

# James Hanna and John Henry Cox: The First Maritime Fur Trader and His Sponsor

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The clocks, watches, jewellery, and mechanical novelties that delighted the mandarins in Canton and Peking in the late eighteenth century have a modest place in the history of the maritime fur trade. For it was these "singsongs," as they were known locally, that brought to China the man who not only sponsored the pioneer expedition of James Hanna to Nootka in 1785 but also was involved in Hanna's second venture and in the better-known voyages of John Meares, Charles Barkley, James Colnett, and others in the crucial years that followed.

The man in question was John Henry Cox, son of James Cox, a celebrated watchmaker and jeweller of Shoe Lane, London, who had been the major supplier of "singsongs." In 1766, "by order of the East India Company," James Cox had made two huge and bejewelled clocks of great complexity that the company had presented to the Emperor of China.<sup>1</sup> Memory of this transaction may have benefited John Henry when he asked the East India Company for permission to go to Canton. Permission was granted, and he was in China by 1781. The *Chronicles* of the company

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<sup>1</sup> At this time the Chinese "always wore watches in pairs, on the quaint grounds that when one went to sleep the other would still be awake." Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-1842* (Cambridge University Press, 1951), 23. Cited hereafter as Greenberg. In this instance the custom was evidently extended to clocks. In 1868 one of the clocks presented to the emperor was offered for sale in London. It had come from Paris "accompanied by a letter from a French officer, who stated that he himself had brought it from the Summer Palace in Pekin"—a clear reference to the looting of the palace in 1861. About 1760 Cox, described as a "craftsman of great mechanical and artistic ability," had made what he claimed to be a "perpetual motion" clock, wound by changes in barometric pressure; it is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. About 1778 he opened a museum in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, but it was not a commercial success and in 1773 a private Act of Parliament authorized him to dispose of the exhibits by a lottery. His detailed catalogue of the fifty-six exhibits and a copy of the catalogue offering the Peking clock for sale in 1868 are in the British Library.

state that he came ostensibly "for the benefit of his health," but his true mission was to deal with the family's business problems in Canton.<sup>2</sup> There he found that many of the Chinese merchants who wished to purchase his "singsongs" were short of cash, and he was compelled to accept goods in payment. This in turn posed problems, since disposing of the goods involved him in trading that was contrary to the monopoly of the East India Company.

Fortunately for Cox, he was not the only British subject so employed. Some illicit trading was conducted by supercargoes from the East India Company's own vessels, who originally had been required to leave in the ships in which they had arrived, but were later permitted to stay for a time in China. There were usually about a dozen of them in residence, and the senior members formed a Select Committee which watched over the affairs of the company in Canton and Macao. The junior supercargoes habitually engaged in trading on their own account, much of which was concerned with the privately owned ships that sailed between India and China in what was known as the Country Trade.

In addition, a few individuals, like Cox, had come to China on one pretext or another and had contrived to stay on from season to season. Known as the Private English, they were only a handful in number, but from time to time the Court of the East India Company, in London, irritated by their trading activities, ordered their expulsion. Cox himself was instructed to leave in 1783. He appealed to the Select Committee, and as he had "always conducted himself with great propriety, and becoming respect and deference to the Hon'ble Companys [sic] authority," his plea was successful.<sup>3</sup> Two other Britishers were also permitted to stay on quite different grounds. John Reid, who had been in China since 1779, had secured a commission as Consul in Canton for His Imperial Austrian Majesty, and the Select Committee decided that in view of this diplomatic qualification it would be "improper to give him any molestation."<sup>4</sup> The same applied to Daniel Beale, who held the post of Consul for the King of Prussia. These two rulings were of great consequence to Cox, for in 1782 the trading house of Cox & Reid, in which both Reid and Beale were partners, had come into existence.

<sup>2</sup> Hosea Ballou Morse (ed.), *The Chronicles of the East India Company trading to China 1635-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), vol. 2, 142. Cited hereafter as Morse. Greenberg states that John Henry was allowed to go to China on the death of his father "to sell off the remainder of his stock" (23). But James Cox lived until 1788.

<sup>3</sup> Morse, 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

As this indicates, Cox was branching out far beyond his initial concern with "singsongs." He was soon involved in the private trading activities of some of the East India supercargoes, and Michael Greenberg states that he acted at Canton "for private British Country merchants in India." He "soon launched out into the Country Trade on his own account, [and] bought the Bengal-built ships, *Supply* and *Enterprise*, which he freighted with cotton and opium from Calcutta."<sup>5</sup> As will appear, these links with India were to be important in the development of the maritime fur trade.

We do not know when the possibility of developing a trade in sea-otter skins from the Northwest Coast, suggested by Cook and some members of his last expedition, first caught Cox's interest. He had arrived in Macao little more than eighteen months after Cook's ships had left it, and no doubt stories about the furs they had brought and the high prices they had fetched were still current. Unauthorized accounts of Cook's voyage, which mentioned the sea-otter transactions, doubtless aroused interest in China as they did in Europe. Encouraged by William Bolts, who had served with the East India Company in Bengal, the Imperial Asiatic Company of Austria planned to have a ship ready to sail from Trieste in September 1782. When negotiating for insurance, Bolts pointed out that the "very able officers" included four who had sailed with Cook (one being George Dixon, who would reach the Northwest Coast under other auspices).<sup>6</sup> Financial and other difficulties doomed the project, but word of the plan probably reached John Reid, Cox's partner, in his capacity as Consul for Austria in Canton. But Britain, France, and Spain were still at war, and it was the coming of peace in 1783 and the publication of the official account of Cook's last voyage in June 1784, in which Captain King offered practical suggestions to would-be participants in the fur trade, that aroused widespread interest and led to definite action.

Cox & Reid were first in the field — the objective of all the initial ventures, since it was assumed that early harvests would probably be the richest. The ship they owned or chartered was the brig *Harmon*, to which they gave the appropriate name *Sea Otter*.<sup>7</sup> Her commander was James

<sup>5</sup> Greenberg, 23, citing East India *Factory Records*, *China*. The company tolerated trading by its supercargoes and the Private English because it required them to deposit their profits (at times very substantial) with the company, which gave in return bills payable in London. This increased the funds it had available in China to purchase tea and other items for export, and so increased its own profits.

<sup>6</sup> William Bolts to Wm. Herries, G. Keith & Co., 31 July 1782, enclosed in Bolts to John Johnston, 31 August 1782. Originals in Provincial Archives.

<sup>7</sup> The logs in the Provincial Archives show that she was renamed *Sea Otter* before she sailed, but she evidently continued to be known locally as the *Harmon*. On 28 February 1786 the Council of Super cargoes of the East India Company, reporting on

Hanna, about whom nothing seems to be known except that he was well regarded. John Meares, for one, referred to him as an "active and able seaman."<sup>8</sup>

No one seems to have paid any heed to Spanish claims to ownership of the Northwest Coast, which Spain had endeavoured to protect by shrouding it in secrecy. Word of Cook's expedition had alarmed the Minister of the Indies in Madrid; he had instructed the authorities in Mexico to try to intercept Cook, but this they had been unable to do. Reports of the sale of sea-otter skins at high prices in China had caused further alarm, as they raised the spectre of a rush of foreign ships to the area. At the same time it suggested that the Spaniards themselves might enter the trade to advantage, as sea otters were plentiful in California waters.

Several plans were soon being considered. In California, the Franciscan fathers saw in furs a possible source of income both for their missions and for the Indians, and the annual galleon that sailed from Acapulco to Manila in 1783 carried over 700 sea-otter skins that they had collected.<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile things were stirring in Manila itself. In 1782 plans were afoot to build ships that would engage in the fur trade on the coast of California, and a vessel intended to be so employed crossed to San Blas in 1785.<sup>10</sup> Relevant in the present context, Ciriaco Gonzales Carvajal, Intendant of the Royal Philippine Company, envisaged a trade in which furs from California would be brought to Manila and then forwarded to Canton, where they would be exchanged for quicksilver, then much in demand in Mexican mines. His interest explains how it is that the earliest account of Hanna's first voyage is found in a dispatch outlining his proposal that Gonzales wrote to the Minister of the Indies on 3 February 1786. It includes a translation of part of a letter from Blanchard, pilot of the frigate *Victoria*, written only a week or two after Hanna returned to Macao. The language of the original is not stated; in English it reads as follows:

At the end of April [1785] a small ship of ninety tons was fitted out at Macao, under the Portuguese flag, although the cargo and Vessel belong to the English. It was rumoured that this Ship was out to buy peltry on the coast of

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her voyage, referred to her as "a small vessel . . . sent last year from Macao the Harmon to the Northwest Coast of America to procure furs." India Office Library and Records, London, Miscellaneous papers of the East India Company. Greenberg makes an odd mistake when he refers to her as the *Hanna*. Greenberg, 24.

<sup>8</sup> John Meares, *Voyages made in the Years 1788 and 1789, from China to the North West Coast of America* (London, 1790), lii.

<sup>9</sup> Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 107.

Cansckaka [Kamchatka]. It was armed with eight cannons, some pedreros<sup>11</sup> and carried a crew of twenty-eight men. Its cargo consisted of nails, knives, scissors, mirrors, glass [beads?] and some other articles likely to arouse the curiosity of savages. On the fifteenth of this month [December 1785] this ship returned to Macao with all its crew in good health, but with its mainmast damaged due to a storm that it encountered on its return trip North of Formosa. This Ship did not go to Cansckaka but to the North of California at a Bay named Kings [*sic*] George Sound. The name which the natives of the Country give to this Bay is Nootka, and it is situated at about the latitude forty [-nine] degrees thirty minutes. They brought some pelts which will cover [the cost of] their outfitting. One of the outfitters has assured me that they may send one or two Ships to these same parts next year.<sup>12</sup>

Blanchard's report is the only contemporary source that states that the *Sea Otter* sailed under Portuguese colours — a practice that would be followed by other ships in which Cox had an interest. This was a subterfuge to avoid the monopolies of the South Sea Company and the East India Company, which respectively controlled British trading rights on the Northwest Coast and in China — that is to say, in the areas where sea-otter skins would be gathered and where they would be sold. Macao was important in this connection. It was a tiny Portuguese colony on the estuary of the Pearl (or Canton) River, some fifty miles from the Canton anchorage at Whampoa. Neither the East India supercargoes nor the Private English were permitted to live the year round in Canton; when the last ship of the season departed they all migrated to Macao. The *Sea Otter* was outfitted at a time when Cox would be living at Macao, and to have the work done there and place her under Portuguese colours was thus physically convenient as well as commercially astute.

