

## Review Article

CHRISTON ARCHER

*Voyages of the "Columbia" to the Northwest Coast 1787-1790 and 1790-1793*, edited by Frederic W. Howay. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1990. xxvii, 518 pp. \$40.00 U.S. cloth.

The republication of Judge Frederic W. Howay's 1941 work on the voyages of *Columbia Rediviva* and the sloop *Washington* occurs at a time of heightened bicentennial interest in the early explorations of the Northwest Coast. Although additional documents and many studies have appeared in the nearly half century since Howay compiled the two logs of Robert Haswell, John Hoskin's narrative, John Boit's log, and many supporting documents from the expeditions, the volume retains its importance as a primary source on the American explorations into the treacherous waters and diplomacy of the Northwest Coast and the difficulties for entrepreneurs involved in the trans-Pacific trade in sea otter skins. Of great importance, perhaps even beyond Howay's own interest in the native cultures, the American accounts provide significant information on the Northwest Coast cultures and the shocks to their societies provoked by the European commercial activities.

Despite the existence of good documentation by their subordinates, Captains John Kendrick and Robert Gray were both enigmatic figures whose goals and ideas remain unclear. Neither of the commanders kept personal journals to explain their motives, and both were highly controversial in important parts of their Northwest Coast adventures. Like many other captains involved in North Pacific exploration, John Kendrick was an impractical dreamer whose ideas led to inevitable financial disasters and conflicts rather than to the formation of a new commercial empire. John Howel, who took up the task of settling Kendrick's "immense" debts at Canton after his accidental death at Oahu, Hawaii in late 1794, wrote to Joseph Barrell, who was the primary Boston merchant investor behind the expeditions: "Except Mr. [John] Hoskins I hardly ever saw a man in your N.W. employ, who was not either fool or Rogue, and your com-

manders united both these characters" (p. 491). Howel discounted Kendrick's future-oriented real estate purchases from Indian bands on the Northwest Coast and could not present Barrell "with any hopes of profit from them even to your great, great grand children. They cost but little, it is true; and when the Millenium shall arrive, and all the nations of the earth shall be at peace, your Posterity may, perhaps, settle them" (p. 493). But Howel considered these to be minor projects for Kendrick who at one point informed the Spanish commander at Nootka Sound that he might cause the Indians to drive out those Europeans who stole their lands. According to Howel, Kendrick went so far as to propose a grandiose project to "change the prevalence of the westerly winds in the Atlantic Ocean, and turn the Gulf Stream into the Pacific, by cutting A Canal through Mexico." At the same time, Howel concluded:

But with all his fooleries he was a wonderful man, and worthy to be remembered beyond the gliding Hours of the present generation. He was ruined by his appointment to the *Columbia*. Empires and fortunes broke on his sight. The paltry two-penny objects of his expedition were swallowed up in the magnitude of his Gulliverian Views. North East America was on the Lilliputian, but he designed N.W. America to be on the Brobdignagian scale. Had you known him as well as I did, you would have sent some Glumdalclitch or other as nurse with him. (p. 493)

Although Howay steered a middle course regarding any definitive conclusions about Kendrick's character, the portrait presented by Robert Haswell was purely negative. On the outward voyage in 1787, Haswell criticized Kendrick for his delays at Atlantic ports, overindulgence with alcohol, and abuse of officers and men. During one argument, Haswell reported that Kendrick said "he would blow my brains out with a pistol" (p. 12). At the Falkland Islands, Haswell requested and received permission to transfer to *Washington*, where he remained for the duration of the voyage. At Nootka Sound, Haswell continued to criticize Kendrick for dallying in port with *Columbia* while Captain Gray actively pursued the fur trade. Frustrated by Kendrick's eccentric behaviour, in July 1789 Gray wrote to Barrell from Nootka Sound that "the voyage will not turn out to the Owners' expectation, all for the want of a nimble leader" (p. 123). When they met again on the second voyage, Haswell criticized Kendrick for his dilatory activities in China that had cost a full season and concluded that "our former commander is not a very urgent man of business" (p. 298).

