

Nanaimo Historical Society Fonds
Series 2 Sound Recordings

Tape 19

William Barraclough's Presentation to the Nanaimo Historical Society November 17, 1970:
Hudson's Bay Company's S.S. Beaver

Transcribed by: Glenys Wall, July/August 2004

Barraclough: [starts speaking]titled The Hudson's Bay Company Steam Ship Beaver of 1835 was presented as a paper before the Nanaimo Historical Society by William Barraclough, Tuesday November 17, 1970 in the Credit Union Building, Nanaimo, a good attendance of members and visitors being present. The paper was of one hour's duration. Mr. R.J. Whalley presented the speaker to the gathering in a suitable manner and Dr. R.E. Forrester expressed the appreciation of all those present for the interesting and well-researched article. As a preface to the prepared article, the speaker read an opening paragraph from the Hudson's Bay Company's official magazine, Beaver, the summer issue for 1970 and we quote:

"Shoppers at Hudson's Bay Company stores the length and breadth of modern Canada may not realise it, but they make their purchases from an organisation which is not only the oldest chartered trading company in the world, but also the oldest ship owning company. The archives of the Hudson's Bay Company contain what is the longest, documented saga of merchant seafaring ever written. In log-books, letter-books, and minutes and later file papers, the story of three hundred years of ship owning and management is unfolded in the laconic phrases of ships masters; the precise instructions of governor and committee; the copper-plate handwriting of generations of forgotten clerks and the letters of countless factors and Company servants."

Barraclough: [now starts the lecture]

An article concerning the Hudson's Bay Company Steamship Beaver was written and recorded by William Barraclough during November 1970. The subject is in keeping with the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company. By way of an introduction:

The Steamship Beaver, being the first steamer to ply the Pacific Northwest Coast in 1836, must be associated with much of the early history of this region. Previous to her arrival, sailing vessels were dependent on favourable winds and weather conditions to serve the Hudson's Bay Company's posts from the Columbia River to Alaska. The Beaver was also most useful in calling at Indian villages along the indented coastlines to deliver supplies for the Pelagic? hunters and to those employed on the sealing vessels. This article is based on the workings and other items connected with the Beaver must not be considered as a complete history of the steamer. It is made up of fragmented accounts from reliable sources and recognized historians that I have gathered together over the years. I trust that in reciting these items, some of the importance and historical records of the Beaver will be revealed. In compiling this article on the Steamship Beaver, periods of history, dates, persons and places became so interwoven with events concerning the ship, that I have taken the liberty of incorporating brief,

historical accounts that are inseparable from the Beaver alone. This article concerning the Beaver, is prepared in two parts. Firstly with the construction, her voyage to the Pacific Northwest Coast and to her destruction near Prospect Point at the entrance to Vancouver Harbour. Part two is compiled from reliable accounts of the ship's working days, covering the period of fifty-two years of historic service.

The Hudson's Bay Company Steamship Beaver, a pioneer of the seas.

Previous to considering the history of the Beaver itself, and the reason why the Hudson's Bay Company had the vessel built, it may be advisable to give a brief resume of the history of the Company. Incorporated in 1670 as the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson's Bay, formed during the reign of King Charles II, and consisting principally of the King's cousin, Prince Rupert, and a few intimate friends. The Company was invested with absolute proprietorship and exclusive traffic rights of Rupertland which embraced all the lands drained by the Hudson's Bay and its tributaries. Their explorations and trading posts extended throughout the Northwest Territory and eventually crossing the Rockies and finally descending to the Pacific Coast. We have all heard of the great explorers and traders, some of them associated with the Hudson's Bay Company as Alex Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, David Thompson, and many other famous men. At this time and period of 1970, it seems almost incredible that provisions and essential necessities for the men engaged in the operations of the trading posts across the country were carried all the way from Montreal, a distance of nearly 4,000 miles by many modes of conveyances and over the same trails by which the fur-traders first reached the Pacific Coast. This way of transportation was too costly and time-consuming. Consequently, the supplies for the fur stations west of the Rockies were brought in sailing ships around Cape Horn. First to Fort Vancouver, Oregon Territory, on the Columbia River thence to posts along the northwest coast. Before the arrival of the Beaver at the Pacific in 1836, the Hudson's Bay Company had other sailing vessels engaged in commerce along the northwest coast. Some are listed in Lewis and Dryden's "History of the Pacific" of 1895 and also in Nicholson's "West Coast" published 1962. They are the Nereid, the Llama, Drysdale and Cadboro. These ships had a limited capacity for trading and collecting furs from the seal hunters. The ships could not navigate the many inlets and intricate passages where Indian villages were located. This was the prime reason the Hudson's Bay Company decided to build a steamer able to operate in these areas. Of the four sailing ships mentioned here, only particulars of the Cadboro can be located at present and we are fortunate to have a copy of the Cadboro's log available on her first journey to this coast. And for the record I wish to incorporate a brief notation from that source, as the Cadboro was closely associated with the history of the Beaver.