It is surprising that Blanchard's list of trade goods does not include iron, copper, or brass, as Cook and some of his officers had commented upon what Cook himself termed the "passion" for metal shown by the natives at Nootka. Alexander Walker (of whom more presently) stated from personal knowledge that Hanna "neither wanted Wrought Iron nor Copper," which Walker's own experience had shown to be "sure and infallible Mediums of Barter."<sup>13</sup> Blanchard exaggerates the size of the *Sea Otter*, which he describes as "a small ship of ninety tons." Half a dozen other contemporary mentions all give her tonnage as fifty or sixty. She cannot

<sup>11</sup> Light swivel guns, probably four-pounders.

<sup>12</sup> The translation is dated 31 January 1786. The dispatch is in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Aud. Guadalajara 492.

<sup>13</sup> Robin Fisher and J. M. Bumstead (eds.), *An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 & 1786 by Alexander Walker* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1982), 200. Cited hereafter as Walker.

have been more than fifty feet in length. Meares comments that her small size was a tribute to Hanna's courage: it "served to impress the minds of all concerned in the business with an [sic] high idea of the spirit of the man."<sup>14</sup>

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Much of our information about Hanna's activities comes from participants in other trading ventures, and in particular from those who took part in three expeditions that were on the Northwest Coast in 1786-1788. Hanna and his sponsors, Cox & Reid, were first on the scene by only a narrow margin. The interest shown in the possibilities of the China fur market in Austria and France, as well as in Britain, had caused the East India Company some concern. In particular, it seems to have caused worry lest George Dixon's knowledge and talents might be used to its disadvantage.<sup>15</sup> In May 1785, when the *Sea Otter* was no more than well started on her voyage, the company decided that it could "by way of experiment" and "with safety to themselves" give trading licences for one voyage to each of two ships owned by a London partnership headed by Richard Cadman Etches.<sup>16</sup> Adopting Cook's name for Nootka, it became known as the King George's Sound Company. In August the South Sea Company gave Etches a similar concession. Most of his partners were merchants, but they included George Dixon and Nathaniel Portlock, who had been shipmates in Cook's *Discovery* and were therefore familiar with Nootka Sound. Portlock headed the expedition as captain of the larger of the company's first two ships, the 320-ton *King George*; Dixon commanded the 200-ton *Queen Charlotte*. They sailed from the Thames in company in September. As the relatively large size of the ships indicates, the enterprise was planned on somewhat ambitious lines. In addition to the approval of the East India Company, it enjoyed the influential support of Sir Joseph Banks, and, as the names of the ships suggest, had met with official favour. The Treasurer of the Navy named the *King George*, and Banks christened the *Queen Charlotte*. Important in the present connection, both Portlock

<sup>14</sup> Meares, li.

<sup>15</sup> Barry M. Gough, *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579-1809* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 53, 159, citing the minutes of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, 29 April 1785.

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of the Committee of Correspondence, 6 May 1785. The full report on the Etches application is printed in F. W. Howay (ed.), *The Journal of Captain James Colnett aboard the Argonaut ... 1789 to ... 1791* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941), 300-05. Cited hereafter as Colnett.

and Dixon published lengthy accounts of their trading and exploring activities on the Northwest Coast.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, another expedition was being organized in Bombay. James Strange, a Factor in the service of the East India Company, had read the official account of Cook's last voyage. Enthused by the possibility of making a fortune by being the first trader to reach Nootka, he secured the financial support of his influential friend David Scott, a future East India chairman. The company's Bombay Council was not directly involved, but it was willing to give some assistance, with a view to gauging what future the fur trade might have. The expedition's two well-equipped ships, the 350-ton *Captain Cook* and the 140-ton *Experiment*, sailed from Bombay early in December 1785, bound for the Northwest Coast. Two journals describing the venture in detail are now available, one kept by Strange himself,<sup>18</sup> and the other by Alexander Walker, who commanded a force of fifteen soldiers seconded to the expedition by the Bombay government. Walker, only 21 at the time, tells us that he was "induced by curiosity to visit the Coast of America, and Embarked on board the *Experiment*" of which his friend, John Guise, was captain.<sup>19</sup>

Word of some of these developments may have reached Cox and his partners, as even before Hanna returned from his first voyage they were preparing to increase their own involvement in the fur trade. Cox's links with Calcutta have been mentioned. More capital was needed for the plans he had in mind, and it was in association with merchants there that the Bengal Fur Society was organized.<sup>20</sup> In January 1786 it purchased two snows of 200 and 100 tons, named respectively *Nootka* and (with some lack of originality) *Sea Otter*. They sailed from Calcutta in March 1786.

The commanders of all six of the ships outfitted for these three ventures had served in the Royal Navy; five of them were lieutenants left unemployed with the coming of peace. Captain of the *Nootka*, and a partner in the enterprise, was John Meares. William Tipping, captain of the *Sea Otter*, was embarking on what proved to be his last voyage, for his little

<sup>17</sup> Nathaniel Portlock, *A Voyage Round the World* (London, 1789), and George Dixon's volume of the same title and date. The latter consists of a series of letters written by William Beresford, Dixon's supercargo, with an introduction by Dixon himself. Cited hereafter as Beresford.

<sup>18</sup> James Strange's *Journal and Narrative of the Commercial Expedition from Bombay to the North-West Coast of America* (Madras: Government Press, 1928). References in this article are to the reprint published with additional matter by the Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Washington, in 1982. Cited hereafter as Strange.

<sup>19</sup> Walker, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Greenberg, 24.

ship would become the first casualty in the maritime fur trade. Meares would join the chroniclers of events on the Northwest Coast in 1790, when he published his portly volume of *Voyages*.

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To return to the first *Sea Otter*, Hanna's ship: she set sail from Macao on 15 April 1785 on what deserves to rank as the first voyage of a merchant ship from the Orient to what is now British Columbia. Two logs kept on board have survived and have found their way to the Provincial Archives in Victoria. Both are incomplete, but between them they provide an entry of some sort for every day of the trans-Pacific voyage.<sup>21</sup> Both suffer from frailties inevitable at the time: many of the positions given and the daily runs recorded had to be based on dead reckoning, and errors resulted, especially in longitude.

Hanna intended to follow the coast of China northward, sail through the Formosa (now Taiwan) Strait, then head northeast across the East China Sea and so again the open Pacific south of Japan. But bad weather slowed the little ship's progress and the favourable winds he had expected to find failed to materialize. On 11 May, in the log probably kept by Hanna himself, the entry reads in part: "We now see one month expired, a large quantity of Water expended, & no appearance of SW Monsoon." He decided to call for water at Amoy (Xiamen), but currents swept him northward and instead he visited what is now Xinghua Sound, at the north end of Taiwan Strait. There he secured water on 21 May, and the following day "got fresh Fish & Fowls, but at a very dear rate, the Inhabitants being exorbitant & thievish." Hanna evidently considered that it was from this point that his voyage really began. One log refers to Lamjet Island (now Nanri Dao), at the entrance of the sound, "from whence I take my departure" and the other notes that it was there that they "Discharged the Pilot."

Constantly plagued by contrary winds, Hanna concluded that he had encountered the northeast trade winds, and in an effort to escape them evidently passed into the Pacific close to Japan. A dozen days later, on 7 June, he sighted an island on which a large volcano was in full eruption,

<sup>21</sup> The more complete of the two logs is entitled "Brig Sea Otter from Macao towards America through the Northern Pacific Ocean." It is probably a fair copy of a log kept by Hanna. It extends from 15 April to 9 August but lacks the entries from 27 May to 7 June. The second log, headed "Journal of a Voyage from Macao towards King Georges Sound. In the Sea Otter, Capt. Hanna, Commander," has the appearance of having been kept day-by-day on shipboard. Unfortunately it extends only from 15 April to 8 June and lacks the entries for 18-27 April.

emitting "Clouds of thick black smoak, [sic] which impregnated the air, with a suffocating sulpherish smell . . . always preceded by a clap of thunder or roaring noise like distant cannonading." Daylight revealed that the decks were "cover'd with a sort of stuff like Lam[p]black, that fell on us in the night."

Thereafter the log consists of little more than a tabulation of estimated positions and distances run, but these have an interest of their own. The only ships that had made westbound passages across the Pacific were the Spanish galleons which for two centuries had sailed between Manila and Acapulco. Hanna's log suggests that he or his principals had secured details of the courses these westbound galleons followed. The southwest monsoon that he had hoped to find was the wind that propelled the galleons on the first stage of their passage, when they were seeking the higher latitudes in which they could expect to encounter westerlies that would persist most of the way to the west coast of America. These westerlies were found somewhere between 31 and 44 degrees north, and for six weeks, until nearly the middle of July, Hanna's log shows that he kept within those latitudes.<sup>22</sup> Thereafter he edged slowly northward, as Nootka Sound was his intended destination, and Cook had given its position as 49 degrees 33 minutes. The latitude recorded in the last entry in Hanna's log is 49 degrees 37 minutes. His calculation of longitude was much less accurate and was in error by almost 10 degrees.

Since the beginning of August there had been indications that land was near. Seals were seen and trunks of trees floated by, two of which interested Hanna because he thought "the Roots was at them from their swimming end up." By 8 August land was in sight: "remarkably high, & there appears to be several Bays and Rivers." The next evening the *Sea Otter* was evidently approaching Nootka Sound: "At 7 P.M. Three Canoes came off, as the Night was dark the Arms was got up [for defence, if need be]. And they hollow'd at a distance Maakook this [according to Cook's vocabulary] was asking to trade. We soon got them along[side]."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> On the routes followed by the galleons see William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: Dutton, 1959), 226-28; and Roger Smith Morris, *Pacific Sail* (Camden, Maine: International Marine Pub. Co., 1987), 44-46. Morris sailed across the Pacific in the replica of the *Bounty*.

<sup>23</sup> A puzzling comment is appended to the log entry for 31 July which states that the weather had been "so thick, wet & hazey or foggy, that since the 14th of May we have not had a clear sky or opportunity of observing for Long[itude] either by night or day." But on 14 May the *Sea Otter* was still in Taiwan Strait, and the second log, which ends 7 June, notes five clear days in the period 14-26 May. It seems likely that "14th May" was a slip of the pen for "14th July."

