

Some Recent Western Canadiana: A Review Article

BARRY M. GOUGH

Noticias de Nutka: An Account of Nootka Sound in 1792, by José Mariano Moziño. Translated and edited by Iris Higbie Wilson. Foreword by Philip Drucker. Toronto and Montreal: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970. xvi. 142 pp. *Illus.*

The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Edited by W. Kaye Lamb. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, Extra Series No. 41, 1970. viii. 551 pp. *Illus.* Available to members and also in Canada by Macmillan of Canada, \$25.00.

Journal of a Voyage on the North West Coast of North America during the Years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814, by Gabriel Franchère. Transcribed and translated by Wessie Tipping Lamp; edited with an introduction and notes by W. Kaye Lamb. Toronto: Publications of the Champlain Society, vol. XLV, 1969. ix. 330 pp. *Illus.* Available to members.

Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to Pacific, by Archibald MacDonald. Introduction to the new edition by Bruce Peel. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1971. xxv. 119 pp. *Illus.* \$5.95.

Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863, by Walter B. Cheadle. Introduction to the new edition by Lewis H. Thomas. Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1971. 311 pp. *Illus.* \$5.95.

The five works here under review are part of the large literature dealing with the Northwest Coast of North America and the cordillera of the Canadian Far West. Each volume provides us with insights into a particular phase of the area's exploration by the white man. Moziño's account is of the early phase of exploration and English-Spanish rivalry for Nootka, of the maritime fur trade, and of initial contact with certain Indian tribes. Mackenzie's letters and journals tell of the first approach to the Pacific

coast overland and of the development of the continental fur trade. Franchère's narrative takes us one step further, to the American-Canadian rivalry for control of the fur trade of the Columbia River, a rivalry in which both maritime and continental forces were at work. McDonald's journal tells of the triumph of the Hudson's Bay Company in New Caledonia after 1821 and of the consolidation of British trade west of the Rocky Mountains, both on the coast and inland. Lastly, Cheadle's description is of the overland approach from Canada, foreshadowing agricultural settlement in the Peace River and a Northwest Passage by land. These works reflect, in turn, the extent of geographical information at the time of their having been written. They reveal, in their chronological span from 1792 to 1863, that the region was neither readily nor quickly explored. Its vastness, in fact, would require a century and more to be completely mapped and then only by means of aerial photography.

Noticias de Nutka: An Account of Nootka Sound was written by José Mariano Moziño Suárez de Figueroa, official botanist to the expedition of Bodega y Quadra to "the Limits to the North of California" in 1792. This edition is the first English translation to be published. What makes the work particularly valuable is the skill of its author. Moziño was a trained botanist and one of the most prominent scientists of New Spain in the eighteenth century. His ethnological report on Nootka Indians is the best we have and is particularly useful in defining the precontact culture as well as providing data for determining culture change. The student of history will find here an account of the Nootka Sound dispute from the arrival of Spanish and British vessels in 1774 and 1778 respectively to the meeting of Vancouver and Bodega y Quadra. Especially revealing is Moziño's view of Spanish strategy to check British expansion on the coast and in the Pacific (pp. 91-94). Also included are Moziño's catalogue of flora and fauna and his Nootka dictionary.

This is a handsome small volume, well printed and illustrated. It contains a bibliography and index. Regrettably it has been edited with less than discretion. The introduction suffers from faulty planning and needless repetition. The survey of Spanish activity on the Northwest Coast in the late eighteenth century suffers from lack of direction. There is much about Cook here and yet no reference to the definitive edition of his journals edited by J. C. Beaglehole and published by the Hakluyt Society. Finally, Iris Higbie Wilson, in her editorial zeal, has superimposed herself on the narrative with excessive and frequently needless textual changes and an over-abundance of footnotes, some of dubious value. But her labours have not been in vain for this is, as Philip Drucker tells us in his

foreword, "a signal contribution to Northwest Coast history and ethnology."

Kaye Lamb's edition of the journals and letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie is of the quality that we have come to expect from this scholar. Edited with care and balance, this work is definitive.

Heretofore we have had no less than sixteen complete and ten partial or abridged versions of the published texts of Mackenzie's *Voyages*. The first edition, published in London in 1801, was entitled *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the Years 1789 and 1793. With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Fur Trade of that Country*. The Lamb edition puts together the best sources available. These consist of the manuscript journal of the first expedition, which is in the British Museum, and every known letter written by Mackenzie, the originals of which are in a number of collections including the Masson Papers in the Public Archives of Canada, the Strathcona bequest in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, the Simcoe Papers in the Ontario Archives, and the Baby Collection, at the Université de Montréal, the Séminaire de Québec archives, or the Public Record Office, London.