The Cadboro was built at Rye, County of Sussex in 1824. A one deck, two masts, schooner rig with a standing bowsprit. She was built and owned by the Hudson's Bay Company and sailed from London under Captain Swan on her first voyage in the fall of 1826 arriving at Fort Vancouver, Oregon Territory, in the spring of 1827; bringing, beside her picked crew, several new servants of the Hudson's Bay Company. There were about 30 persons in all and she carried 6 guns. The Cadboro was a big moneymaker for the Hudson's Bay Company on her trading trips between Nootka Sound and Fort Vancouver; at that time she was the crack vessel on the Pacific Coast. The Cadboro has a prominent place in Nanaimo's history. She took aboard the first shipment of coal to leave here, 460 barrels on September 10th 1852.

Now back to the story of the Beaver. It was an interesting time among ship-builders when the

keel of their first transatlantic steamship was laid at Blackwell, a suburb town of London. The Hudson's Bay Company, in having the Beaver built, intended from the start that the vessel should be constructed of the best materials available. The materials used and the cost of the vessel must have been enormous for a craft of her dimensions. Quoting from "History of the Beaver", a publication by Charles McCain, Vancouver, B.C. in 1894: " The Beaver was built by Messrs. Green, Wigram and Green as their certificate states, dated May 7th 1835. Listed here are some of the specifications:

The elm keel was of unusual size and strength. The stern and stem posts were of British oak; along the keel were placed the frames or ribs, two feet centres. These were of the best oak and greenheart. The spaces between the frames were filled solid to a level above the water line with curved timbers. The outside planking was of oak and African teak securely fastened to the frames with copper bolts and oak treenails. This was covered with a thick layer of tarpaper over which was placed a planking fur, held with spikes of a bronze composition. Then to preserve the woodwork from the ravages of [unintelligible] a sheathing of copper was secured all over the exterior hull with the exception of an [unintelligible] just below the gunnels. The inside lining of the frame consisted of oak and teak planking secured with diagonal, heavy iron straps and riveted, copper bolts. The main keelson was a massive stick of greenheart, twelve inches square, extending the whole length of the keel, secured with copper bolts which passed through both timbers. Parallel to this on either side, were the sister keelsons of the same material, but not so heavy. Across the keelsons, were fastened large, greenheart timbers, which formed the bed for the engines as well as the foundations for the furnaces. The deck was supported by a series of stout beams, mostly of greenheart and African teak. These were placed at frequent intervals across the hull to which they were fastened, there supports being oak beams and massive [unintelligible]. In addition to these were two oak-beams, about 10 by 14 inches, which crossed at the points where the two spars penetrated the deck."

At the time of the launching of the Beaver into the Thames, there are various accounts of the event and many conflicting stories. Some reports stated many thousands witnessed the ceremony. Yet it would be difficult for a few hundreds to crowd into the small yards. Alan Morley of the Vancouver Sun for Saturday August 27th 1966 states: " The accounts of the Beaver launching are doubtful. It was described as witnessed by a tremendous crowd of 130,000 people including King William IV; but some irreverent critic points out it was not mentioned in the London Times next day and the Times kept pretty close tabs on its Kings and Queens and their public appearances". Again Norman Hacking, marine editor of the Vancouver Province, in an article dated Thursday July 13th 1967 states: " The Beaver fable, of the launching, just won't die. The reporters drew on their imagination to make a colourful account. The steamer was launched by Mrs. John Laborchiere[?] wife of a Hudson's Bay Company official and not by a Duchess, and King William IV was not on hand." The story was reprinted in the Victoria Colonist in 1882 and again in several publications about the launching.

Next in order is the placing of the boiler and machinery. These items had been ordered the year previously from Bolton and Watt, a most reliable establishment and I quote here from the "Century Encyclopedia":

"The steam engine was brought to a high state of perfection by James Watt about the year 1782."

[It is unclear whether Barraclough is still quoting].

The Beaver's engines when packed at the works and together with the boiler and gearing for the paddle wheels weighed sixty-three and a half tons, the cost being 4,500 pounds sterling. There were two engines of the same design, turned 35 nominal horsepower each. These engines were several times heavier and very complicated compared to the modern steam engine of today of the same weight and capacity. The cylinders stood vertically and had a diameter of 42 inches with a 36-inch stroke. The piston rods projected through the top of the cylinders. There was a pair of horizontal beams, levers, connecting rods etc. The crankshaft was 6 inches in diameter. At each extremity of the outer portions of this shaft was a paddle wheel of 13 feet in diameter made up of 11 radial arms 5 feet in width. The low pressure boiler, which rested on brick furnaces and from which steam was carried through large copper tubes to the steam chest, in due course a trial trip was made when according to Lloyd's records, the Beaver attained a speed of 9 3/4 m.p.h. which was considered very gratifying. The Beaver's dimensions were: length overall 101.3 feet; breadth inside the paddle boxes 20 feet, outside the paddle boxes, 33 feet; depth 11.5 feet, registered as 109 1/8th tonnes burden and she was armed with 5 guns, 9 pounders and carried a crew of 26 men.