Unfortunately the log breaks off abruptly at this point, and the few details available about Hanna's first stay at Nootka are found in the accounts of participants in the other fur-trading ventures to which reference has already been made. The earliest and most informative of these is the recently published journal of Alexander Walker, a member of the expedition led by James Strange — the first to visit Nootka after Hanna. The editors of the journal warn readers that the original manuscript was lost, but that Walker "kept rough notes and lengthy extracts from the original" that enabled him to reconstruct the text as printed. Fortunately the surviving extracts included his account of Hanna; Walker himself states specifically that "Among the Papers that I preserved is an account of a Voyage that was made to the North West (Coast) of America from Canton in 1785. . . . It was conducted by an Englishman of the name of Hannah [sic] with enterprise and intelligence." Walker's account of Hanna's second voyage evidently survived as well, as it is dated February 1787.<sup>24</sup>

Most references, whether well- or ill-informed, treat a clash with the Indians at Nootka as the major event of Hanna's sojourn there, perhaps because it proved to be the first of a series of attacks by natives on trading ships.<sup>25</sup> Accounts of it vary considerably and present the familiar historical problem of trying to ascertain what actually happened.

Walker evidently made a considerable effort to secure the facts of the matter. His initial account reads:

The Savages commenced the Attack in this manner. They surrounded the Schooner with their Canoes amounting to 16 or 20, from whence they assailed her with all kinds of Missile Weapons; but finding this Mode not likely to succeed, they attempted to board her with long knives. This effort seems not to have been very obstinate, nor was there much difficulty in repulsing them.

Walker adds that "a party of Strangers who were also trading with him" had forewarned Hanna that an attack on the *Sea Otter* was being planned, and without this timely warning he felt that it might well have succeeded.<sup>26</sup> The "Strangers" were evidently Ahousat Indians, whose village was then on Vargas Island, some fifty miles to the south. Gratitude for this warning probably explains the friendship that Hanna formed with Cheaskinah, the Ahousat chief. In accordance with Indian custom, they exchanged names as a token of mutual esteem, and Cleaskinah was known ever after as Chief Hanna. He promised to reserve furs for Hanna, in the

<sup>24</sup> Walker, 7, 168, 203.

<sup>25</sup> See F. W. Howay, "Indian Attacks upon Maritime Traders of the North-West Coast, 1785-1805," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 6 (1925), 287-309.

<sup>26</sup> Walker, 199.

expectation that he would be making a second voyage, and did so when the Strange expedition arrived in 1786.<sup>27</sup>

Later Walker became distrustful of his first account and wrote an amended version:

It seems from subsequent events and from Circumstances which have transpired, that Capn Hannah's [sic] People were the original transgressors. He is said to have Punished some of the Savages by firing on them, for a petty theft they committed and they made an Attack by surprise as usual in revenge. It ended in their defeat and discomfiture.

Walker continues: "As an instance of the singular disposition of these People, the Battle was not long over, when the Savages who had been guilty of so recent an Act of perfidy, came again along side and offered their Skins to Sale as if nothing had happened." Many later incidents would illustrate this trait of Indian character. If violence or the threat of it failed to secure the end in view, they were frequently ready to change their tactics and try to gain it by trading. Sometimes the very weapons they would have used in an attack became items offered for barter.

A little is known about the sources of Walker's information. He did not meet Hanna, as he had left China before Hanna returned from his second voyage. But he did obtain what he terms a "verbal relation" and he talked with Cox. The talk may not have been very informative, as Walker notes that "great mystery and secrecy" about the first voyage were "observed in disclosing any of its details and occurrences."<sup>28</sup>

The trouble at Nootka was referred to briefly in a well-informed two-part article entitled "New Fur Trade" that appeared in the London *World* on 6 and 13 October 1788. It summarizes all the fur-trading voyages to the Northwest Coast that took place in 1785, 1786, and 1787. The sources of its information seem evident. Portlock and Dixon, commanders of the Etches expedition, who had traded on the coast in 1786 and 1787, had returned to England only weeks before it appeared, and, as we shall see, the East India Company had expelled John Henry Cox from China, and he too was in London in the autumn of 1788. The *World's* account of Hanna's first visit to Nootka reads:

<sup>27</sup> Such well-known narratives as those of Meares, Colnett, Haswell, and Hoskins all refer to Cleaskinah by his adopted name. Dalrymple cites as an instance of Indian "Probity and Honour" that they "stood true to their engagements with Capt. Hanna in 1785, and would not sell one Skin to Mr. Strange, altho' he came thither in 1786 before Capt. Hanna, but kept the whole 'till Capt. Hanna's Arrival." Alexander Dalrymple, *Plan for Promoting the Fur-Trade and Securing it for this Country, by uniting the Operations of the East India Company and Hudson's Bay Company* (London, 1789), 32. Cited hereafter as Dalrymple.

<sup>28</sup> Walker, 199-200.

Soon after her [the *Sea Otter's*] arrival, the natives, whom Captain Cooke [*sic*] had left unacquainted with the effects of fire-arms,<sup>29</sup> tempted probably by the diminutive size of the vessel (scarcely larger than some of their own canoes) and the small number of her people, attempted to board her in open day; but were repulsed with considerable slaughter. This was the introduction to a firm and lasting friendship. Capt. Hanna cured such of the Indians as were wounded; an unreserved confidence took place — they traded fairly and peaceably — [and] a valuable cargo of Furs was procured. . . .<sup>30</sup>

The published narratives of Portlock, Dixon, and Meares all mention Hanna's difficulties with the Indians, but the references are brief and add nothing new. Meares had had access to a Hanna journal (which, without explanation, he describes as "very curious"), but in spite of this he confuses the events of Hanna's two voyages.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, reports from Spanish and Russian sources had added violent details to the affair.

Spain was fearful that the advance of Russian traders through the Aleutian Islands and the mainland of Alaska would soon encroach on the Northwest Coast. In July 1788 an expedition led by Esteban José Martínez, sent from Mexico to investigate the seriousness of the threat, arrived at the Russian post on Unalaska, in the Aleutians. Martínez was accompanied by an interpreter, Estaban Mondolfía, who learned from the post's commander, Potap Zaikov, that a British ship had visited Nootka and had had difficulties with the Indians there. In his diary Mondolfía noted that "in 1785 an English galley had been at Nootka and the Indians had killed and eaten two of its men." Martínez recorded the incident in his own diary in virtually the same words.<sup>32</sup>

It was in this roundabout way that the Spaniards first heard of the arrival of the pioneer maritime fur trader on the Northwest Coast. News of the events at Nootka had been relayed to Zaikov from Petropavlovsk, in Kamchatka, where the British snow *Lark*, commanded by William Peters, had called in the summer of 1786. She had left Bengal in March and had spent some weeks at Canton soon after Hanna had left on his

<sup>29</sup> Not entirely unacquainted: firings were few, but some did occur. One of the great guns was discharged accidentally, and Cook relates that Lieut. Wilkinson demonstrated the ability of a musket ball to penetrate the moose-hide armour of the Indians, who "gaz'd at one another with fright and silent astonishment." J. C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain James Cook: The Voyage of the "Resolution" and "Discovery" 1776-1780* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1967), 320.

<sup>30</sup> London *World*, 6 October 1788. This and other quotations are from the reprint in *The White Knight Chapbooks, Pacific Northwest Series*, no. 4 (San Francisco: White Knight Press, 1941), unpaged.

<sup>31</sup> Meares, liii.

<sup>32</sup> Both diaries are in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville. The entry quoted is dated 20 and 21 July 1788 (ship's time).

second voyage. The Russians were anxious to have news, as they had claims of their own to the Northwest Coast.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Zaikov confirmed Martínez's fears and convinced him that the Russians intended to take possession of Nootka in 1789. Martínez himself would lead the Spanish expedition sent to Nootka in the spring of that year to forestall this move.

There is no evidence to support the story that the Indians ate two of Hanna's sailors. (Blanchard, it will be recalled, stated that the *Sea Otter* returned to Macao "with all its crew in good health.") Thieving was a problem for all the traders who visited Nootka; in a description of the sound and its inhabitants that Martínez inserted in his diary under the date 30 September 1789, he remarked that the Nootkans were "skilled thieves" and described various thefts from British, American, and Spanish ships. Martínez was an ardent and ambitious nationalist, and his point was that the British were much less tolerant of this thieving than the Americans and especially the Spaniards. He cited Hanna's behaviour as evidence:

... the English, who have been less patient in this region than we have been, have treated the Indians haughtily taking their fish from them by force, and paying them for their furs as they wished, ill-treating and depriving them of life. Thus Captain Hanna of the packet *Sea Otter* acted. He went among the villages situated along the NE arm of the inlet, where he killed more than fifty Indians. Not content with this, one day, when Macuina [Maquinna], the principal chief of the village in this port where we are lying, went on board his ship to visit him, and when they had seated him near the binnacle, they sprinkled a little powder under his chair, giving him to understand that this was an honor which they showed to chiefs. He supposed that the powder was dark colored sand, but he soon felt its effect, when one of the Englishmen set off the charge. Poor Macuina was raised from the deck by the explosion and had his buttocks scorched; he showed me the scars.<sup>34</sup>

This sounds much more like a practical joke perpetrated by irresponsible sailors than the act of a captain who hoped to barter furs from the Indians.

<sup>33</sup> See the report (dated 19 April 1787) from Gregorii Shelikhov to the Governor General at Irkutsk: "I have evidence that the English are moving around Kamchatka, and along the coast of America in the North Pacific. . . . When I was at Petropavlovsk harbor in August last year, William Peters, a captain with the East Indian Company, came to trade." Shelikhov assumed that the ships that had come to the Northwest Coast also belonged to the East India Company: "In the year 1785 that company's ship [meaning Hanna's *Sea Otter*] was near our frontiers along the Northwest Coast of America in 50° latitude. . . . Not content with this they sent five more ships in 1786." Thomas Vaughan et al. (eds.), *Russian Penetration of the North Pacific Ocean: A Documentary Record*, 2 (Portland, Ore.: Oregon Historical Society, 1988), 331-32.

<sup>34</sup> Martínez added: "The rest of the English and the other ships treated these Indians in the same manner." The only captains the natives had not complained about were Barkley of the *Imperial Eagle* and Kendrick, commander of the expedition from Boston. Quotations are from the translation by W. L. Schurz in the Special Collections Division of the UBC Library. The original diary is in the Museo Naval, Madrid.

