

Fort Connah and its Managers and other Developments on the Flathead Reservation in the early 1850s

In the Pacific Northwest in 1846

By Chalk Courchane 2011

Fort Connah is located in the Mission Valley (“a lush vale of glacial moraine and stunning views”), in Lake County, Western Montana, just about six miles north of the town of St. Ignatius. (Today it is on Highway 93 between St. Ignatius and Ronan, Montana). The Mission Mountains was called “Coul-hi-cat” by Angus McDonald and said they overlooked the most beautiful valley in America. The Salish referred to the valley as Snielemen, the “meeting place.”

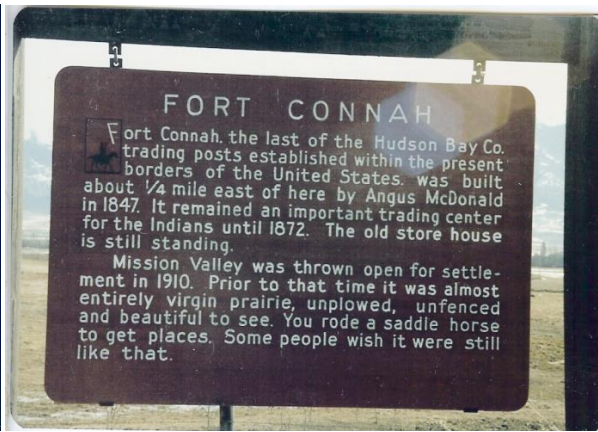
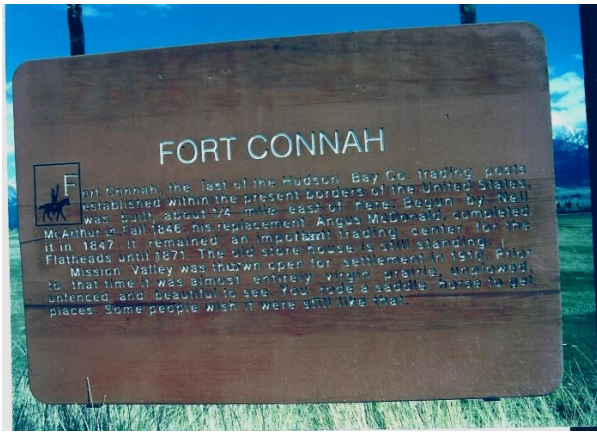
Local historian, J. F. McAlear wrote of the Flathead Reservation in 1962:

“Prominent valleys on the reservation today include Valley View, Reservoir Valley, Moiese Valley, Irvine Flats, Round Butte, Mission Valley, Jocko Valley, the Big Draw, the Little Bitter Root, and Camas Prairie. The now larger Flathead River is snow-fed by the mountains that surround it. The Mission Mountains feed Mud, Spring, Crow, Post, and Mission Creeks, also the Jocko River on the south.

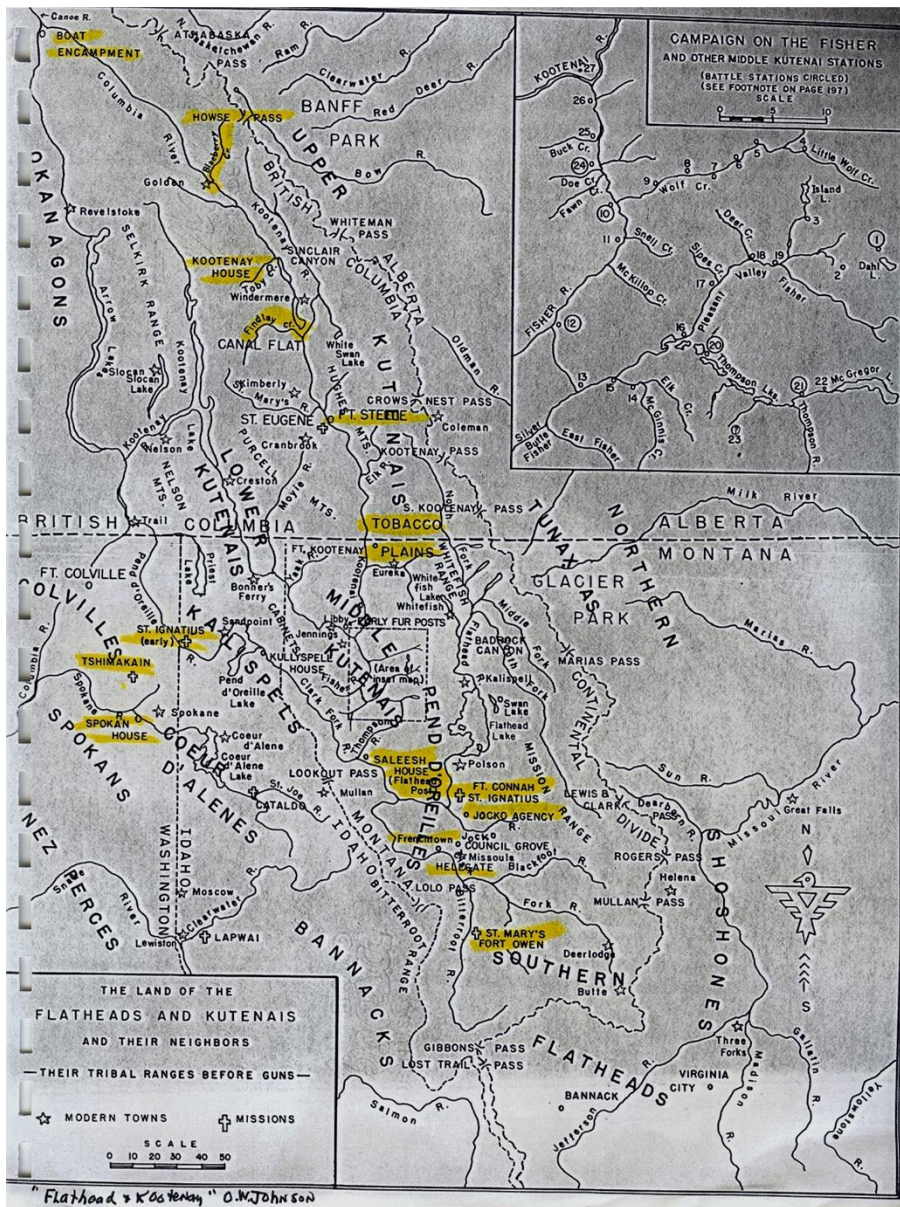
Before the advent of the explorer, the trader, and the settlers, the area was a haven for wild game. The lakes and streams were well-supplied with fish. It was a paradise for the early-day Indian as he never wanted for wild berries, meat, fish and timber for his home and fuel.

It was indeed a favored land, and today, although the supply of game and fish has been greatly depleted, the area still retains much of its natural beauty. It reflects the majestic power it once held when the valley was silent except for the footsteps of nature.” The Fabulous Flathead, the Story of the Development of Montana’s Flathead Indian Reservation, as told to Sharon Bergman by J.F. McAlear, President of the Reservation Pioneers, 1962, The Reservation Pioneers, Inc. & Treasure State Publishing Company, pages 2-3.