For the passage out of England to the Pacific Coast, the steamer Beaver was rigged as a brig with engines being placed in passage and the paddle wheel stored in her holds, covering the whole distance of the voyage under canvass. During the time the steamer was under construction the Hudson's Bay Company was also having a bark built to accompany the Beaver across the seas to her destination. The bark was called the Columbia and was of 310 tonnes burden. She was armed with 5 guns, 9 pounders and carried a crew of 26 men.

The Beaver and the Columbia, under Captain Derby, must have set out on the journey about the same time as reference is made in the log of the Beaver the first day out of "shorten sail to keep in company of the Columbia". Lewis & Dryden's register, "the bark Columbia sailed with her as consort but the Beaver was too speedy" etc. etc.

Now the log of the Beaver. The log of the Beaver as published in Lewis & Dryden's "Marine Register of the Pacific Coast" in 1894 is an extensive account of dates, positions, happenings on board and general information. There are approximately 226 entries in the log from August 27th 1835 to April 10th 1836. Here are a few selected items from the log; this will do for our purpose:

"From Gravesend for the Columbia River, August 27 1835.- Crew list on leaving Gravesend:

D. Home, was Commander W.C. Hamilton, first mate; Charles Dodd, second mate; Peter Arthur, chief engineer; John Donald, second engineer; Henry Barrett, carpenter; William Wilson, George Gordon, William Phillips, James Dick, George Holland, James McIntyre, William Burns.

Thursday, August 27, 1835 - 3 p.m, pilot came on board, hauled the vessel out of the docks and proceeded..... towards Gravesend.

7 a.m., Anchored off Gravesend. People employed the rest of the day fitting steering halyards, blocks and gear.

Aug. 29..... Dropped down to the head of Lea Reach.

Aug.31- 6 a.m., weighed anchor and proceeded towards the downs. At noon..... the pilot left us.

Sept. 2- Moderate breeze and clear weather, obliged to carry easy sail to keep in company with the Columbia. "

From here to September 12th the log of the Beaver gives details of activities carried on board, sails adjusted, prayers, signals, people employed about the rigging, making mats etc. And when the ship reached the island of Porto Santo.

"Sept.13 -.....At noon. Made the island of Madeira."

The sails of several ships in the area sighted.

" Oct. 4 -..... Spoke to a brig bound for Montevideo. Read prayers to the ship's company.

Nov.11- Made the Falkland Islands, bearing S. by W.

Nov.15 -.... Weather too unsettled to read prayers. Longitude 31' 33", latitude 56' 33".

Nov.18 - Strong breeze. Made Cape Horn bearing S. by W., distant, 10 leagues. At noon, Cape Horn, N.E. by E.

Nov.22 - Fresh gales with heavy squalls and hail; weather too bad to read prayers.

Nov.25-..... A sudden squall carried away topmast steering sail boom. Heavy fall of snow."

Rough seas and bad weather caused many changes to sails. Dec.12 - In moderate conditions, the ship made the Island of Juan Fernandez and anchored. [This island is the location of the famous Robinson Crusoe story situated off the coast of Chile.]

"Dec.18 -..... Weighed anchor and made sail for the Sandwich Islands.

Dec.19 - People employed unbending cable and stowing anchors..... Read prayers to the ship's company."

It would appear the officer in charge of entering records in the log of the Beaver did not think much of social festivities. From Christmas Day, Friday December 25th 1835, is this brief notation:

"Light breeze, S.E. Showed longitude to the Columbia, bearing S.E."

And on Friday January 1st, 1836, New Year's Day, is this brief item:

"Moderate trade, E. by S., squally with rain."

"Jan.27 - Light, variable breeze E. Captain Home went on board the Columbia.

Feb.1- Hove to for Columbia. Made the Island of Hawaii. [The actual name is Towhee in the log].

Feb 4 - Sighted Woahoo Island at 2.30. Mr. Reynolds came on board to pilot us in. At 3 p.m. came to anchor in 4 fathoms or water in Honolulu Harbour. Attended divine service on the shore with the ship's company."

Here is an interesting human story for February 14th:

"William Wilson went on shore without leave and against positive orders not to go."

On 17th the mate made the following entry:

"At 11 a.m. Captain Charlton, His Majesty's Consul, came on board and reprimanded Mr. Wilson, Seaman, for leaving the ship on Sunday last against his orders. Also for his insolence to me on the passage and general bad conduct. Captain Holme wrote over this," "Not correct"" , and a footnote added:

"In reference to the log of the 17, Captain Charlton came on board the Beaver at my request to take William Wilson out of the vessel for punishment, for having left the vessel without leave, but Wilson showing great contrition for his offence and the rest of the people asking that he be not punished, I reprimanded him and sent him [back] to his duty".

So there!

"Feb.19 - Let the old stock of water out of the boilers, it being very bad. Took aboard 1000 gallons of water.

Feb.24 - Crew [being] employed preparing for sea.

Feb. 25 - Weighed anchor and made sail.

Mar.16 - Observed Cape Disappointment ahead at 5.30. Tacked ship at 11.30 [and] fired two guns. Bearings at noon, Cape Disappointment, N. 1/2 E., Point Adams, N.E. by E.

