

To the Ends of the Earth: A Study of the Explorative Discourse Promoting British  
Expansionism in Canada

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(Abstract)

Between 1760 and 1833, English explorers systematically filled in the map of British North America. Many of those explorers worked for two fur-trading companies: the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. In pursuit of new sources of fur, they opened western Canada to European comprehension. Their published accounts of geographic exploration provided the British audience with new geographical information about North America. New geographic information often paved the way for settlement. However, in the case of the Canadian West, increased geographic comprehension did not necessarily lead to settlement. By 1833, the explorers had built a base of knowledge from which the British conceptualized the Canadian wilderness. Over the course of seventy years, the British conception of western Canada remained remarkably consistent. The popular British image of western Canada, persisting into the 1830s, was of a wasteland fit only for the fur trade. The British, who had been expanding around the world for several hundred years, were not yet interested in settlement in western Canada. This thesis seeks to expand upon the link that existed between the fur trade, its employees, and their influence on the British conception of western Canada.

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## Introduction

Between the second half of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century, the British conception of the western Canadian wilderness remained remarkably consistent. The popular British image of western Canada, persisting into the 1830s, was of a wasteland fit only for the fur trade. The commercial exploitation of beaver fur fueled a systematic exploration of western Canada. From 1763-1830, British explorers risked their lives as they methodically explored and surveyed the continent. Western Canada was a cold remote wilderness far from any European concept of civilization. Depending on the season, a birch bark canoe or snowshoes were the main modes of transportation. Two fur-trading companies employed the majority of the explorers; the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. While employed, these young adults partook in exploration expeditions that were dangerous, long, miserable, and exciting. They opened a continent to British comprehension while their peers stayed at home and followed a more predictable existence. As they expanded the geographic knowledge of the continent, they faced death or dismemberment. The monetary reward for their services was not large; once they completed their surveys, they often went back to work as traders.

Several of the explorers maintained journals of their expeditions.<sup>1</sup> Even more intriguing, several managed to publish accounts of their travels. Through their publications, these explorers filled in the map of western Canada. The new geographical discoveries arrived in London, where the public read them and imagined the Canadian wilderness. Those journals provided the public with tales of adventure, danger, and success. They also provided geographical information that proved useful to cartographers. Thus, the pursuit of new sources for fur during the eighteenth and nineteenth century opened western Canada to the scrutiny of the British.

Between the years 1763-1833, the public received the emerging information about British North America. A discourse emerged between the explorers of western Canada and the public in Britain. The explorers presented their geographical information to the

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<sup>1</sup> Most men on the expeditions were illiterate. Illiteracy was a requirement for employment as a North West Company *voyageur*. The *voyageur* performed all of the labor-intensive tasks. The Company did not want its employees to realize that they were signing themselves into a virtual debt-peonage system. The *voyageurs* came from an extremely poor and uneducated French-Canadian working class.

public in several formats. The first form was the published journals and accounts of their travels. The published journals sold quite well in London.<sup>2</sup> Several explorers created maps of their individual surveys in Canada. Several of these maps were available to the public. The third format available to the public was Aaron Arrowsmith's map of North America. He compiled all of the information collected by the different explorers into a representation of the continent. As new discoveries emerged, Arrowsmith revised his map and released new editions. His firm became the de facto official cartographer for the Hudson's Bay Company.

The publications received widespread press coverage in Britain. Various newspapers and magazines printed reviews about the new geographical works, thereby disseminating the information to the public. Invariably, the reviewers also commented on the occurrences in western Canada. The available information enabled the British to become more familiar with the geography of North America. Because of this familiarity, people became comfortable with their perception of the continent. Various British citizens contemplated the economic, political, and settlement possibilities available in western Canada.

Although British citizens contemplated the possibilities in western Canada, only one decided to form a settlement there before 1849. Lord Thomas Douglas, fifth earl of Selkirk, familiarized himself with western Canada by studying the published information provided by explorers. With his new confidence, Lord Selkirk formed a settlement at Red River, in Hudson's Bay territory, in 1812. Despite the information and arguments presented by the explorers in their journals, Selkirk faced serious opposition in Canada and in Britain. Before 1830, the British public rejected the notion of settlement in western Canada.

During my research, I discovered a variety of information. I originally hoped to find evidence indicating that the explorers' published information influenced the British to settle in western Canada. Instead, as the project unfolded, I found that just the opposite occurred. The British enthusiastically received the new geographic information about western Canada. However, despite the clearer depiction of North America, they

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *The Journals & Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie* edited by W. Kaye Lamb, Cambridge [England]: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1970, pg.35

remained uninterested in settlement. Over the course of seventy years, the British conception of the Canadian wilderness hardly evolved. Between 1760 and 1833, English explorers systematically filled in the map of British North America. The explorers began to emphasize its potential beyond the fur trade. Despite their efforts, the British public continued to view western Canada as fit only for the fur trade.

My research aims to amplify the historiography available about exploration in western Canada from 1760-1870. I have not found much research about the popular reception to the explorers' publications in Britain. No one seems to have asked whether the individual explorers' published works influenced the British to colonize western Canada in between 1763 and 1833.

Edward John Parkinson discussed the importance of explorers in relation to the creation of a modern day Canadian culture. He argued that the technology of writing allowed the explorers to shape perceptions of Canada in Europe.<sup>3</sup> His argument helps to expand the one-dimensional approach that conceptualizes the fur trade as “the denomination of metropolitan centers over an ever-expanding and increasingly distant hinterland.”<sup>4</sup> Parkinson's thesis illuminates the discourse that occurred between the explorers and the metropolis, and the ability of the explorers to control the presentation and shaping of Canadian geography within that discourse. However, he did not discuss the important role individuals played in forming policy and shaping the direction of events. Organizations do not decide to invest precious resources in colonization without having a conception of the destination. According to Wayne Franklin, “knowledge must precede the settlement.”<sup>5</sup> However, new geographic knowledge does not necessarily lead to settlement.

Also studying the discourse that occurred between the explorers, settlers, First Nations, and government is Stuart Banner. In *Possessing the Pacific*, Banner contradicts historians' assumptions that colonial policy emanated from the center outward. He

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<sup>3</sup> Edward John Parkinson, “From There to Here: Writing, Exploration and the Colonizing of the Canadian Landscape” (Doctor of Philosophy, McMaster University, Hamilton, 1994), pg. 305-306

<sup>4</sup>Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, & R. C. Macleod, “John Elgin Foster,” in *From Rupert's Land to Canada* edited by Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, & R. C. Macleod. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001, pg. xi

<sup>5</sup> Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, pg. 5

argues that conditions on the periphery generated local policies that officials in London later incorporated.<sup>6</sup> His work complements studies of the role the fur trade played in opening Canada to exploration.

Historians have discussed the roles the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company fulfilled in the formation of Canada down to the modern day. W. S. Wallace, L. J. Burpee, J. B. Tyrell, A. S. Morton, and H. A. Innis viewed the fur trade as a motive for exploration and an integral part of the protracted struggle for imperial interests in North America. Harold Innis concludes in *The Fur Trade in Canada*: “The significance of the fur trade consisted in its determination of the geographic framework.”<sup>7</sup> The geographic area in which the Hudson’s Bay Company operated determined the modern boundaries of Canada. The fur traders’ presence allowed the British to claim possession of western Canada, despite the native people who lived there.

Biographies and the edited journals of the individual explorers provide useful information about the world in which they lived. The biographies of such notable characters such as Alexander Mackenzie, George Vancouver, and James Cook cater to the public and its appetite for narratives about unimaginable situations. Barbara Belyea’s edition of David Thompson’s *Columbia Journals* is a meticulous piece of scholarship. According to Belyea, “Thompson’s journals resist attempts to go beyond the textual surface in order to reconstruct the author and his times.”<sup>8</sup> J. M. Bumsted’s recently published *Lord Selkirk: A Life* provides an interesting description of the world in which Selkirk lived. His discussion of Selkirk’s colonization policy facilitated a glimpse of the official British position towards settlement.<sup>9</sup> The information presented about the individuals is quite useful, but biographies do not give the entire picture. The edited journals and biographical sketches provide a glimpse of the individuals who traveled across the continent.

John S. Galbraith and Richard Somerset Mackie expand upon the general histories of the fur trade. They have both written about the fur companies’ frontier

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<sup>6</sup> Stuart Banner, *Possessing the Pacific: Land, Settlers, and Indigenous People from Australia to Alaska*, London: Harvard University Press, 2007, pg. 5

<sup>7</sup> Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956, pg. 393

<sup>8</sup> David Thompson, *Columbia Journals: David Thompson*, edited by Barbara Belyea, Toronto: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994, pg. ix

<sup>9</sup> J. M. Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: a Life*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2009, pg. 139

policies and the British commercial, naval, and political policy in the Pacific. Galbraith undertook an extensive study of the expanding role the Hudson's Bay Company played in British Imperial interests. In 1957, he published *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869*. There he fused the expansion of the British Empire with the Company's pursuit of economic profits. The British granted a monopoly on trade in return for settlement in the west. Richard Somerset Mackie's 1997 book *Trading Beyond the Mountains* is a detailed study of the fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains. Mackie focuses upon the emergence of a regional economy on the west coast in between 1793 and 1843. Mercantilist expansion by the Hudson's Bay Company financially linked the new economy on the west coast to London.<sup>10</sup> Mackie illustrates the link that existed between the metropolis and the periphery on the Pacific coast: "Even the name British Columbia, chosen by Queen Victoria in 1858, reflects a political and commercial inheritance from the Columbia Department."<sup>11</sup>

The first part of chapter 1 provides a short history of the fur trade and the two competing companies. The economic rivalry between the two companies leads to a need for an increase in the geographical knowledge of North America. The pursuit of new furs and a British interest in geography opened up western Canada to the scrutiny of the British. Also included in chapter 1 are biographical sketches of the explorers. They appear sequentially to emphasize the extent to which each individual explorer built upon the work of those who came before.

Chapter 2 deals with the publications of the explorers and their reception in Britain. The first part of the chapter explains the significance of periodicals, such as the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, in providing information about North America to the public. The magazines provide a source from which to gauge the public response to the new publications. Also included is a discussion highlighting the importance of Aaron Arrowsmith's map of North America. That map, which compiled information from all of the explorers, provided a concrete visual representation of the continent.

The second section of the chapter discusses the various plans the explorers had for the future incorporation of western Canada in the British Empire. The argument

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<sup>10</sup> Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific 1793-1843*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997, pg. xxii

<sup>11</sup> Mackie, *Trading*, pg. 322

Alexander Mackenzie proposed in his *Voyages* in 1801 figures prominently in the second section of chapter two. Mackenzie and his North West partners had devised a plan to extend trade across North America, across the Pacific, and into China.<sup>12</sup> Although Mackenzie failed to enact successfully his plan, several pages describe the attempt he and Lord Selkirk made to implement elements of it. Both individuals had different visions of expanding British influence in western Canada. Selkirk's vision included settlement along the Red River in 1812.

Chapter 3 deals with the immediate reaction to Selkirk's actions and increased British interest in North America. British newspapers reflected the mood of the public in reviews about Selkirk's publications in response to critiques of Red River. Selkirk's settlement redirected the British interest toward North America. The expansion of interest fueled an increase in the geographic knowledge of the continent. The second half of the chapter discusses the importance of David Thompson's work in clarifying the geography of North America. Arrowsmith's 1811 map, the newest edition available to the initial settlers of Red River, had large blank sections. After 1812, David Thompson's discoveries made their way back to Britain. By 1833, his information helped complete the map of North America.

The discourse between the metropolis and the periphery is important in understanding the British perception of the Canadian wilderness. This thesis seeks to expand upon the link that existed between the fur trade, its employees, and their influence on the British conception of western Canada. In between 1760 and 1833, English explorers had completed a systematic geographical survey of British North America. By 1833, Arrowsmith had constructed a detailed map of North America that would serve as the basis for future maps of the continent. The Arrowsmith cartography firm had used all of the information available from the explorers discussed in this thesis. Minor details were still missing, details other explorers would eventually add in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The explorers presented a clearer geographical representation of the continent along with arguments deemphasizing the importance of the fur trade. Despite the explorers' efforts, the British public that received the information continued to view western Canada as fit only for the fur trade. The British, who had been

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<sup>12</sup> Mackie, *Trading*, pg. 311

expanding around the world for several hundred years, were not yet interested in settlement in western Canada.

## Chapter 1

### Exploration of western Sub-Arctic Canada

Beaver fueled the exploration of western and central Canada. In search of new sources of fur, British explorers systematically filled in the map of North America between the years 1763 and 1833. In 1763, British traders and explorers had barely left the shores of the Hudson Bay. By 1833, they had explored and mapped virtually all of sub-arctic Canada. The explorers did not explore to settle western Canada, but rather to find the most profitable way to get beaver pelts out of the region. The fur trade was profitable; the yearly sales in London brought a financial windfall to the various companies and merchants based there.<sup>13</sup> As a correspondent of the *London Times* noted at the end of the nineteenth century, “the lands of the Hudson’s Bay Company are ransacked to provide the furs for consumption in England and the rest of continental Europe.”<sup>14</sup> Fashion resulted in the demise of the beaver, but it also fueled geographic exploration. The Hudson’s Bay Company built a successful trade, lasting over 300 years, fueled by the popularity of a hat made from the soft under fur of beaver.<sup>15</sup>

The Hudson’s Bay Company and its chief competitor, the North West Company, employed five of the men central to the focus of this thesis: Peter Pond, Samuel Hearne, David Thompson, Philip Turnor, and Alexander Mackenzie. However, the two fur companies were not the only organizations with an interest in the geography of North America. Captain James Cook and Captain George Vancouver, officers in the Royal Navy, surveyed the Pacific Coast on different expeditions during the eighteenth century. By 1795, their surveys depicted the western outline of North America. Publication of the inland and coastal explorers’ discoveries into the 1830s slowly filled in the map of North America. Their publications brought the interior of western Canada to the attention of the British public.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, “The Fur Trade” Wednesday, January 4, 1888, pg.2

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, “The Fur Trade” Wednesday, January 4, 1888, pg.2

<sup>15</sup> *Undelivered Letters to Hudson’s Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57*. Edited by Judith Hudson Beattie and Helen M. Buss, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003, pg. 2