The incident is mentioned only in the diary of Martínez, who is not always a reliable witness, but it has been accepted as fact by authoritative writers, including Warren Cook, author of *Flood Tide of Empire*. In his article on Hanna in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Richard Pierce refers to it as “a humiliating and painful practical joke,” but he assumes that it happened.<sup>35</sup>

Whatever actually occurred, the fracas lingered long in the memory of the Indians at Nootka. In 1803, eighteen years after Hanna’s first voyage, the natives seized the trading ship *Boston* and killed all but two of her crew. John Jewitt, one of the survivors, kept a diary, and his *Journal* was published in 1807. Jewitt’s life had been spared because he was the ship’s armourer, and his skills would be useful to Maquinna. He and the chief developed a friendship of sorts, and on one occasion Maquinna explained to Jewitt why the *Boston* had been seized. He justified the attack by listing some of the wrongs the Indians had suffered at the hands of various trading ships. Hanna had been one of the culprits:

. . . a capt. Hannah [sic] much offended the natives. One of them had been on board his ship, and stole from him a carpenter’s chissel [sic]. The next day there being a number of canoes lying along side the ship the captain fired upon them and killed men, women and children to the number of twenty. The chief being on board jumped from the quarter deck and swam ashore. . . . They were therefore resolved to have revenge on the first ship they should fall in with, which unfortunate event happened to befal [sic] us.<sup>36</sup>

\* \* \*

In his unheralded visit to Nootka, lasting five or six weeks, Hanna acquired 500 whole sea-otter skins and many slips and pieces. One wonders if it is conceivable that, even after a lapse of seven years, this harvest was a legacy of Cook’s visit in 1778. Cook states that when he was leaving the Indians “importuned us much to return to them again and by way of encouragement [sic] promised to lay in a good stock of skins for us, and I

<sup>35</sup> Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 101; *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 4 (University of Toronto Press, 1979), 325.

<sup>36</sup> John R. Jewitt, *A Journal kept at Nootka Sound* (Boston, 1807), 13. With the help of a ghostwriter Jewitt later expanded his journal into a *Narrative* that has been reprinted many times, most recently in 1987. His account of Hanna was changed in a few details, but this may have been due to the ghostwriter rather than Jewitt himself. The first edition of the *Narrative* did not appear until 1815, or thirty years after Hanna’s first visit to Nootka. The name Maquinna was borne by a succession of chiefs, and the question arises whether the Maquinna that Jewitt knew was the same chief that Hanna encountered. Charles Bishop’s log of the ship *Ruby*, which arrived at Nootka in September 1795, notes that Maquinna “came on board to Welcome the Ship, altho’ extremely ill of an ague” and in October, when visiting

have not the least doubt but they will."<sup>37</sup> The *World* understood that a change of season ended Hanna's visit: "bad weather setting in, he left the Coast in the end of September, touched at the Sandwich Islands, and arrived at Macao the end of December."<sup>38</sup> (No other contemporary source mentioned this call at Hawaii, and the *World* probably confused Hanna's first and second voyages.)

William Beresford, supercargo of the *Queen Charlotte*, states that while his ship was in China a resident of Canton gave her commander, Captain Dixon, "a particular account of every transaction in the Fur Trade since its commencement."<sup>39</sup> Beresford noted many details from this source in the letters that form the main text of Dixon's *Voyage*. They include a tabulation of the furs Hanna sold and the prices (in Spanish dollars) which they brought:

140 prime skins	60 dollars each	\$ 8,400
175 second quality	45      "      "	7,875
80 third quality	30      "      "	2,400
55 fourth quality	15      "      "	825
50 fifth quality	10      "      "	500
<hr/>		
500 whole skins		\$20,000
<hr/>		
240 slips and pieces estimated at		
60 skins, sold for		600
<hr/>		
560 otter skins		\$20,600 <sup>40</sup>

There was evidently some delay in disposing of the furs, as they were not sold until 21 March 1786, three months after Hanna's return.

Walker heard that when Hanna returned from his second voyage, in February 1787, the Governor of Macao "refused them permission to enter the Typa [the outer anchorage], in consequence of their having Smuggled

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Clayoquot Sound, Bishop was informed that Maquinna had died. Michael Roe (ed.), *The Journal and Letters of Captain Charles Bishop ... 1794-1799* (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1967), 94, 107. But the narrative of Camille de Roquemore, who was at Nootka in 1817 and 1818, gives a convincing account of his talks with a very old but active Maquinna, who was said to have succeeded his father in 1778, remembered all the Spanish commanders at Nootka, and had praise for all of them except Martinez. *A Voyage Round the World, 1816-1819, in the ship "Bordelais"* (London, 1823), 28, 97, 103.

<sup>37</sup> Cook, *Journals*, 308.

<sup>38</sup> London *World*, 6 October 1788.

<sup>39</sup> Beresford, 315.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 316. The exchange rate between the Spanish dollar and the pound sterling seems to have varied little in this period. East India records show that the rate apply-

many of their Skins the last time they were in the Harbour.”<sup>41</sup> This is probably a garbled account of a stratagem of Cox’s that enabled him to avoid paying certain dues and duties and (according to Greenberg) “save \$2,000 per ship if it anchored at Macao and the skins were transferred to the next Country [private trading] ship bound up-river” to the Canton anchorage at Whampoa.<sup>42</sup>

“It was said, at Canton,” according to Walker, that the cost of Hanna’s expedition had been “about 17,000 Dollars,” but he gives no details of the items that were included in this total. Later, when describing Hanna’s second voyage, he added that Hanna’s pay was “240 Dollars a Month, besides 6 P Cent on all the Trade which Lance and Co. carry on, or may carry on to that Coast. The Ships [*sic*] Company have also 6 P Cent and their Wages.”<sup>43</sup> David Lance was one of the East India supercargoes at Canton with whom Cox was associated in trading transactions.

If Walker’s estimate of costs is anywhere near the mark, the profit on Hanna’s first venture was not large, but it was sufficient to prompt Cox & Reid to send him on a second voyage. He was given a somewhat larger ship, a snow of 120 tons; like her predecessor she was named *Sea Otter* (third of the name).<sup>44</sup> She sailed from Macao on 4 May 1786. Although described as “a very bad Sailer” she managed to cross the North Pacific from the coast of Japan to Nootka Sound in forty-seven days.<sup>45</sup> When she anchored there on 18 August, Hanna made the disconcerting discovery that the sound had just been visited by two rival trading ships.

They were the *Captain Cook* and *Experiment*, carrying the expedition headed by James Strange, which had been organized at Bombay late in 1785. They had ended their visit to Nootka Sound only three weeks before, and, with a view to paving the way for a second voyage (which never materialized), Strange had left at Nootka John Mackay, formerly a surgeon’s mate in the Royal Navy. Hanna invited him to come away in the *Sea Otter*, but Mackay declined, and appeared to be “healthy and contented, dressed and living like the Natives.”<sup>46</sup>

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ing late in 1779 was 5:2 to the dollar, and the same rate was being used in February 1788. At this rate Hanna’s furs would have brought £5,320.

<sup>41</sup> Walker, 201.

<sup>42</sup> Greenberg, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Walker, 199, 203.

<sup>44</sup> Use of the name *Sea Otter* for three different vessels has caused some confusion. Walker confuses them (201), and so do Vincent Harlow and Barry Goult.

<sup>45</sup> Dalrymple, 29.

<sup>46</sup> Walker, 201. Mackay’s name is spelled in a variety of ways, but it is “Mackay” in Strange’s journal.

The Indians had made no mention of Hanna, and Strange still thought he was the first trader to visit the Northwest Coast. He had spent a month at Nootka, at the end of which (in the words of his journal) he believed he had "got possession of every rag of Furr within the Sound, & for a Degree to the Northward & Southward of it."<sup>47</sup> The Indians and Mackay confirmed his visit, which ended Hanna's hopes of repeating the promising trading of the previous year. "Wishing however to refresh his people, many of whom were ill of the scurvy," Beresford notes, "he lay in the Sound about a fortnight, during which time he purchased about fifty sea-otter skins, which were brought him by the natives from distant parts."<sup>48</sup> Presumably the "distant parts" were Vargas Island and the natives were Chief Cleaskinah and the Ahousat Indians, who the previous year had promised to reserve their furs for Hanna.

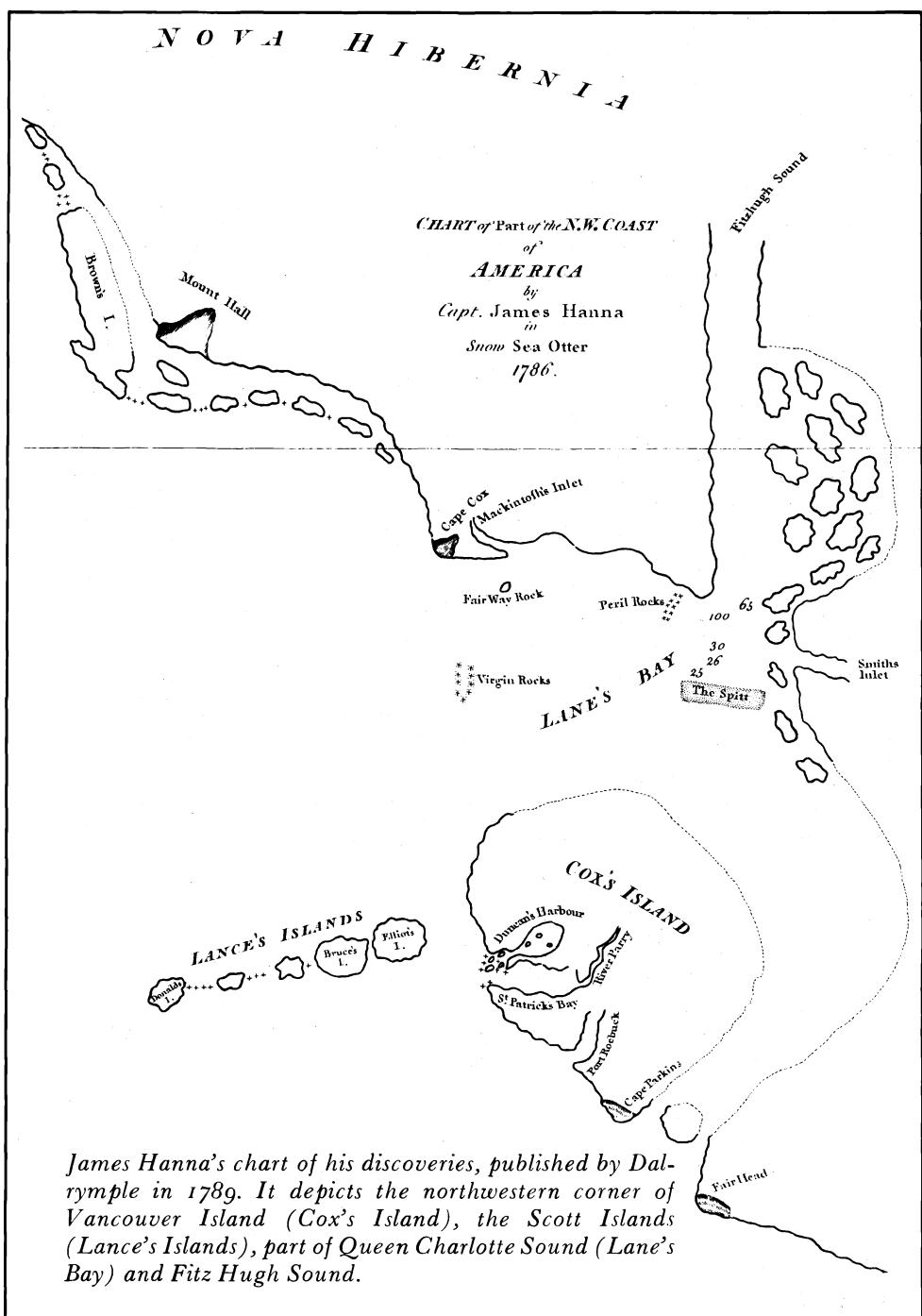
Alexander Dalrymple, one of those who praised the probity of the Indians in honouring their pledge, was at the time Examiner of Sea Journals for the East India Company and in 1795 would become the first hydrographer of the Royal Navy. He had assisted in preparing Cook's journal of his last voyage for publication, and took an avid interest in trade developments and exploration. Most of the journals and charts compiled by early traders and mariners — and many of the men themselves — found their way to his office in London. John Henry Cox was one of a group of friends in Canton who kept him well informed about events on the Northwest Coast. All of the pioneer expeditions, except Hanna's first voyage, professed to have discovery as well as trade as part of their mission, and several (notably the Etches ventures of 1785-1788) included in their plans the establishment of a post or settlement on the coast.