“Last to be established of the series of forts or trading posts of the Hudson’s Bay Company south of the forty-ninth parallel.” (Partoll, page 399) It held out for 24 years after transferring from the abandoned Flathead Post located on the eastern bank of the Flathead River above Thompson Falls, in Sanders County, Montana. The southernmost post of the Hudson’s Bay Company, in the western part of the United States.



Both taken by Chalk Courchane



Neil McLean McArthur

Oct. 9, 1845 “ Sunday. Fine weather. At half past seven this morning the York Factory Express arrived, in charge of Dugald McTavish, brought down 10 new hands. C.(hief) F.(actor) Lewes and family, and Mr. McArthur apprentice clerk crossed the mountains with the Express, but both have remained here with the Express Boats. Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 29.

In the summer of 1846 Neil McLean McArthur, apprenticed clerk in charge of the old Flathead Post of the Hudson’s Bay Company near Thompson’s Falls, moved the supplies from that place and began construction of a building at a site some sixty miles east of his post in the Mission Valley. (Partoll, p.399) It is a “fine cross between English post and beam and standard log cabin.” Kingston Heath, Montana State Historic Preservation Office. The site was on a creek that was later to be called Post Creek because of the trading post.

February 22, 1850. “Friday. Dr. Tolmie has married Miss Jane Work. Captain McNeil has got leave of absence for a year and is to proceed to the States. Mr. Blenkinsop is to take charge of Fort Rupert, and Mr. McArthur has come across with Governor Colvile to be stationed here, probably to take my place.”

“March 8th. Friday. Sleeting most of the day. About 5 P.M. Mr. McArthur arrived from Fort Victoria, by way of the Nisqually portage. He was accompanied by Mr. Grahame’s brother, Jeffrey, who arrived at Nisqually a few days ago. He is direct from England and having only remained a week at San Francisco. He sailed from Liverpool on the 13th, July last and touched on the way out at the Brazills and Valparaiso. He has come here to see his uncle Mr. Allan, with whom he will probably return to California. Mr. McArthur I understand is to be staioned at Oregon City.”

“11th. Monday. Raining during the fore part of the day. At daylight this morning Governor Colvile, Sir Edward Poore, Mr. McKinlay and Mr. McArthur started in a boat for Champooiac, and after dinner Mr. Allan, Dr. Barclay and Jeffrey Grahame left in a canoe for Oregon City. Both parties intended returning about Friday. In the afternoon Capt. Travailot and Frederick Lewes arrived from Portland, and Mt. Adolphus Lewes returned to his farm.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages74-75.

He was in 1851 to 1854 at Fort Hall replacing Richard Grant. McArthur was replaced by William Sinclair. Chronology of the Snake River Karen L. Pratt Copyright © 2003 by Idaho Power Company

Peter Skene Ogden wrote on July 18, 1851 to William Tolmie, “I have been very unwell and one day to my bed ... I am indeed harassed to death .. tho I succeeded with assistance of Indians to discharge the Perkin’s cargo in nine days and at the same time loaded the Mary Dare, sent of McKinley with his outfit to the Umpqua ... MacArthur to the Snake Country and cleared my

dispatches for England and Canada .. so from this you may judge that I have enough to occupy me

My old Lady (Julia) and family have gone down to increase the population at Beaver, Mrs. B. (Birnie) feeling so wretched...” Binns, Archie, Peter Skene Ogden Fur Trader, Binford & Mort, Publishers, Portland, Oregon, 1967.

“Judge Woody told me this story of the origin of the name: Neil MacArthur was a Hudson Bay company factor who afterward went trading for himself on the old emigrant road. He was in charge of one of the old Hudson Bay "brigades" which had been an expedition from the post to an Indian camp down near where Frenchtown is. He had had a successful trading season and was returning to the post over the old trail. One of his men was a Kanaka, named Koriaka, and this man rode the bell mare at the head of the line. In the canyon, as the "brigade" was returning to the post, it was waylaid by a war party of Blackfeet in the little gulch where the Marent trestle is built. The ambush was not a success, as the Blackfeet did not wait for the main body of the "brigade," but shot Koriaka as he came into sight on the trail. The following line at once fell back, rallied and drove back the hostiles. There was no other life lost than that of the poor Kanaka and the canyon was given his name. The old Indian name seems to have been entirely lost; whatever it was, it was superseded by the name " Koriaka's canyon," and this it retained until The O'Keeffe rounded it out into " The Coriacan defile." Following old trails, by Arthur L. Stone ,page 33

But there was too much individuality about this Irish baron for any other name than his to be applied to any place where he was and soon the basin was known as "O'Keeffe's place," and the defile became "O'Keeffe's canyon," by which name it is yet called. Poor Koriaka was not important enough to be retained in history, even though he gave his life to win a place there. The Celtic force asserted itself; it was the survival of the fittest.”

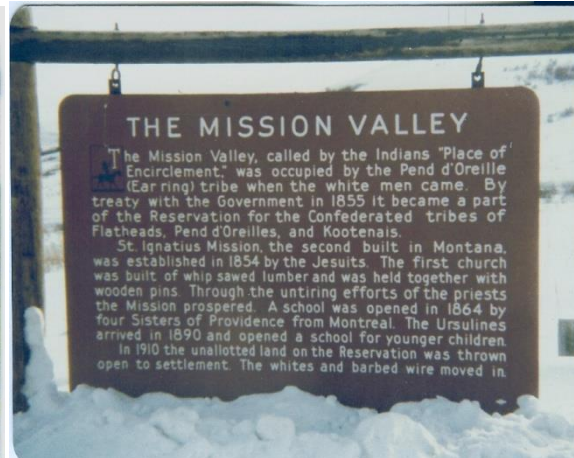
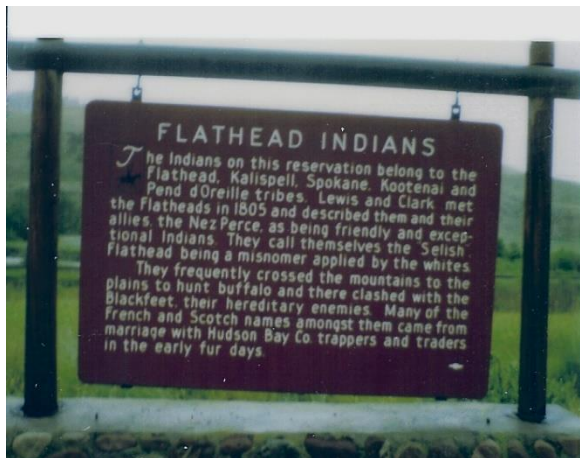
McArthur eventually left the service of the HBC and “In the fall of 1855 Neil McArthur, a Bay man, with Henry Brooks and L. R. Maillet, established a cattle-and horse-breeding station, using old Cantonment Stevens.” Fahey, John, The Flathead Indians, 1974, University of Oklahoma, page 104.

“In 1860, Donald McLean, who had worked for the Hudson Bay Company for 33 years, enlisted Neil McArthur to pre-empt 160 acres at the junction of the Bonaparte River and Hat Creek (British Columbia). It is believed that McLean did not pre-empt the land himself because he had already claimed a farm at Cache Creek, thereby reaching his limit for pre-empting land at that time. During his years with the HBC, Donald had learned that the area offered good winter pasture land and fertile soil. Over the next four years, McLean and his family developed the ranch and the roadhouse. By 1861, he had overcome potential water shortages by constructing the first known flood irrigation system in the colony. Despite innovations of this kind, success could be elusive. With barley and vegetables suffering from lack of rain the following year, McLean opened the irrigation gates only to lose much of the crop to unseasonal frost.