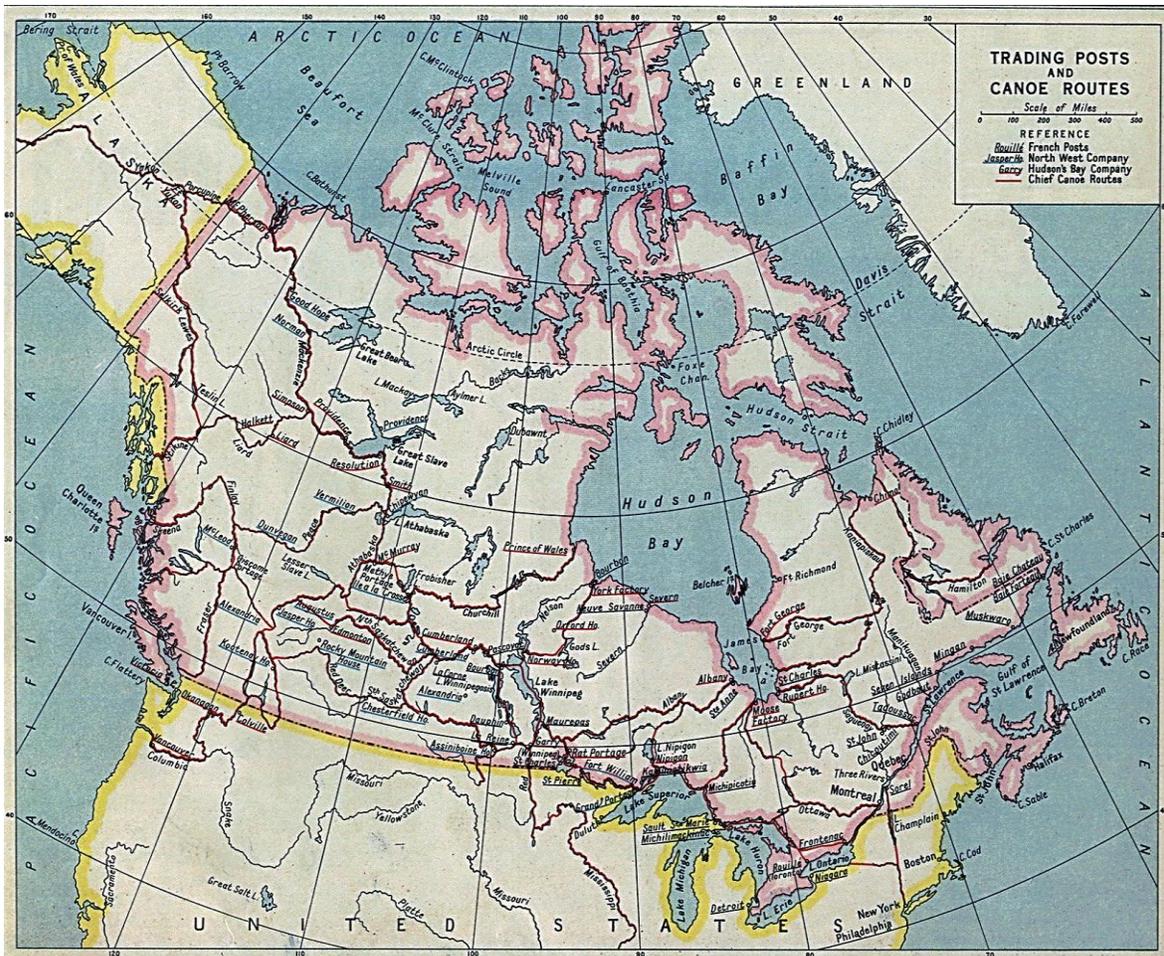


Figure 1: Generic Map of North America: Courtesy of Library and Archives of Canada

Figure 1 is a map of North America. The lines following the waterways across Canada show the routes used by the fur traders. The interconnected bodies of water allowed the traders to travel by canoe across the continent.<sup>16</sup> The traders did not discover all the routes shown in (figure 1) until the second decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

## II. Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company: Reasons for exploration

The Canadian west was largely unknown to the Europeans in the middle of the eighteenth century. At that time, the only Europeans in the Canadian interior were employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Hudson's Bay Company is currently the oldest operating corporation in North America. On May 2 1670, Charles II of England granted to the Hudson's Bay Company control over a large portion of North America

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793* New York, Allerton Book Co. 1905, Vol. I, pg. li

<sup>17</sup> David Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812*, edited by Richard Glover, Toronto: The Champlain Society vol. XL, 1962, pg. 398

named Rupert's Land.<sup>18</sup> This grant comprised the entire Hudson Bay drainage system, which includes northern Québec and Ontario north of the Laurentian watershed, all of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, southern Alberta, and a portion of the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The company had a monopoly on trade with the Native Americans, control of settlement, and government within the territory.<sup>19</sup>

With Company headquarters in London, England, the London Governor, Deputy Governor, and Committee members made decisions about the company's operations, but rarely visited the North American continent. The Chief Factors, the men who lived at and ran the trade forts, made most of the day-to-day management decisions.

The Company employees remained at their outposts throughout the year. They had no reason to go inland to explore; the traders had no desire to settle western Canada and thus saw no need to know the geography of the Canadian interior. In addition, there was no major competition from other Europeans for the furs from the interior. For the first 97 years of operation, the traders were happy to let the Native Americans bring their furs to the Company's coastal trading forts.

In the eighteenth century, the British government showed a special interest in one reported geographical feature of North America. In 1745, the House of Commons passed a bill that offered an award of £20,000 for the discovery of a Northwest Passage.<sup>20</sup> Europeans had been searching for a Northwest Passage for centuries. The lure of a quicker route to Asia had induced Christopher Columbus to sail west in 1492. Instead of Asia, Columbus sailed into the Caribbean. However, after Columbus' voyage, others kept looking for a Northwest Passage. Parliament hoped to induce further exploration in the eighteenth century, because a shorter route to Asia held enormous implications for trade and British expansion. The rich markets of China tempted those in Parliament; an increased trade with China meant an increase in Imperial Revenue. In addition, the shorter route meant a more direct communication network between London and India.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Rupert's land derives its name from Prince Rupert, the king's cousin and the company's first governor.

<sup>19</sup> *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, "Hudson's Bay Company"

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0007006> 12:35pm, Dec. 17, 2008

<sup>20</sup> Roy Daniels, *Alexander Mackenzie and the North West*, New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc. 1969, pg. 100

<sup>21</sup> Jack Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye: David Thompson on the Columbia Plateau*, Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2005, pg.19

The importance the British attached to the discovery of a Northwest Passage cannot be underestimated. The British Parliament considered the discovery of a Northwest Passage so important, that they passed a revised bill of exploration in 1818. The new bill came up for debate seventy-three years after passage of the initial bill. Parliament continued to offer compensation to those looking for a passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Parliament and the British hoped for a shortened trade and communications route between London and Asia.<sup>22</sup> The bill, passed on March 9, 1818, was entitled: *A Bill for more effectually discovering the Longitude at Sea, and encouraging Attempts to find a Northern Passage between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and to approach the Northern Pole.*<sup>23</sup>

Unfortunately, for potential explorers, the 1818 bill repealed the act of 1745, which allocated £20,000 to the discoverer of the Northwest Passage. Instead, Parliament instituted a reward system based upon a sliding scale. Parliament failed to specify what remuneration was possible on the sliding scale; it simply stated that a monetary award was under the discretion of the Commissioners for the Discovery of the Longitude at Sea.<sup>24</sup>

The monetary award offered by Parliament did not initially galvanize the Hudson's Bay Company employees to explore the Canadian interior. There was no competition from other British traders forcing the traders to go inland to obtain a fur supply, and the Native Americans continued to bring furs to the coastal trading forts. Life and business was good at the coastal trading outposts. Eventually, though, the sedentary life of the Hudson's Bay trader changed.

The Company's business practice worked well when the French controlled Lower Canada. With the French in charge of Montreal, French fur traders traded with the Native Americans around Lake Superior. The British were unable to stop the French from trading on the European market. After 1763, the Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War, handed control of New France over to Britain. After 1763, predominantly Scottish traders took over the fur trade that emanated from Montreal. The

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<sup>22</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March 1790, pg.197

<sup>23</sup> "A Bill promoting the Longitude at Sea of Northwest Passage, 1818," *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers*, 1818 Session, vol.18. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969, pg. 151

<sup>24</sup> "A Bill promoting Northwest Passage" *Irish University Press Series*, 1818 session, vol. 18

British traders who operated out of Montreal changed the face of the fur trade. For the first time in 97 years, the Hudson's Bay Company faced serious competition for the supply of furs in western Canada. The Hudson's Bay Company found that furs from the Canadian interior left through Montreal and competed directly with its share of the sales on the British market.

After years of intense competition among themselves, the mostly Scottish traders of Montreal decided to work together. They discovered that together they represented a more formidable opponent for the Hudson's Bay Company. The traders came together to form the North West Company in 1779. Combined, they became the main economic competition of the Hudson's Bay Company. The traders of the North West Company adopted the business plan of intercepting shipments of furs bound for the Hudson's Bay.

The North West Company's headquarters and main point of embarkation for England was the city of Montreal. Native Americans did not want to travel all the way to Montreal to trade. Instead, the North West partners and their French-Canadian voyageurs transported trade goods across the Great Lakes by birch bark canoe. The yearly canoe brigades from Montreal brought trade goods to Grand Portage and then later Fort William. There the "wintering partners" met them and exchanged the collected furs from the Canadian interior for the new goods.<sup>25</sup> Beginning in the 1770s, the economic competition between the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies spurred a period of western exploration.

### III: Response of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Increased Competition

The increase in interior trade from the Montreal traders in the 1770s and 1780s forced the Hudson's Bay Company to promote Canadian exploration and rethink its business strategy. Before the emergence of the North West Company, the Hudson's Bay Company only required rough maps of the Hudson Bay's coast. Sea captains who had sailed to the Hudson Bay had surveyed the coast for navigational purposes. The rough navigational charts allowed the committee in London to monitor its vessels and coastal trade forts. Although incomplete, these early coastal maps provided the committee

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<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. I, pg. xlv-llii; Wintering partners of the North West Company were members who owned a share of stock in the company and spent the winter among the natives in one of the inland trading forts. Every year they made the yearly trek from their trading posts to Grand Portage, Minnesota where they exchanged furs for goods and discussed the business plan for the upcoming year with the partners who traveled from Montreal.

members enough information to locate areas indicated in yearly business correspondence from North America.<sup>26</sup>

When the Company decided to send traders into the interior to keep pace with the competition from Montreal, no maps existed.<sup>27</sup> Without maps of the interior, it was difficult to plan and anticipate the actions of the North West Company. To remedy the situation, in 1778, the committee members decided to hire three surveyors to explore and survey Rupert's Land.<sup>28</sup> The members entrusted the surveyors with the job of determining the positions of all the navigable rivers and lakes in the region.<sup>29</sup>

Competition galvanized the Hudson's Bay and the North West Company into exploring western Canada in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Eventually, the surveyors fulfilled their job requirements, and their publications enlightened the world about the geography of North America.<sup>30</sup>

Intent on obtaining surveyors and explorers in the 1770s, the Hudson's Bay Committee recruited apprentices from London schools. In 1778, the secretary of the Hudson Bay Company, William Redknap, wrote a letter to his friend, William Wales. Wales was the mathematical master at Christ's Hospital, a school for boys, located in London, from which the Hudson's Bay Company recruited some of its employees.<sup>31</sup>

Mr. William Wales,  
Mathematical Master at Christ's Hospital.

Sir,

The Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company intending to send out this year by their ships which will sail the latter end of May next for their several settlements in Hudson's Bay, three or more Persons well skilled in the Mathematics and in making Astronomical Observations, under the Direction of the Chiefs at the respective Factories, which Persons are to travel Inland with the Title of Inland Surveyors, and to rise to higher Stations in the Company's Service according to Merit, and that each of the Persons so employed shall have a fixed Salary of Fifty Pounds a year, with the promise of a Gratuity in proportion to services performed. The Committee therefore requests you to use your best Endeavors to procure Persons, answering the above description for the Company's Service.

I am,

Sir,

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<sup>26</sup> Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*, edited by J. B. Tyrrell Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934, pg.58

<sup>27</sup> Beckles Willson, *The Great Company: Being a History of the Honorable Company of Merchants-Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay*, New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1900, pg.341

<sup>28</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.58

<sup>29</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg. 58

<sup>30</sup> The Native Americans were probably not too pleased with the increasing tide of white-Europeans.

<sup>31</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.62

(Signed) William Redknap<sup>32</sup>

In response, Wales recommended Philip Turnor for service with the Hudson's Bay Company. Turnor became an influential explorer whose work helped open the interior of North America to British exploitation and settlement. He signed on with the company on May 6, 1778, for an initial period of three years.<sup>33</sup> At the time he began working for the Company, it identified him as "aged about twenty-six years, of Laleham in Middlesex."<sup>34</sup> It is unknown what he did for the first twenty-six years of his life, but he spent the rest of his working days as an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. How Mr. Wales knew him is a mystery. He must have had some connection with Christ's Hospital, though he was never actually a student there. Despite his obscure origins, Turnor fulfilled his job requirements admirably.<sup>35</sup>

Many of those who made geographical discoveries were traders who explored to discover new sources of fur. Turnor was the first person hired by either the Hudson's Bay Company or the North West Company specifically to conduct surveys of Canada. He eventually became a fur trader, but his primary position in the company was that of Chief Surveyor. While working for the Hudson's Bay Company, Turnor traveled throughout the interior of Canada.<sup>36</sup> He kept a journal that documented his surveys of the wilderness in the late 1770's and early 1780's. He made two expeditions in his first three years of service: one up the Saskatchewan River and the other from Fort Prince of Wales to Cumberland House.<sup>37</sup> On those surveying expeditions, he encountered the full force of nature but came through alive.<sup>38</sup> Due to ill health, Turnor returned to London in September 1787. While back in England, he created a map of his discoveries for the

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<sup>32</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg. 61

<sup>33</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.63

<sup>34</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, Appendix A

<sup>35</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, Appendix A

<sup>36</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Polar Sea, in the years 1819, 20, 21, and 22," *Gentlemen's Magazine*, May 1823, pg.428 (footnotes of the Book Review)

<sup>37</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.41

<sup>38</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.41

company.<sup>39</sup> On November 26, 1788, the company paid twenty guineas for his “Draught of several Inland Settlements belonging to the Company.”<sup>40</sup>

After completing maps of his surveys and explorations, Turnor renewed his contract. On May 16, 1789, he became the “inland Surveyor to the Hudson’s Bay Company for three years at £80 per year.”<sup>41</sup> The Company ordered him to find Lake Athabasca, ascertain its position, and discover a viable route to it from the modern town of Churchill, Manitoba.<sup>42</sup> For years, fur traders from the North West Company had been operating out of Lake Athabasca, intercepting the furs heading east to the Hudson’s Bay. Turnor spent three years in the interior of Canada, making trips to Lake Athabasca and the Great Slave Lake. When he returned to York Factory, in 1792, and argued for a permanent trading post on Lake Athabasca, the Company rejected his argument.<sup>43</sup>

Despite failing to influence the directors’ business plans, Turnor produced eight maps during his years working in the northwest. Most of these were charts of the shoreline of the Hudson Bay and the rivers that flowed into it; charts that ended up in the archives of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Prior to 1785, Turnor created a map that covered two of the routes he explored in his early years: the route from York Fort to Cumberland House and up the Saskatchewan River. In 1792 and 1794, Turnor drew two multi-sheet maps that were regional in scope and included the works of several other explorers. He published his map entitled a “Map of the Hudson’s Bay and the Rivers and Lakes between the Atlantick and Pacifick Oceans” in London in 1794.<sup>44</sup>

Turnor led the surveying effort the Hudson’s Bay Company launched in 1778. Eventually, cartographers, using the information Turnor collected, created an influential map of North America in 1795. The map published in 1795, became the basis for many subsequent maps of the continent. The cartographer, Aaron Arrowsmith wrote in 1794,

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<sup>39</sup> “Philip Turnor,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* <http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=36315> March 18, 2009 4:57pm

<sup>40</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.86

<sup>41</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.41

<sup>42</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.91

<sup>43</sup> Beckles, *The Great Company*, pg.341

<sup>44</sup> *Gentlemen’s Magazine*, July 1795

the work of the company's servants, Turnor among them, "had laid the permanent Foundation for the Geography of that part of the Globe."<sup>45</sup>

Philip Turnor's contemporaries in exploration were Samuel Hearne and Peter Pond. Hearne and Pond started their careers earlier than Turnor did; they started about the same time in the fur trade, but worked for competing interests. Samuel Hearne was born in London in 1745. He lost his father at the age of three and joined the Royal Navy as a captain's batman at age eleven. After leaving the navy, he joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1766 as first mate of the *Churchill* and later the *Charlotte*. By 1768, he transferred to Fort Prince of Wales, which is located in Churchill, Manitoba. From Fort Prince of Wales, Hearne embarked upon the first of three attempts to reach the Arctic Circle via the Coppermine River.<sup>46</sup>

Hearne's first attempt to reach the Arctic by way of the Coppermine River in 1769 lasted five weeks. He returned early because his crew consisted of "irredeemable Indians."<sup>47</sup> Hearne encountered what has plagued members of expeditions for centuries: the inability of crewmembers to coexist peaceably in dangerous and isolated situations. That is not the preferred method of travel through the Canadian wilderness.<sup>48</sup>

Unable to reach his goal in 1769, Hearne tried again a year later. Again, he was unsuccessful, but this time not because of dissension within the crew. Rather, he found himself unable to take competent observations of longitude and latitude, when his quadrant broke.<sup>49</sup> After taking measurements all day with his quadrant, Hearne decided to eat dinner before putting away his surveying instruments. Unfortunately, during dinner, a strong gust of wind blew his quadrant over, smashing it into the ground.<sup>50</sup> Despite the accident, the second time around, he came much closer to his destination. He

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<sup>45</sup> Aaron Arrowsmith, "Result of Astronomical observations made in the interior parts of North America" London: C. Buckton, 1794, pg. 3

<sup>46</sup> Beckles, *The Great Company*, pg.341

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Hearne, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean... in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*, London: Cadell & Davies, 1795, pg. 5-6

<sup>48</sup> I encountered a similar problem this summer when I attempted to paddle from Lake Superior to the Hudson Bay. Forty-three days into the trip, four of us had to leave because several issues exacerbated the potentially deadly situations facing us.

