Oct. 1848, B191/c/1, f.16, HBCA.
- ⁵¹ Allan was offered the Hawaiian consulate in San Francisco but declined. For letters from Allan to Wyllie see Richard A. Greer, “California Gold—Some Reports to Hawaii,” *HJH* 4 (1970): 157–173.
- ⁵² Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 30 Oct. 1850, All/62, f.418, HBCA.
- ⁵³ Asher B. Bates, letter to Archibald Barclay, 29 Oct. 1950, All/62, fos. 520–521d, HBCA. The nature of Pelly’s “outrages upon decency” is not further clarified. Neither the *Polynesian* nor the *Friend* reported the Pelly incident. In the *Polynesian* of 23 Nov. 1850 Bates inserted a notice as the assignee of all Pelly’s property. The notice informed all persons having in their possession any portion of Pelly’s property to account for such to Bates, and that persons having claims against Pelly’s estate should present them to Bates for adjustment.
- ⁵⁴ Asher B. Bates, letter to London, 1 Nov. 1850, All/62, f.529, HBCA. Bates warned the Company that he believed that Pelly was secretly trying to carry to England a large amount of gold coin. Also, Pelly previously shipped three cases of gold dust on the *Pandora* to London. What action, if any, the Company took against Pelly I do not know. He died in 1866.
- ⁵⁵ Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 24 Sept. 1851, All/62, f.638, HBCA. Pelly’s Luakaha property in Nu’uanu Valley was sold for \$2,300. His town house and lot were eventually sold to Robert Crichton Wyllie for \$4,000, according to Robert Clouston, letter to London, 19 December 1853, All/63, fos. 36–37), HBCA.
- ⁵⁶ In writing to Sir George Simpson, a personal friend, Mactavish said of his experience with Pelly, “I hope to God I shall never have such years to spend again”: Dugald Mactavish, letter to Sir George Simpson, 25 June 1851, All/62, f.641. HBCA.
- ⁵⁷ Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters*, 196n; Burns, “Holiday 1856 in Honolulu.”
- ⁵⁸ Robert Clouston, letter to Donald Ross, 17 Jan. 1852, Donald Ross Collection, PABC.
- ⁵⁹ Joseph Wordsworth Hardisty Papers, HBCA; Burns, “Holiday 1856 in Honolulu.”
- ⁶⁰ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 17 Jan. 1855, All/63, fos. 105–106, HBCA.
- ⁶¹ B191/d/12, 1852–1853, HBCA.
- ⁶² Robert Clouston, letter to London, 6 Aug. 1853, All/63, fos. 16d–17, HBCA.
- ⁶³ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 12 March 1854, All/63, f.62, HBCA.
- ⁶⁴ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 17 Jan. 1855, All/63, fos. 105–106, HBCA.

- ⁶⁵ P, 20 Sept. 1858; Thrum, "History of HBC Agency" 58-59. Clouston was liked and respected in Honolulu. He followed Mactavish in the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society and the Chamber of Commerce.
- ⁶⁶ Kuykendall, *Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 1854-1874 139.
- ⁶⁷ Sir George Simpson, letter to James Bissett, 15 March 1859, D4/55, f.187, HBCA.
- ⁶⁸ James Bissett, letter to Sir George Simpson, 25 July 1859, D5/49, fos. 453-457 and 466-474, HBCA.
- ⁶⁹ London, letter to James Bissett, 1 July 1859, A6/34, fos. 214-216, HBCA.
- ⁷⁰ Bissett kept a daily journal chronicling his and his wife's activities in Honolulu: James Bissett, Journal, 1859-1860, ms., Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.
- ⁷¹ See also Richard A. Greer, "The Founding of Queen's Hospital," *HJH* 3 (1969): 110-145.
- ⁷² James Bissett, Journal, 10 March 1859. The monument is the present obelisk, not erected until 1874.
- ⁷³ James Bissett, Journal, 10 April 1859.
- ⁷⁴ James Bissett, letter to London, 1 Aug. 1860, All/63, f.556; James Bissett, letter to Guardians of Lunalilo, 25 June 1860, All/63, f.559, HBCA.
- ⁷⁵ For an overview of Hawaii-Northwest Coast trade, see Alfred L. Lomax, "Hawaii-Columbia River Trade in Early Days," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 43 (1942): 328-383.
- ⁷⁶ "Extracts from the Emmon's Journal," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 26 (1925): 268.
- ⁷⁷ Stephen Reynolds, Journal, 25 and 26 June 1841.
- ⁷⁸ Richard S. Mackie, "Colonial Land, Indian Labor, and Company Capital: The Economy of Vancouver Island, 1849-1858", thesis, U of Victoria, 1984, 142. Mackie states the Company produced nearly two million shingles between 1846 and 1858.
- ⁷⁹ John McLoughlin, letter to Sir George Simpson, 20 March 1844, *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 17 (1916): 225.
- ⁸⁰ James Bissett, letter to Governor and Council, Northern Dept., 18 May 1859, D5/49, f.264, HBCA.
- ⁸¹ E. E. Rich, ed., *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, Third Series, 1844-1846* (London: Champlain Society for the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1944) 85.
- ⁸² George Pelly and Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 25 Jan. 1849, All/62, HBCA.
- ⁸³ John McLoughlin, letter to Sir George Simpson, 20 March 1844, *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 17 (1916): 225.
- ⁸⁴ James Bissett, letter to London, 1 Aug. 1860, All/63, fos. 555-556, HBCA; Joseph Hardisty, letter to London, 6 Sept. 1860, All/63, f.567, HBCA.
- ⁸⁵ Mary K. Cullen, *History of Fort Langley, 1827-1896*, Canadian Historic Sites No. 20, Papers on Archaeology and History (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1979).
- ⁸⁶ John N. Cobb, "Salmon Fisheries of the Pacific Coast," *Bureau of Fisheries Document* 751, *Report of the Commissioner of Fisheries for 1910* (Washington, D.C., 1911) 62.
- ⁸⁷ Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851*, 6.
- ⁸⁸ Cullen, *History of Fort Langley* 49.
- ⁸⁹ Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851*, 190.
- ⁹⁰ Cullen, *History of Fort Langley* 51; James Bissett, letter to Governor and Council, 18 May 1859, D5/49, fos. 262-265, HBCA.
- ⁹¹ George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 5 March 1845, All/62, f.38, HBCA.
- ⁹² Robert Clouston, letter to London, 19 Dec. 1853, All/63, fos. 36-37, HBCA.

