

very clear, it may have been an advantageous one. When Hunt reached Astoria the following month, the resolution of the partners was evidently represented to him as a unanimous one, and even then he does not appear, as Mr. Bancroft says, to have indorsed the steps already taken by his partners, nor did he approve their "manifesto." He made a decided protest, but acquiesced in the inevitable, as the action of the partners was clearly within their authority. As he departed immediately for the purpose of chartering a vessel to remove all such goods as could not be taken across the mountains, it seems probable that the agreement with McTavish covered only the surrender of the posts. It could not have included the furs, as Frauchère says word was sent to the partners in the interior to forward all their furs to Astoria in the spring, that they might be shipped on the vessel Hunt was expected to bring. Before leaving, however, it was suggested by McDougal that some accident might prevent Hunt's return in time to carry out the agreement, and although the latter considered this very improbable, he acceded to McDougal's request that the carrying out of this agreement be put into his hands if Hunt should not return in time. It is very evident that this authority delegated to McDougal covered only the execution of those arrangements to which a majority of the partners had already given their assent. So far, McDougal's course would seem to have been reasonably fair, even if open to criticism as weak and showing his leaning toward his old associates of the Northwest Company. But we come now to the closing transaction, which is of an entirely different character.

Six weeks had barely passed since Hunt's departure, when McTavish reappeared at Astoria, this time closely followed by a large party, more than equal in number to the Astorians. They expected to meet an armed supply ship and a British man-of-war at the mouth of the Columbia; but neither had arrived, and it was very uncertain when they would arrive. The English party was without provisions and had lost their ammunition, so that they were entirely in McDougal's power. But they seem to have known their man, and we know the result—the surrender of all the possessions of the Pacific Fur Company at a nominal value and the adoption of McDougal as a partner in the Northwest Company. Mr. Bancroft argues very elaborately that this appears a fair transaction on both sides, and anyhow, the best that could be done under the circumstances. He lays especial stress on the protracted negotiations, claiming that the English held back in the hope of the arrival of their ship, and that McDougal brought them to the sticking point only by threatening to move up the Willamette and cut off their supplies. To sustain this view he gives a series of dates which I am unable to verify in the authorities quoted. He states

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