March 18- Calm and clear weather..... At 3 p.m. stood in at the bar [of the Columbia River], sounding every 5 minutes. At 2 a canoe came alongside with natives. 7.30 anchored in 7 fathoms with 40 fathoms of chain.

April 3- Made all possible sail up the river. At 4 p.m. observed the Columbia aground and sent a boat to assist.

April 4- Columbia hove off at 4 a.m.

April 10- 1836. At 6.30 p.m. rounded Parting Point, fired 2 guns. At 7.30 abreast Fort Vancouver in 9 fathoms and found lying there the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company schooner Cadboro."

The next entries in the log concern the work of fitting the Beaver as a steamer.

"Monday May 16 -1836. Carpenters ship in the paddle wheels. At 4.p.m the engineers got up steam and tried the engines. Found them to answer very well.

May 17- At daylight got steam up and ran abreast of the lower plain for firewood. At 2 p.m. returned to the Fort.

May 31-. At 9.30 a party of ladies and gentlemen came aboard. At 9.45... ran down the river under steam and entered the Willamette River and back to Vancouver. At 8, called all hands on deck to splice the main brace.

June 21- Weighed anchor and ran down the river. At 4.30 anchored in Baker's Bay in company with the Columbia and found the engines to work extremely well."

The Beaver never returned to Fort Vancouver.

Now we come to the Beaver's first trip to the Northwest Coast. On June 26th 1836, the Beaver embarked on her first trip to the Northwest Coast. The crew, on leaving Fort Vancouver, was as follows: [and I mention these persons as place names and family names around Nanaimo can be attributed to them.]

D. Home, Commander; Charles Dodd, first mate; A. Lattie, second mate; P. Arthur and T. Donald, engineers; William Lackey, boatswain; H. T. Barrett, carpenter; William Burns, cook; William Wilson, William Phillips, George Gordon, George Holland, James Dick, James McIntyre, seamen; John McLean, Farquhar McDonald and two Kanakas were stokers; Murdock McLeod, Louis Tademier, Tyneas Tozier, A. Martell, Joseph Martell, Joseph Michael, Hugh Connick and six Kanakas and Indians, woodcutters.

"June 27 - The after part of the starboard paddle-box carried away. At daylight saw the high land to the N. of Nootka Sound.

June 28 - Finding that we had not enough fuel to carry us to Millbank [sound], stopped the steam and made sail to the topsail and unshipped five paddle-boxes on each side to avoid holding too much water.

June 30 - At 4, after taking on a supply of wood, weighed and ran up the Sound, anchored at 6.30 opposite Millbank Fort, saluted the Fort with seven guns, which was returned. Arrived at Fort Simpson, being 6 days going up owing to frequent stops for wood.

July 14 - Arrived at Tungasse and found there the Russian Fur Company's brig Chitsekoff".

From here on the Beaver went into a busy service without delay, running up and down the coast, in and out of every bay, river and inlet between Puget Sound and Alaska, collecting furs and carrying supplies for the Company's posts. At this time nearly all of the far Northwest was under lease to the Hudson's Bay Company from Russia. The Beaver made period trips with a cargo of produce, cattle, grain and other goods with which to pay the rent. The steamer made frequent trips to the American side after the Company moved its headquarters to Victoria and on one visit in 1851, in command of Captain steward, she was seized for an infraction of the

laws and sent to Olympia. While lying there, Captain Steward put the man in charge ashore and steamed away to the British side. Captain Sabiston, the veteran British Columbia pilot, was mate on the vessel at the time. Amicable relations between the Company and the U.S. were soon restored.

In 1860, the Beaver was extensively overhauled and fitted with staterooms, and ran between Victoria and New Westminster. A few years later she passed into the hands of the Imperial Hydrographers, under charter from the Hudson's Bay Company. They kept her busy for several years, surveying the waters of the Northwest Coast. When the vessel returned to the Hudson's Bay Company on 25th December, 1870, at the expiration of the lease, she was hauled out and thoroughly repaired. On examining the hull, a ten-pound piece of rock was found embedded in one of the timbers, a relic she had carried away after coming in contact with Race Rocks.

Here is a recent item taken from the Hudson's Bay Company magazine, "Beaver", summer issue for 1970:

"She came back under the Company flag on December 21st, 1870, with naval pomp and ceremony".

The "Victoria Colonist" for July 9th, 1867 has an item reading as follows:

"The old Hudson's Bay steamer Beaver, has lately been on Laing's Ways, and examinations show that her timbers are as sound as they were the day she was launched. The Beaver will receive her new boilers and resume her surveying duties on the Northwest Coast."

In 1874 the Beaver was refitted and made her first trip as a towboat on August 8th. This proud ship further indignities by being stripped of her mast and other items of her sailing days. The City of Vancouver acquired her main mast, 18 inches at the butt diameter. It was erected at the entrance of Stanley Park. On August 31st the Beaver was sold by the Hudson's Bay Company for \$17,500. to Stafford, Saunders, Martin, Rudlin, Coltman and Williams. In 1877, Captain J.D. Warren took command.