<sup>49</sup> Quadrant: an instrument for measuring altitudes consisting commonly of a graduated arc of 90 degrees with an index or vernier and usually having a plumb line or spirit level for fixing the vertical or horizontal direction. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

<sup>50</sup> Hearne, *A Journey*, pg. 45

started out in February 1770 hoping to reach the Arctic Ocean, but returned by late November after failing to reach his objective.<sup>51</sup>

Shortly after his arrival at Fort Prince of Wales in November 1770, Hearne decided to try to reach the mouth of the Coppermine River. On his third and final attempt, he left Fort Prince of Wales on December 7, 1770. He traveled through the winter and spring to arrive at the mouth of the Coppermine River on July 14, 1771.<sup>52</sup> Once in view of the Arctic Ocean, he finished his observations and put some of his adventures behind him as he headed back to Fort Prince of Wales.

His third trip was just as eventful as his first two, if not more so. Prior to reaching the mouth of the Coppermine, Hearne ran into a band of Inuits. His Cree guides had warned him about the warlike nature of the Inuits, but Hearne had dismissed their warnings. His guides worried, the Cree, decided to strike preemptively against the band of Inuits. Possessing firearms and the element of surprise against the unsuspecting Inuits, Hearne's guides massacred the band of Inuits, including women and children. The encounter shook Hearne; he remained vigilant for the duration of their expedition.<sup>53</sup>

Upon his return to Fort Prince of Wales, company officials held a meeting for Hearne on December 23, 1772. There officials credited Hearne with a gratuity "for his great labor and pains" in prosecuting his journeys to the Coppermine River.<sup>54</sup> Hearne's discovery of the mouth of the Coppermine provided valuable information about the location of the Arctic Coast. The directors of the Company were happy to receive the information about the Arctic Coast. After his trips down the Coppermine River, Hearne finished out his years working in the fur trade. He traveled throughout the interior of Canada for almost twenty more years. In 1773, he set up a trading post along the Saskatchewan in Blackfoot territory. After trading with the Blackfoot for several years, he became the Chief Trader at Fort Prince of Wales. The French captured him and the fort in 1782, and he returned to London in 1788.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Beckles, *The Great Company*, pg. 302

<sup>52</sup> Hearne, *A Journey*, pg. 162

<sup>53</sup> Hearne, *A Journey*, pg. 148-157

<sup>54</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.28

<sup>55</sup> Douglas Mackay, *The Honorable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company*, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936, pg. 104

After his death in 1792, Hearne's family published in 1795 *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean... in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*. The family published Hearne's account in 1795, in London. Hearne died five years after he retired; he was only forty-seven at the time of his death. The trials of the northwest shortened his life, as it shortened the lives of many who traveled around that country by canoe and snowshoe.<sup>56</sup>

During the same period that Samuel Hearne worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, Peter Pond intercepted furs bound for the Hudson's Bay. Pond was an American working for the North West Company. He had been born in 1740, in Milford, Connecticut. Prior to his entry into the fur trade, he had lived a full life.<sup>57</sup> He served in the provisional army four different times during the French and Indian War. He had enlisted at sixteen as a private; upon his discharge he was an officer. After the war, he went on a voyage to the West Indies. Upon returning home, he learned his father had gone on a trading expedition to Detroit, and his mother had fallen ill and died.<sup>58</sup> Pond took care of the family until his father returned. Peter Pond's father died insolvent in 1764. Sometime between 1761 and 1764, Peter Pond married Susanna Newell, and then promptly entered the fur trade around Detroit.<sup>59</sup>

By 1773, Pond was one of the most successful traders in the area between Green Bay and the Mississippi. He left Milford, Connecticut, for the northwest in April 1773, and did not return for twelve years.<sup>60</sup> He was a good trader who provided the Hudson's Bay Company with plenty of stiff competition. In 1778, Pond decided that he was going to head toward the center of Chipewyan Country, which is near Lake Athabasca. On his way west, he paddled past the trading post set-up at Pasquia by Samuel Hearne in 1773.<sup>61</sup>

Peter Pond had a knack for causing trouble and disrupting other people's fur trade. However, he was courteous to his fellow human beings, even when it involved trade. In a letter addressed to the chief factor at Fort Prince of Wales, the master at Cumberland House wrote on May 26, 1778:

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<sup>56</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg 150

<sup>57</sup> Harold A. Innis, *Peter Pond: Fur Trader and Adventurer*, Toronto: Irwin & Gordon, Ltd. 1930, pg. 2

<sup>58</sup> Innis, *Peter Pond*, pg. 18

<sup>59</sup> Innis, *Peter Pond*, pg. 22

<sup>60</sup> Innis, *Peter Pond*, pg. 30

<sup>61</sup> Mackay, *The Honorable Company*, pg. 122

Peter Pond, one of the Canadian traders, arrived here with 5 large canoes from above loaded with goods. He is going to penetrate into the Athopuskow (Athabasca) country as far as he can possibly go, and there to stay this next winter. He brought Isaac Batt with two bundles of furs from the Upper Settlement, he not having a canoe to come down in. I could not but in civility ask him to come in the house for his kindness, I also returned him thanks for the supply of provisions he gave to William Walker when he arrived at the Upper Settlement, which William Walker informs me was of great service to him, there being no Indians there to trade provisions with.<sup>62</sup>

While a competitor of the Hudson's Bay Company, Pond recognized that, his rivals were fellow humans. Isaac Batt worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, as did William Walker. Instead of leaving both men stranded and reducing the competition he faced, Pond assisted both men in their times of need. This indicates that despite the fierce economic competition, some traders and explorers acted civilly toward each other as they roamed through the Canadian wilderness.

Such examples notwithstanding, civility sometimes degenerated into physical violence. The government indicted Pond for shooting a Mr. Wadin, a fellow fur trader, in the leg at dinner in 1780.<sup>63</sup> Pond and Wadin had an argument, and Wadin, who was popular according to Alexander Mackenzie, lost the argument when Pond shot him.<sup>64</sup> The magistrates in Montreal acquitted Pond, but he retained his reputation as a colorful character. While he sometimes offered transportation or provided food to those who did not have enough, he was also a thorn in the side of the Hudson's Bay Company. Although his explorations and business ventures cost the Hudson's Bay Company money, the information he gathered in his travels to the Athabasca region eventually proved invaluable to that Company, the North West Company, and the British.

Pond spent the winter of 1784 on Lake Athabasca; during his time there, he sketched a map of all of the known, interconnected waterways in central and western Canada. Pond was the first cartographer to show the interconnected waterways within British North America. In April 1785, Lord Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec, forwarded Pond's 1785 map of Canada to the Colonial Office in London.<sup>65</sup> Five years

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<sup>62</sup> Innis, *Peter Pond*, pg. 54

<sup>63</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. I, pg. xl

<sup>64</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. I, pg. XXXV

<sup>65</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the Northwest*, pg.40

later the *Gentlemen's Magazine* printed a copy of his map in conjunction with a discussion of the possibilities and discoveries in Canada.<sup>66</sup> As seen in figure 2, Pond left the possibility open for a river to flow out of the western end of Lake Athabasca and connect with the Pacific Ocean. According to Pond, the river emptied into Cook's Outlet on the Alaska coast. He labeled the hypothetical river Cook's River. No European had traveled far enough west in 1785 to realize that the Rockies extended all the way to the Arctic Ocean.<sup>67</sup> Pond's hypothesis provided the slim possibility of a Northwest Passage, or at least a river that ran to the Pacific, facilitating trade across North America.<sup>68</sup>

Pond's map, while limited in scope, provided vital information for those interested in reaching Lake Athabasca. In 1788, Turnor, Hearne, and William Wales entered into a lengthy conversation in London concerning the exact location of Lake Athabasca.<sup>69</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company had lost so many furs to the North West Company trading posts in the Athabasca region that the governors wanted to know the location of this lake.<sup>70</sup> Despite Pond's antagonistic qualities, Hearne, Turnor, and Wales trusted his knowledge of geography. His map and the information it provided about the Lake Athabasca region proved invaluable.

The fur traders were not the only ones exploring North America. Elements of the British government were interested in surveying the entire world. Under orders from the Royal Navy, Captain James Cook explored the Pacific coast of North America between the years 1776-1779 and produced a detailed map of the coastline. Cook was born on October 27, 1728 in Marton, England.<sup>71</sup> He came from obscure origins; his father was a Scottish farm laborer. When he was fifteen, he went to work for a merchant shipping company and then, in 1755, he joined the Royal Navy. Prior to exploring the Pacific Coast of North America, Cook commanded two other voyages of discovery for Great Britain and sailed around the world twice. He was the first British mariner to

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<sup>66</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March 1790, pg. 196

<sup>67</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg.20

<sup>68</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg. 20

<sup>69</sup> William Wales: the Mathematical Master at Christ's Hospital (Blue Coat School) in London

<sup>70</sup> Hearne and Turnor, *Journals*, pg.150

<sup>71</sup> *Captain James Cook in the Pacific as told by selections of his own Journals 1768-1779*. Edited by A. Grenfell Price, New York: The Heritage Press, 1958, pg. 2

circumnavigate the globe in a lone ship.<sup>72</sup> Cook was also the first British commander to prevent the outbreak of scurvy by regulating his crew's diet, serving them citrus fruit and sauerkraut to prevent the disease.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *Treasures from the National Library*: "The Endeavor Journal"  
[http://www.nla.gov.au/collect/treasures/mar\\_treasure.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/collect/treasures/mar_treasure.html) January 29, 2009 11:52 am

<sup>73</sup> Price, *Captain James Cook In the Pacific*, pg. 35

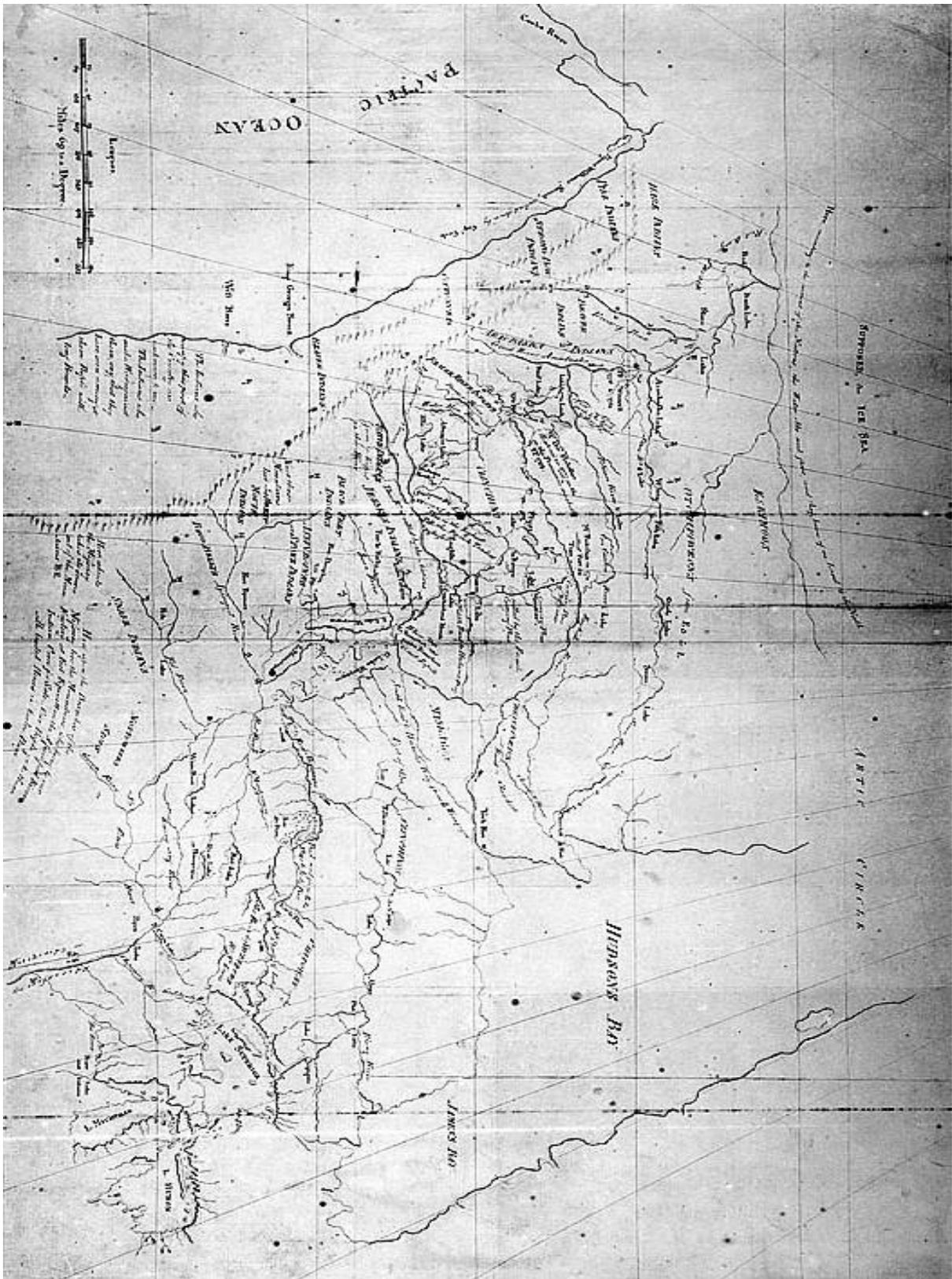


Figure 2: Peter Pond's Map of North America, 1785: Courtesy of National Archives of Canada

Cook's three expeditions took place in 1768, 1772, and 1776. On his third voyage, his orders were to "search for, and explore, such rivers or inlets as may appear to be of a considerable extent, and pointing towards Hudson's or Baffin's Bays."<sup>74</sup> Cook followed his instructions to the letter. From his observations, he produced a remarkable nautical chart of the Alaska coastline. Unfortunately, before he could return home to England, natives in Hawaii killed him on February 14, 1779.<sup>75</sup> He had been unsuccessful in his pursuit of a Northwest Passage, but his map indicated a river outlet on the Alaska coast. He named the mouth of the river Cook's Outlet. Cook, and many who viewed his chart, hoped this outlet would lead to a Northwest Passage. His observation allowed Peter Pond to hypothesize that Cook's Outlet connected with a river that left from Lake Athabasca.