For all of his supposed faults, Kendrick's character had positive sides that made some subordinates and colleagues into loyal friends. At least on

some occasions, Kendrick went out of his way to repay favours. In 1793, for example, he made every effort to assist the former Spanish governor of Juan Fernández Island, Don Blas González, who had been removed from office and punished for having assisted the American expedition in 1788 with wood, water, and repairs. Kendrick wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson requesting diplomatic intervention by the United States government on behalf of the Spanish official. John Hoskins, supercargo aboard *Columbia* on the second voyage, was quite positive about Kendrick, whom he described as “an old, experienced, navigator” (p. 161). Hoskins noted that Kendrick had contracted a violent fever in China that nearly took his life and prevented him from conducting business at Canton. Snubbed by Captain Gray, who thought that he was a company spy (p. 480), Hoskins rejected charges by officers of the *Columbia* that Kendrick was out to cheat the owners and “to gratify his own pleasures” (p. 165). While he had to admit that Kendrick had not accomplished as much as might have been hoped with two ships, he argued that “a better man might have done worse” (p. 165). Hoskins did admit that Gray was a more effective fur trader, but concluded, “his principles were no better, his abilities less, and his knowledge of the coast, from his former voyage, circumscribed within very narrow limits” (p. 166). If Kendrick was leisurely during the progress of his ocean voyages, during the second voyage from Boston beginning in 1789, Hoskins condemned Gray for not stopping at ports to obtain fresh provisions, which resulted in a severe outbreak of scurvy among the crew. At Nootka Sound in August 1792, Hoskins used the Spanish royal mail service through Mexico to complain to Joseph Barrell of Gray’s personal trade in old woolen coats and rumoured statements to his officers that if he made \$10,000 he would abscond to England. Hoskins concluded, “the Captain of your ship is a man of no principle” (p. 482).

Although these charges might be taken to represent natural quarrels emerging from the stifling boredom aboard a merchant vessel engaged in a lengthy mission into uncharted waters, Gray’s seamanship frightened Haswell and Boit as well as Hoskins. Off Tatoche Island near Cape Flattery, Haswell chided Captain Gray for “running in dense fog and strong currents back and forth across an unknown channel some 12 miles wide” (p. 301). Boit went even further, stating, “our situation was truly alarming, but we had no business so near the land in that weather.” He noted that they sighted a rock “about stone’s throw distant, and narrowly escaped being dash’d upon itt. damn nonsense to keep beating about among rocks in foggy weather. The Captain, at length was frightened, and proceeded with the Ship to a good offing. . . .” (p. 380). Later, when

*Columbia* struck a sunken reef at 52 degrees 50 minutes latitude near Milbanke Sound, Haswell criticized Gray for his lack of care in cruising under full sail in dangerous waters without posting adequate lookouts (p. 338). One positive side of this accident was that despite his orders to steer clear of Spanish ports, Gray had to put in for repairs at Friendly Cove, where the Americans received friendly treatment and excellent information from the Spanish commander Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra. Hoskins was even more critical of Gray's command, reporting a series of lucky escapes on uncharted shores, upon entering dangerous harbours, and in other situations where soundings were not taken and the captain failed to put boats in the water to reconnoitre possible hazards. Hoskins described *Columbia's* progress at the time of the accident as "blundering along, (for I can call it by no better name) without any look out kept, within three miles of a most inhospitable and rocky coast, the Ship going six knots with a crowd of sail, struck on a rock about four feet under water. . . ." (p. 483)

Despite this constant backbiting by Gray's detractors, Howay dismissed all of the allegations about dishonesty and sloppy seamanship as lacking in supporting evidence. Kendrick was beyond salvation as a potential hero, but Howay promoted the cause of Gray, who performed in the manner of a true explorer and discovered the Columbia River. Despite the evidence of contemporary detractors, Howay described Gray as "a resolute, self-reliant, and determined man, one who clearly saw his objective and pressed forward to it, overcoming and almost despising intervening obstacles" (p. xiv).