During her later years of working, the Hudson's Bay Company experienced difficulty in securing engineers who understood her engines or were willing to handle the old style machines. One would suppose that these old engines would be constantly needing repairs, but such was not the case. They ran remarkably well right up to the last they were in use, according to men who had been part of her crew. One of her late engineers stated: " You should have seen us fellas jump when we got the signals to go ahead.....[END OF SIDE 1 OF TAPE]

SIDE 2

..... complicated series of jointed levers, often getting uncentred, which was their worst feature. In 1880, the steamer took fire, and her upper works were considerably damaged. The Beaver continued jobbing around until 1883, when the vessel struck a rock at the entrance of Burrard Inlet Narrows and sank. She was raised and put in good order by the British Columbia Towing and Transportation Company. The Beaver served as a towboat until 1888 when she was once more licensed to carry passengers. She continued serving the logging

camps along the coast, until the fatal day of July 26th, 1888 when she went on the rocks near the entrance to Vancouver Harbour. That foggy morning of July 26th 1888, the chief officers were: George Marchant, Captain; Dave Simmons, Chief Engineer; Charles Johnson, Mate. When the Beaver struck the rock on her way out of the harbour, and Dave Simmons, pulled the throttle which stopped the engines for the last time. She hung on the rocks in a listless manner until June 2nd, 1892, when a big side-wheeler, the Yosemite, sweeping by at high water, throwing a swash which lifted the Beaver from the rocks and slipped her into deep water. That portion of her house and hull, which had not already been carried off by the relic hunters, was gradually pulled apart by grappling hooks, to be prized as mementoes of the famous craft. The copper bolts and sheathing were melted down and made into medals and souvenirs. Fixtures from the wheelhouse and timbers from the hull were manufactured into great number of items and sold as mementoes and the cast iron was purchased by the local foundries. While on the rocks at Prospect Point, 1085 pounds of copper was salvaged from her bolts, tubing, sheathing etc. And from this copper medals were struck. The first made in 1891 about the size of a 50-cent piece. They weighed one and a quarter ounces with an illustration of the Beaver on one side. There were about 226 issued in number. The second lot of medals were finer workmanship, about one and three eighth inches in diameter, three quarters of an ounce in weight. The third issue, about the size of a 25-cent piece. Medals sold first for a \$1. and \$1.25. The latest quotation I heard about the Beaver medals were \$10. and up according to the issue. All the copper medals were numbered, the exact count of each series we are not able to ascertain. The dyes were hand-struck making some imperfect copies, which were discarded. Occasionally one of these copper medals turns up to view by its proud possessor and many of the medals are on display in the museums.

Here we come to part 2 of this article. Over the years I have collected a file of interesting items concerning the Steamship Beaver, published by recognized historians. They are the historic information of her journeys along the Pacific Coast and the men who sailed in the vessel. These items are not necessarily in chronological order. Since the Beaver was engaged in journeys along the coastal waterways, she could not be likened to an historical landmark. The following items must be considered as an anthology of items pieced together.

This part 2 deals with a more intimate account of the men who sailed in the Beaver.

On April 4th 1836, the Beaver under Captain Home, together with the Columbia, Captain Derby, arrived at the historic port of Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River. Later, the Beaver proceeded about 115 miles up the river to Fort Vancouver, then the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters of the Pacific Northwest Coast, arriving there April 10th 1836. On hand to welcome the steamer and her crew, were John McLoughlin, Governor of Northwest Coast affairs; Chief Factor, Duncan Finlayson, James Douglas and John Dunne and others associated with the Hudson's Bay Company. Shortly after the arrival of the Beaver to this coast in 1836, Captain Home resigned his command of the vessel to Captain William H. McNeil. That was in 1837. He was formerly of the Hudson's Bay Company ship Llama. Captain McNeil's name has become inseparably connected with the Beaver and the early records of the vast regions of the Northwest Coast.

About the month of July 1836, Chief Factor McLoughlin issued orders for the Beaver to proceed to the north end of Vancouver Island and ascertain if coal did exist as so reported by Indians at Fort McLoughlin. Quoting from Dunne's "History of the Oregon Territory" published in 1844 in London, in part: " Mr. Finlayson with part of the crew of the Beaver went on shore

leaving me in the ship to conduct trade. Bituminous coal was found of excellent quality". This was the first finding of coal on this coast by others than Indians. The coal was first tested in the Beaver's furnaces. In honour of her captain, the small bay where the Beaver first cast anchor was called McNeil Harbour, later changed to Beaver Harbour. Another item by Mr. Dunne, during the steamer's first trip to Fort Simpson in 1836: " At Fort McLoughlin we took on board the Beaver, about 26 cords of wood for fuel which was ready cut for us. This amount generally lasted us between 3 and 4 days running time. Woodcutters were engaged in stacking suitable wood for the furnaces of the Beaver at convenient places along the coast."