- ⁹³ Cullen, *History of Fort Langley* 51; Robert Clouston, letter to London, 17 January 1856, All/63, f.178, HBCA.
- ⁹⁴ Rich, ed., *Letters of John McLoughlin . . . , Third Series, 1844-1846*, 85.
- ⁹⁵ Bowsfield, ed., *Fort Victoria Letters, 1846-1851*, 15.
- ⁹⁶ George Pelly, letter to London, 31 Dec. 1835, All/61, f.6; 26 October 1836, All/ 6, f.19, HBCA.
- ⁹⁷ Rich, ed., *Letters of John McLoughlin, Second Series, 1839-1844*, 125.
- ⁹⁸ George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 2 June 1846, All/62, fos. 129-130, HBCA.
- ⁹⁹ Flour imports into Honolulu in 1847 totalled 4,050 barrels, of which 1,668 came from the Columbia River: P, 8 Jan. 1848.
- ¹⁰⁰ Rich, ed., *Letters of John McLoughlin . . . , Second Series, 1839-1844*, 20.
- ¹⁰¹ G. Williams, ed., London Correspondence . . . 1841-1842, 126-127. Simpson identified the six leading business houses apart from the Company as Pierce and Brewer, W. French and Co., Ladd and Co., H. Skinner, E. and H. Grimes, and Julius Dudoit.
- ¹⁰² George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 5 March 1845, All/62, f.38, HBCA.
- ¹⁰³ George Pelly and George Allan, requisition to London, 14 March 1846, All/62, fos. 101-109, HBCA.
- ¹⁰⁴ Dugald Mactavish and George Pelly, letter to London, All/62, fos. 294, 347 and 377, HBCA.
- ¹⁰⁵ George Pelly and Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 2 February 1849, All/62, f.347, HBCA.
- ¹⁰⁶ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 29 March 1854, All/63, f.57, HBCA. In a Hudson's Bay blanket the larger the number of "points," the wider the blanket. The points are shown by short, parallel, indigo lines woven into one side of the blanket. The points are said originally to have designated the number of beaver pelts the blanket was worth in barter.
- ¹⁰⁷ Thrum, "History of the HBC Agency": 54.
- ¹⁰⁸ George Pelly and Dugald Mactavish, letter to London, 30 Aug. 1847, All/62, fos. 232-233, HBCA.
- ¹⁰⁹ Dugald Mactavish and George Pelly, letter to London, 20 June 1848, All/62, f.310, HBCA.
- ¹¹⁰ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 29 Nov. 1854, All/63, fos. 99-100, HBCA.
- ¹¹¹ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 5 Nov. 1853, 19 Nov. 1853, All/63, fos. 29-30 and 34, HBCA.
- ¹¹² For a few years the Agency imported from England scarlet, yellow, and black feathers, apparently in much demand, probably for making *leis* and *kahilis*.
- ¹¹³ Dugald Mactavish and Robert Clouston, letter to London, 12 July 1852, All/62, fos. 682-683, HBCA.
- ¹¹⁴ Robert Clouston, invoice, 8 Oct. 1853, All/63, f.24, HBCA.
- ¹¹⁵ On Hawaiian salt-making, see Thos. G. Thrum, "Hawaiian Salt Making," *HAA* (1924): 112-117.
- ¹¹⁶ Thrum, "History of HBC Agency": 51.
- ¹¹⁷ Thrum, "Salt Making": 115.
- ¹¹⁸ Pauline King, ed., *Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg* (Honolulu: HHS, 1984) 131.
- ¹¹⁹ Robert Clouston, invoices, All/63, fos. 24, 31, and 38, HBCA.
- ¹²⁰ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 19 Dec 1853, All/63, fos. 36-37, HBCA.
- ¹²¹ George Pelly, letter to London, 22 Dec 1838, All/61, fos. 48-51, HBCA.

- ¹²² George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 23 Dec. 1843, All/62, f.11, HBCA.
- ¹²³ George Pelly and George Allan, letter to London, 4 Sept. 1845, All/62, f.59, HBCA.
- ¹²⁴ Robert Clouston, letter to London, 2 Oct. 1854, 18 Feb. 1855, All/63, fos, 63, 88, 91, and 102, HBCA.