George Vancouver is the other British Naval explorer whose discoveries were significant at the end of the eighteenth century. Vancouver was born in King's Lynn, Norfolk, England on June 22, 1757. His voyage to the Pacific between the years 1791 and 1795 had not been his first visit to the Pacific Coast of North America. He had been a member of James Cook's second and third voyages of discovery. Vancouver came to Cook's attention in 1772. Vancouver joined Cook's second voyage, which was supposed to determine the location of the Antarctic continent.<sup>76</sup> Unfortunately, Cook's second expedition was unable to determine if there was an Antarctic Continent because the sea ice kept him at bay.<sup>77</sup> Vancouver returned home in 1775 with the expedition. Almost immediately, Cook planned a third voyage to search for a Northwest Passage. Vancouver accompanied Cook's third expedition in the smaller ship, the *Discovery*.<sup>78</sup> Despite the death of Cook in Hawaii, Vancouver returned to England with the rest of the expedition in 1780. While a member of Cook's expeditions, Vancouver studied the science of celestial navigation, surveying, and charting under the tutelage of Cook and William Wales, the expedition's astronomer.<sup>79</sup> The lessons Vancouver learned while serving

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<sup>74</sup> Price, *Captain James Cook In the Pacific*, pg.197

<sup>75</sup> "A Sketch of the life of Captain Cook," *Gentlemen's Magazine*, January 1785, pg. 35

<sup>76</sup> Robin Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage: Charting the Northwest Coast, 1791-1795*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992, pg. 7

<sup>77</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg. 7

<sup>78</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg. 21

<sup>79</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg. 7

under Cook proved instrumental in the success he achieved leading his own expedition to the Pacific Northwest.

At the behest of the British Admiralty, Vancouver spent three seasons surveying the Pacific coast of North America between the years 1791-1795.<sup>80</sup> The admiralty charged Vancouver with three assignments: first, to meet a Spanish commissioner at Nootka and settle the damage claims arising from the 1789 Nootka Crisis; second, to make a detailed survey of the coast from California to Alaska; and third, to ascertain whether an entry to a Northwest Passage existed.<sup>81</sup> Vancouver met his Spanish counterpart, Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra around Nootka Sound in 1792; the two of them got along admirably and surveyed the Pacific Coast together. They were unable to conclude any agreements on their own, but in a gesture of good faith, Vancouver named modern Vancouver Island, Quadra and Vancouver's Island.<sup>82</sup>

While surveying the Pacific coast of North America, Vancouver focused much of his time on the region between the mouth of the Columbia River and the Alaska panhandle. He filled in several of the blanks left in James Cook's survey of the Pacific Coast of North America.<sup>83</sup> Vancouver devoted a whole summer of his time to surveying around Vancouver Island. His attention to detail was phenomenal. His ships were unable to enter many of the shallow bays and inlets that dot the North American Pacific coast, but he overcame that handicap by sending his sailors out in rowboats to survey every bay. Despite his attention to detail, Vancouver made some blunders. He failed to discover the entrance to the Columbia River until an American, Captain Robert Gray, informed him of its existence. Gray traveled up the Columbia on May 11, 1792, becoming the first white person to go one hundred miles up the river.<sup>84</sup>

The British were quite receptive to Vancouver's works. He did his work so well, that one scholar, Robin Fisher, has argued:

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<sup>80</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, pg. i

<sup>81</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg.19

<sup>82</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg.119; The Nootka Crisis began in 1789 when the Spanish confiscated British ships in Nootka Sound. This action on the North American Pacific coast brought the two countries to the brink of war. The Spanish agreed to sign the Nootka Convention in 1790, ending the crisis and recognizing open international use of the area. The ultimate result of the Nootka Crisis and Convention was the eventual evacuation of the weakened Spanish from the Pacific Northwest and the split dominance over the region by the British and Americans.

<sup>83</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg. 21

<sup>84</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg. 24

He [Vancouver] put the northwest coast on the map...He drew up a map of the north-west coast that was accurate to the nth degree, to the point it was still being used into the 20th century as a navigational aid. That is unusual for a map that early.<sup>85</sup>

The British Admiralty urged John Vancouver, George's brother, to publish his brother's map and journal by the end of 1798. George and his brother John had been editing George's journals since his return in 1795. Unfortunately, George died at the age of forty on May 12, 1798.<sup>86</sup> John Vancouver then published a *Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, And Round the World in the Years 1791-95* later that year, in London.<sup>87</sup> Within three years, John had released a second edition because it had sold so well.<sup>88</sup>

The 1801 publication of Alexander Mackenzie's journals, *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793*, arrived on the heels of the second edition of Vancouver's journals. Mackenzie's publication supplemented the information provided by Vancouver. Vancouver provided a concise description and survey of the Pacific coast, but no information concerning the interior of the western part of Canada. Mackenzie provided information about the geography of the interior of western Canada, anthropological observations, the fur trade, and his opinion on the importance of retaining British North America.<sup>89</sup>

Alexander Mackenzie was born in Stornoway, Scotland, in 1764, the second of four children. His family left Scotland when he was 10 years old. His mother had died, and with her death, Mackenzie's father moved the family to New York. A few months after they arrived in New York, the American Revolution broke out. Mackenzie's father sent him to Canada for school while he and Alexander's uncle joined a loyalist regiment. Mackenzie's father died in 1780 at an American prisoner of war camp.<sup>90</sup>

After finishing school in Canada, Mackenzie started work at age fifteen for the fur-trading firm Gregory, McLeod and Co. of Montreal. He worked for them for five

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<sup>85</sup> Larry Pynn, 'Charting the Coast,' The [Vancouver Sun](#), May 30, 2007, p.B3

<sup>86</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver's Voyage*, pg. 118

<sup>87</sup> *The Times*, Friday, Jul 25, 1800, pg. 2

<sup>88</sup> W. Kaye Lamb, *Captain George Vancouver*. <http://www.discovervancouver.com/GVB/captain-george-vancouver.asp> Wednesday, January 28, 2009, 3:37pm

<sup>89</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg.341-360

<sup>90</sup> Daniells, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 50-51

years and learned a great deal. When he was twenty, he went on a lucrative trading mission to Detroit for Gregory, McLeod and Co. His success at Detroit paid off; Gregory, McLeod and Co., in 1785, offered him a partnership in the company on the condition that he go out to the northwest.

He spent the winter of 1787-88 with Peter Pond on Lake Athabasca. During the winter, Pond convinced Mackenzie that it was possible to reach the Pacific from Lake Athabasca.<sup>91</sup> Pond's map (figure 2) left open the possibility that a river might run from the western end of Lake Athabasca to the Pacific Ocean. The river supposedly emptied into the sea at Cook's Outlet on the Alaska coast. Mackenzie decided to test Pond's hypothesis; on 3 June 1789, he and his crew set out to find a route to the Pacific. Unfortunately, the river he followed, now called the Mackenzie River, flowed into the Arctic Ocean and not the Pacific. In a letter to Lord Dorchester, written in Montreal on 17 November 1794, Mackenzie summarized the results of the Arctic Voyage. He stated that he "followed the course of the waters, reported by Mr. Pond to fall into Cook's River. They led me to the Northern Ocean by 16 July. ... Tho' this expedition did not answer the intended purpose, it proved that Mr. Pond's assertion was nothing but conjecture, and that a North-West passage is impracticable."<sup>92</sup>

After his first unsuccessful attempt to discover a viable Northwest Passage, Mackenzie returned home to Britain unperturbed by his failure. He reinforced his knowledge of astronomical navigation, surveying, and mapmaking during the two years he spent in Britain before embarking on his second voyage.<sup>93</sup> In 1793, he set out again from Lake Athabasca, still hoping to find a passage to the Pacific. After crossing the Rocky Mountains and surviving some harrowing situations, Alexander Mackenzie became the first European to reach the Pacific by traveling overland through North America.<sup>94</sup> He arrived at the Pacific on July 22 1793, missing Vancouver's expedition by two days. He indicated his presence by writing on a large rock: "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada, by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and

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<sup>91</sup> Arthur P. Woollacott, *Mackenzie and his Voyageurs: By Canoe to the Arctic and Pacific 1789-93* London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 1927, pg.31

<sup>92</sup> Woollacott, *Mackenzie and his Voyageurs*, pg.91

<sup>93</sup> Daniells, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 97

<sup>94</sup> Daniells, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 104

ninety-three.”<sup>95</sup> His expedition discovered a viable route to the Pacific by water and portage, but it failed to prove the existence of a Northwest Passage across the continent of North America. He wrote his account of the two expeditions to encourage an east-west reorientation of the fur trade and to promote settlement in western Canada.

Aside from its mercantile applications, Mackenzie’s expeditions to the Arctic and the Pacific also resulted in general observations of the country that he passed through. He noted the Native American tribes with whom he dealt along the way to the Pacific, describing their customs, dress, appearance, and temperament toward Europeans.<sup>96</sup> Also included in his 1801 publication was a general history of the fur trade in North America. In that section, he described the practices of the competing companies.<sup>97</sup>

Another explorer who was intimate with the business practices of both the Hudson’s Bay and the North West Company was David Thompson, who had worked for both companies. Thompson, the last explorer discussed in this thesis, was born in Westminster on April 30, 1770. When David was two, his father died; the resultant financial hardship led him and his brother to become students at the Gray Coat Hospital, which was a school for disadvantaged children of Westminster. In 1784, the fourteen-year-old apprenticed with the Hudson’s Bay Company after he had undergone an education in mathematics and surveying.<sup>98</sup> He was still only fourteen years old when he arrived in North America. After his apprenticeship ended, in 1791, Thompson worked for the Company for another six years. He retired from the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1797 and promptly took up the position as chief surveyor and astronomer of the North West Company. He spent the next fifteen years exploring the interior of Canada, taking longitude and latitude readings as he covered over 50,000 miles of territory.<sup>99</sup>

One of the many lasting contributions Thompson made during his tenure with the North West Company was his exploration of the headwaters of the Columbia River in 1807. Four years later, in 1811, he traveled the full length of the Columbia, the first

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<sup>95</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg.282

<sup>96</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg.341-360

<sup>97</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. I, pg. xxxi-cxci

<sup>98</sup> D’Arcy Jenish, *Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003, pg. 13-15

<sup>99</sup> Jenish, *Epic Wanderer*, pg. 86

white person to do so.<sup>100</sup> Biographer Jack Nisbet wrote, “Thompson proved the Columbia ran from the mountains to the ocean and that a Northwest Passage of sorts did exist, if not by water the entire way. Thompson’s Northwest Passage was his trail over the Rockies to the Columbia River. It would serve the Canadian fur trade into the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>101</sup> By the 1830s, the path he blazed allowed a brigade of voyageurs to paddle from the Pacific Ocean to York Factory in 100 days.

Thompson retired from the North West Company in 1812. The Partners then commissioned him to create a map of the interior parts of Canada, from Lake Superior west to the Pacific Ocean, a map he completed in 1814. His great map of the “North-West Territory . . . of Canada” is approximately eighty-four inches high by one hundred and twenty-nine inches long. It accurately depicts of the vast territory traversed by those who worked for the fur trade and the location of fur trading posts.<sup>102</sup> He also incorporated non-geographical information on his map, including the location of various Native American tribes, comments about portages, and notes about items he thought consequential.<sup>103</sup> His map and information would prove helpful to cartographers and government officials. His descriptions of Native Americans and the climate proved to be a valuable resource to those who drew up treaties and contemplated new settlements in western Canada.<sup>104</sup>

In 1816, Thompson became the official astronomer and surveyor to the British Border Commission. Times had changed; he no longer expanded British mercantilism or searched for new sources of fur while surveying. While working for the government, he surveyed 1,000 miles of disputed boundary territory between Lake of the Woods and the town of Cornwall, Ontario.<sup>105</sup> Between 1818 and 1846, the Americans and the British jointly occupied the Oregon Country, which stretched from the Rockies to the Pacific, neither side willing to cede control of the Oregon Country.<sup>106</sup> After finishing his surveys

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<sup>100</sup> *David Thompson's Narrative*, pg.360

<sup>101</sup> Archives of Canada, *David Thompson*, <http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits/thompson/geographer.htm> January 19, 2009, 4:27pm

<sup>102</sup> Jenish, *Epic Wanderer*, pg. 210-214

<sup>103</sup> Jenish, *Epic Wanderer*, pg. 216

<sup>104</sup> Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, pg. 296

<sup>105</sup> Jenish, *Epic Wanderer*, pg. 226

<sup>106</sup> Banner, *Possessing the Pacific*, pg.231

for the border commission, he remained active in the border dispute, which continued until it was resolved with a treaty in 1846.

After the first several years of surveying for the government, Thompson tried to publish his map of North America in London by 1820. His attempt at producing his own map in direct competition with the Arrowsmith printing firm proved to be a disaster. The Arrowsmith printing firm produced maps of North America with information provided by the Hudson's Bay Company. Additionally, with the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, Thompson's map, located at Fort William, became the property of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company made his map available to the Arrowsmith printing firm, which used the information in the next edition.<sup>107</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, maps of North America were no longer empty shells. In search of new sources of fur, British explorers systematically filled in the map of North America. The publication of the explorers' maps and journals introduced the Canadian west to those living in Europe. The observations by men such as Pond, Turnor, Hearne, Mackenzie, Thompson, Cook, and Vancouver provided the information necessary for European cartographers to depict North America accurately. In their pursuit of fur, the explorers surveyed the outline of a large continent and a fair amount of its interior. The cartographers' work, in turn, provided the British government and its citizens the ability to visualize the continent of North America and its relation with the rest of the world.

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<sup>107</sup> Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, pg. 208

## Chapter 2

### Public Reception of Exploration and the Concept of Colonization

By the early nineteenth century, the British understood the geography of North America better than they had twenty years earlier. The explorers' published accounts and maps opened up western Canada to the scrutiny of the British. Through their publications, the explorers emphasized the potential western Canada held for Britain, in the fur trade and beyond. The public warmly received the new information, but remained skeptical about notions of settlement in western Canada. The explorers' publications always found a ready audience in the British public. Many in that audience were armchair travelers, interested in the exotic depiction of foreign lands. Other members of the audience, however, such as representatives of the government, private business interests, and proponents of settlement, contemplated economic, political, and settlement ventures in the Canadian west.

In 1773, John Hawkesworth published an edited account of Cook's first voyage in the South Pacific. While not about North America, this account capitalized on the public's desire for knowledge about the world. Hawkesworth combined Cook's work with the journals of Joseph Banks and other early Pacific explorers. The book, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the order of His present Majesty, for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and Successively Performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook* became one of the most popular works of the eighteenth century.<sup>108</sup> The publisher reprinted the book in its first year; translations into other European languages followed. It proved the single most popular work in the Bristol Library between 1773 and 1784. Patrons borrowed the book over 201 times.<sup>109</sup>

While the South Pacific is not North America, the reception of Cook's first set of journals indicates the British interest in new scientific discoveries about the world. The public reception Cook's 1774 journals received is similar to the reception the publications

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<sup>108</sup> Treasures from the National Library: *The Endeavour Journal*  
[http://www.nla.gov.au/collect/treasures/mar\\_treasure.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/collect/treasures/mar_treasure.html) January 29, 2009, 11:52 am

<sup>109</sup> Treasures from the National Library: *The Endeavour Journal*

of explorers received.<sup>110</sup> The narrative was exciting, and readers yearned to know about the world outside England. However, while patrons had borrowed Cook's edited journal from the Bristol Library 201 times, not everyone could access library materials.<sup>111</sup> Much of the literate population of Britain relied upon periodicals and magazines to keep informed of current news and discoveries about the world.