After McLean's death in 1864, in the Chilcotin War. His wife Sophia and family were unable in the next several years to make a living from the property in. With McArthur still the legal owner, they were forced to walk away from their home. McArthur had pre-empted 160 acres just south of the McLean place, at the mouth of Hat Creek, on January 29, 1861. He moved to this property a log building and a barn abandoned by the fur traders from across the Bonaparte

River.” Ranching at Hat Creek Ranch, http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/pm_v2.php?id=story_line&lg=English&fl=0&ex=00000379&sl=2849&pos=1 ; Trails to Gold, Volume 1 by Branwen Christine Patenaude, page 109.

In December of 1879, Donald McLean’s sons, Allan McLean, Charles McLean, Archibald McLean and Alexander Hare – the Kamloops Outlaws – were charged with horse stealing. John Ussher and three special constables with warrants for their arrest found them in the Nicola Mountains, and summoned them to surrender. In reply they opened fire, killing Ussher and wounding two of his assistants. The outlaws then killed an inoffensive sheep rancher named Kelly. A large posse pursued them and they were surrounded and captured . They were tried in New Westminster in November, 1880, and found guilty. The four criminals were hanged on one scaffold at New Westminster, on January 31, 1881. ” Angus McDonald: A Few Items Of The West, edited by F.W. Howay, William S. Lewis and Jacob A. Meyers, Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 8, 1917, page 212. Donald McLean was another that was taught the Flathead trade by Archibald McDonald and Francis Ermatinger.



Taken by Chalk Courchane

Angus McDonald

The next summer of 1847 McArthur was replaced by Angus McDonald and it is he who completed the post buildings. The post had no palisade or moat surrounding it, and was not a “fort” but a trading post. Seen shortly after (1856) by Thomas Adams, a reliable observer, and member of Stevens Pacific Railroad Survey in 1853-1854 and the 1855 Hellgate Treaty, plus involved in the Mullan Road project, and he said “this “fort” was “a wooden building, about twenty-four by sixteen feet, of one story, with a bark roof; one wooden bastion, about fourteen feet square; and two store-rooms, each ten feet square; also a log corral, about sixty feet square.” (Partoll, page 400. Another description of the building called it Red River framing, with the roof cut by a two hand saw, it had a porch by the door that was later torn off. Shawna Grenier, History Project to Bring Students to Fort Connah.” Mission Valley News, May 18, 1983.

“Francois Finley, the son of Jocko Finlay, was in the lower Flathead Valley (Mission Valley) when HBC trader, Neil McArthur began construction on a new trading post of hand-hewn, mortised logs of pine or fir heartwood. Francois furnished the manual labor that was needed. By the time the post was finished, Angus McDonald who had replaced McArthur as local trader, and McDonald wanted to call the post Connan, after the Scottish River, but the Indians and Francois could not pronounce Connan, soon the name gave way to “Conna” and then ”Connah”. Connah was as close as they could come to the correct pronunciation. Finally, Angus McDonald changed the name officially to Fort Connah in 1847.” Courchane, Finley, page 155.

So then the second clerk in charge of Fort Connah was Angus McDonald (15 Oct.1816-1 Feb.1889) a prominent figure in the fur trade of the Pacific Northwest and he served the Hudson’s Bay Company in various capacities from 1838 to 1872. He was a native of Craig House, Loch Torridon, Ross-shire, Scotland where he received a good education. He was well versed in the classics, religion, and philosophy. He came to America in 1838 in the employ of the company, and at first he was assigned around the vicinity of Hudson’s Bay as an apprenticed clerk, and then he was variously stationed during his career at the Flatheads, Fort Simpson, Fort Nisqually, Fort Hall, Fort Boise, Fort Connah and Fort Colville. At Fort Colville he became the chief trader in charge of the post. Sometime in the ‘forties he married a Nez Perce-Iroquois woman and raised a family of twelve children. He was called "Oops-chin" which meant whiskers.” In 1842 though his good works he was promoted to clerk.

As for McDonald, he was a dashing, cultured, bagpipe-toting Scotchman with jet black hair and a large mustache, quick to anger and quick to forgive, who “was excessively fond of the life of the aborigine and would rather live in a tent or lodge, than in a house built in accordance to civilized plans, according to a contemporary account.” John Stromnes.

In the autumn of 1847 Angus, his wife Catherine and two children, John and Christina left Fort Hall for the new Flathead Post by pack train, this of course was Fort Connah. It was 50 miles from the old Flathead Post. In 1847 there were probably only 15 white people in the region.

The family resided mainly at both Fort Connah and acquired property and adjoining lands of the fort. In his early career Angus was under the command of his uncle, Archibald McDonald, and was taught the Flathead trade by Francis Ermatinger, as indicated in this letter by Archie McDonald to Edward Ermatinger on April 2, 1840 from Fort Colville:

“I heard from your brother, but of course will avoid troubling you with what he says of himself, I am about sending him a boatload of Colville grub to meet him at W.W. (Walla Walla), which will be accompanied by a kinsman of my own [Angus McDonald] I have had in training here since last fall and is to complete his education among the Snakes.” Cole, page 152

Angus McDonald himself tells of his new home: “The Jesuit Mission, established in 1853 is on one of its western rivulets called Sin a Jial a min, from a band of elk in days of yore once surrounded there. My home six miles due north of it is called Kootle tzin ape, from an alley

formed by two birches and willow groves on the left of the stream. ("The enclosed door to his immediate surroundings," also referred to by the Flatheads as "Lnemele.") Here then was begun by McArthur and finished by me the last Post established by the Hudson's Bay Company in the Territories of the U. States. The Reservation itself is divided by the Flathead River and the Blackhorse or the Flathead Lake, as it sweeps down from British Columbia, and each of its many generous little tributaries have stories enough for a hundred Othellos or Macbeths." Angus McDonald: A Few Items Of The West, edited by F.W. Howay, William S. Lewis and Jacob A. Meyers, Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 8, 1917, pages 188-229. The Pend Oreille chief, Silistoo, warned Angus McDonald not to build a cabin too near the creek, because heavy brush made good cover for Blackfoot raiders." Fahey, John, The Flathead Indians, 1974, University of Oklahoma, page 104.

I insert here a nice little story by Adeline Beaver in her "Early Days by Miss Beaver" column: "Early Days by Miss Beaver - The Woods were full of McDonalds - Listen to this taken from a book published 70 years ago in 1910.

Within the range of Sin-yal-min which rises abruptly from the Flathead valley to altitudes of perpetual snow, in a ravine sunk deep into the heart of the mountain is Lake Angus McDonald. The jagged summits of Sin-yal-min toss their crests against the sky. Suddenly out of the tangled forests a sheet of water smooth and clear appears, and in the polished mirror of these waters is reflected the perfect image of the mountain crown. Such is Lake Angus McDonald and presiding over all, shouldering its perpetual burden of ice is McDonald Peak.