Here is a recent item taken in part from a lengthy article in the Hudson's Bay Company magazine, "Beaver", summer issue for 1970: " The Beaver could not have possibly steamed out to the North Pacific The most shattering information about her was her unbelievable appetite for wood fuel. She consumed 40 cords of wood in one days steaming. A cord of wood is 8 feet by 4 feet by 4 or a total of 5,120 cubic feet of timber. It took some little while for these implications of her engineers' demands to sink in. After two trial runs, a gang was kept permanently employed in chopping to feed her hungry furnaces. Unless there were several thousand cubic feet of wood ready chopped to her engineers taste at points of call, she lost a couple of days steaming. She averaged 30 miles a day, steaming. The facts of this account do not agree with Mr. Dunne's notes as stated here previously. Mr. Dunne stated 26 cords lasted 3 or 4 days steaming time, which sounds reasonable. I think the writer of that article must have drawn on his imagination.

From Fort Simpson journal, August 10th 1837: " On his way south bound from Fort Simpson, Captain McNeil and the Beaver explored the south end of Vancouver Island and found an excellent harbour and a fine open country along the seashore but saw no river sufficiently extensive for a mill." And then quoting from Coates and Gosnell, 1910: " As early as 1837, McNeil had explored the southern end of Vancouver Island and had found an excellent harbour and fine open country." McNeil's credited with discovering Esquimalt and Victoria harbours. Gosnell was a former British Columbia provincial archivist.

In the Spring of 1840, James Douglas proceeded northwards in the Beaver to establish Fort Durham and Taku Inlet, the northern most post of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was accompanied by R. Finlayson. Finlayson's autobiography and Howay & Schofield's "History of British Columbia".

In May 1840 James Douglas proceeded in the Beaver to Sitka, Alaska, where he met the Russian Governor,

Etholin when, the Hudson's Bay Company acquired the rights to occupy certain southern portions of Alaska in exchange for farm produce, cattle and other provisions. These items came from the Company's farms at Nisqually on the Columbia River. Afterwards they were provided from the Hudson's Bay Company farms at Fort Langley which was established in 1827. Sir George Simpson in his narrative of a journey towards the end of September 1841 speaks of a cruise in the Beaver from Puget Sound to Alaska, where he and James Douglas spent a most enjoyable time with Governor Etholin? who visited the little vessel dressed in full uniform, quoting here: " No man of war ever maintained stricter discipline along this coast than did the little black steamer, Beaver."

The following item is a diversion from the main subject, but it leads up to that part that the

steamer, Beaver, took in establishing Fort Victoria. Sir George Simpson, the reputable governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, having establish a new post north of Fort Vancouver, in case the boundary line should follow the proposed compromise of the 49th parallel. Dr. McLoughlin was instructed to carry out the undertaking. Early in the year 1842 James Douglas left Fort Vancouver for Nisqually, where he embarked with a party of six men on the schooner, Cadboro and proceeded to explore the southern end of Vancouver Island. He inspected several areas; finally he made a choice of Fort Camosack, known later as Camosun. As reported in Howay & Schofield's, volume I: " March 1st 1843, Douglas with 15 men set sail from Fort Vancouver, calling at Nisqually and Cowlitz for supplies. Here the steamer, Beaver, was waiting for them. Crossing the Straits of Juan de Fuca, they landed from the Beaver at Schole Point, now Clover Point, on March 14th 1843. Douglas reported on the 15th: " " Went this morning to examine the harbour, commenced to build Fort Camosun"".

"Tuesday, March 21st 1843, Douglas and party journeyed northward in the Beaver to Fort Simpson, then to dismantle Fort Durham at Taku Inlet, and Fort McLoughlin, on Millbank Sound, in accordance of instructions of Sir George Simpson who ruled these points north would be in future supplied by the Beaver." Douglas and his party arrived back at Camosun 1st June 1843.

In 1843 Captain William H. McNeil resigned his command of the Beaver to Captain Charles Dodd who was second mate when the vessel left England in 1835. Dodd Narrows is named after him. He was one of the first captains to navigate the narrow waterways. In 1849, three years after the 49th parallel of latitude had been established as the national boundary between and the United States and the Hudson's Bay Company domains, the Beaver was engaged in the removal of effects from Fort Vancouver to Fort Victoria.

We come to the year 1849 and an account of the first coal workings on Vancouver Island at McNeil Harbour, later Fort Rupert, and the part the steamship Beaver played in servicing the project as recorded in the private diary of Andrew Muir. We're taking parts of it during the years 1849 -50. The diary is preserved at the B.C. Archives, Victoria. The miners, Muir and McGregor, left Victoria on 27th August 1849 in the brig Mary Dare and after a tedious passage, arrived at Beaver Harbour on 27th September. The Muir diary is one of the most remarkable pieces of history about Vancouver Island. It contains a total of 121 pages, dating from sailing from England to leaving Fort Rupert. There are 36 pages of factual day to day happenings of the early coal mining project, working conditions etc. and at times the brutal treatment the miners received from the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, in charge at the mines. Noting a few brief items the Muirs and McGregor were charged with insubordination for not doing extra work ordered by the officers that was in no way part of their duties, and fined 50 pounds. On May 2nd 1860 the Beaver and the bark Cowlitz, arrived from Victoria. After tea, the miners went on board the Beaver and no doubt told the conditions prevailing there. On Friday May 3rd, Andrew Muir, son of John Muir, overman at the works, and John McGregor before Blenkinsop, [Breadmuir?], and McNeil, which officers appeared to act like madmen, with drawn pistols and swords. Andrew Muir and John McGregor were put in irons and fed on bread and water for six days and " treated in a shocking manner, even threatened to be shot like dogs". Muir was placed in the upper Bastion and McGregor in the lower. The miners pleaded with the doctor at the Fort for relief from the cold and damp conditions they were subjected to.