One such source was *The Gentlemen's Magazine*. Edward Cave founded *The Gentlemen's Magazine* in London in 1731. One of the earliest monthly digests, the publication carried news and commentary on a range of topics that might interest an educated public. Cave often printed essays and articles culled from other publications, a common practice at that time. He distributed *The Gentlemen's Magazine* throughout Britain, reaching a relatively large audience. The magazine underwent several revisions over the years, but remained in publication until 1907.<sup>112</sup>

The magazine not only printed articles and essays, but also letters from its readers. In the late eighteenth century, those who wrote letters to the editor addressed their work to a Mr. Sylvanus Urban. Urban was a fictitious alter ego of the editors, who wished to remain anonymous. These letters and the editors' responses allowed the magazine to discuss important international discoveries and their implications in a candid and uninhibited manner.

Occasionally, the magazine's international section included an article about discoveries in North America. Sometimes there was a response to the new information. Letters to the editor periodically discussed the implications of the information that emerged from British North America. One anonymous letter to Mr. Urban, written from Quebec, covered the importance of the fur trade and the link it held to future geographical exploration of North America.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, several letters submitted in the eighteenth century concerned the actions and implications of the fur company employees and independent traders in Canada. Later in the eighteenth and during the nineteenth centuries, letters raised the question of permanent settlement.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort," *Gentlemen's Magazine*, June 1796, pg. 497

<sup>111</sup> Treasures from the National Library: *The Endeavour Journal*

<sup>112</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Gentlemen's Magazine"

<sup>113</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, January, 1788

<sup>114</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March 1790, pg.197

The public required geographic information about western Canada before any discussion about settlement began. The March 1790 edition supplied the first comprehensive representation of the geography of the Canadian interior with the publication of Peter Pond's map of 1788. His map (figure 2), showed the interconnected waterways in British North America, which provided endless possibilities for the expansion of British commerce. The *Gentlemen's Magazine* also published an informative letter concerning the ramifications Pond's map held. The letter was from an unnamed source in Quebec and addressed to a friend in London. The letter's author was interested in the expansion of British commerce. The correspondent presented the possibilities offered British mercantilism by an internal communication system navigable by canoe within central and western Canada.<sup>115</sup>

The Great Slave Lake is the most Northerly piece of water before you arrive at the Northern Ocean; and that the river which rises from that lake empties into the Northern Pacific Ocean, and is the river that Cook discovered. That an easy communication with, and as advantageous commerce, may be carried on by posts established on Lakes Slave, Arabaska [Athabasca], and Pelican, &c. and to deliver the fruits of their commerce at the mouth of Cook's River, to be thence carried to China, &c, &c; and that, as Cook's River and the lands on Slave Lake, Arabaska,[Athabasca] &c. are very fine, some advantageous settlements may be made thereon, which may be beneficial to Government.<sup>116</sup>

This letter captures the relative unimportance of settlement in western Canada. Its emphasis is clearly upon the economic possibilities available in the region. The author hoped for a waterway that would facilitate trade between the Canadian interior and China. By 1790, British merchants hoped for an extension of trade to the lucrative markets of China.<sup>117</sup> However, if the Northwest Passage failed to materialize, there was still hope for increased trade within Canada itself. Locations for possible settlement appear in the last two sentences, though more as an aside than a serious suggestion. Perhaps the letter's author mentioned settlement as an appeasement to government officials. Despite the one sentence about settlement, it is obvious how the writer from Quebec felt. The expansion of British mercantile interests was central to the British conception of western Canada. The limited interest for settlement corresponds with the

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<sup>115</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March, 1790, pg. 196

<sup>116</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March, 1790, pg.197

<sup>117</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March, 1790, pg.197

perception the British had of the Canadian west until the 1830s. The British saw the Canadian west as a wilderness, fit only for the fur trade.

The anonymous Quebec correspondent had a keen sense of the international marketplace, but his sense of geography remained incomplete. He had apparently studied Pond's map or talked to Pond himself. According to Harold A. Innis, during the winter that Pond spent with Mackenzie (1787-1788), Pond speculated that the Slave River formed a water link between Lake Athabasca and Cook's Outlet on the Alaska coast.<sup>118</sup> Pond did not depict this possible link on his 1788 map (Figure 2), but reports of a possible Northwest Passage, or at least a river that ran to the Pacific, reached London through letters such as this one to *Gentlemen's Magazine*.

The possible route from Slave Lake to Cook's Outlet was one of the only remaining routes across North America available to the British in 1790. The American Revolution had forced the British out of the lower part of the continent, and Spain controlled California, which kept the British out of the American southwest. Canada was the last British hope for a navigable trade route that would shorten the travel time between Asia and Britain. As indicated by the letter from Quebec in *Gentlemen's Magazine* about Pond's map, the British public hoped for a shortened route to Asia. In 1790, the British appeared uninterested in the possibilities of settlement in western Canada. However, the economic possibilities of a Northwest Passage continued to tantalize British merchants.

The suggestion of a possible Northwest Passage via Cook's Outlet excited many people. A prime example of this is Alexander Mackenzie, who risked his life in 1789 in an attempt to follow the river out of Slave Lake to the Pacific. The same anonymous author informed Mr. Urban of Mackenzie's attempt to follow the river out of Slave Lake to the Pacific in 1789:

Another man, by the name of McKenzie, was left by Pond at Slave Lake, with orders to go down the river, and from thence to Unalaska, and so to Kamskatska, and thence to England, through Russia, &c. If he meets with no accident, you may have him with you the next year.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Innis, *Peter Pond*, pg.135

<sup>119</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, March 1790, pg.197

Unfortunately, for Pond, Mackenzie disproved his argument about a Slave River running to the Pacific Ocean. His attempt to follow the Slave River west to the Pacific resulted in his discovery of the Mackenzie River, which empties north into the Arctic Ocean.<sup>120</sup> Contrary to the Quebec correspondent's expectation, Mackenzie did not arrive in England via Russia. Instead, the Rocky Mountains proved an insurmountable obstacle to Pond's and Mackenzie's hope for a navigable Northwest Passage.

The *Gentlemen's Magazine* was only one source that presented information to the British public about North America. Another source in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was Aaron Arrowsmith's maps of North America. Aaron Arrowsmith, a cartographer from London, compiled the discoveries of various explorers into a map of North America. He published his first map of North America on January 1, 1795, under the title *A Map/ Exhibiting all the New Discoveries/ in the Interior Parts of/ North America/ Inscribed by Permission/ To the Honorable Governor and Company of Adventurers of England/ Trading with Hudson's Bay/ In Testimony of their liberal Communications/ To their most Obedient/ and very Humble Servant/ A. Arrowsmith.*<sup>121</sup> Arrowsmith's representation of North America provided the template for modern maps of the continent. His original map incorporated many of the discoveries made by the explorers James Cook, Samuel Hearne, Philip Turnor, and Peter Pond, presenting them in one package for the public's consumption.<sup>122</sup>

Arrowsmith's map of North America (Figure 3) represented the steady advancements in European scientific measurements. However, there was room for improvement in his representation. In the 1795 edition, Arrowsmith mistakenly depicted the Rocky Mountains as only 3520ft high.<sup>123</sup> In addition, the map lacked information about the interior of the North American continent, which it showed as a large, blank space. Published journals, maps, and accounts of expeditions would eventually help fill

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<sup>120</sup> Woollacott, *Mackenzie and his Voyageurs*, pg. 89

<sup>121</sup> Aaron Arrowsmith, *A Map/ Exhibiting all the New Discoveries/ in the Interior Parts of/ North America/ Inscribed by Permission/ To the Honorable Governor and Company of Adventurers of England/ Trading with Hudson's Bay/ In Testimony of their liberal Communications/ To their most Obedient/ and very Humble Servant/ A. Arrowsmith.* London: A. Arrowsmith, 1795

<sup>122</sup> Richard Ruggles, *A Country So Interesting: The Hudson's Bay Company and Two Centuries of Mapping: 1670-1870.* London: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1991, pg. 58

<sup>123</sup> "Aaron Arrowsmith" University of Virginia Library  
[http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/lewis\\_clark/exploring/ch4-30.html](http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/lewis_clark/exploring/ch4-30.html) January 29, 2009, 7:09 pm

in the spaces on Arrowsmith's 1795 map. British Cabinet members, members of the Royal Navy, and at least one President of the United States of America, purchased copies of Arrowsmith's map.<sup>124</sup>



Figure 3: Aaron Arrowsmith's *Map of North America*, 1795: Courtesy of the University of Virginia Library

Arrowsmith's map is one of the most visible manifestations of the geographical information available to the public during this period. The explorers' discoveries, coupled with the reversal of Hudson's Bay Company policy, provided the impetus for Arrowsmith's map. Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company considered its maps important secrets and refused to grant permission for their publication. It jealously guarded the domain of its North American kingdom. The Company feared that any competition

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<sup>124</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg.20

would gain an edge if maps and charts of the Hudson's Bay territory were made widely available.<sup>125</sup> At times, the Company forced employees to burn their personal diaries and journals in order to keep information from returning to Britain.<sup>126</sup> By the 1770s, attitudes had changed; the Company realized that it could make money from the cartographic representation of North America. In 1790, the Company entered into a business partnership with the cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith. The Company granted him full access to its archives, and with its help, he produced his map of North America.<sup>127</sup>

During his employment with the Hudson's Bay Company, Philip Turnor provided much of the information used to create Arrowsmith's 1795 map of North America. Turnor led the surveying effort launched by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1778. Seeking to establish the positions of its inland posts and the river routes that linked them, he produced eight maps of his surveys in the northwest. Most of his maps were charts of the shoreline of the Hudson's Bay and the rivers that flowed into it. Most of these charts, produced during his employment, became the property of the Company and went into the Company archives. When the Company and Arrowsmith began doing business together, the Company made Turnor's charts available for Arrowsmith to use.<sup>128</sup>

Not all of the information that Turnor provide to Arrowsmith came from the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1794, Turnor published his masterpiece, entitled a "*Map of the Hudson's Bay and the Rivers and Lakes between the Atlantick and Pacifick Oceans.*"<sup>129</sup> The publication of Arrowsmith's map the following year overshadowed Turnor's map. Since Turnor released his map to the public, Arrowsmith eventually incorporated any new information Turnor's map contained into his own.

Arrowsmith also used maps from James Cook and Peter Pond. The British Admiralty published Cook's survey of the Alaska coast after the return of his crew in 1780. Arrowsmith incorporated Cook's Pacific coast sketches (figure 5) into his 1795 map of North America, which helped outline the western edge of the continent. Pond's map combined with the reports of Turnor and Hearne provided Arrowsmith with a

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<sup>125</sup> John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor 1821-1869*, New York: Octagon Books, 1977, pg. 60

<sup>126</sup> "A few words on the Hudson Bay Company" Enclosure No.3, in No.17, pg.85 in "Canadian Parliamentary Papers" 1822

<sup>127</sup> Ruggles, *A Country So Interesting*, pg.60

<sup>128</sup> Ruggles, *A Country So Interesting*, pg.60

<sup>129</sup> *Gentlemen's Magazine*, July 1795

framework of the Canadian interior.<sup>130</sup> There was no other work to refute Pond's depiction of the Canadian waterways east of the Rocky Mountains. However, Arrowsmith did not include Pond's guess about a river running to the Pacific Ocean. He had heard about Mackenzie's journey to the Arctic Ocean in 1789, during which Mackenzie found that the Slave River did not flow to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>131</sup>

Arrowsmith was aware that he had relied heavily upon the generosity of the Hudson's Bay Company, its employees, and several naval surveys in completing his map of North America. In 1794, one year before he published his map, he published a pamphlet entitled *Result of Astronomical Observations Made in the Interior Parts of North America*. In the introduction of his pamphlet, he credited those who had provided him with the necessary geographic information:

The result of Astronomical Observations in the Interior Parts of North America, have chiefly been made at the Expense of the Honorable Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, Trading into Hudson's Bay: and printed by Permission of the Company, to which the Public stands indebted for the many positions so accurately settled by Mr. Philip Turnor and others in their service; which has laid the permanent Foundation for the Geography of that part of the Globe.<sup>132</sup>

Arrowsmith wrote that the work of the company's employees, Turnor among them, "had laid the permanent foundation for the geography of that part of the globe."<sup>133</sup> He understood the importance a map of North America had toward British economic and cultural expansion. He also understood the important role the fur companies had played in sending Turnor and others into the interior to survey British North America. The companies had financed the geographic exploration, which increased European geographic knowledge of the world. The fog of cartographic uncertainty no longer shrouded North America. Instead, the combined work of Philip Turnor, Samuel Hearne, Peter Pond, and James Cook enabled cartographers such as Arrowsmith to depict the entire continent. Arrowsmith's rendition of North America created a framework for the British to comprehend North America. However, holes remained within the visual representation of the continent. Using the newest advancement of European scientific

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<sup>130</sup> Ruggles, *A Country So Interesting*, pg. 60

<sup>131</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyage*, vol. I, pg. ix

<sup>132</sup> Arrowsmith, "Result of Astronomical observations in the interior," pg.3

<sup>133</sup> Arrowsmith, "Result of Astronomical observations in the interior," pg.3

measurements, he provided a tool, which allowed the British to study the geography of North America. Arrowsmith had mapped the boundary of North America; all that remained was to fill in the blanks. This partially required the works of Samuel Hearne, Alexander Mackenzie, David Thompson, and George Vancouver.

In 1795, Samuel Hearne's family published his journals. Hearne, himself, had died in 1792, but his family published *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean... in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772*, through the publishing house of Cadell & Davies.<sup>134</sup> Arrowsmith had already incorporated much of the information published by Hearne's family, because he had access to the Hudson's Bay Company archives. Not all of it though; some new adjustments to the Coppermine River occurred in Arrowsmith's 1802 edition.

Cadell & Davies was one of the leading publishing houses of the day.<sup>135</sup> In 1801, the same firm published Alexander Mackenzie's account of his *Voyages to the Pacific and Northern Oceans in 1789-1793*.<sup>136</sup> Normally, large publishing firms do not support a book if they think that sales will be unprofitable. Cadell & Davies published Hearne's journal in 1795, directly following Arrowsmith's publication of his map. The publication of Hearne's journal suggests there was a popular demand for information about North America. Hearne's journal was the firm's answer to the public demand, and the journal sold quite well.<sup>137</sup>

In June 1796, the *Gentlemen's Magazine* printed a review of Hearne's account of his *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay*. The magazine provided a brief summary of Hearne's exploits during his three attempts to reach the Coppermine River.<sup>138</sup> After summarizing his exploits and describing the living conditions of the Native Americans, the magazine made a compelling endorsement of Hearne's account. They "venture[d] to rank this as a valuable addition to the discoveries which the enterprising spirit of our countrymen [Britain] leads them to make."<sup>139</sup> The *Gentlemen's* endorsement suggests that the British actively followed the publications of new

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<sup>134</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *The Journals & Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie*. Edited by W. Kaye Lamb, Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1970, pg.34

<sup>135</sup> Lamb, *Journals & Letters of Mackenzie*, pg.34

<sup>136</sup> Lamb, *Journals & Letters of Mackenzie*, pg.34

<sup>137</sup> Lamb, *Journals & Letters of Mackenzie*, pg. 35

<sup>138</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort," *Gentlemen's Magazine*, June 1796, pg. 497

<sup>139</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort," *Gentlemen's Magazine*, June 1796, pg. 497

geographic discoveries. Perhaps they did more than read about the discoveries; the language of the article suggests the British appeared to foster an “enterprising spirit of [their] countrymen.”<sup>140</sup>

In 1798, three years after the publication of Hearne’s journals, John Vancouver published his brother’s *Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, And Round the World in the Years 1791-95*. George Vancouver’s journal and map proved to be popular with the public. Vancouver’s first edition had sold so well, that by 1801 John released a second edition.<sup>141</sup>

Prior to Vancouver’s return to Britain in 1795, early renditions of his map of the Pacific coast had made their way back to Britain via mail boats. The Admiralty made the surveys available to Arrowsmith. Consequently, his 1795 map of North America incorporated elements of Vancouver’s early surveys of the Columbia River and the Pacific Coast.<sup>142</sup> After the publication of Vancouver’s journal, in 1798, Arrowsmith carefully studied the updated plates depicting the Pacific Coast. He used what he found in his 1802 edition. Vancouver’s discoveries guaranteed that the 1802 version would depict the Pacific coastline clearer. After 1802, readers could see the contributions Vancouver’s surveys made to the representation of North American geography.