Strangely beautiful are these living monuments to the name and fame of a man. One naturally asks who was this Angus McDonald that his memory should endure in the eternal mountains within the crystal cup of the snowfed lake?

Angus McDonald was Highland Scotchman, sent out into the western wilderness by the Hudson Bay Company. Angus McDonald became in dress, in manner of life and in heart an Indian. He took unto himself an Indian wife and begot sons who were Indians like his adopted people.

He made for himself and his family a home in the valley of Sin-yal-min, not far below the lake and peak which honor his memory.

Physically he was a man of towering stature, standing over six feet in his moccasins; his shoulders were broad and he was very erect. His head bore a heavy shock of hair and his beard hung to his waist. His eyes were blue and penetrating. A picturesque figure he made clad in full buckskin leggings and shirt with a blanket over his shoulder for extra warmth. He was known among the Indians and whites throughout the country, and no more strange or striking character quickened the adventure-bearing epoch which we call the Early Days.

Angus McDonald operated Fort Connah for the Hudson Bay Company, the last of the British owned posts in the United States territory. When the Hudson Bay Company closed the post Angus McDonald chose to remain in the valley to carry on the business and raise his family in the shadow of the peak that bears his name.

His Son Duncan McDonald, who at the age of 15 had full charge of the trading post, also had a lake named for him; a remote lake in Glacier Park. Again I quote:

"This story was told by Duncan McDonald. Duncan and a little band of Salish, were crossing from their own land of the Jocko into the country of the Blackfeet which lies East of the main range, to recover some ponies stolen by the latter tribe, when they came in view of this lake hitherto unknown to them. Duncan McDonald, who was the leader, blazed the name McDonald upon some pines among the shore."

By a strange coincidence Sir John McDonald, famed Canadian politician, riding across the border cut a trail through the pathless woods and penetrated to the lake and blazed his name upon a tree."

It matters little who first set foot on the unpeopled shores, but it is strange that both pathfinders blazed the same name, "McDonald." *The Mission Valley News*, Feb. 11, 1981, page 6.

From the St. Paul and St. Regis Missions Marriage Records from 1848 is a marriage that will prove to be one of three marriages remembered for the couple:

"M-11 Anges and Catherine McDonald Married at St. Paul Mission by Father Antoine Ravalli, S.J. and the witnesses were Baptiste Lapierre and Daniel."

Catherine was 1/2 Nez Perce, 1/4 Mohawk, and 1/4 white, the daughter of Baptiste "Coquin" Bonaparte and Margaret De Naie. Also that she was the cousin of Chief Eagle-of-the Light and kin to Chief Looking Glass. The couple were to have twelve children.

Albert J. Partoll states that they were married in a civil ceremony in 1842 by Chief Trader Richard Grant of Fort Hall. And Partoll also states in "Angus McDonald" page 145 that Angus yielded to Catherine's request to a Christian marriage and in 1854 by reaffirmation of the nuptial vows before Father Joseph Joset, S.J. at Fort Colville. Married three times!

"Aug. 15, (1843) Mr. Angus McDonald arrived from Nisqually where Dr. Tolmie has succeeded him in charge of the Post and Farm." *Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 1A B* There were several McDonald in the HBC at this time and two Angus McDonald's and sometimes both were at Fort Vancouver or Willamette Falls at the same time. The Angus McDonald a laborer usually worked at the granary.

September 26, (1844) "Mr. [James] Douglas started for Fort George. Mr. Angus McDonald arrived from the Snake Country with 2 boats, bringing the Furs from that Country. He reports a party of American immigrants – 140 waggons – on their way down River." *Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 2A B*

Aug. 17, 1844 "General McCarver arrived from the (Willamette) Falls. Mr. McBean left this in the afternoon to proceed to Champoic (Champoeg) in order to receive Wheat from the Settlers. Mr. McDonald is there at present, but will probably return to the Falls. Mr. Peers went up to the Mill Plain to day to look after the men, as Mr. Harvey is unwell. Barge arrived from the Falls. Showery in the forenoon." *Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 4.* Three days before Thomas Lowe wrote that "The Equinoxial Gales have commenced, and the flag staff was blown down this evening."

“Sept. 23, 1844 “In the afternoon Mr. A. McDonald arrived with the Returns of the Snake Country in one boat. He brings intelligence that a large party of Emigrants from the United States are on their way to this place, and may be expected about the same time as last year. Blowing very heavy all day from the E.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 6.

The next day Lowe wrote that “The Easterly Gale still continues with unabated force, and the dust is flying in all directions, a fire broke out at the end of the (Camas) plain, and all the men to be mustered to extinguish it.” The 26th, “Easterly gales all day. In the evening rode out with Mr. (James) Douglas and Mr. Roberts to observe the fire which had originated in the Camas Plain, and which has now spread as far in this direction as the Little River on this side of the 1st. plain. A party of men set to watch the Barn behind, and another the Barn on the lower plain. Carting water all night. A Watch set at the Fort. I had the morning Watch.

27th, Friday. Early this morning a report was brought that fire had broke out in the lower plain and that the Barn there was in imminent danger. Mr. McDonald and Mr. David accompanied Mr. Douglas to the place, and succeeded with a party of men and Indians in smothering it. All the men were turned out about 1 o'clock in the morning, and distributed into different parties to guard against an outbreak of fire from the woods, which now in a blaze all round. Most of the men were employed all morning about the Fort Hill, settin the grass on fire, ploughing the ground, and taking other precautions to prevent the fire running when it emerged from the woods. While much of the men were so engaged, a spark from the woods behind set the Barn ablaze, when there was only an Indian present, and in an instant the whole was in flames. The few who were in the Fort immediately got wet Blankets ready, and put themselves in positions where the sparks could be most easily extinguished. Meantime Mr. Douglas, Mr. Lewis, and Mr. K. Logan accompanied by all hands from the Old Fort Hill made all haste to the Barn and did all they possibly could in extinguishing the fire, which by this time had run to the camp and set the garden fences of Baron's and Mrs. Lattey's house on fire, as well as the Orchard adjoining the Fort garden. Dr. Barclay, Mr. Roberts and I were in the Fort when the fire broke out. The Dr. went to the orchard, Mr. r. was employed putting out the burning grass that surrounded the school rooms, and I mustered a party to protect the clover field next the Fort, which had caught in several places, and after leaving some men to perform the duty, I took charge of the party at the Barn, and remained there till the afternoon, when little danger was to be apprehended from it, and then under Mr. D.s (Douglas) directions employed a good many men and Indians in burning a broad strip in the stubble fields from the Barn to the Waters edge, to prevent the fire which was approaching from the Old Fort Hill from running into the clover field next the Fort. All hands were on the move the whole night, firing the grass and looking after the fires. The ladies of the Fort and all the children crossed to the other side of the River, immediately after I had taken down the papers and money, for although they had strict injunctions to remain, fear had so taken possession of them, that they pulled themselves across without any assistance from our men, several of whom deserted with their families and property during the time of the fire was at its height.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 6

“28th. Saturday. The woods around presented an awful appearance this morning, but all immediate danger is now removed, and I was sent across the River, to bring back the women and children, whom I found quietly encamped directly opposite the Fort. We have heard that both the Saw and Grist Mills, as well as the Mill Plain have been visited by the fire, and that the sheds on the plain have had a narrow escape. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Peers are in charge there, and with the assistance of the Indians, have succeeded in preserving everything as yet. Messrs. D.[avid] McLoughlin and [Angus] McDonald are in charge of the party at the lower plain, where they have also had plenty of employment. Most of the men engaged cutting the grass in the garden, and watching the fires.”