Mackenzie made two remarkable journeys. The first was in 1789, officially on behalf of the North West Company and partly on his own initiative. His object was to find a route to the Pacific with commercial possibilities. From Fort Chipewyan, he travelled down the Slave River to Great Slave Lake and then to the Mackenzie River, hitherto unexplored and which he named 'River of Disappointment' for it led him not to the Pacific but to the Arctic Ocean. Mackenzie was determined to find the way west and in 1792, after a brief visit to England to purchase necessary astronomical instruments, he left Fort Chipewyan again, made his way by land and water via the forks of the Peace and Smoky Rivers, the Peace River Pass, Mackenzie Divide, and reached Dean Channel on the Pacific 22 July 1793. He was the first white man to cross the full width of the North American continent and was the vanguard of the North West Company in the Cordillera, a movement that was necessary in view of the expansion of company trade in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company. But he was to be disappointed again: his route, difficult in the extreme, could not be considered a practical channel for trade.

Mackenzie's *Journals and Letters* provide ample evidence that their author thought in continental terms. He sought to master the waterways of the Canadian Far West in order to give the Nor'westers a route to the

Pacific. Even had he been successful, the chartered rights of the Hudson's Bay Company and East India Company would have mitigated against any great expansion of the Canadian company. Mackenzie's explorations and commercial designs, so well portrayed in this edition, reveal not only the success and obstacles of the Nor'westers but also the reasons for their drive to the Pacific and eventual merger with the Hudson's Bay Company.

The publication by the Champlain Society of Gabriel Franchère's journal, also under Kaye Lamb's editorship, is a distinct contribution to the history of fur-trade rivalry on the Northwest Coast before and during the War of 1812. Adulterated versions of Franchère's narrative have been published before. The first, in French, was edited by Michel Bidaud and published in Montreal in 1820. Bidaud went beyond the bounds of scholarly editorial practice, changing, adding and omitting as he saw fit with the consequence that the original narrative was significantly modified. The first English edition, edited by J. V. Huntington and published in New York in 1854, strayed further from the truth in that it was an elaboration of Bidaud's work. A second English edition (a modification of the first) appeared in 1904, and a third in 1954, with a useful introduction by Milo Milton Quaife. Most recently, a new translation of the Bidaud version appeared in 1967, being the work of Franchère's great-grandson, Hoyt C. Franchère. The Champlain Society edition succeeds all of these, for it is a printed version of the original, unadorned document now in the Toronto Public Library, skilfully edited and with an introduction by Lamb and a competent translation by his wife, Wessie Tipping Lamb. The original French text is also published.

Franchère's narrative, Dr. Lamb justifiably claims, is "the most informative single record of events at Astoria during the three years in which John Jacob Astor was endeavouring to establish a fur-trading depot at the mouth of the Columbia River." (p. 1). Franchère was a 26 year-old clerk and one of 54 men in Astor's ship, the *Tonquin*, which left New York in 1810 bound for the mouth of the Columbia River. After doubling Cape Horn, and visiting the Hawaiian Islands, she reached the river in April 1811 where the crew built Fort Astoria. An investigation of the lower Columbia was made. Franchère's journal records these events in detail and tells of the destruction of the *Tonquin* and the massacre of her crew by Indians in Clayquot Sound, Vancouver Island, in 1811. It also tells about the difficulties of the Astorians in the face of North West Company rivalry, the arrival of David Thompson at Astoria, the sale of the port to the Nor'westers, the appearance of the British sloop *Raccoon* in 1813, of the sale of the post to the Nor'westers, and of the overland

journey of Franchère and other Astorians to Montreal, ending in August 1814.

The Champlain edition throws new light on the long standing debate among such scholars as A. S. Morton, J. B. Tyrrell and Richard Glover on whether or not David Thompson had North West Company instructions to dash across the continent to establish a post at the Columbia's mouth before Astor's expedition could do so. Franchère wrote in 1854 that Astor's party thought Thompson had been sent to forestall the Astorians. Why then, Lamb asks, did he make no reference to this in his journal? The answer, he suggests, is that Thompson's motive was "to limit the activities of the Pacific Fur Company to the smallest possible area." This would have been near the mouth of the Columbia. During his westward progress Thompson was claiming the territory as far as the mouth of the Snake River, and was saying in effect to the Astorians that they could penetrate inland "Thus far and no farther." (pp. 13-14). This is a significant explanation of Thompson's motives and does much toward ending the mystery of his actions.