Except for Nootka Sound, bad weather had prevented Cook from seeing any part of the hundreds of miles of coast between Cape Flattery and Cape Edgecumbe, in Alaska, and Dalrymple anxiously awaited news that this blank on the map was being filled in. A copy of Mourelle's journal of his voyage in the *Sonora* in 1775 had reached England and had added a few features as far south as Cape Muzon. But, except for Nootka, the whole of the coast of what is now British Columbia was still unknown territory.

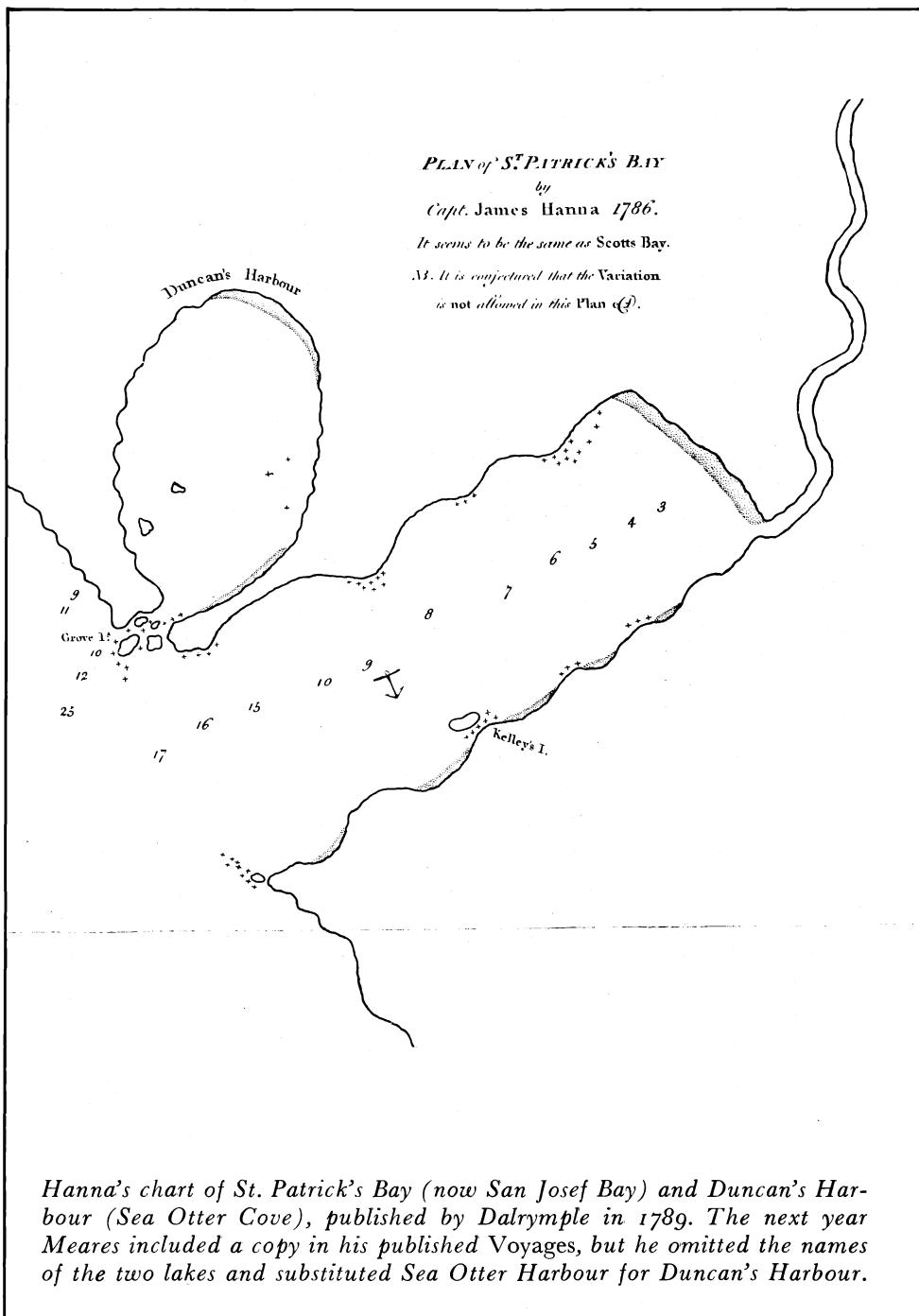
Strange and Hanna were about to make a modest contribution to the solution of this mystery. Strange's two ships left Nootka on 27 July, and owing to misty weather saw little of the land until they neared the north end of Vancouver Island. There Strange named three features after his friend and patron, David Scott: Cape Scott, the northwestern tip of the island;

<sup>47</sup> Strange, 88.

<sup>48</sup> Beresford, 317-18.



James Hanna's chart of his discoveries, published by Dalrymple in 1789. It depicts the northwestern corner of Vancouver Island (Cox's Island), the Scott Islands (Lance's Islands), part of Queen Charlotte Sound (Lane's Bay) and Fitz Hugh Sound.



Hanna's chart of St. Patrick's Bay (now San Josef Bay) and Duncan's Harbour (Sea Otter Cove), published by Dalrymple in 1789. The next year Meares included a copy in his published Voyages, but he omitted the names of the two lakes and substituted Sea Otter Harbour for Duncan's Harbour.

the Scott Islands, which extend westward from it; and Scott's Bay, the larger of the two bays a few miles south of the cape. The smaller bay he named Oxenford Bay, recalling the home of his friend Sir John Dalrymple, brother of Alexander. (The names of the cape and islands have survived, but those of the two bays have been superseded not once but twice.)

In his long boat Strange next entered Goletas Channel, which extends eastward between a fringe of islands and the northern coast of Vancouver Island. He probably reached its eastern end, from which he could see, stretching far into the distance, the full width of Queen Charlotte Strait, which he named Queen Charlotte Sound. There, to his regret, lack of time and provisions compelled him to return to the ships; but the far vista had excited his imagination:

I shall not venture to hazard an Opinion, what this Discovery may lead to; but it strikes me that the Inlet in question, is very probably the Strait, said to be Discovered many years ago by Admiral DeFonte; The Existence of which Captain Cook in his Narrative, regrets not being able to disprove.<sup>49</sup>

It was an opinion soon shared by others, including Hanna.

Strange could devote no more time to discovery; furs were the important thing. There were few natives about, and he noted in his journal that for fifteen days his "stock of furs . . . had received no increase Whatever."<sup>50</sup> On 7 August the *Captain Cook* and *Experiment* set sail for Prince William Sound, in the expectation that trading would be better there.

A few weeks later Hanna arrived in the *Sea Otter* to take his turn at discovery. He had no knowledge of Strange's movements, but by sheer coincidence probed the coastline in the same general area.

Thanks to Cox and Dalrymple, two of Hanna's charts and fragments of his 1786 journal are available. Strange had been sparing of place names; by contrast, twenty-three features are named on the more important of Hanna's two charts. Only three of the names have survived: Fitzhugh Sound (now spelled Fitz Hugh Sound), Smith's Inlet,<sup>51</sup> and the Virgin Islands. Hanna's name for the Scott Islands was Lance's Islands, honouring David Lance; this was spelled "Lanz" on Spanish charts, and one of the Scott Islands is now Lanz Island. Hanna thought that the northwestern corner of Vancouver Island was probably a separate entity, which he named Cox's Island. The largest of the Scott Islands is now Cox Island.

There are four place names on Hanna's second chart, which depicts the

<sup>49</sup> Strange, 94.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>51</sup> Hanna actually named what is now Smith Sound; the name Smith Inlet now applies to an extension of the sound inland.

two bays already named by Strange. On the version published by Dalrymple in 1789 they appear as St. Patrick's Bay and Duncan's Harbour. Two islands are named Kelley's Island and Grove Island. In 1790 Meares printed another version in his *Voyages*, in which the islands are nameless and Duncan's Harbour has become Sea Otter Harbour. It is now Sea Otter Cove. San Josef Bay, the present name of St. Patrick's Bay, appeared on Spanish charts as early as 1793, and the name St. Patrick has migrated to a mountain on the north shore of the bay.<sup>52</sup>

In 1789 Dalrymple printed extracts from Hanna's 1786 journal that relate to the period he devoted to exploration. On 8 September Hanna wrote: "I found we were got into an extensive Bay, bounded to the Southward by Lance's Islands, from whence it takes a sweep Easterly, to a great distance." This "extensive Bay," which appears on his chart as Lane's Bay (named after Henry Lane) was the southwestern corner of what is now Queen Charlotte Sound, and the "sweep Easterly" would be the view down the wide mouth of Queen Charlotte Strait. "In the NE corner of this Bay," the journal continues, "we saw the Entrance of a Great Sound: I called it Fitzhugh Sound, in honour of William Fitzhugh Esq."<sup>53</sup> (Hanna was remembering associates of his owners in China; Lance, Lane, and Fitzhugh were all East India supercargoes who engaged in private trade as partners, and who also did business with Cox.)