29th. Sunday. “The air is full of smoke, and has been since this time last week, and the stumps and trees are still burning in the woods. In the afternoon I was sent up to sleep at the Grist Mill, and take every precaution to insure it against fire. I first rode up by the upper road past the old Fort Hill, but found it so blocked up with burnt and fallen timber that I was obliged to take the lower road along the River side. At the end of the plain I found Mr. Roberts with a party of men stationed to protect the shed, as the fire was only a short distance back in the woods. I arrived at the Grist Mill I arrived at the Grist Mill about an hour before dark, and to my delight discovered that the fire was nearly a mile off, and as the night was calm there appeared little danger. The six men that were there I divided into watches, and erected a ladder to reach the roof of the mill, and took every precaution in my power. The fire did not approach nearer during the night, and early in the morning, I rode up to the Mill .

30th. “Plain where I found Mr. Peers. The woods had been on fire all round, and several parts of the Plain had been burnt. The sheds of grain escaped narrowly, the straw around one having actually been burned to the very base of the Stack. The men were very active, and the large number of Indians who were fortunately encamped there at the time rendered important services. Mr. P.[eers] and I rode down together to the Saw Mill, the road to which was rather dangerous, as the trees were still falling. We met Mr. Harvey near the Hill, and breakfasted with him. The men were all busily employed removing the fences around, and carrying them to the Rivers edge. As the weather was calm and the grass and underwood green, there did not appear much danger to the houses, unless the wind should blow down the River. After breakfast Mr. H. rode down with me to the Grist Mill, from whence I proceeded to the Fort. I arrived there in the forenoon, and found most of the people going on with their customary employments. An examination was made today of the Canadians who deserted during the time the fire was raging, and fled to the opposite side of the River. Beaudoin one of them was put in irons, and after receiving a severe reprimand was liberated, making many promises of amendment. Monique, Barron, Bayfield and two or three half-breed lads, who were the other deserters, only were blamed for running away, but nothing done to them. The Indians who assisted have been well paid to day, and appear satisfied. Weather fine. No rain.”

October 1st, Tuesday. Two Kanakas (Tova and Samohomoho) who broke into the depense when the barn took fire, were apprehended and examined to day, and being found guilty Tova received

15 lashes at the Gun, and the other ten, and were afterwards put in confinement. Parties of men were still kept watching the fires in the woods, which continue to burn, but not fiercely as the weather is calm.”

2nd, Wednesday. Most of the work about the Fort going on as usual. About 10 o'clock at night it rained for about an hour which will do much good.”

3rd, Wednesday. Weather fair and the air free from smoke, and all danger from fire is now ended. Mr. Douglas rode up in the afternoon to the Plain, and brought down Mr. Peers with him.

4th. Friday About 4 this morning Dr. McLoughlin arrived from the Wallamette, where he has been for the last 5 weeks. The Wallamette Settlement and Jallatine (Tulatin) Plains had also been overrun with fire, and a good deal of damage done to cattle, as well as grain.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 6-7.

September 9, 1844 “Wednesday. Strong E. Wind. Mr. McDonald started late in the afternoon in a Boat which he was to take as far as Walla Walla. The Rev. Mr. Desmedt (Pierre Jean De Smet) and Father Mengariny (Gregario Mengarini) went as passengers, and the Boat's cargo was principally composed of their goods. Report was brought by an Indian that the Mill Plain was again in danger of fire. Mr. Douglas and Mr. Peers rode up there, but fortunately found the fire distant. The woods are burning a little behind the Old Fort.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 7.

“27th. Saturday. Still confined to the house, face much swollen. Mr. Angus McDonald arrived in the forenoon from the Snake Country in a Boat with 17 men, bringing the Returns. Slight showers during the day.” (I sympathize with 20 year-old Thomas Lowe because when I was 20 and in Viet Nam I got my last wisdom teeth too. No dentist as was his case! Chalk)

Sept. 30, 1845 “Tuesday. Cool. In the afternoon Mr. Ogden arrived from the Wallamette Falls, accompanied by Mr. Robert Birnie and Mr. Brooks, clerk to Capt. Couch. Mr. Lane who went up with Mr. Ogden has not yet returned, as he was to have accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Ermatinger and Mr. Joseph McLoughlin and his wife as far up the settlement as Mr. Applegate's.”

Oct 3, 1845 “3rd. Friday. Unusually cold. Mr. Ogden and Mr. Angus McDonald started before breakfast in a Boat to proceed into the Interior. Mr. Ogden intends visiting New Caledonia for the purpose of discovering a good and safe route for the Interior Brigade to bring the Returns out to the N.W. Coast instead of down the Columbia to Vancouver as hitherto, on the latter at present most unsafe. It is thought that Fraser's River will be chosen as the most eligible water communication. Mr. McDonald returns to the Snake County. The Barge left to day for the Falls. Strong Easterly gale.”

Dec. 21, 1845 “21st. Sunday. Fine and frosty. Mr. Lane read prayers in the Hall as I was not very well. Mr. Angus McDonald arrived from Champoeg to settle his Wheat accounts.”

“22nd. Monday. Still frosty. This morning Mr. Grahame and I had a splendid skating bout on one of the Lakes in the Fort Plain, the ice being in good order. McDonald returned to Champoege.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages 26-31.

“10th (Feb. 1846) Tuesday. Weather rather cold, a few slight showers, Mr. Angus McDonald arrived in the afternoon from the Wallamette Falls, and will I hope be able to render us some assistance in the Office.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 34.

“16th. Monday. Beautiful forenoon, but cloudy in the after part of the day, with muzzling rain. Mr. Peers arrived in the afternoon from the Cowelitz Farm, where he has been in charge during the time Mr. Forrest has been under the Doctors hands at this place. Mr. McDonald (not Angus) returned before supper from the Wallamette Falls, having come down in 4 ½ hours, probably the quickest trip ever made between the two places. About 9 o’clock at night Mr. Angus McDonald arrived from the Snake Country. He came down the River in a canoe. Mr. McBeans had not arrived at Walla Walla when he passed, and Mr. McKinley was nearly blind having been complaining of his eyes for the last 2 or 3 months. In the forenoon Messrs. Warre and Vavasour started in a Boat for Fort George, to survey Cape Disappointment, and they are to call at Mr. Lewe’s on their way, and take him down with them.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 34.

Feb. 24, 1846 “Tuesday. Fine weather. Mr. Angus McDonald started this forenoon for the Wallamette Falls, to go round amongst the Settlers, and get Notes of Hands from those who are in debt to the Company, for the amount.” (The other McDonald had went to Walla Walla with Capt. Baillie and Lt. Rodney a few days before.)