In their relations with the Spaniards, the Americans exercised care to avoid becoming entangled in the dangerous rivalries over sovereignty between Spain and Britain. Aware that the English fur traders were their obvious competitors, it was natural that Robert Gray, Joseph Ingraham, and other Americans would side with the Spaniards, who posed only limited potential for commercial competition. While Kendrick obtained water, provisions, and other aid under a claim of distress and damage to his vessel at Juan Fernández, his visit set off a ripple of repercussions that could have terminated American fur trading. Spanish authorities from Peru to Mexico surveyed marine and coastal defences and supported the view of the Spanish imperial government that incursions from the United States posed significant potential dangers to sovereignty. Viceroy Caballero de Croix of Peru reported that while no evil intentions had been perceived in the project Kendrick described to visit Russian waters, the Americans had not presented passports from their government showing

that they had obtained permission from Spain to explore in the Pacific. Lacking an official licence to navigate in the Pacific Ocean, Croix argued that the *Columbia* should have been detained. Regardless of their apparent purpose, under the Real Cédula [Spanish law] of 25 November 1692, any foreigners who sailed in the Pacific without proper permissions from Madrid were to be treated as enemies.<sup>1</sup> Viceroy Manuel Antonio Flórez of New Spain issued orders for the commanders of the Marine Department of San Blas, Acapulco, governors of California settlements, and all judicial authorities of the Mexican and Guatemalan coasts to seize the American vessels.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Viceroy Flórez favoured a hard-line position in which Spain would reject all arguments about the settlement of colonies from the Russians, British, or Americans. The return of the 1788 expedition of Esteban José Martínez from Alaska with reports of numerous foreign activities and information about the importance of Nootka Sound convinced Flórez that Kendrick's expedition must be on the coast to seek a site for an American colony. Flórez could see no other object that would motivate such a lengthy voyage and concluded, "if they manage to establish a colony on the West Coast of America they will have more wealth than Great China or India."<sup>3</sup>

Unaware of the commotion that they had caused among Spanish officialdom, the American vessels reached Nootka Sound in September 1788, where they met the English fur trading expedition of John Meares and William Douglas masquerading under the Portuguese flag<sup>4</sup> to avoid the laws of the British East India and South Sea Companies. While relations between competitors were artificially friendly, Meares's men did their best to protect their monopoly and to unnerve the Americans by spinning tall tales about the difficulties of coastal navigation and the bloodthirsty nature of the native population. Misrepresentations and lies designed to deter competition became confused with other information on Indian culture. In fact, the rather brutal side of the maritime fur trade soon became fully evident. Haswell reported that Meares plundered native villages of their

<sup>1</sup> Viceroy Caballero de Croix to Viceroy Manuel Antonio Flórez, Lima, 31 July 1788, Archivo General de las Indias, Seville, Spain [cited hereinafter as AGI], Sección de Estado, legajo 20.

<sup>2</sup> Flórez to Minister of the Indies, Antonio Valdés, no. 691, 27 November 1788, AGI, Estado, leg. 20, ramo 39.

<sup>3</sup> Flórez to Valdés, no. 702 reservado, 23 December 1788, AGI, Sección de México, leg. 1529.

<sup>4</sup> See W. Kaye Lamb and Tomás Bartroli, "James Hunter and John Cox: The First Maritime Fur Trader and his Sponsor," *BC Studies* 84 (Winter 1989-90): 29; and Barry M. Gough, *Distant Dominion: Britain and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1579-1809* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 66.

winter stores of oil and fish—offering a small piece of copper in exchange for provisions confiscated by force. The British fur traders pursued Indian fishing canoes and halted them with musket fire to seize their catch. Wintering at Nootka Sound despite warnings from Meares about the dangers, Haswell was able to make some basic observations on the natives and their customs. Unfortunately, some of the information collected and passed on by the fur traders reflected simple misunderstandings as well as planned misrepresentations. Based upon rather limited contacts, Haswell concluded: “Thes people are cannables and eat the flesh of their vanquished enemies and frequently of their slaves who they kill in Cool blud. They make little serimony in owning the fact and I have seen them eat human flesh myself” (p. 66).