Fitz Hugh Sound, which runs northward between the mainland and Calvert Island, was Hanna's most significant discovery. He made several attempts to explore it, but first turned his attention to the west coast of Calvert Island. The journal reads:

From this Sound the Land trended about, to the Northward [actually the Northwestward], and formed a well-looking Inlet, named McIntosh's Inlet, from That the land trended WNW, and ended in a fine round Mountain, which appears in a small double Peak, by which it may be known at a very great distance. As the Mountain forms the North Head of the Bay, and will be the true Directory [landmark] to run for, I named it Cape Cox, in honour of John Henry Cox Esq.<sup>54</sup>

There is no "well-looking Inlet" on the coast of Calvert Island; H. R. Wagner, an authority on Northwest Coast place names, simply lists McIntosh Inlet as obsolete and suggests no modern equivalent. The only possible identification of Cape Cox appears to be Mark Nipple, which rises to no

<sup>52</sup> Only four of Hanna's place names are mentioned in the surviving fragments of his 1786 journal, and as his original charts have disappeared, it is impossible to know when or by whom some of the others may have been added.

<sup>53</sup> Dalrymple, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 11.

great height, but which the modern *Pilot* recommends as "a useful landmark when approaching Fitz Hugh Sound."

At this point a strong gale, rain, and fog intervened and Hanna was "glad to get clear of the Land, as fast as possible." On 11 September, back in Lane's Bay, he "stood with all sail for Fitzhugh Sound." Conditions there prompted him to remark: "I never in the Mouth of any River or Inlet, found such large quantities of Timber, and Rubbish, as continually came down here with the Stream." Another gale, which "encreased [sic], and soon raised a Sea, very little inferiour [sic] to that in the Bay of Biscay" again drove the *Sea Otter* away from the entrance. On the 14th he was able at last to reach the mouth of the sound, only to be becalmed and nearly swept on rocks by the current. All he could do was describe the entrance: "The western shore [Calvert Island] is formed of high Land, making in round Hills, and forming bites, or small bays, as you pass up the Sound: the East side is composed of innumerable Islands . . . [which] appear to extend a great distance Eastward." His conclusion was: "This appears to be a River, from the constant stream that runs out of it, and the quantity of Timber that is floated down."<sup>55</sup>

Hanna made no further effort to enter the sound; the risks were too great. But Dalrymple would later print the relevant passages in Hanna's journal "because it strongly indicates the reality of de Fonta's [sic] account": the islands could well be the Archipelago of St. Lazarus, at the mouth of the Rio de los Reyes, which de Fonte alleged led far inland to a lake that was linked with the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>56</sup>

Beresford gives the only details available about Hanna's trading activities after he left Nootka. He anchored in St. Patrick's Bay and "met with some inhabitants there, but got few furs of any consequence." He then "traced the coast to near 53 degrees North latitude."<sup>57</sup> On his chart Hanna shows a Brown's Island, centred upon latitude 52 degrees 10 minutes, which Wagner suggests was the present Aristazabal Island, at 52 degrees 40 minutes. Presumably the name honoured the Mr. Browne who was a senior East India Company supercargo at Canton. Hanna left the coast on 1 October, and on the homeward voyage the *Sea Otter* lived up to her reputation of being a very bad sailor. Walker heard that "they had a long and fatiguing Passage to the Sandwich Islands, where they Anchored, but did not land."<sup>58</sup> Macao was not reached until 8 February 1787.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 11-13.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>57</sup> Beresford, 317.

<sup>58</sup> Walker, 201, where he confuses two ships named *Sea Otter*.

Walker also records that the *Sea Otter* had a passenger on this return voyage: "They carried away with them a Boy, who was brother to Makquilla [Maquinna], and brought him in good health to China; this was acknowledged to have been done secretly, but with the Lad's own consent."<sup>59</sup> From Meares, who brought him back to Nootka in the *Felice* in May 1788, we learn that his name was Comekela. Meares had hoped that he would have been of great assistance in trading with the Indians, but after spending only a few days short of a year in China he "spoke such a jargon of the Chinese, English and Nootkan languages, as to be by no means a ready interpreter between us and the natives."<sup>60</sup> But he has a place in history as the first native from the coast of British Columbia known to have visited the Orient.

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At Macao, Hanna learned that Strange's ships had arrived late in 1786 and that they had been followed early in January by the French exploring expedition headed by the Comte de la Pérouse. It had spent two of the summer months of 1786 on the Northwest Coast (without encountering either the *Sea Otter* or Strange's ships) and had then sailed south to Monterey. Hanna may well have wondered what effect these arrivals would have on the fur market. Although the La Pérouse expedition was primarily a scientific venture, intended to emulate Cook's, it had picked up furs along the way. According to Walker, La Pérouse and his officers, who stood to benefit financially, had a greatly exaggerated idea of their market value in China. The price they originally had in mind was 96,000 Spanish dollars for their 275 whole sea-otter skins and between 700 and 800 pieces. With time for bargaining limited, La Pérouse had to sell them for 9,050 Spanish dollars.<sup>61</sup>

As in the case of the first voyage, an effort was made to keep the results of Hanna's voyage secret. Walker's journal is again an important source. His informant was Mr. Simpson, presumably Francis Simpson, 5th Officer of Strange's *Captain Cook*. Simpson had been at Macao for only a couple of days after the *Sea Otter* returned in February 1787, but he had seen "the second Mate and a few of the Sailors" who unfortunately "were all so secret, that no certain Account of their success could be learnt from them." Later, on his way to India, Simpson had fallen in with the East

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>60</sup> Meares, 121.

<sup>61</sup> Walker, 205. La Pérouse himself considered that he received only 15 percent of the actual value of the furs.

Indiaman *Ganges*, in which John Reid, one of Cox's partners, was a passenger. Reid had talked to Hanna before he left Macao, and, in Walker's phrase, had been able to give Simpson "a more ample Account" of Hanna's second venture. But, no doubt in the interests of secrecy, Reid chose to greatly exaggerate the quantity and quality of the furs Hanna had gathered. At Nootka the Indians were said to have held back furs from Strange, in accordance with the undertaking given to Hanna in 1785, with the result that he secured "about 156 or 160 whole Sea Otter Skins; exclusive of a proportional number of pieces, such as halves, quarters, &c. These were all of the finest black." Hanna was said to have made a cruise to the south from Nootka in the course of which he "collected from 250 to 300 of the finest Furs Mr. Reid ever saw." Nor was this all. "Over, and above these they brought an equal number, or more, of whole Skins in quality not inferior to our best. Besides they procured rather a greater number of mutilated Skins, or pieces than we had." But Walker was skeptical. "If this relation can be depended on, they must have got by the lowest Computation, 1000d entire Furs; but it appears to me to be greatly exaggerated."<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile the truth was emerging at Macao. In the introduction to his *Voyage* Dixon remarked that "The success he [Hanna] met with in this expedition was never made known, but no doubt it was greatly inferior to that of his former voyage." By the time the main text of Dixon's volume was printed, Beresford had learned that Hanna's furs had been sold at Canton on 12 March 1787, and that they consisted of only 100 sea-otter skins that had fetched \$50 each and 300 "different sized slips and pieces of sea-otter, some of them indifferent" that sold for \$10 each. The total received was thus only \$8,000, compared with the \$20,600 paid for the furs marketed in 1786.<sup>63</sup>

This was a disappointing return, and John Reid's presence on the East Indiaman *Ganges* indicated that Cox and his partners were involved in difficulties of another sort. The East India Company had received complaints that they were conducting business with the Country traders that the company felt should have been handled either by itself or its super-cargoes. Some time after Hanna's return it exercised its power to expel British subjects and ordered Cox and Beale to leave China. As in 1783, Beale was able to stay in spite of the order because he was still Prussian Consul at Canton, but Cox, a simple "private English," had no alternative but to leave.<sup>64</sup> About the same time John Reid also left. He had been consul

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 202-03.

<sup>63</sup> Beresford, xviii, 317-18.

<sup>64</sup> Morse, 42.

for Austria and head of the Imperial Factory at Canton, but the Imperial Austrian Company had become bankrupt.<sup>65</sup> These departures necessitated a reorganization of the firm of Cox & Reid, founded in 1782. Reid dropped out, but Cox wished to continue his links with China and became a non-resident partner in the succeeding firm of Cox & Beale. The partners resident in Canton were Daniel Beale and his brother Thomas, whose convenient appointment as Daniel's secretary at the Prussian Consulate enabled him to take up permanent residence in China.

No doubt Cox tarried in China as long as he could, as he and his associates were anxiously awaiting news of three other ships in which they held an interest. Two of these have been mentioned — the *Nootka* and *Sea Otter*, outfitted by the Bengal Fur Society. The third ship was the *Imperial Eagle*, whose story somewhat resembles the attempt of William Bolts to enter the maritime fur trade. A British ship, in this instance, the *Loudoun*, was taken to Ostend, outfitted there, renamed *Imperial Eagle* and placed under the Austrian flag. Daniel Beale and John Reid (still Austrian Consul at the time) were part owners, and some of the East India supercargoes were also involved. She sailed from Ostend in November 1786, and when she arrived at Nootka Sound in July 1787, her captain, Charles William Barkley, recruited John Mackay, left by the Strange expedition, who helped him gather a goodly harvest of furs. Barkley had been married at Ostend, and his wife, who travelled with him, was the first white woman to visit the Northwest Coast. A fragment of her diary records the event that assures a place in history for the *Imperial Eagle* — the discovery of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Leaving Nootka on 24 July, she cruised southward and a few days later Frances Barkley made the historic entry in her diary: "In the afternoon, to our great astonishment, we arrived off a large opening extending to the eastward . . . which my husband immediately recognized as the long lost strait of Juan de Fuca, and to which he gave the name of the original discoverer, my husband placing it on his chart."<sup>66</sup>

By an extraordinary coincidence two expeditions in which Cox and his associates were interested, exploring part of the Northwest Coast that Cook did not see — Hanna to the north of Nootka and Barkley to the south — thus began a questioning of Cook's dismissal of the voyages of de Fonte and de Fuca as "vague and improbable stories," and, in the words of

<sup>65</sup> Greenberg, 25.