Feb. 27th. 1846 “Friday. Heavy rain last night, which continued most of the day. In the forenoon Mr. and Mrs. McKinlay arrived from Walla Walla accompanied by Mr. Burke, a Naturalist sent out by Sir Wm. Hooker. He came in with the Express in the Fall of 1844, and has since been in the Snake Country. Mr. McKinlay is come down I believe to be stationed at the Wallamette Falls. Pere Devos also arrived in the forenoon from the Wallamette.”

“March 20, 1846 “Friday. In the afternoon Mr. Ogden arrived with Mr. Ermatinger and Mr. McKinlay from the Wallamette Falls. Mr. E. is to go out with the Express, and Mr. McK. to see Dr. Barclay about his eyes which are very weak. Mr. Angus McDonald also returned in the afternoon from Walla Walla with the 4 Boats which went up with the Outfit of that Post. M. Laframboise returned to the Wallamette.”

“21st. Saturday. Beautiful day, but frosty at night. Mr. Ermatinger and Mr. McDonald start for the Wallamette in search of two deserters from this place, Hagrut and L’hussier.”

“22nd. Sunday. Beautiful warm weather. Mr. Fenton arrived from the Falls in the forenoon. Late at night Mr. Ermatinger, Mr. McDonald and William McKay returned from the Wallamette having apprehended the two deserters and brought them here.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages 35-36.

April 23, 1846 "Thursday. Rainy. The wind being favorable the Cadboro was able to make a start to day. Mr. McDonald started late in the afternoon with two Boats containing the Snake Country Outfit, and has to be down here again by the 1st. of September, which is much earlier than usual. Mr. Grahame, Mr. Pearce and myself rode out to his encampment at the end of the Fort Plain, and remained there all night." Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 39.

Sept. 1, 1846 "Tuesday. Fine weather. Many of the men unfit for duty, having got drunk on liquor which they purchased from Dock McCary, brought up in the "Callepooiah." In the evening a Mr. Romain arrived at the Fort having come through with the Immigration from the States this season. He is an English traveler, and starts to morrow in order to overtake the "Toulon" and proceed to Woahoo (Oahu, Hawaii).

"2nd, Wednesday. This morning the Boat, started with the Boutes who are to bring down the Express. Mr. George Simpson (Jr.) goes up in charge of it, and is to remain at Colvile. Mr. Hobbs of the Modeste goes up as far as the Cascades to see the Country. After dinner Mr. MacTavish and Mr. Coode of the Modeste started on a visit to the Wallamette, and Mr. Romaine left in a canoe to overtake the "Toulon." Dull cloudy weather, but no rain. Several men employed making a verandah in front of the Big House. The Boat which started this morning goes up the length of Walla Walla to bring down Mr. McDonald with the Returns of the Snake Country, and 4 Boutes and Mr. Simpson proceed from Walla Walla to Colvile on horseback." Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 48.

Sept. 15, 1846 "Tuesday. In the afternoon Mr. McDonald arrived with the Snake Country Returns. The "Prince of Wales" sailed for the Wallamette Falls, and Mr. McKinlay left on her. Late at night Mr. Coode and Mr. MacTavish returned from their cruize in the Wallamette. Fine fair day. Very warm in the afternoon."

"18th. Friday. Cloudy. Mr. Angus McDonald started from here about 1 o'clock with two Boats laden with the Snake Country Returns, which he is to take across to Nisqually, from whence they will be forwarded to Victoria for re-shipment to England this Fall. He had also in charge two cases containing \$3500 in Cash, which is to be supplied H.M. Ship Fisgard at present laying at Nisqually." Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 49

"30th. Wednesday. Fine day. In the afternoon Mr. McDonald returned from Nisqually, where he had been with the Snake Country Furs.

Oct. 2, 1846 "Friday. Cold cloudy weather. Mr. Angus McDonald started this morning for the Wallamette Falls. He crossed the Columbia at the Ferry which has been lately established here by an American named Switzler, and is to ride across."

“5th. Monday. Cold. In the evening Mr. Angus McDonald returned from the Falls, accompanied by Mr. Burke, Naturalist, who had come from the Snake Country to the Wallamette, with Mr. Applegate’s party. The “Prince of Wales” left this for the Falls in the evening.”

“7th. Wednesday. Fine fair day. In the afternoon Mr. Angus McDonald started in a Boat to return to Fort Hall, accompanied by Mr. Burke. The Boat only goes as far as the Dalles, from whence Mr. McDonald and party proceed on horseback.”

February 28, 1847 “Sunday. Pleasant mild day. Mr. Angus McDonald arrived last night from Champoiac. In the afternoon two Americans, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Lawton, arrived from Victoria via the Cowelitz Portage, having come with papers from the American Brig “Henry,” which put in at Victoria for provisions, and is to enter the River. They bring no news, as they left Woahoo (Oahu) on the 6th. Han. (Having had a very boisterous passage and been unable to enter the Columbia Bar) as we have just received news of a much later date by the Barque Columbia.”

Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 50-51

On March 31, 1849 Angus McDonald’s son, Duncan was born at the post. Duncan McDonald “was well versed in the native history of the region and had the fondest recollections of the old post, of which, incidentally, he was the last custodian.” Partoll, footnote 3, page 400. And a son, Donald was born there in 1851.





Fort Connah in center in front of the two large evergreen trees, I took this a few years ago when there was no access to the fort..I think there is now.





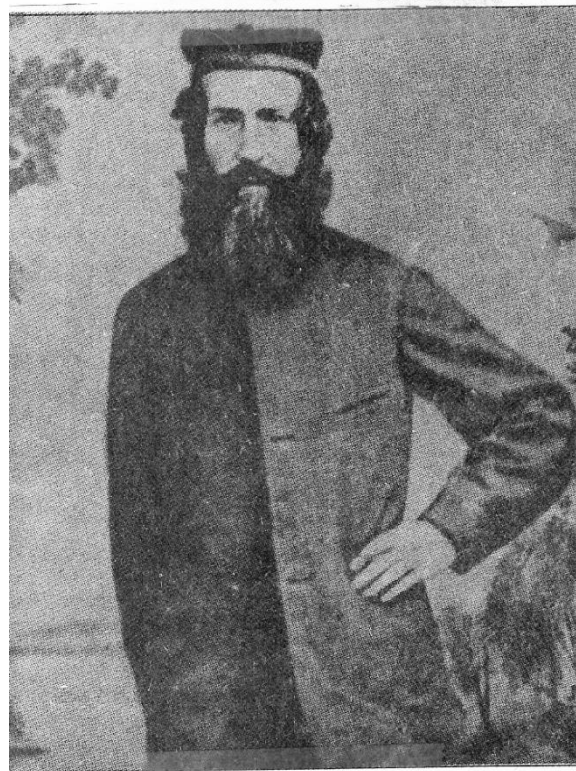
RARE OLD PICTURE—There are numerous head and shoulder pictures of Angus MacDonald, but here is one showing the full man and his two daughters at his side. On the left is Margaret, born in 1855, and on the right, Christine, born in 1847. The others of Angus' 13 children and the dates of their birth are: John 1843; Duncan 1849; Donald 1851; Annie (died young) 1853; Tom 1858; Angus P. 1860; Alexander 1861; Archie 1863; Joe 1866; Angus C. 1868; and Mary 1871. It is likely that this picture has never been published before. The original belongs to Mrs. Mary Swaney of Dixon, a granddaughter of Angus.