Unaware of the native penchant for using fear as an element in their own diplomacy and warfare, Haswell accepted information dating back to James Cook’s journal, added the fur trader reports, and completed his findings from the garbled statements provided by his most elementary conversations with the Indians. Sign language and a few shared words provided little basis for accurate reporting. Haswell and other fur traders became quite preoccupied by the morbid thought of being eaten at some horrible banquet—a preoccupation that made the Americans more careful and probably more violent in their reactions to perceived dangers from natives whom they visited. This became obvious in an incident that took place near Bucareli Bay on Prince of Wales Island in May 1789, when *Washington* struck some submerged rocks and sustained damage. Reflecting about the near disaster and the possible horrors of being marooned, Haswell speculated on their situation on “A Coast inhabited by a most horrid race of savage canables in whose hands we could not hope for life and even tho’ not inhabited so destitute of every thing that we esteem requisite to sustain life that a European could not exist” (p. 95). Noting fortifications and obvious warlike tendencies from the Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands, Haswell reported: “. . . they say it is their custom to eat their vanquished enemies and said it was excellent food” (p. 98). Hoskins concurred, noting “That these people are Cannibals is beyond a doubt not from anything we saw but from their own confession” (p. 288). John Boit heard the same stories from the Indians, but believed that they engaged in cannibalism infrequently and then only when they sacrificed some poor prisoner of war. Although Howay stated: “The better opinion is that the Indians on the Northwest Coast were not cannibals” (p. 288), he neglected the extremely negative impact of this perception upon fur

trader-native relations.<sup>5</sup> This factor plus the use of tall tales by traders to deter others tended to exacerbate the level of fear and to set the scene for violent incidents. Haswell noted that John Meares and his officers “fully employed themselves fabricating and rehursing vague and improvable tales relative to the coast of the vast danger attending its navigation of the Monsterous Savage disposition of its inhabitants adding it would be madness in us so week as we were to stay a winter among them” (p. 49).

Rumours such as these merely served to entrench existing prejudices and rivalries between the different competitors for trade and sovereignty. Indeed, despite the existence of many excellent journals, logs, and official correspondence, facts are often difficult to separate from fiction. Although Kendrick got along quite well with Esteban José Martínez in 1789, on 12 July 1791 he sailed *Washington* past the Spanish post at Yuquot, heading up the sound with matches burning, eight cannon and twelve swivel guns loaded, and his crew armed with muskets, pistols, and sabres.<sup>6</sup> Kendrick attributed these warlike preparations to reports he had heard in Asia of a possible rupture between Spain and England. He informed the Spaniards about a frightening clash aboard his ship with a Haida band in which the natives gained control of the deck and an arms chest before they had been driven off with at least fifteen killed — some shot in their canoes and in the water.<sup>7</sup> Like many of his colleagues and competitors on the Northwest Coast, Kendrick horrified the Spaniards by embellishing the truth with bloody tales about the cruel customs of the Indians. He

<sup>5</sup> See Christon I. Archer, “Cannibalism in the Early History of the Northwest Coast: Enduring Myths and Neglected Realities,” *Canadian Historical Review* LXI:4 (December, 1980): 453-79.

<sup>6</sup> Extracto de la Navegación que ha hecha el Piloto Dn. Juan Pantoja y Arriaga en el Paquebot de S.M, el San Carlos al mando del Alférez de Navío de la Real Armada Don Ramón Saavedra, que salió del Departamento de San Blas el 4 de febrero de 1791 con destino a socorrer el Establecimiento de San Lorenzo de Noca, y Expedición que en el se ha hecho, sobre esta costa septentrional de la California al mando de Teniente de Navío D. Francisco Eliza, Comandante del expresado establecimiento que se halla situado en la Lat. N. de 49 grs. 35 mins. . . 1791, Museo Naval, Madrid, vol. 331.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Arriving on the scene later with *Columbia* commanded by Captain Gray, Hoskins found the story told by the Haida informants about Kendrick’s violence difficult to believe. Hoskins noted, “How much credit is to be given to this story, when it is considered our knowledge of their language is so very superficial as scarcely to be understood but by signs; and from Captain Kendrick’s well known disposition, who has hitherto treated these people more like children than an ignorant race of savages. . . .” (p. 200). Although the causes of this incident appear in Hoskins’ Narrative (pp. 240-41), no estimate was given of the numbers of casualties except that “a constant fire was kept up as long as they could reach the natives with cannon or small arms after which they chased them in their armed boats making the most dreadful havock by killing all they came across. . . .” (p. 241). Boit gave the figure of over fifty Indians killed in the clash (p. 379).

stated that the Indians butchered and ate boys and girls who fell into the hands of enemy tribes as prisoners of war. He noted that he had been offered the loin and hand of a four year old child, which so horrified him that although he wanted to punish the transgressors, he lost control of himself and wept so much that he had to lock himself in his cabin. Shocked by this tale, the Spanish pilot José Tobar y Tamirez exclaimed, "If we had known this when we began the expedition, we would have invested all of our salaries and allowances in copper sheets to redeem some innocent who may have been saved by our greatest enterprise."<sup>8</sup>