Vancouver’s map (Figure 4) shows the surveyed coastline of a small part of the North American Pacific coast. His survey was so meticulous that sailors still used it to navigate with well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>143</sup> Vancouver filled in many of the blanks left in James Cook’s survey of the Northern Pacific Coast of North America.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup>“A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort,” *Gentlemen’s Magazine*, June 1796, pg. 497

<sup>141</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver’s Voyage*, pg.119

<sup>142</sup> “Aaron Arrowsmith,” University of Virginia Library

[http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/lewis\\_clark/exploring/ch4-30.html](http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/exhibits/lewis_clark/exploring/ch4-30.html) January 29, 2009 7:09 pm

<sup>143</sup> Larry Pynn, 'Charting the Coast,' The [Vancouver Sun](#), May 30, 2007, p.B3

<sup>144</sup> Fisher, *Vancouver’s Voyages*, pg. 21

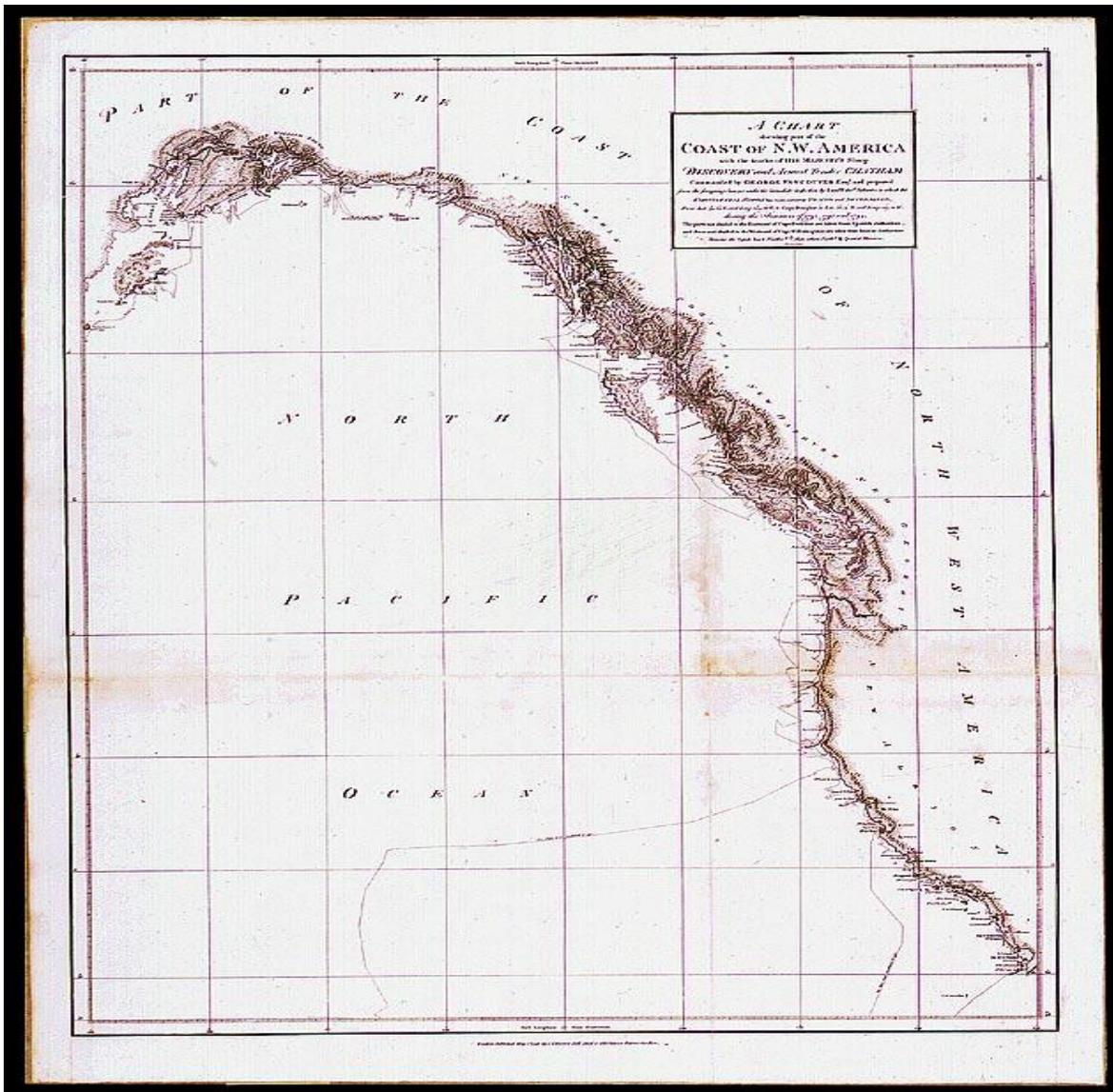


Figure 4: George Vancouver’s *Chart Showing Part of the Coast of N.W. America*, 1798: Courtesy of Library and Archives of Canada

Vancouver’s survey of the Pacific Coast (Figure 4) is detailed and very impressive. Vancouver created such an intricate map by sending his sailors out in rowboats to survey every bay they could.<sup>145</sup> Despite his meticulousness, Vancouver made some blunders; he omitted the Fraser River, for example. Such omissions, however, did not keep his map from being widely accepted. Commander Gordon of the

<sup>145</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker’s Eye*, pg. 21

Royal Navy used them to great effect when he resurveyed Vancouver's Island in 1846, in preparation of a colonial settlement.<sup>146</sup>

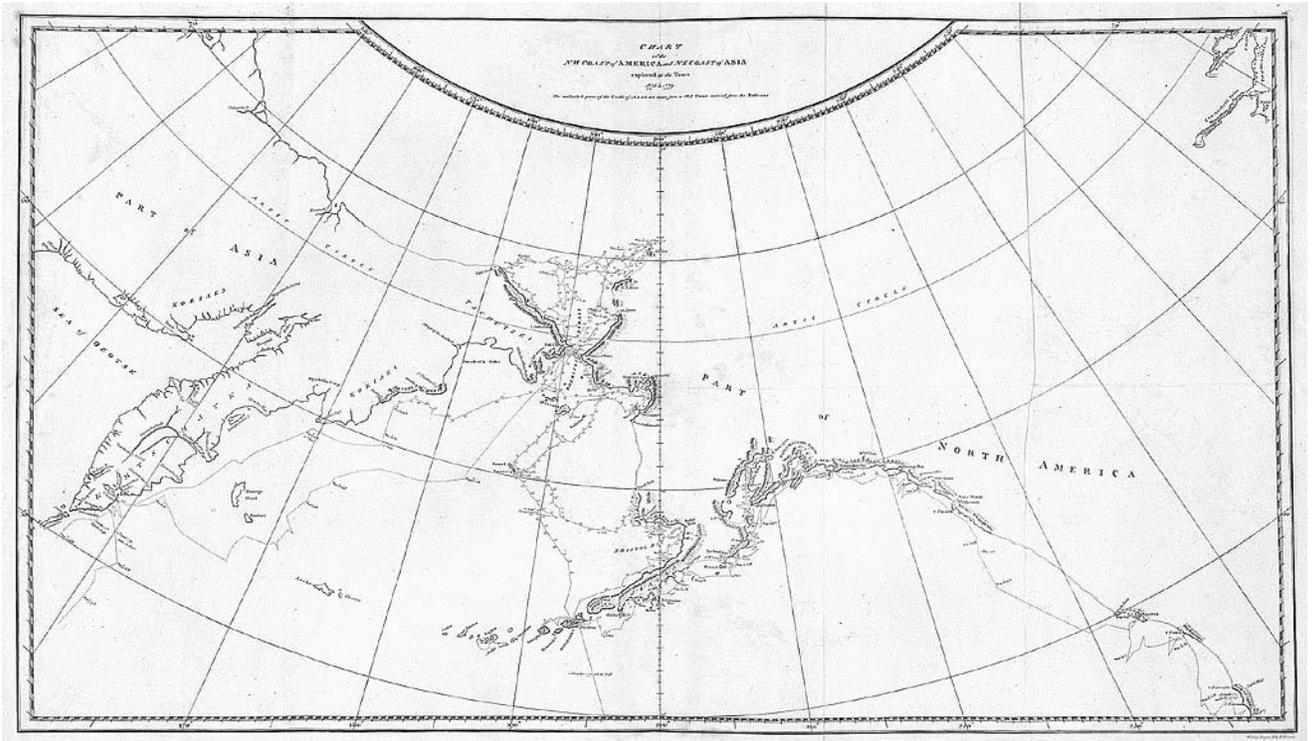


Figure 5: James Cook's *Chart of the N.W. Coast of America and N.E. Coast of Asia Explored in the Years 1778 & 1779*: Courtesy of Library and Archives of Canada

Despite the omission of the Fraser River, Vancouver provided the British public with a substantial survey of the Pacific coastline of North America. His work updated the survey made by Captain Cook fifteen years earlier (Figure 5). The most substantial change was that Vancouver's map omitted the famed Cook's Outlet that had caused Mackenzie to undertake a canoe expedition to the Arctic in 1789. Vancouver focused much of his attention on the region between the mouth of the Columbia River and the Alaska panhandle. He filled in much of the blank coast evident in the lower right hand portion of Cook's map. The combined maps of Vancouver and Cook provided a detailed survey of the Pacific coast.

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<sup>146</sup> "Copy of a dispatch from Commander Gordon to Captain J. A. Duntze October 7, 1846," *Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers*, 1849 Session, vol.18. Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969, pg. 416

In 1801, Alexander Mackenzie published his *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans in 1789 and 1793*.

Mackenzie was the first explorer to suggest settlement in western Canada as a viable option for British foreign policy by actively encouraging his audience to consider the possibilities of future British involvement in North America. He deviated from how the earlier explorers presented information to the British public. The earlier explorers provided geographic information about western Canada, but none of them proactively suggested settlement. Their descriptions reinforced the idea that western Canada was a wilderness, fit only for the fur trade.

Cadell & Davies, which published Hearne's account in 1795, printed the original edition of Mackenzie's *Voyages*. The first edition, which consisted of 750 copies, quickly sold out, and the publishers issued a second printing.<sup>147</sup> Of all the publications mentioned in this thesis, Mackenzie's *Voyages* attracted the greatest attention. Several influential journals mentioned the book at some length, and Cadell & Davies published half a dozen new editions in 1802; including French and German versions.<sup>148</sup> The London *Times* ran an advertisement for Mackenzie's book in 1802; the editors may have been interested in information about western Canada and wanted to ensure that it reached a broader audience. Mackenzie's publication garnered him so much attention that in 1802, the King knighted him as a reward for his efforts during the exploration of western Canada.<sup>149</sup>

In the last section of his *Voyages*, Mackenzie argued for a merger between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. He believed a merger would be beneficial for both the merchants and the British Government, streamlining the management and increasing efficiency. He proposed that:

The junction of such a commercial association with the Hudson's Bay Company, is the important measure which I would propose, and the trade might then be carried on with a very superior degree of advantage, both private and public, under the privilege of their charter... and would fulfill the conditions on which it was granted.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Theodore Besterman ed., *The publishing firm of Cadell & Davies. Select correspondence and accounts, 1793-1836*, London: Cadell & Davies, 1938, p. xxxi

<sup>148</sup> Lamb, *Journals and Letters of Mackenzie*, pg. 35; *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, May 1852

<sup>149</sup> Canadian Library and Archives: *Alexander Mackenzie*

<sup>150</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 355

Mackenzie believed that the competition between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company was detrimental. According to him, both companies engaged in business practices that were inefficient and failed to expand British mercantilism. The merger of both companies would eliminate the competition between the traders. If the two companies failed to merge, then he advocated government support of the North West Company's trade. Although the Royal Charter of 1670 granted exclusive trading rights to the Hudson's Bay Company, he argued that it had not expanded Britain's knowledge of North America. He believed that those who worked for the North West Company had made many of the discoveries enlightening the British about western Canada, and thus deserved economic legitimization.<sup>151</sup>

Mackenzie not only wanted to economize trade in North America, but he also wanted to make it easier for trans-Pacific trade to flourish. He hoped to open up the Chinese fur markets to members of the North West Company.<sup>152</sup> The East India Company held the monopoly on the lucrative Chinese trade, which it jealously guarded. Mackenzie suggested that the Hudson's Bay Company, the North West Company, and the East India Company seal an agreement, creating a new company called "The Fishery and Fur Company."<sup>153</sup> He planned for trade to occur across two oceans. Ships carrying trade goods from England to North America would return to England with furs for the British market. Those sailing from a settlement on the North American Pacific coast would take furs and supplies to China.<sup>154</sup> This business venture would allow the British to compete with the Americans, who were already trading furs from the Columbia River in China.<sup>155</sup> Unfortunately, for him, his plans for a business merger and global trade did not materialize during his lifetime.

The possible combination of the two companies would simplify another proposal Mackenzie made about the American Northwest. He promoted settlement around the mouth of the Columbia River, because it is "the most Northern situation fit for

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<sup>151</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 355

<sup>152</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 173

<sup>153</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 173

<sup>154</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 174

<sup>155</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 175

colonization, and suitable to the residence of civilized people.”<sup>156</sup> Mackenzie did not yet know about the Fraser River; he thought a settlement at the Columbia was vital to control the fur trade of the Pacific coast.<sup>157</sup> He believed that a British settlement would keep the Americans from “plundering the abundance of the Pacific coast.”<sup>158</sup> In his mind, the Americans who had shouldered none of the burdens of exploration did not deserve to reap the benefits. He did not understand why the British should relinquish their claim to the profitable Pacific coast fisheries or the location of a trading station that increased access to the “markets of the four quarters of the globe.”<sup>159</sup> He argued that settlement went hand in hand with economic expansion. The Pacific coast was so bountiful that a settlement would open up an incalculable field of commercial enterprise. The rewards would be so great that Britain would “begin to be remunerated for the expenses it sustained in discovering and surveying the coast of the Pacific Ocean.”<sup>160</sup>

Despite the positive reception of his *Voyages*, Mackenzie failed to generate widespread official support for settlement and reorganization of the fur trade. In 1802, Britain was preoccupied with Napoleon, who was a viable threat to British interests. Mackenzie’s belief in settlement required sending single and married able-bodied men to Canada, a policy that did not engender the support of the military. Despite failing to garner broad support for his schemes, Mackenzie did impress one proponent of settlement. His description of the fur trade in North America, the natives, and the productivity of the country as he passed through it stimulated the interest of the Earl of Selkirk, a prominent Scottish promoter of colonization.