When the Hudson's Bay Company in 1847 sent Angus MacDonald, to take charge of its "Saleesh House in the Flathead country," as it was known to the company, he re-named it Fort Connah. Upon arriving, he said to a man named Finley: "This reminds me of Scotland and the river Connen, only these mountains are much higher and more beautiful. I believe we will call this 'Fort Connen'." Finley had trouble pro-

nouncing the word and called it 'Connah.' "You can't say it, huh?" Angus remarked. "Well that is close enough; we'll call it 'Fort Connah'".

That was the beginning of a new era in the Flathead. Long after England relinquished claim to the region, Angus MacDonald remained and the Flathead became his adopted home. His descendants are many and well known. He was born in 1812 and died in 1889. His wife was of the Nez Perce tribe and he brought her to Fort Connah.

A pageant-drama, "A Tale of the Shining Mountains," a true story of important happenings among the Whites and Indians in this region between 1847 and 1947 was presented near the old Fort Connah grounds in July 1947, under the direction of Professor Bert Hansen. Walter McDonald, president of the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribal Council, is a grandson of the native Scot. Many relics pertaining to Angus' life and activities are at the Museum of Northwest History, Montana State University, Missoula, and are now on loan to the Mission exhibit in the Mission church.



RARE PICTURE of Angus McDonald



HISTORIC FORT CONNAH

Ray Miller photo



Catherine McDonald

Flathead long ago, one can still imagine Catherine leading her pack train into the trading post or the sound of Angus' bagpipe floating on the wind beneath the Mission range.

Tried & True Cleaning Hints & Stuff

To make copper items shine, sprinkle some salt on top, pour a little vinegar over the salt, and use a soft scrubber to clean. Rinse with soapy water.

When hot cloths are needed to relieve pain, save your hands by heating them in a steamer instead of boiling them in hot water and

wringing them out.

To remove pitch from clothes or hands, rub well with peanut butter and then wash.

A few drops of vinegar in the water when poaching eggs will keep the eggs from running all over the pan.

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"To the Flatheads and their allies, the Kootenais and Kalispells, Angus had been a friend and fellow traveler ever since he was first stationed at Fort Connah in 1847 as a clerk. He was welcome on their hunts and at their campfire meetings and was regarded as a sage in council. As a sign of esteem, Chief Victor of the Salish willed his favorite war-horse to Angus and requested that upon his death his wife personally execute his wishes. And when he died his wife gave the horse to Angus when he visited the Bitterroot Valley that fall." Partoll, Angus McDonald, page 144.

"In 1850, a big pow wow was held at the present site of Polson. Angus, stripped and painted with rich colors, rode his big black charger with skill. He matched the best of the natives in the competition, seemed to thoroughly enjoy himself, and won the admiration of all who competed with him." The Fabulous Flathead, the Story of the Development of Montana's Flathead Indian Reservation, as told to Sharon Bergman by J.F. McAlear, President of the Reservation Pioneers, 1962, The Reservation Pioneers, Inc. & Treasure State Publishing Company, page 17.

Sir George Simpson's, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, son also named George, was a HBC clerk that helped construct Fort Connah. Young George had been stationed in both

California and “Woahoo” Oahu, Hawaii previous to this assignment. Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., page 43.

Clerk Simpson wrote from “Fort Cona Flathead Country on October 31, 1847 to his father giving him an account of his past duties, comments in parenthesis are mine.:

“Since my arrival at Colville, Sept. ’46 nothing new or important has occurred worth communicating, I will merely state that the Winter was the most severe ever experienced by the oldest inhabitant. Horse Cattle and pigs died in great numbers all over the Country.

I passed the Summer at Colville with four men keeping the Farm in good order and which I think ‘though a great drought prevailed in the course of the Summer will be productive of a bountiful harvest.

On the return of Mr. C.[hief] F.[actor] [John Lee] Lewes with the Summer Brigade from head Quarters [Fort Vancouver] August ’47 he informed me of my appointment to this post as assistant to Mr. Angus McDonald. I immediately started on the 9th with the Summer Outfit and reached with everything safe at the Old House on the 25th but great was my surprise when Mr. McDonald informed me that 29 of their Horses had been stolen a few days previous by a Roving party of Blackfeet, about fifty miles from the house, and no danger in the least was apprehended, without a shot being fired, they have never been known to approach so near, one consolation is that four of them were shot a few days after by the Indians (Flatheads and Pend d’Oreilles), but to recover the Horses was impossible.

We were so long delayed by this misfortune that our project of following the Indians to Buffaloe was Knocked on the Head. We do not however despair though it was truly aggravating and disheartening for our First Sett out, the loss of these Horses and another similar loss in the Spring (2 kegs Powder and 2 bags Shot) will be a drawback to the profits of this Post, but the Fur trade will not be lost to the Company.

With our neighbors the Jesuits (at St. Mary’s Mission in the Bitterroot Valley) and freemen we are on the best footing possible and they do not seem inclined to give us any annoyance. The Jesuits tho’ they do not intend it, injure us a great deal in the way of the provision trade, they generally get from Vancouver Kegs of Powder & Shot which they give gratis to the Indians, and by so doing get meat in abundance, while we have to starve one half of the year for want of it.

We have within the year moved and erected buildings at this place, and by which plan I say the Company will gain advantage by, as it is much nearer the road the Indians pass than at the old House, a small farm is now cultivated, the Soil is capital, and may expect in a year Or two to raise sufficient Grain, so as to enable us to live without making it necessary the expense of transporting flour hence.”

The Jesuit priest, Father Anthony Ravalli, an Italian, replaced Father Zerbinatti (who had replaced Father De Smet) after he had drowned swimming in the Bitterroot River, at St. Mary’s

Mission in the Bitterroot Valley. From Fort Colville the missionaries had bought seed to plant wheat and potatoes in 1841. They also had milk cows from Fort Colville. So these must have been available to Fort Connah in 1847 as well. In a few years the Catholic Mission in the Bitterroot was forced to close its doors due to Blackfoot harassment and a new emotion of disinterest from the Flatheads, who yearned to return to their old ways. They sold out to John Owen, who with the help of his brother, Frank, converted the mission into a trading post. Owens was himself briefly run out by the Blackfeet in 1853. Owen was to become friendly with the Fort Connah traders but was still their competitor.

As Fort Connah was not completed nor occupied when the Oregon Treaty of 1846 came about, it is not listed in the HBC's property as was the old Flathead Post, which was used until 1849. The Hudson's Bay Company referred to Fort Connah as Flathead Post in its records sometimes.

In 1848 Fort Connah became part of Oregon Territory and by 1850 the HBC was not supposed to operate in the Indian country and if they did were to be subject to a penalty by Intercourse Act of 1834, "pursuing a policy of "sit tight" diplomacy, the company and those in charge at the fort for the main part calmly ignored the edict." Partoll, page 403.

Fort Connah was under the jurisdiction of Fort Colville. Neil McLean McArthur testified in 1865 that the post just like Flathead Post (Flathead House) before it furnished the Hudson Bay Company trade with large quantities of dried buffalo meat, pemmican, buffalo fat, tallow, horse accoutrements, par fleches and appichemores, dressed skins and raw-hide cords and also cords made of buffalo hair, all the things that were necessary for the horse brigades.