While the Americans were pleased to use the Spaniards and to assist their case against the British, the competition for sovereignty and commercial advantage on the Northwest Coast tainted even the warmest of relationships. Martínez expressed concerns when he learned that Kendrick had distributed commemorative medals to the Indians, which gave evidence of the American presence at different ports of the Northwest Coast.<sup>9</sup> On the second voyage of the *Columbia*, Gray's orders prohibited any visits to Spanish ports except in cases of extreme distress. Chief Wickanish of Clayoquot informed Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra that Kendrick's "brother" Gray had told him that the Spaniards were evil.<sup>10</sup> However, when the *Columbia* struck a submerged reef at the Queen Charlotte Islands, Gray had to seek emergency assistance from the Spanish post at Nootka Sound. Although the Americans anticipated a cool reception, Bodega y Quadra did everything in his power to help with repairs and to act as the congenial and gracious host. Boit noted, "The Spaniards treated us nobly, and offer'd freely evry assistance in their power" (p. 409). Bodega entertained all of the officers on solid plate silver, which highly impressed the acquisitive Americans. While Bodega's instructions ordered him to be polite, the Spanish commander took advan-

<sup>8</sup> Informe que yo Don José Tobar y Tamariz, primer piloto de la Real Armada doy al Exmo. Virrey de Nueva España en obediencia de su superior orden, comunicada con fecha de 29 de agosto de 1789, Archivo General de la Nación, México, Sección de Historia, [cited hereinafter as AGN, Hist] vol. 65.

<sup>9</sup> Esteban José Martínez, Diario de la Navegación que yo el Alférez de Navio de la Real Armada Dn. Esteban Josef Martínez, voy a executar al Pto. de San Lorenzo de Nuca, mandando la Fragata Princesa, y Paquebot San Carlos de orden de el Exmo. Sor. Dn. Manuel Antonio Flórez, Virrey, Gobernador y Capitán Genral de N.E. en el presente año de 1789, in Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, *Colección de diarios y relaciones para la historia de los viajes y descubrimientos VI* (Madrid: Instituto Histórico de Marina, 1964), 65.

<sup>10</sup> Ramón Saavedra to Juan de la Bodega y Quadra, aboard the frigate *Concepción*, Nootka Sound, 27 August 1791, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, legajo 4289; and Report of Bodega y Quadra, Nootka Sound, 27 August 1791, AGN, Hist., vol. 69.

tage of the opportunity to obtain a letter from Gray and Joseph Ingraham<sup>11</sup> of the American vessel *Hope* in which they fully supported the Spanish interpretation of the incidents that had provoked the 1789 Nootka Sound Controversy (pp. 474-79). They even went so far as to support "our friend" Esteban José Martínez, whom they heard condemned as "an imposter and a pirate" (p. 479). Although this material was of little use in the negotiations with Captain George Vancouver, Bodega took special care to build Spain's case for sovereignty. It should be noted that Howay lacked accurate information on the Spanish activities at Nootka Sound that became available in later published research from Mexican and Spanish archives.<sup>12</sup>

From his own studies, Howay was very much aware of the element of violence involved in the maritime fur trade and about the potential damages to the native societies of the Northwest Coast.<sup>13</sup> Haswell noted that many traders plundered Indian villages and paid little or nothing for their booty. Even during the first voyage, the Americans discovered that muskets, lead, and powder had become the most sought after objects of trade at Clayoquot Sound. During the second voyage, Hoskins noted that "the natives now demand muskets, powder and shot for their skins which now supplants copper and cloathing" (p. 258). By 1792, Wickananish's people had obtained sufficient guns that they engaged in firing practice, made their own shot, and used muskets in their own wars. Perhaps exaggerating, Haswell estimated that the Clayoquot Sound bands possessed 200 stands of arms and sufficient skill to use them (p. 312). Boit was of the view that some Indians handled firearms as well as the Americans (p. 389), and Hoskins and Gray reported: "The natives from the arms and ammunition they have received, have become expert marksmen and exceedingly troublesome. . . ." (p. 473). At the same time, however, possession of some old

<sup>11</sup> See Mark D. Kaplanoff, ed. *Joseph Ingraham's Journal of the Brigantine HOPE on a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of North America, 1790-92* (Barre, Massachusetts: Imprint Society, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> See particularly Warren C. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); and Iris Wilson Engstrand, *Spanish Scientists in the New World: The Eighteenth Century Expeditions* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981) and *Noticias de Nutka: An Account of Nootka Sound in 1792* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970). In addition, there is an impressive bibliography of works in Spanish on the Spanish scientific and exploratory activities.