"May 24th. The steamer England, Captain Brown, from San Francisco, arrived for coal.

On June 1st the steamer, Beaver, and the miners had a visit from the second mate of the England who heard their story.

June 15th, went on board the England in our own canoe.

June 27th the Beaver called, bringing letters. The miners laid their grievances before Dr. Helmcken. This morning the Beaver left for the north end."

On July 9th they were taken up on the England, very badly off as it states. The miners returned to Victoria in due course; we might add when word of the trouble at Fort Rupert reached headquarters of the Company in London, the Governor wrote a scathing rebuke to Chief Factor James Douglas at Fort Victoria, declaring those officers had no legal right to imprison miners let alone put them in irons.

Dr. J. S. Helmcken gave an interesting description of the steamship Beaver, the first steamer to ply along this northwest coast, he quotes: " In 1850, I was passenger on the Beaver, Captain Dodd was commander. She had the appearance of a small man of war, armed with 4 brass cannons, muskets and cutlasses around the mainmast. Along her sides were boarding nettings; she had an old fashioned steering wheel. No horse existed in those days; carried plenty of hands, not for defence, but to cut wood for furnaces, there being no coal in their early career. And she was flush for and aft".

From " Vancouver Island's Westcoast 1762-1962" by George Nicholson: " When the Beaver leaving Victoria, she was saluted by the Fort with 5 guns, as it was a matter of policy to keep up the dignity of the Hudson's Bay Company, not only at Victoria, but all along the coast to impress the Indians".

The steamship Beaver and items concerning Nanaimo Harbour.

James Douglas may have come to Nanaimo in 1852, and confirmed the report of coal deposits. An historic document written and signed by Douglas to Joseph William McKay, dated at Fort Victoria 24th August 1852, wherein McKay was instructed to proceed with all possible diligence to Winthuysen Inlet, commonly known as Nanaimo Bay and formerly take possession of the coal beds lately discovered there for and on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company etc. etc. We have seen it reported that McKay came to Nanaimo in the Beaver to follow out his instructions from instructions from Douglas. However, at present, we do not have official confirmation of that item. If McKay left Victoria early on the morning of the 25th, which was the usual custom of all such undertakings, then arriving at Nanaimo on 27th, being only two days travel time, it is unlikely that he would have journeyed either by canoe or sailing ship.

Form August 1852, the Beaver was a regular caller at Nanaimo, in and out of the harbour on Hudson's Bay Company business.

January 17th 1853 was an event of moment history with the Beaver and Nanaimo harbour. It concerned the first trial by jury on Vancouver Island or the mainland of British Columbia which was held on the quarterdeck of the Beaver, conducted by James Douglas. Two men were charged with murder; they were found guilty and hanged at the south point of Douglas Island,

now called Gallows Point, Protection Island. Quoting " The trial and execution taking place on a frosty day, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m" [Communicated by Admiral, then Lieutenant, John Moresby; and by Mr. Joseph William McKay. This account is taken from the Hudson's Bay Company records at Nanaimo by Captain John T. Walbran.

The Beaver bought supplies to Nanaimo while the Bastion was being constructed, which was completed in 1853. The Hudson's Bay Company warehouse and yards, situated below Wharf Street, as pictures show, were built shortly after the [unintelligible]. Freight, trade goods, supplies etc, were unloaded from the Beaver. The late Mr. William Lewis, then being a centenarian, told me many anecdotes of visiting this warehouse below what is now [Wharf street??]. One item of interest; he saw two barrels of gunflints. Those boys used to have competitions, who could throw the flints furthest over the water.

November 27th 1854, is an historic date for Nanaimo when the passengers who had sailed from England in the Princess Royal to Esquimalt, were brought ashore here at 11 a.m. November 27th 1854 by the steamer Beaver and the sailing ship Recovery.

Here are two items concerning the Beaver taken from the diary of Cornelius Bryant, whose activities during the early period of Nanaimo, are of particular historic interest. Mr. Bryant left London, England on the sailing ship Princess Royal August 19th, 1856, arriving at Fort Vancouver, January 17th 1857, being 151 days at sea. Quoting from his diary, " On entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca, we were met by the steamer Beaver and the Otter from Victoria, and hearty cheers were exchanged. His Excellency the Governor was aboard the Beaver. On January 17th we went ashore at Fort Victoria and were met by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Benson. On January 31st, left Fort Victoria in the steamer Beaver for Colvilletown and arrived there on the next day, Sunday, February 1st. 1857 where we met with a hearty reception."