<sup>66</sup> W. Kaye Lamb (ed.), "Barkley Papers," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, 6 (1942), 49-50.

Glyndwr Williams, "raised once again — and for the last time — the possibility that a [interoceanic] passage might exist in temperate latitudes."<sup>67</sup>

The *Nootka*, commanded by John Meares, was the first of four traders to arrive at Macao in a little more than a month, in October and November of 1787. The others were the *King George* and *Queen Charlotte*, belonging to Richard Cadman Etches & Company, and the *Imperial Eagle*. The *Nootka* brought little news to cheer Cox. Underestimating the severity of the northern climate, Meares had decided to winter in Prince William Sound, where he lost many of his crew from scurvy. He had been found in the spring and aided by Portlock and Dixon in the *King George* and *Queen Charlotte* — assistance paid for with bills drawn on Cox.<sup>68</sup> And Meares had no word of his companion ship, the *Sea Otter*. Strange had encountered her in Prince William Sound in September 1786, but she vanished thereafter and presumably was lost at sea — the first casualty in the maritime fur trade.

His misfortunes had curtailed Meares's trading activities, and when his furs were sold early in January total receipts were no more than \$14,242. But the collection, which Beresford lists in detail, had included a hundred prime sea-otter skins, fifty of which had sold for \$91 a skin — the highest price reported at the time.<sup>69</sup> Portlock and Dixon were the next to test the market. Beresford states that the arrival of so many ships had "quite glutted it, and had such an effect on the Chinese, that they scarcely thought furs worth taking away."<sup>70</sup> But Portlock, leader of the expedition, was anxious to leave for England and decided to dispose of their large collection as best he could. It included the handsome total of 2,552 sea-otter skins, "at least 2,000" of which, in Beresford's opinion, "ought to have fetched fifty dollars each, and the remainder a price in proportion." The sum actually received for them and some other miscellaneous furs was \$54,857, which implies that the sea-otter skins brought no more than an average price of about twenty dollars.<sup>71</sup>

Precise details regarding the sale of the furs secured by the *Imperial Eagle* are not available, but according to Dalrymple, who received his information from Cox, her cargo included "about 700" sea-otter skins that

<sup>67</sup> Glyndwr Williams, *The British Search for the North West Passage in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1962), 215.

<sup>68</sup> Meares, xxx, xxxviii.

<sup>69</sup> Beresford, 319. The highest price would be paid for the furs from Prince William Sound, where the severe winter climate produced furs of prime quality.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 321.

were sold for "about \$29,000."<sup>72</sup> The sale was handled by Daniel Beale, and the much better average price of about \$40 a skin may be attributed to his astuteness and knowledge of local ways and means. Portlock had been in a poor position to bargain, as the terms of his trading licence from the East India Company forced him to deal with its Select Committee.

Objections raised by the committee to the status and trading activities of the *Imperial Eagle* made it impracticable to send her on a second voyage to the Northwest Coast, as intended, but this did not deter Beale and Cox and their associates from arranging to continue their activities there. In January 1788 two snows, the 230-ton *Felice* and the 200-ton *Iphigenia*, were purchased and outfitted so expeditiously that they were able to sail from Macao before the end of the month.<sup>73</sup>

This in effect concludes the story of James Hanna. He was still living when the *Nootka* arrived at Macao in October 1787, as Meares, referring to his journals, remarks that Hanna "was so kind as to submit the examination of them to us." He implies that Hanna had expected to participate in further trading to the Northwest Coast, but that death intervened. After referring to his two expeditions, Meares adds: "before he could engage in a third, this active and able seaman was called to take that voyage from which there is no return."<sup>74</sup>

\* \* \*

It remains to note the activities of John Henry Cox in the few years that remained to him. After his formal expulsion from China in 1787 he returned briefly at least twice, but his business interests were divided between the partnership of Cox & Beale, which carried on in Macao and Canton, and personal activities based in London.

Of equal interest is his friendship with Alexander Dalrymple, the hydrographer, whose office became a clearing house for news about trade and exploration on the Northwest Coast. Cox had kept him informed about

<sup>72</sup> Dalrymple, 27.

<sup>73</sup> The full names of the ships (which Meares did not use in his account of the expedition) were *Felice Adventurer* and *Iphigenia Nubiana*. Though British-owned, they flew the Portuguese flag, and their nominal owner was Juan Cawalho, of Macao. Vincent Harlow, citing a statement by Meares before the Board of Trade in London in May 1790, states that the *Felice* was the *Nootka* renamed, but this contradicts Meares's statement in his *Memorial*, presented to Parliament the same month, in which he wrote that "having disposed of the *Nootka*, he . . . purchased and fitted out two other vessels, named the *Felice* and *Iphigenia*." It is clear that the latter statement was correct. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763-1791*, 2 (London: Longmans, 1964), 435; Meares, "Memorial" in appendix to his *Voyages*, unpagged.

<sup>74</sup> Meares, lii.

market conditions and was instrumental in enabling him to see many of the logs, journals, and charts compiled by Hanna, Strange, Portlock, Dixon, and Barkley. So far as trade was concerned, Dalrymple became convinced that the best way to preserve the fur trade for Britain would be to combine the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company and the East India Company. The former would extend its fur gathering operations westward to the Pacific coast, and the East India Company would transport the furs to China and market them there.

In the famous pamphlet in which he expressed these views, Dalrymple noted the progress that had been made in the exploration of the Northwest Coast. Thanks to the voyages of Hanna, Portlock, Dixon, and Barkley, the general direction of the coast was known, but Dalrymple was well aware of Dixon's opinion "that all the Lands, yet discovered, on the West side, at least from Nootka inclusively Northward" were "Islands and not the Continent."<sup>75</sup> And he tentatively accepted the likelihood, supported in part by Hanna's exploration, that de Fonte's inlet and river might actually exist: "Capt. Dixon, and other late Navigators, have found an Archipelago of Islands, and the strongest indications of a large River, in the place where such are described by de Fonta [sic]; This gives some countenance to that too hastily exploded Narrative!"<sup>76</sup>

Even before the pamphlet appeared, Dalrymple had begun publication of a series of charts intended to make known the geographical information available from fur trade sources. The first three sheets, issued in January 1789, were devoted to plans taken from Spanish manuscripts "communicated by John Henry Cox Esqr." They included plans of Bucareli Bay, in Alaska, and four areas in California — Monterey, Santa Barbara Channel, San Diego, and "Port Sn. Francisco." The latter is of interest because it is the earliest known map of San Francisco Bay in the English language.<sup>77</sup> The fifth sheet reproduced the two surviving charts by James Hanna, showing the areas that he explored.<sup>78</sup> This sheet, and Dalrymple's *Plan for Promoting the Fur-Trade*, in which the extracts from Hanna's 1786 journal appeared, were both published in March 1789.

<sup>75</sup> Exploring the coast further north, Colnett shared this opinion: "It's a doubt with me, if ever I have seen the Coast of America at all." Gough, 69. The quotation is from the unpublished journal of his voyage in the *Prince of Wales*.

<sup>76</sup> Dalrymple, 7, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Neal Harlow, *The Maps of San Francisco Bay from the Spanish Discovery in 1769 to the American Occupation* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1950), 49. It is no. 11 of the twenty-nine maps known to have been produced between 1771 and 1844.

<sup>78</sup> On the same sheet Dalrymple included the chart of the track of Strange's *Experiment*, from Nootka northward, drawn by S. Wedgbrough, her 2nd Officer.

Arrangements for the 1788 trading season were probably in place before Cox had to leave China. In spite of the poor returns from the cruise of the *Nootka*, Meares was to command the new expedition in the *Felice*, accompanied by the *Iphigenia*. The intention was to establish a post at Nootka, and Meares stated afterwards that he purchased a site from Chief Maquinna and erected a substantial building. Both claims were questioned later. His one certain achievement was construction of the schooner *North West America*, the first non-native vessel built on the Northwest Coast. But the decisive event of the season was the arrival at Nootka in September of the Boston traders *Columbia* and *Washington*. They represented competition not only from new rival owners, but from another nation, whose ships could operate without any regard for the monopolies of the East India and South Sea companies. Having arranged for the *Iphigenia* and *North West America* to winter in Hawaii, Meares hurried back to China in the *Felice* to discuss strategy for the coming year.

He reached Macao early in December and found that a second pair of ships sent out from England by Richard Cadman Etches & Company, the *Prince of Wales* and *Princess Royal*, had arrived in November after trading for two seasons on the Northwest Coast. In addition to furs that sold later for \$64,235,<sup>79</sup> the highest return from any cargo to date, they brought two persons of importance, James Colnett, commander of the *Prince of Wales*, and John Etches (brother and partner of Richard), her supercargo. The news that American competitors had appeared on the coast, reinforced by the presence of three additional traders — two American and one Portuguese — that were actually fitting out at Macao, prompted the British interests concerned to join forces.

Colnett sums up the circumstances in the first pages of his journal: "it was thought advisable by both parties to form a Junction of trade under the British Flag, each flattering himself [that] from the knowledge acquired by their Commanders of the Coast, [of the] dispositions of the natives, and articles coveted by them in Trade, [we] would soon expel all other adventurers, and enable us to make returns adequate to [meet] expenses of outfit which none of our former Voyages had done." What was termed "an entire union of Interests as well as partnerships" took place between "Messrs. Cox Beal, & Co., and Messrs. Richard Cadman Etches and John Etches & Co., in all Shipping concerns either from China or England which

<sup>79</sup> Morse, 51. The wording of the entry suggests that this sum may have included only the furs from the *Prince of Wales*, as it notes that the "transactions" for the *Princess Royal* "did not pass through the Select Committee's books."

are to be employed on the Coast of America." The formal agreement was dated 23 January 1789.<sup>80</sup>

The *Prince of Wales* sailed on to England, but the much smaller *Princess Royal* was to return to the Northwest Coast along with the recently purchased *Argonaut*.<sup>81</sup> They would be joined there by the *Iphigenia* and *North West America*, after their winter stay in Hawaii. This was intended to be a formidable four-ship offensive in the trade, under the overall command of Colnett. In addition to the usual seamen, "being determined," in his own words, "to form a Settlement at Nootka, Build a fort and also craft to carry on the Trade on a large scale," the *Argonaut* carried a force of Chinese carpenters, blacksmiths, bricklayers, and masons, twenty-nine in all, when she got away from Macao on 26 April 1789.<sup>82</sup>

But across the Pacific, just nine days later, Esteban José Martínez would sail into Nootka Sound in command of a Spanish expedition that would take possession, build a fortified post, seize three of Colnett's four ships, including the *Argonaut*, and precipitate what is known to history as the Nootka Sound Controversy.