<sup>13</sup> Frederic W. Howay, "Indian Attacks upon Maritime Traders of the North-West Coast, 1785-1805," *Canadian Historical Review* VI (December 1925): 287-309; and "The Introduction of Intoxicating Liquors amongst the Indians of the Northwest Coast," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* VI (July 1942), 157-69. For an interesting and somewhat contrary view, see Robin Fisher, "Arms and Men on the Northwest Coast, 1774-1825," *BC Studies* 29 (Spring 1976): 3-17.

or inferior muskets was not enough to prevent fur traders from employing the superior firepower of their heavy cannon and swivel guns to compel trade. In 1793, Chief Wickananish informed Captain Josiah Roberts of the *Jefferson* about a skirmish the previous year with an armed boat from *Butterworth* commanded by Captain William Brown, whose men went so far as to rob sea otter skin garments from the backs of the Indians (p. 412). Wickananish also told Bernard Magee, first officer of *Jefferson*, that Captain Gray had pointed a musket at his breast and threatened his life unless he produced more furs. With these experiences, Wickananish said that other than Captain Roberts, he trusted only the friendship of Captain Kendrick.<sup>14</sup> For the Northwest Coast Indians, fur traders such as Gray posed the additional threat of interrupting traditional native patterns of commerce by going directly to the sources of furs and removing the customary middlemen in indigenous trading networks. Bodega y Quadra stated that Captain Gray ruined commerce for the Nootka Sound Indians, who earlier had managed the trade in sea otter skins despite the fact that few if any furs were taken at Nootka Sound.<sup>15</sup>

Of the American journals of the *Columbia*, John Boit's log of the second voyage is the only complete expedition account, and it contains fascinating detail on eighteenth century maritime life and a level of simple eloquence that the other writers did not achieve. Boit described daily life on a long ocean voyage—commenting on food, sanitation, health, and the constant hunting and fishing for albatrosses, sea birds, and any other game that might be used to supplement the monotonous marine diet. At the same time, he lamented the death of Nancy the goat, "our dear friend" (p. 368). Despite all efforts to vary their diet, Boit reported in 1791 that even before *Columbia* rounded Cape Horn, some sailors showed the first signs of scurvy in their gums. By the time that they reached Clayoquot Sound, ten men were so sick that they were sent ashore to recuperate on greens and spruce tea. Several of the worst sufferers were buried up to their hips for some hours as a treatment for scurvy that Boit claimed was highly effective.

Boit was also one of the more acute American observers of the indigenous societies, commenting on outward appearances and attempting to

<sup>14</sup> Bernard Magee, "... all the most necessary remarks and observations in a voyage made on board the ship *Jefferson*, Josiah Roberts, commander from Boston, North America to the North West Coast of the same and round the globe," Manuscript, British Columbia Provincial Archives.

<sup>15</sup> "Viaje a la Costa N.O. de la América Septentrional por Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, del Orden de Santiago, Capitán de Navío de la Real Armada, y Comandante del Departamento de San Blas en las Fragatas de su mando *Santa Gertrudis*, *Aranzazu*, *Princesa*, y *Activo*." San Blas 2 February 1793, Photocopy of of the original manuscript, British Columbia Provincial Archives.