It would be fitting at this time to briefly review a few items about Cornelius Bryant; he played a prominent part in Nanaimo's history. Mr. Bryant entered upon his duties as teacher in the colonial school and acted as postmaster. He held the first religious service here, February 15th 1857 and organised the Band of Hope for the children. Later Mr. Bryant entered the ministry and served the church in Nanaimo for two separate three-year terms, afterwards moving to Chilliwack and Sumas to continue his work in the ministry.

For the next few years, the Beaver was constantly engaged filling various assignments along the coastal waters. In 1858 came the famous gold rush to the Fraser River. The little, black steamer conveyed thousands of miners and prospectors cross from Victoria to the Fraser River. On November 18th 1858, James Douglas accompanied by Rear-Admiral Robert Lampard-Baynes, David Cameron, Chief Justice of Vancouver Island, Matthew B. Begbie, Judge of British Columbia, and Captain Robert Mann-Parsons, in command of a detachment of twenty men, left Victoria on Her Majesty's Ship Satellite, to Point Roberts, thence by the Hudson's Bay Company vessel Otter, to Derby, that was old Fort Langley, where the official party boarded the historic Beaver, arriving at Fort Langley, some two and a half miles on, where they landed November 19th 1858, quoting: " The natal day of British Columbia. A salute of eighteen guns was fired; the Union Jack was run up over the principal entrance".

Here is an interesting article by Bruce A. McKelvie, the noted historian, writing on the history of Fort Langley, he states: " In March 1834, John McLaughlin, the dictator [sic] of the Columbia, wrote to J. M. Yale, you will keep the Fort in repair and sow as much grain as you

can." At that time the Hudson's Bay Company were considering moving Fort Langley to an area near to Lulu Island. The arrival of the steamer Beaver to work on the Fraser removed one of the obstacles to the Fort's continuance on the banks of the Fraser. This piece of history is worth repeating here: " The ceremony took place in the main building of the Fort. Douglas, after administering the usual oaths to Mr. Begbie and handing him his commission as Judge of British Columbia, took the oaths of office and allegiance. The Governor then issued a proclamation revoking the Hudson's Bay Company's licence of exclusive trade with the Indians, so far as the new colony was concerned. Three other laws were proclaimed:

- 1] The Act creating the Colony of British Columbia;
- 2] Another, validating the acts of Douglas and all the officials under him;
- 3] A third declaring English law in force in the Colony"

That is from F.W. Howay.

November 19th 1866, the proclamation read uniting the two crown colonies of Vancouver Island and the Mainland of British Columbia.

In 1859 the San Juan Island affair developed, known as the Pig War. The Beaver, being well armed, carried several officers from Victoria to the trouble spot. Included were A.G. Dallas, and Dr. William F. Tolmie. San Juan Island was ceded to the U.S.A. on October 21st, 1872.

When the replica of the Beaver arrived at Nanaimo Harbour, Tuesday August 16th 1966 at 7 p.m., there was a large gathering of people to welcome the ship. Referring again to our old friend Mr. William Lewis, then aged 103 years, he remarked of often seeing the Beaver in the harbour. Also they had been aboard the ship and on one occasion the Beaver was stranded on the rock behind the post office, as he said "high and dry".

This item is interesting. From brief, descriptive notes about Nanaimo in 1874 by Mr. Mark Bate, in part:

"Where Dobeson Iron Works have established there had been machinery for operating a slip [unintelligible], a powerful windlass and other requisite appliances. The weighs were built by Bolton & Cook who hauled up the old historic Beaver and effected extensive repairs to her fore-front." etc etc.

In viewing pictures of the Beaver, which were taken over the years, there is marked contrast in the upper structure. In some pictures it is difficult to recognise her as the same vessel.

Here is an interesting item concerning the steering wheel of the steamship Beaver. On making an enquiry at the Maritime Museum in Victoria on the subject, we received a reply dated August 19th, 1969, quoting in part: "This museum holds what we understand was the original wheel of the Beaver. There are other wheels, reputed to be from the Beaver, but their size, condition, and method of construction indicate that they are later ones." And from the Maritime Museum of Vancouver, in a reply dated 8th September, 1969, we quote in part: " We have in our possession a large, relatively intact, standard 19th century oak wheel. This was donated to us by a local, prominent businessman, who located it in a private collection outside

the Province. It had been acquired here in British Columbia before the turn of the century as the wheel from the Beaver, and attested to by several of her past crew members. The Maritime Museum in Victoria too has a wheel that is attributed to having come off the Beaver, this one of a different type to ours, was acquired when the Museum was located at the Esquimalt Base and is also, I believe, guaranteed authentic. You pays your money and takes your choice."

There are several place names along the coast named after the steamer. Beaver Point, Beaver Rock, Coal Island etc.

From the Victoria Colonist, October 20th 1963: " There was more than one Beaver. In 1888 another Beaver was built at Victoria, the first steamship to be built in British Columbia. Registered as 427 tons, gross, a stern-wheeler; length overall, 140 feet, beam 28 feet and draft 5.1 feet.

TAPE ENDS ABRUPTLY

NOTE

Barraclough's quotations are transcribed as he speaks them. They are often inaccurate. For the exact quotes see the items referred to.