\* \* \*

Before the consequences of the controversy had been sorted out, John Henry Cox was dead, but he had been characteristically active in the interval. Greenberg gives a brief summary:

Cox went back to Europe and, obtaining a commission in the Swedish navy, fitted out an armed brig, ostensibly to attack the Russian settlement at Alaska (the Russians and Swedes being then at war). Instead he cruised the Indian and Pacific Oceans in search of seal skins, which he brought to Whampoa in September 1791.<sup>83</sup>

There is confusion and error here, for Cox was involved in three voyages, not one, and there is no evidence that he contemplated hostilities against the Russians.

In England he acquired the new brig *Mercury*, of 152 tons, which he both owned and commanded. The crew included George Mortimer, a lieutenant in the Marines, whose account of the voyage was published in 1791. His preface reads in part:

<sup>80</sup> Colnett, 3, 17. His "journal" includes copies of letters and other documents as well as a narrative describing his voyage. The text of the formal agreement (retroactive to 23 November 1788) is given on 4-7.

<sup>81</sup> Colnett notes that she was 120 tons and refers to her as "the Snow which I have determined to call the *Argonaut*," but he does not give her previous name. Howay notes that "in the Orient at this time owners altered the names of their vessels without any formality." Colnett, 4, 13, 77.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>83</sup> Greenberg, 25.

I am not altogether acquainted with Mr. Cox's motives for what he did; but only understand from him, that as he was under an urgent necessity to go to China, he chose rather to go in his own vessel, than in an Indiaman, especially as he had a great desire to visit the Islands in the South Seas.

(It is obvious that Mortimer was unaware that, having been expelled from China by the East India Company, Cox would be unlikely to seek to travel thither in one of its ships.) Mortimer also understood that although the voyage was undertaken chiefly from motives of curiosity, "the fur trade to the North West Coast of America was its ultimate object."<sup>84</sup> As will appear, the *Mercury* spent a summer trading on the coast.

She sailed from Gravesend on 26 February 1789, rounded the Cape of Good Hope early in May, and late in the month called at Amsterdam Island, a description of which Cox later wrote and Dalrymple published.<sup>85</sup> Always one with an eye for business, Cox was impressed by the great number of seals on the island, and the *Mercury* "procured near a thousand seals skins of a very superior quality,"<sup>86</sup> a harvest that would prompt Cox to send a ship to the island on a sealing expedition.

Continuing on eastward, the *Mercury* skirted Australia and entered the Pacific. After dark on the evening of 9 August she passed within two miles of the island of Tubuai, which sits astride the Tropic of Capricorn. As there were lights on shore, guns were fired, but there was no response. The guns may well have caused some alarm, as the lights were bonfires lit by the mutineers from the *Bounty*, and if it had been daylight the *Bounty* herself would have been visible.<sup>87</sup>

Too much must not be made of this incident, as Mortimer knew nothing about the mutiny at the time, but he became fully informed when the *Mercury* arrived at Tahiti, from which the *Bounty*, with the mutineers in command, had sailed less than two months before. Later Mortimer believed that if he had been able to "communicate such intelligence to the Admiralty respecting the probable destination of the mutineers" it would have enabled the *Pandora*, sent in pursuit of them in August 1790, to run them to earth.<sup>88</sup> But presumably Tubuai was the island where Mortimer ex-

<sup>84</sup> George Mortimer, *Observations and Remarks made during a Voyage . . . to Canton, in the Brig Mercury, commanded by John Henry Cox Esq.* (Dublin, 1791), vii, x. Mortimer described the *Mercury* as "a fine new copper-bottomed vessel . . . built by that ingenious naval architect, Mr. Stalkaart, of Deptford."

<sup>85</sup> [John Henry Cox.] *A Description of the Island called St. Paul's by the Dutch and by the English Amsterdam* (London, 1790).

<sup>86</sup> Mortimer, 20.

<sup>87</sup> Gavin Kennedy, *Bligh* (London: Duckworth, 1978), 136; Mortimer, 34.

<sup>88</sup> Mortimer, xii. By an odd twist of events, in 1804 Mortimer was serving as Captain of Marines in the *Warrior*, commanded by Bligh, when the latter was involved in a

pected them to be found, and in this he was mistaken. The *Bounty* had moved on to Pitcairn, and the little colony there was not discovered until 1808.

From Tahiti Cox sailed on to Hawaii, where he renewed acquaintance with Tianna (Kaiana), an adventurous and ambitious young chief whom Meares had taken to China in the *Nootka* in 1787 and who had returned to the islands in the *Iphigenia* in 1788. Cox had befriended him in Canton; Meares states that when Kaiana was leaving, Cox gave him a "generous consignment of a considerable quantity of live cattle and other animals," but few of them survived the violent motion of the *Iphigenia* in a storm. Fortunately Kaiana had been provided with other more durable gifts, including a wide variety of tools, some cloth and chinaware.<sup>89</sup>

Cox gave Kaiana a certificate, the wording of which reveals that by the time the *Mercury* visited the Hawaiian Islands in September her name had been changed to *Gustavus* (actually *Gustavus III*) in honour of the reigning King of Sweden.<sup>90</sup> Presumably it was at this time that she hoisted Swedish colours. These measures would seem to be the preparations for the hostilities against the Russians that Greenberg had expected, but Mortimer's narrative shows that the visit to Unalaska, in the Aleutians, was of the most friendly nature. It seems to have been motivated partly by curiosity and in part by the realization that it was much too late in the season for the ship to engage in fur trading on the Northwest Coast. In the course of his stay of a fortnight, Cox explored the strait between Unalaska and Sedaghur (now Sedanka) Island, which leads from the ocean into Beaver Inlet, and his charts of the strait and of Muscle Cove, on the northern shore of the inlet itself, were published by Dalrymple in 1791.

From Unalaska the *Gustavus III* headed for China, where she arrived at Macao on 27 December 1789. How long Cox was able to stay in China we do not know, but it was sufficiently long for him to arrange for two further expeditions. One was the sealing expedition to Amsterdam Island that he had in mind since his visit there in the *Mercury*. For this he acquired none other than the *Nootka*, in which Meares had made his fur-trading voyage from Bengal. The *Chronicles* of the East India Company record the result of this venture:

court martial to hear charges made against him by his 2nd Lieutenant. Mortimer gave evidence against Bligh. Kennedy, 327.

<sup>89</sup> Meares, 4, 342.

<sup>90</sup> Colnett saw the certificate in April 1791 and noted that it had been left "by the Commander of a Ship called the *Gustavus*." Colnett, 221.

July 19 [1791]. Anchored in the Typa a brig belonging to John Henry Cox with about Eight thousand Seal Skins procured at the Islands of St. Paul and Amsterdam. This vessel was formerly the *Nootka*, fitted out from Bengal for the North West Coast of America, afterwards disposed of at Macao to a naturalized Portuguese Merchant residing there, from whom she was purchased by Mr. Cox and recalled [i.e., renamed] *Nootka*.

She attempted to proceed to Canton, but was flying English colours, and lacked the necessary pass and permission. At this point Cox's faithful partner Daniel Beale, still Prussian Consul, evidently came to the rescue; the *Chronicles* note that "after this date the brig is (twice) entered in the records as being Prussian."<sup>91</sup>

Meanwhile the *Gustavus III* had been outfitted for a fur-trading voyage to the Northwest Coast. She sailed from Macao on 14 November 1790, under the command of Thomas Barnet. Once again a crew member, John Bartlett, has given a detailed account of the expedition.<sup>92</sup> She arrived on the coast early in March 1791 and spent the next five months trading, much of the time around the Queen Charlotte Islands. Cloak Bay, at their northern tip, proved to be the best hunting ground; hundreds of sea otters were secured there. But it was not a happy cruise; crew members died of scurvy, and rations were so poor and so limited that an open mutiny was narrowly averted. Clearly the ship was inadequately provisioned, and the officers seem to have kept a major part of what food was available for themselves. At one point Bartlett (a common sailor) reports sardonically: "The boatswain piped to dinner and turned the hands out as usual whether we had anything to eat or not."<sup>93</sup> A call at the Hawaiian Islands offered some respite, but the ship was nearly lost in the stormy weather that followed. At last, on 26 October, the *Gustavus III* anchored in Macao Roads, only to be greeted by "the news of the death of our owner, 'Squire Cox.'

The *Chronicles* of the East India Company for 1791 state that "Mr. Cox was not this year at Macao," but he was certainly in China. On 31 July Daniel Beale gave sailing orders to Colnett for an intended voyage to Japan in which he instructed him, on his return, "to send some trusty person with a letter address'd to me or Mr. Cox at this place [Macao], or should we both be at Canton Mr. M'intire [a long-time resident at Macao]

<sup>91</sup> Morse, 187.

<sup>92</sup> "A Narrative of events on the life of John Bartlett of Boston, Massachusetts, in the years 1790-1793, during voyages to Canton and the Northwest Coast of America," in *The Sea, The Ship and The Sailor* (Salem, Mass.: Marine Research Society, 1925).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 308.

will forward your letter to us there."<sup>94</sup> Cox died on 5 October, little more than two months later, and there would seem to be no reasonable doubt that his death occurred in Macao or Canton.

His was in several respects a remarkable career. Up to and including the season of 1790, every British vessel engaged in the fur trade to the Northwest Coast, with the single exception of the Strange expedition, was wholly or in part sponsored by John Henry Cox and his partners, Daniel Beale and John Reid, or by the firm with which they coalesced late in 1788. And the original firm of Cox & Reid left a notable corporate legacy.<sup>95</sup> The only change in partnership of concern in the present context occurred in 1787, when the firm became Cox & Beale. But through the years partners came and went until 1824, when William Jardine and James Matheson were admitted. Eight years later they became the sole partners, and there came into existence Jardine Matheson & Company — one of the great mercantile houses, and still a power in business affairs in the Orient today.

<sup>94</sup> Morse, 187; Colnett, 239.

<sup>95</sup> Greenberg, 222-23, traces the evolution of the partnerships from 1782 to 1832.