Another contribution is that of untangling the motives of the Nor'westers and the Astorians in the sale of the post to the Canadians. Lamb concludes that because of the arrival of the Nor'westers overland, of Astor's inability to send supplies, and of news that the British maritime expedition was on its way, the Astorians realized that their only option was to sell the post to their rivals. It was, moreover, an arrangement of advantage to the Nor'westers. They sought to keep Astoria from becoming a prize of war. Therefore, the significance of the *Raccoon's* arrival is shown to be less important than others, including Elliot Coues, have claimed. With occasional cross references to the writings of Alexander Ross, Ross Cox and others, Lamb has facilitated our study of the Canadian-American contest for control of the Columbia fur trade in the pre-Hudson's Bay Company era.

Archibald McDonald's *Peace River* is a reprint of the first edition (Montreal, 1872) and contains a new introduction by Bruce Peel. It is an account of a canoe voyage of 3,200 miles from York Factory on Hudson Bay to Fort Langley near the mouth of the Fraser River in the company of Sir George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of Hudson's Bay Company territories in North America. Simpson was making his second transcontinental journey. His purpose was closely connected with the Oregon boundary dispute and he was seeking to strengthen Company trade on the frontiers of its influence, especially in New Caledonia and the Snake River region. McDonald was his guide and companion.

Among other matters, mainly insignificant, the volume tells of the celebrated arrival at Fort St. James of the party, complete with piper in full Highland costume in order to impress the Indians. This was the chief post of the New Caledonia district and James Douglas was stationed there. Relations with the Indians in the area were at flash point, and an important aspect of Simpson's trip was to make clear Company Indian policy and evidently support Douglas and six men who had been forced to take extreme measures against some Indians. McDonald's account provides no conclusive evidence on Douglas's guilt and Malcolm McLeod's editorial additions in the first edition, here reprinted, supply no additional insights save a general defense of Douglas's actions.

On other subjects, the work is a *pot-pourri* of information on the actual voyage. The original edition was actually published for McLeod's purpose of drawing Canadian public attention to the Peace River both as an area for agriculture and settlement but, more importantly, as a possible route for the Canadian railway to the Pacific. One cannot help feeling that the present volume, other than the short new introduction, is little more than a reprint of a period piece with antiquarian value.

Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863 is, by contrast, an important reprint and the new introduction by Lewis H. Thomas supplies interesting detail that shows why the original edition was significant.

In 1862, Dr. Walter Butler Cheadle, recently a medical student, and William Fitzwilliam, Viscount Milton, set out on an incredible journey from Liverpool to Quebec and Fort Garry, where the difficult crossing of the continent to their destinations of Victoria and the Cariboo gold fields began. Both were in their twenties and were inexperienced in the wilds. It is miraculous therefore that they lived to tell the tale. Their sufferings, especially over the Yellowhead route, are recounted at length and the narrative is spiced with comic relief and good humour. Milton and Cheadle befriended at Fort Edmonton a destitute Irish schoolteacher named Eugene Francis O'Beirne. He was Canada's original hitch-hiker, and he became a hinderance to the party and had to be literally carried across the Rockies.

In spite of their problems, Milton and Cheadle reached Victoria and the Cariboo. Cheadle was a keen observer and he recorded the gradual decay of the Indian cultures. He gives useful descriptions of Governor James Douglas, Colonel Richard Moody, R. E., Captain George Bazalgette, in charge of the Royal Marines on San Juan Island, and others. His account of mining techniques and miners in the Cariboo is highly signifi-

cant. The travellers completed their journey by proceeding to Panama by ship, crossing the isthmus, and sailing for New York and then England.

In 1865 their popular travel book, *The North-West Passage by Land*, was published. It told of their adventures and the need for imperial development of the Canadian West by railways, settlement and trade. *Cheadle's Journal*, first published in 1931, confirmed Cheadle's authorship to *The North-West Passage by Land* and revealed that it was the basis of the earlier volume. Their voyage from Fort Edmonton to Kamloops across the Yellowhead route was no new discovery, but it did show that British Columbia could be reached overland by strong, determined, and inexperienced travellers. Even more, it showed that the days of the fur trade and exploration had passed; the days of the railroad and white settlement were about to begin.