In 1802, the *Annual Review* published a critique of Mackenzie’s *Journals*. The editors’ were not particularly kind to Mackenzie in their review of his work. They did not think it was as well written or engaging as Samuel Hearne’s journal.

The book itself, though in many parts interesting, wants perspicuity. Sometimes the author is provokingly minute; but when he arrives at the Icy Sea, he is as provokingly inaccurate. It is impossible not to compare his journal with that of

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<sup>156</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg.358

<sup>157</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 171

<sup>158</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 359

<sup>159</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 358

<sup>160</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 359

Mr. Hearne, an adventurer in the same trade, traveling in the same country; and compared with that excellent work, this is indeed miserably meager.<sup>161</sup>

Despite the stinging critique of Mackenzie's presentation, the editors were interested in his argument about the fur trade. They wrote about Mackenzie's evident push for a unification of the fur companies and an extension of the trade:

Our present traveler was engaged in the same commercial pursuit, and has prefaced his journal by a general history of the fur trade from Canada to the north-west. The trade is become so important, that Mr. Mackenzie is desirous to see it still farther extended by the countenance and support of the British government.<sup>162</sup>

Mackenzie's journals tapped a broad base of support that the previous explorers had created through their publications. Their work brought North America to the attention of the public; Mackenzie's *Voyages* capitalized upon the favorable public opinion that Vancouver's journals and Arrowsmith's maps had created in Britain. He used that favorable opinion to his advantage, pushing his own agenda for the expansion of British influence throughout North America.<sup>163</sup>

## II. Publications Influence the Formation of Settlement

By 1802, the combination of the explorers' discoveries provided an impressive array of information about North America. Arrowsmith had released a second edition of his map, which contained information from Vancouver and Mackenzie's journals. The 1802 edition, while much more detailed than the 1795 edition, still had large blank spaces in the interior. Arrowsmith's updated map, combined with Mackenzie's *Voyages*, attracted the attention of Lord Selkirk. His comprehension of Mackenzie's account, supplemented by the study of Arrowsmith's 1802 map, propelled Selkirk to advocate settlement in western Canada. He eventually created a settlement in Hudson's Bay territory, but almost a decade after he first read Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages*.

When Lord Selkirk read Mackenzie's account of his *Voyages* in 1801, he began to contemplate the formation of a settlement in North America. Selkirk was a philanthropist concerned about the poor landless Scots evicted from the Scottish Highlands.<sup>164</sup> His first

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<sup>161</sup> "Voyages from Montreal," *Annual Review*, January 1802, pg. 18

<sup>162</sup> "Voyages from Montreal," *Annual Review*, January 1802, pg. 18

<sup>163</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 355-360

<sup>164</sup> Daniels, *Mackenzie and the North West*, pg. 178

colonization attempt in 1803-1804, was on Prince Edward's Island, in the Canadian maritime. He attributed the success to an initially homogenous society of Highland Scotsmen, motivation amongst the colonists, and reasonable weather upon their arrival at Prince Edwards Island.<sup>165</sup> After the formation of his first settlement, Selkirk traveled to Montreal, where he made the acquaintance of Father Edmund Burke. Father Burke proposed the idea of starting another settlement in Upper Canada. The new settlement would provide a place for the poor from Montreal. Despite misgivings upon Selkirk's part, Father Burke persuaded Selkirk to form a settlement near the edge of Lake St. Claire.<sup>166</sup>

Between Lake Huron and Lake Erie, Lake St. Claire is almost as far south as the 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel. Mackenzie mentioned the location of Lake St. Claire as part of the route the voyageurs paddled through on their way to Grand Portage.<sup>167</sup> Mackenzie described the countryside of the voyageurs route, along which Lake St. Claire lay: "Of this great tract, more than half is represented as barren and broken, displaying a surface of rock and fresh water lakes, with a very scattered and scanty proportion of soil."<sup>168</sup>

Selkirk professed to have read Mackenzie's account in 1801. He must have thought that the land near Lake St. Claire fell into the half of territory that Mackenzie did not represent as barren and broken. Unfortunately, Selkirk's interpretation of Mackenzie's description was wrong. The settlement near Lake St. Claire proved disastrous; the location was poor, crops failed to grow, and the houses flooded in the fall. The settlers themselves were an apathetic lot, unwilling to work, poorly motivated, and chosen quickly and at random. Selkirk discovered that he had rushed the planning of this settlement and had not adequately screened the colony's settlers, land, or climate.<sup>169</sup> He promised himself that he would not make the same mistake twice.

Despite the failure of his second attempt at settling impoverished British subjects in Canada, he returned to Britain ready to try again. Upon his return, he published a book entitled: *Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland, with a View of*

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<sup>165</sup> John Morgan Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, Canada: Michigan State University Press, 1964, pg. 53

<sup>166</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 22

<sup>167</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 342

<sup>168</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 342

<sup>169</sup> Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State*, London: Smith, Elder and Co. 1856, pg. 45

*the Causes and Probable Consequences of Emigration* in 1805 and a revised edition in 1806.<sup>170</sup> Selkirk stated the solution to the problem of a landless surplus population in Scotland was emigration. When Scottish lords drove their tenants off the land to clear it for wool production, the tenants had nowhere to go. Selkirk proposed emigration to Canada as a solution.<sup>171</sup> His publication placed him in the public eye; people had sponsored colonization projects before, but no one had published a work promoting emigration from the Highlands.<sup>172</sup> His critics argued that “Highlanders were required at home as soldiers and in the south as laborers.”<sup>173</sup> In addition, his proposal came during a period of industrialization, when policy makers thought the size of the population represented a country’s ability to garner wealth. Members of Parliament declared his publication a poor attempt to shape national policy.<sup>174</sup> Those sitting in Parliament did not approve of Selkirk’s arguments; they thought it usurped their authority concerning emigration. Ironically, within the year, his fellow Scottish lords elected him one of the Scottish peers in the House of Lords, and he sat in Parliament until 1817.<sup>175</sup>

Despite the criticism, Selkirk began to plan a possible settlement in southwestern Upper Canada in 1806. In a letter addressed to Lord William Wyndham in 1806, entitled “Suggestions respecting Upper Canada” Selkirk argued for an “alternative population to the Yankees [Americans] already in western Canada.”<sup>176</sup> He believed the Yankees, attracted by cheap land, threatened the “dependence of the province on Britain.”<sup>177</sup> However, his argument fell upon deaf ears in 1806, preventing the formation of a settlement in southwestern Upper Canada.<sup>178</sup>

During the summer of 1808, Selkirk and Mackenzie entered into a mutually beneficial relationship. Mackenzie argued for settlement along the Columbia River as a method of expanding British trade and containing the Americans. Mackenzie’s argument must have resonated with Selkirk. Mackenzie believed that a British settlement would

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<sup>170</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 4

<sup>171</sup> Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, pg.60

<sup>172</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 22

<sup>173</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 143

<sup>174</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 22

<sup>175</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 67

<sup>176</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 145

<sup>177</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 145

<sup>178</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 22

keep the Americans from “plundering the abundance of the Pacific coast.”<sup>179</sup> In his 1806 letter to Lord William Wyndham, Selkirk made a similar argument about the threat the encroaching Americans represented towards British North America.<sup>180</sup> Selkirk also proposed settlement as a method to counteract the American advancement west. Tony Cashman, in his *The History of British Columbia*, argues that Mackenzie’s appeal for British control of the Columbia River Basin influenced Selkirk to settle British subjects in western Canada.<sup>181</sup>

The full extent of Selkirk and Mackenzie’s partnership is unknown, but they each required the resources and assistance of the other.<sup>182</sup> With Selkirk providing most of the capital, the two bought Hudson’s Bay stock on joint account in 1808. Most of Mackenzie’s capital remained in Canada, tied up in the outfitting of the fur brigades.<sup>183</sup> Both sought to gain a voice in the workings of the Hudson’s Bay Company. However, they had two very different goals.

Despite working together to acquire the stocks of the Hudson’s Bay Company, several of Mackenzie’s biographers have suggested that Selkirk and Mackenzie were in conflict over the proposed acquisition. Mackenzie wanted to use the monopoly granted to the Hudson’s Bay Company in their Royal charter of 1670 to legitimize the North West Company’s operations. Mackenzie’s plan for the future did not match Selkirk’s plans.<sup>184</sup> Selkirk quietly conducted research in preparation for a new settlement project. Substantial amounts of geographical information about the territories claimed by the Hudson’s Bay Company were available to anyone willing to seek it out. Selkirk utilized the many records the Company accumulated over the years and the first-hand recollections of retired servants.<sup>185</sup> He eventually sought a land grant in the west based on the Hudson’s Bay Company charter to establish settlement at Red River.<sup>186</sup>

When their partnership ended, Mackenzie became wary of Selkirk’s proposed settlement. In correspondence with Simon McGillivray and Roderick McKenzie,

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<sup>179</sup> Mackenzie, *Voyages*, vol. II, pg. 359

<sup>180</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 145

<sup>181</sup> Cashman, *History of British Columbia*, pg.83

<sup>182</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 54

<sup>183</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 53

<sup>184</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 172

<sup>185</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 192

<sup>186</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg. 172

Alexander Mackenzie warned his fellow traders to beware of Lord Selkirk and his plans for settlement. In 1812, Mackenzie argued that:

He [Selkirk] will cause the North West Company a greater expense than you seem to apprehend; had the Company sacrificed £20,000, which might have secured a preponderance in the stock of the Hudson's Bay Company, it would have been money well spent.<sup>187</sup>

Mackenzie feared the damage a settlement in Rupert's Land would inflict upon the trade of the North West Company. Despite his plea in his *Voyages* for an increased British presence in North America, Mackenzie did not approve of Selkirk's plan. Selkirk's plan did not settle colonists on the Pacific coast. Instead, it called for a settlement at the edge of the Canadian prairie, upon the "waters which fall into Lake Winnipec [Winnipeg]" – Red River.<sup>188</sup> The location at Red River placed the settlement astride the North West Company's main transportation route from Montreal to the Lake Athabasca region.<sup>189</sup> Mackenzie feared the settlement might impede the North West Company's commerce.

Despite their disagreement, Selkirk prevailed upon Mackenzie to sell him his shares in the Hudson's Bay Company. This action paved the way for the allocation of land for Selkirk's settlement at Red River.<sup>190</sup> By 1810, the Earl of Selkirk, his brother-in-law, Andrew Wedderburn, and John Halkett had obtained a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>191</sup> They pressured the other members of the governing council for a grant, in Lord Selkirk's name, for forty-five million acres in the valley of the Red River.<sup>192</sup>

In Selkirk's mind, the location of Red River, while not along the Columbia, still validated British claims in the northwest. It served as a political check on the westward moving Americans, who had an insatiable appetite for new territory.<sup>193</sup> The presence of

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<sup>187</sup> Mackenzie to the Hon. Roderick McKenzie, 13 April 1812; Masson, *Les Bourgeois de la Comagnie du Nord-Quest* (Montreal, 1889-90), Vol. 1, pg. 53

<sup>188</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 22

<sup>189</sup> Ute McEachran, "The Reorganization of the Fur Trade after the Merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company, 1821-1826," (MA Thesis, York University, York, 1988), pg.4

<sup>190</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 53

<sup>191</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>192</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg. 4

<sup>193</sup> Cashman, *History of British Columbia*, pg. 90

British settlers west of Lake Superior would reinforce the Company's claim to Rupert's Land.<sup>194</sup>

Selkirk argued that the colonists at Red River would eventually provide the Company with provisions, alleviating the massive expense of shipping food supplies from Britain.<sup>195</sup> Along with growing their own crops, they would hunt buffalo and produce pemmican for the canoe brigades paddling into and out of the northwest.<sup>196</sup> After the first several years, the hope was that the Red River settlement would become self-sufficient, producing a surplus of food for the Company. Additionally, the Directors fervently hoped that Red River would become a recruiting station for youngsters willing to work in the fur trade.<sup>197</sup> The population of potential recruits on which Company officials banked was Métis, the children of former Company employees and native women.<sup>198</sup> The fur traders and the Native Americans had a history of intermarrying; this practice was widely accepted by both parties. The Company eventually encouraged many of its employees to retire to Red River. It hoped that a sizable Métis population would emerge. The Company preferred children of mixed heritage as employees to Europeans because the former were acclimated to the region, experienced in the culture of the fur trade, and competent in the native languages.

Selkirk harangued his fellow board members into allowing his scheme to go forward. The other directors, much like rest of the British population, never seemed very enthusiastic about his proposed settlement.<sup>199</sup> However, the plans for settlement were set in motion in 1811, and the first colonists arrived in the spring of 1812.<sup>200</sup> The Colonial Office in Canada thought that Selkirk's plan was dangerous and unstable.<sup>201</sup> The Colonial Secretary, Lord Bathurst, thought Selkirk's settlement would provoke trouble between the fur traders and Native Americans. In a letter written to his under-secretary, Henry Goulburn, in 1815, Lord Bathurst condemned Selkirk's Red River settlement as

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<sup>194</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>195</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg. 5

<sup>196</sup> Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, pg. 80

<sup>197</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>198</sup> Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, pg.81

<sup>199</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>200</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 54

<sup>201</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 154

“wild and unpromising.”<sup>202</sup> The Colonial Office perceived Selkirk as an outsider trying to disrupt the status quo that had emerged between the Hudson’s Bay and the North West Company. In addition, many of the Colonial Secretary’s friends were major shareholders in the North West Company.<sup>203</sup> In 1812, the Colonial Office mirrored the views of the North West Company partners. Eventually, with the advance of American settlers in the Oregon Country in the 1830s, the Colonial Office favored settlement and colonization in the Canadian west.

According to Wayne Franklin, “knowledge must precede the settlement.”<sup>204</sup> However, an increase in geographic knowledge in Britain did not lead to settlement of western Canada by 1830. The explorers’ published accounts and maps had opened up western Canada to the scrutiny of the British. Throughout the nineteenth century, Arrowsmith’s mapmaking firm continuously updated its surveys and maps. Newspapers advertised the new publications throughout Britain.<sup>205</sup> The new geographical surveys, when they arrived in London, increased the European comprehension of the Canadian west. Selkirk utilized the information available and started a settlement at Red River in 1812. However, the increase in geographic knowledge about western Canada did not necessarily lead to settlement. Selkirk simply decided to use the new information when he formed his settlement at Red River. Despite the availability of information about British North America, Selkirk faced opposition to the settlement of Red River. Pond, Turnor, Hearne, Cook, Mackenzie, and Vancouver provided the necessary information for the successful formation of the Red River settlement. However, after the first decade of the nineteenth century, the torch for new geographical discoveries passed to David Thompson.

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<sup>202</sup> Irish University Press: *Letter from Lord Bathurst to Under-Secretary Henry Goulburn, 1815*

<sup>203</sup> Ross, *The Red River Settlement*, pg.120

<sup>204</sup> Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers*, pg.3

<sup>205</sup> “Modern Geography: a Description of the Empires, Kingdoms, States, and Colonies, with the Oceans, Seas, and Isles in all Parts of the World; including the most recent Discoveries, and political Alterations” *Monthly Register*, and *Encyclopedian Magazine*, 1:3 (June 1802), p.237

### Chapter 3

#### Public Conception of Western Canada

As new discoveries opened western Canada to British scrutiny in the nineteenth century, Selkirk faced hostility about the formation of Red River. The dysfunctional relationship between Selkirk and the North West Company redirected the gaze of the British toward North America. Settlement in western Canada became a contentious topic. Naturally, the interest displayed by the public prompted an increase in the geographic knowledge of the continent. Arrowsmith's 1811 map, the newest edition available to the initial settlers of Red River, still had large blank sections. The information collected by earlier explorers had provided Arrowsmith enough information to create a reasonably accurate outline of North America. In 1811, information about the interior and west of the Rockies remained relatively scarce. After 1812, David Thompson's discoveries filled in Arrowsmith's map. By the 1830s, the new information helped complete the map of North America. This provided a clearer picture to anyone interested in studying British North America.