understand the hidden complexities of the Northwest Coast civilization. He lamented the violence of the maritime fur traders who fired upon the Indians and thus lowered themselves to the level of savages. He was quick to condemn the Spaniards, who after the murder of one of their men at Puerto de Nuñez Gaona [Neah Bay] "seized a canoe full of Natives and massacred them all (in *cool blood*) not even sparing the Children. Shocking to relate" (p. 409).<sup>16</sup> During the winter at Clayoquot, Boit spent time among the Indians and believed that a relationship of trust was developing. He expressed considerable shock following an abortive attack on the American camp, concluding, "We find them to be still a savage tribe, and only waiting an opportunity for to Massacre the whole of us in cold blood" (p. 388). Dispatched in command of a reprisal raid to destroy the village of Opitsat, Boit felt some guilt at presiding over the obliteration of 200 houses; he commented, "the work of Ages, was in a short time totally destroy'd" (p. 391). Notwithstanding his concerns about the legitimate rights of the Indians, fear led Boit to conclude, "I believe it is impossible to keep friends with savages any longer than they stand in fear of you" (p. 401). Although there were provocations by natives, who as Howay noted had been assaulted by previous fur traders and desired revenge against any maritime intruders, the Americans were often quick to open fire, and they left a trail of death and destruction at many different ports.

Boit also described the prevalence of sexual relations between the American crew members and native women and the advance of venereal diseases and smallpox. As editor, Howay commented on the devastation of smallpox, but if he wished to comment on references to sexual relations, the attitudes of his times probably prevented him from doing so. Haswell noted in 1788 that the natives of Oregon were pitted by smallpox. In 1792, Boit reported similar signs at Nitinat and blamed the Spaniards for introducing the disease. Howay repeated an apocryphal story that in 1775 the Spaniards had introduced smallpox to the Tlingits and that the disease rapidly spread up and down the coast. A young man in his sexual prime, Boit expressed a roguish delight in titillating his readers with references to amorous conquests. At a port in Clayoquot Sound, he noted, "their Women where more Chaste than those we had left. But still they were not all Dianas" (p. 371). Later, at the Queen Charlotte Islands, Boit commented, "The females was not very Chaste, but their lip peices [labrets] was enough to disgust any Civilized being, however some of the crew was

<sup>16</sup> For information on this incident see Christon I. Archer, "The Making of Spanish Indian Policy on the Northwest Coast," *New Mexico Historical Review* LII: 1 (January 1977), 62-63.

quite partial" (p. 373). Hoskins agreed that "they [the Haida women] were always ready and willing to gratify the amorous inclinations of any who wish it" (p. 200), but he contradicted Boit with the remark that Captain Gray forbade any sexual activities. At the Columbia River, Boit went even further, describing beautiful women "who wear a leaf apron (perhaps 'twas a fig leaf). But some of our gentlemen, that examin'd them pretty close, and *near*, both *within* and *without* reported that it was not a leaf but a nice wove mat in resemblance!!" (p. 399). Finally at the Hawaiian Islands Boit wrote, "The men where fine stately looking fellows, and the Women quite handsome. They where all in a state of Nature, except a small covering round the Middle. Not many of the Columbia's Crew prov'd to be *Josephs*" (p. 418).

The exploitation of the maritime fur trade represented raw capitalism and untrammelled exploitation of a resource and of the native people of the Northwest Coast. Unlike the Spanish and British naval explorers, who were usually held in check by national mission and military discipline, the fur traders operated well beyond the ordinary constraints and laws that governed in their own societies. Anxious to make profits that would justify investment in distant ventures, they undertook enormously long voyages in small merchant ships. Captains such as John Kendrick and Robert Gray exhibited remarkable qualities of leadership and very often flaws of one kind and another that after months and years of confinement aboard their vessels chafed raw relationships with their subordinate officers. Under the scrutiny of highly intelligent but equally critical observers such as Haswell, Hoskins, and Boit, unblemished reputations were impossible to maintain. Where necessary, merchant-commanders such as Kendrick and Gray cheated their fellow fur traders and took any advantage possible from the diplomatic manoeuvring of Britain and Spain. In the business of purchasing sea otter pelts, they forced unwilling natives to trade at gunpoint, sometimes provoked bloody atrocities, and their crews introduced the horrors of venereal diseases. As editor of the present work, Howay's unparalleled knowledge of the fur trading voyages has not been superseded by more recent studies. Although present day readers have access to a variety of additional primary and secondary sources that were not available in 1941, on most topics Howay's copious notes and comments retain their original value. The journals, logs, and correspondence of *Columbia* and *Washington* continue to offer a mine of information for historians, anthropologists, and for anyone interested in the early Northwest Coast. The Oregon Historical Society is to be applauded for adding this volume to the outstanding North Pacific Studies Series.