The first five years of Selkirk's settlement were rife with conflict, lack of food, eviction, resettlement, and uncertainty.<sup>206</sup> Complicating matters further, the settlement sat astride the North West Company's main transportation route from Montreal to the Lake Athabasca region.<sup>207</sup> During the summer of 1816, North West Company employees and their Métis allies killed twenty colonists at Seven Oaks.<sup>208</sup> Lord Selkirk was in Montreal, on his way to the Red River settlement, when the event occurred. Later that summer he captured the North West post at Fort William, arrested the North West partners, shipped them to Montreal to await trial, and ordered the return of the settlers.<sup>209</sup> While capturing Fort William, he amassed evidence that should have indicted the North West partners in the murder of twenty settlers. Instead, he found himself on trial for conspiracy and the confiscation of eighty-two rifles under a search warrant issued by himself at Ft.

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<sup>206</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 54

<sup>207</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>208</sup> "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America," *Quarterly Review*, October 1816, p.129

<sup>209</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg.280

William.<sup>210</sup> Eventually, a magistrate in Upper Canada indicted Selkirk for theft and conspiracy to interfere in the fur trade of the North West Company.<sup>211</sup> He went back to London and addressed Parliament to clear his name. In the end, though, the North West Company won that political fight.<sup>212</sup>

Before he went west to investigate the killings at Seven Oaks, Selkirk wrote *A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America; with Observations relative to the North-West Company of Montreal*, which he published in London in 1816.<sup>213</sup> The timing of Selkirk's publication, and the events that transpired after Seven Oaks, caught the attention of at least one British periodical. In October 1816, the *Quarterly Review* published a forty-four page article that reviewed Selkirk's *Sketch of the Fur Trade* and addressed the issue of settlement in Canada. The *Quarterly Review* discussed the implications of Seven Oaks. It then launched into a general history of the fur trade for the benefit of its audience. The *Review* appears to have thought that Selkirk's plight was worth its time and effort. The publication of the article indicates that the audience appreciated information about an area that was periphery to the center, Britain.

After reviewing Selkirk's *Sketch of the Fur Trade* and finding it biased, the *Review* turned its attention toward the recent occurrences in North America. Selkirk's support of settlement in the Canadian wilderness, a land suitable only for the fur trade, baffled the *Quarterly Review*. The focus of the article switched to the settlement in western Canada. The *Review* had "strong doubts of the policy as well as the efficacy of Lord Selkirk's plan of colonization."<sup>214</sup> It did not understand why Selkirk advocated settlement in British North America over other established colonies. It argued, "The valuable possessions of the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon deserved the tide of emigration setting so strongly to the North-west-ward."<sup>215</sup> The *Quarterly Review* dismissed Selkirk's 1805 argument about the benefits of settling Scottish Highlanders as an enclave. Furthermore, in the opinion of the *Review*, Canada did not provide a prime location for Highland settlement. Although interested in Selkirk's operations at Red

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<sup>210</sup> McEachran, *The Reorganization of the Fur Trade*, pg.4

<sup>211</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 154

<sup>212</sup> Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River*, pg. 154

<sup>213</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p.130

<sup>214</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p.142

<sup>215</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p. 142

River, the *Quarterly Review* still thought the emigrants' colonization of another established colony would better benefit Britain.<sup>216</sup> The location of the Red River settlement "far beyond any market to receive their surplus produce" was too remote to provide any economic benefit to British mercantile interests.<sup>217</sup> Only the Hudson's Bay Company might benefit from the presence of settlers in the region. The *Quarterly Review* saw the allocation of Scotsmen to Selkirk's Red River as a waste of valuable resources.<sup>218</sup>

The *Quarterly Review's* view that settlement at Red River was a misallocation of resources indicates that the British image of Canada had not yet changed. Studying the available information, the British had concluded that western Canada was only fit for the fur trade. Despite their growing knowledge of western Canadian geography, British citizens showed no interest in colonizing a continent full of hostile natives and ill-mannered traders. The *Review*, and arguably its readers, was interested in expansion, settlement, and mercantilism. The *Quarterly Review* did not have a problem with Selkirk's theoretical concept of colonization, but it believed that Selkirk should implement his colonization scheme in a different location.

Despite its opposition to settlement at Red River, the *Review* still deemed knowledge of the general history of the fur trade and the European presence in Canada important.<sup>219</sup> Selkirk's publication of his *Sketch of the Fur Trade* and the events following the attack at Seven Oaks in 1816 captured the attention of the British. Red River's growing pains were the most interesting bit of news that had come out of the Canadian west in a long time. The *Quarterly Review* capitalized on this development. The periodical provided the audience with a lengthy history, review, and opinions about the Hudson's Bay Company and settlement. The editors of the *Quarterly Review* attempted to satisfy the public's appetite for information about Seven Oaks, Selkirk's settlement plans, and British North America.

Lord Selkirk's *Sketch of the Fur Trade* and the article in the *Quarterly Review* were two interesting sources of information about British North America. The British

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<sup>216</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p.143

<sup>217</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p. 142

<sup>218</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p. 142

<sup>219</sup> "A Sketch of the fur trade..." *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, pg.129-172

interest had been piqued. Naturally, this attention helped increase the demand for any geographical knowledge of North America. David Thompson, the last explorer mentioned in this thesis, contributed heavily to filling in the geography of western Canada. As the nineteenth century passed, Thompson's work proved invaluable for cartographers and public officials alike. Thompson had worked as a surveyor and trader for both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company. He surveyed and traveled over 50,000 miles of the Canadian interior during his years in the fur trade. Thompson retired from the fur trade in 1812 and completed his map for his former employers at the North West Company in 1814.<sup>220</sup> He had spent a lifetime traveling throughout North America. His work, published after 1814, filled the gaps left by those who had preceded him into the wilderness. He increased the substantial amounts of geographical information already available to the British about North America after 1814.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, pg.198

<sup>221</sup> Bumsted, *Lord Selkirk: A Life*, pg.192



Figure 6: Aaron Arrowsmith's *British Possessions in North America From Mr. Arrowsmith's map of North America*: Courtesy of David Rumsey Collection

The most up to date map of North America available to the British at the time Thompson finished his map in 1814 (Figure 6) was part of an atlas entitled *British Possessions in North America: From Mr. Arrowsmith's map of North America &c. &c. Drawn under the direction of Mr. Pinkerton by L. Hebert*. Cadell & Davies, the publisher of Samuel Hearne's journals, published the atlas in London in 1815. In it, the area west of the Rocky Mountains was still devoid of almost any geographical information. The only river shown is the Peace River, which Mackenzie had followed for part of his journey to the Pacific in 1793. There is not even a sketch of the Columbia River, or the Fraser River, even though Thompson had surveyed all 1,100 miles of the Columbia in 1811.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>222</sup> Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, pg.360

Thompson's map of 1814 accurately depicted the travel routes of the traders through 1,700,000 square miles of the British Northwest and the United States.<sup>223</sup> Indicated on the map are the locations of the trading posts, marking the living-quarters of the few Europeans who inhabited the area. Additionally, he incorporated information not directly related to geography on his map.<sup>224</sup> As was his habit when exploring new territory, Thompson supplemented his record of courses and distances with remarks on topography and navigation, such as the severity of rapids and the lengths of portages. Many of his daybook entries for the mid-Columbia also delve into the details of local ethnography and natural history.<sup>225</sup> His description of the country that he passed through is quite breathtaking for its exotic splendor, not for its agricultural potential.<sup>226</sup> Very rarely did Thompson describe the fertility of the soil or the growing season of western Canada as he passed through.

Thompson attempted to gain public recognition of his works in 1820. Unfortunately, for Thompson, his attempt at publishing his own map in Britain, in direct competition with Arrowsmith, proved disastrous.<sup>227</sup> He was unable to publish his maps in London by 1820 as he had hoped. In addition, the government employed him as a surveyor on the joint British/American Boundary Commission during this time. This kept him from working on his maps, but enabled him to survey over a thousand miles of territory that would make up the boundary.<sup>228</sup>

Although Thompson never successfully published a map that competed with the Arrowsmith map, his maps did enlarge the knowledge of the geography of North America. In 1817, Arrowsmith incorporated some of Thompson's work onto his new editions.<sup>229</sup> Arrowsmith's use of Thompson's maps and surveys guaranteed that members of the government and public learned of Thompson's discoveries, although it seems unlikely that anyone realized it was Thompson's work supporting Arrowsmith's maps. The *Edinburgh Annual Register* carried an advertisement for Arrowsmith's new

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<sup>223</sup> Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, pg.208

<sup>224</sup> Thompson's Map of 1814

<sup>225</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg.104

<sup>226</sup> Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, pg.148

<sup>227</sup> Jenish, *Epic Wanderer*, pg.190

<sup>228</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg. 72

<sup>229</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg. 72

atlas for all the known regions of the world, including North America.<sup>230</sup> Papers advertised Arrowsmith's map/atlas all over Britain, garnering much public attention.<sup>231</sup>

As time passed, Thompson's work filled in the blank spaces on Arrowsmith's North American map. Arrowsmith's use of Thompson's information in 1817 was a step in that direction, but information was still missing. With the merger of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, Thompson's 1814 map became the property of the Hudson's Bay Company. Governor George Simpson made Thompson's map available to the Arrowsmith printing firm, which used the information in its next edition.<sup>232</sup> Arrowsmith may have drawn more from the work of David Thompson than from that of any other explorer.<sup>233</sup> New information about the area west of the Rocky Mountains filled in many blank spaces. Arrowsmith had used the new information, and it was obvious that two rivers ran to the Pacific, the Fraser and the Columbia.<sup>234</sup> Anyone who viewed Arrowsmith's 1821 map could see that the Columbia River was the main artery for trade and communication into the Oregon Country from the Pacific Ocean.<sup>235</sup>

After 1821, the map of North America filled in, but was not yet complete. Thompson created a work of art in 1814, but he had rushed the production of his map.<sup>236</sup> During the 1820s, he had time to produce a more detailed map. On ten individual sheets, he created a *Map of North America from 84° West to the Pacific Ocean*.<sup>237</sup> Drawn on a scale of three inches to one degree of longitude, it covered roughly the same territory as the 1814 North-West Territory map.<sup>238</sup> Those ten sheets arrived in London by 1826, and Arrowsmith promptly incorporated them into his map of North America.

In 1827, and again in 1832, Arrowsmith used Thompson's information to bolster his *General Atlas*. The new atlas editions impressed the papers with the "neatness of the

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<sup>230</sup> New Publications for 1817, *Edinburgh Annual Register*, January 1817, p.256

<sup>231</sup> Advertisements can be found in the *Edinburgh Annual Register*, *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, and *The London Times*. The last two were published in London, while the third was published in Scotland.

Arrowsmith's productions received reasonable press coverage.

<sup>232</sup> Thompson, *Columbia Journals*, pg. 208

<sup>233</sup> Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, pg.2

<sup>234</sup> Arrowsmith, *Map of North America*, 1833

<sup>235</sup> Arrowsmith, *Map of North America*, 1821

<sup>236</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg.136

<sup>237</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg. 136

<sup>238</sup> Nisbet, *The Mapmaker's Eye*, pg.135

execution” of the maps.<sup>239</sup> The *Quarterly Review* and the *Dublin Review* ran advertisements and short reviews that favorably described Arrowsmith’s presentation of world geography.<sup>240</sup> He even published a *Grammar of Modern Geography*, for use at King’s College School. The atlas provided teachers with a tool they could use to teach children about geography.<sup>241</sup> If students studied Arrowsmith’s maps, then that is a good indication of the public’s acceptance and interest in the geography of North America and the world.

By 1833, maps of western Canada looked much like the way they do today. Minor details were still missing, details the other explorers would eventually add in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Information available to the British public about western Canada was now extensive and reliable. David Thompson’s observations completed the work begun by Pond, Hearne, Cook, Vancouver, Turnor, and Mackenzie. By 1833, Arrowsmith had used all of the information provided by the explorers on his maps of North America to construct a detailed map of North America that would serve as the basis for future maps of the continent.

British explorers had provided extensive geographical information to a British audience about western Canada. Nevertheless, studying the available geographic information, the British concluded the region was only fit for the fur trade. The public was happy to receive the new knowledge, but in this case, the increased knowledge about western Canada did not lead to settlement. The British, who had been expanding around the world for several hundred years, were not yet interested in settling western Canada.

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<sup>239</sup> *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, 1:2 (1827:Nov.), p.29

<sup>240</sup> *Quarterly Review* 35:70 (1827: March), p. 614

<sup>241</sup> “A Grammar of Modern Geography, 1832,” *Dublin Review* 5:9 (1838: July), pg.51

## Conclusion

By 1833, the explorers had filled in Arrowsmith's map of North America. The explorers built a base of knowledge from which the British conceptualized the Canadian wilderness. Each discovery contributed to a clearer description of the world. The explorers' work was slow going; over the course of seventy years, they contributed to the European scientific classification of the globe. Each new discovery corrected the mistaken observations of those that had come before. Many of the expeditions were a direct result of the fur trade, the explorers' search for new sources of fur opened up the Canadian interior to European comprehension.

Between 1763 and 1833, the British conception of the Canadian wilderness remained remarkably consistent. During that period the explorers' publications transmitted the idea that western Canada was a wilderness, full of economic possibility, but not readily suitable for settlement. The only explorer to advocate settlement in the Canadian west was Mackenzie. He published his argument in his *Voyages* in 1801. Mackenzie and his North West partners had devised a plan to extend trade across North America, across the Pacific, and into China.<sup>242</sup> Mackenzie failed to implement his plan before his death. His call for a colony in western Canada seems to have influenced only one person, Lord Selkirk. The *Quarterly Review* did not support the settlement at Red River. The magazine did not understand why anyone wanted to use precious resources to settle a land only fit for the fur trade.<sup>243</sup>

Over the course of seventy years, the British conception of the Canadian wilderness evolved very little. Because of the explorers' discoveries, the British understood the geography of North America better in 1833 than in 1763. The periodicals provided a glimpse at the public reception to the discoveries made in western Canada. Several articles indicated that the British really had no interest in colonizing western Canada. It had no problem with the conception of settlement; Britain had been doing it since the early seventeenth century. They just did not understand why anyone would

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<sup>242</sup> Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, pg. 311

<sup>243</sup> "A Sketch of the British Fur Trade in North America," *Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1816, p.142

want to settle in a wilderness that was supposedly too remote to benefit British mercantile interests. The British just could not shake their conception of Canada as a wilderness fit only for the fur trade.

Eventually, British opposition to settlement in western Canada eased. In 1838, the directors of the Hudson's Bay Company created the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company. It supplied agricultural produce for Hawaii and entered into a trade agreement with the Russian American Company in Alaska. In addition, the directors promoted settlement to reinforce the British territorial claim to part of the Oregon Country.<sup>244</sup> In 1849, the British officially settled Vancouver's Island under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>245</sup> The encroaching Americans in the Oregon Country may have motivated the British to create a colony there. The British desired political control of the region north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. However, that intriguing historical study can be the subject of another research project.

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<sup>244</sup> Galbraith, *Hudson's Bay Company as Imperial Factor*, pg. 197

<sup>245</sup> Galbraith, *Hudson's Bay Company as Imperial Factor*, pg. 283

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