Chief Trader Alexander Caulfield Anderson was in charge of Fort Colville from 1848 to 1851 and supervised the trade at Fort Connah. Anderson remembered:

"The main trade for exportation was of course in furs; there were other trades which had local applications; I allude particularly to the trade of the Flatheads [at Fort Connah] in "par-feches" and "appichemores" (saddle blankets with hair still on the leather); these are buffalo skins dressed in a particular way for the purposes of horse transport, and were indispensable to the operations of the Company, for the purpose of carrying on their transport from Okanogan to the more northerly posts. Large quantities of dried meat and tallow were also traded, required for the provisioning of the different parties by whom the transport was carried on. The returns from the different outposts were brought in in the spring. The outposts then received supplies and provisions and goods for the purposes of the summer trade; their parties again returned in the autumn in time to meet the fall brigade from the maritime depot; they then returned to their different posts with the outfit for the winter trade." Partoll, page 404

To the north about 90 miles was Fort Kootenai, a minor post that was "irregularly used and occupied."

NAME: McDONALD, ANGUS (b) PARISH: Dingwall, Ross ENTERED SERVICE: 19 June 1838 DATES: b. 15 Oct. 1816
 PLACE OF BIRTH: Craig House, Loch Torridon, SCOTLAND (A.32/40 fo. 88) d. 1 Feb. 1899

Appointments & Service Outfit Year*:	Position:	Post:	District:	HBCA Reference:
*An Outfit year ran from 1 June to 31 May				
1838-1839	General Servant	General Charges (no specific post)	York	B.239/g/19
1839-1840	General Servant	Fort Colville	Columbia	B.239/g/20
1840-1842	Post Master	Snake Party	Columbia	B.239/g/21-22
1842-1843	General Servant	Snake Expedition	Columbia	B.239/g/23
1843-1844	Post Master	Fort Hall (Snake Expedition)	Columbia	B.239/k/2 p. 280
1844-1845	Post Master	Snake Country	Columbia	B.239/k/2 p. 361; D.4/67 fo. 61
1845-1846	Post Master	Flat Heads	Columbia	B.239/k/2 p. 361
1846-1847	Clerk	Snake Country	Columbia	B.239/g/27
1847-1848	Clerk	Fort Hall (Snake Expedition)	Columbia	B.239/k/2 p. 413; British and American Joint Commission ... pp. 151-155
1848-1851	Clerk	Flatheads	Columbia	B.239/k/2 pp. 438, 464, 487
1851-1853	Clerk	Fort Colville	Columbia	B.239/g/32-33; British and American Joint Commission ... pp. 155-162
1853-1857	Clerk	Fort Colville	Oregon	B.239/g/34-37; B.223/b/41 p. 166
1858-1872	Chief Trader	Colville	Oregon	B.239/g/38-40; B.239/k/3 p. 428; HBRS VI
1872	Resigned but continued living in the Fort Colville area			HBRS VI

* In *Ronald MacDonald*, edited by William S. Lewis and Naojiro Murakami, p. 96, he mentions Angus of Flat-head post who died in 1889, as being his uncle)

Parents: Donald McDonald and Christian Macrae (Info. found in International Genealogical Index)
 Siblings: Duncan (Info. found in International Genealogical Index)
 Wife: m. 1842 Catherine (a Nez Perce Indian)
 Children: John (b. 26 Nov. 1845); Christine (b. Sept. 1847) (photo in *The Beaver*, Autumn 1959 p. 43); Duncan (b. 31 March 1849); Donald (b. Feb. 1851); Anne (b. 26 Aug. 1853); Margaret (b. 1 Dec. 1855); Thomas (b. 18 Dec. 1858); Alexander (b. 6 August 1861); Archibald (b. 19 July 1863); Joseph (b. 4 April 1866); Angus C. (b. 11 April 1868); Mary (b. 15 April 1871) (Albert J. Partoll, "Angus McDonald, Frontier Fur Trader," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, April 1951 p. 139)

Photo of Angus and daughters in Oregon Historical Society; photo of Angus in Terry Peltus, *The Beaver*, Summer 1961, pp. 8-15



Filename: M'Donald, Angus (b) (1816-1889) (fl. 1838-1872) JHB 06/99 (rev. 07/99)

James Robert Anderson is Alexander Caulfield Anderson's eldest son, born in Fort Nisqually in 1841. He died in 1930, in Victoria, struck by a car -- the first person in Victoria to die in a traffic accident. He was the oldest citizen of Victoria, having lived there since 1858 when he entered school at Fort Victoria [with exception of a few years spent at Cathlamet with his parents].

He was about eight to ten years old when he knew Angus McDonald at Fort Colville.

[p.124] "A few days before the date of my Father's expected arrival on his return journey from Fort Langley [brigade to Fort Langley, summer 1849] Mr. Angus McDonald the gentleman in charge of the post in the Flathead country, made his appearance to await the brigade and convey his outfit to his post. Two days before my Father was due, Mr. McDonald suggested to my Mother [James Birnie's eldest daughter, Eliza or Betsy] that he and I should proceed a day's journey to meet my Father. This having been decided upon, we made a start after breakfast on our horses for the Mission where we were to cross the Columbia, but what was our chagrin when we espied my Father cantering towards the Fort by another road. Having his eyes fixed on his destination he did not see us, and we had to follow ignominiously in his wake. Needless to say, we were most unmercifully chaffed....."

[p.126] "Angus McDonald lived and died in the interior; he was always employed in the Flathead country and vicinity and as late as 1860 was in charge of Fort Colville, as will be seen by the copy of his letter to my Father in another part. He was a rough specimen of a Highlander and despised many customs as effeminate. I met him last at Fort Vancouver about 1865 and on

that occasion he expressed his contempt of the galvanic battery offering to take the highest charge. Dr. Benson accepted the challenge and I was deputed to work the instrument; it was an old-fashioned concern and in the act of increasing the voltage the bar slipped and the highest charge was given; McDonald gave a yell and dropped to the ground much to his consternation and disgust. It was a treat to hear him sing in Gaelic, strutting about as if in the act of playing the bagpipes and to see him dance the sword dance.” Notes and Comments on Early Days and events in British Columbia, Washington and Oregon, ... the Memoirs of James R. Anderson, Written by himself [typescript], Add Mss 1912, J.R. Anderson, PABC from Nancy Anderson [nananderson@shaw.ca]

Trade at Fort Connah was good for the Salish tribes of the area, as not only was furs exchanged but the buffalo robes and other products from the plains hunts. The years between 1850 and 1860 were best in trade for the post.

In a letter to T.D. Duncan from Duncan McDonald: “This was in 1847-8 and was abandoned for the stampede to California in 1849. (With) Such men as Antoine Plant, Camille Launclet, Antoine Finley, commonly known as Penatze. This last named after returning from California found gold in Montana at Gold Creek in 1850 or 1851, and gave it to my father Angus MacDonald, who was in charge of Flathead House, on a creek now known as Post Creek.” Duncan McDonald seems to have confused Antoine Finley with Francois Finley. Francois was called Penatze or Benetsee.

It was at this time that the grandson of Jocko Finlay and son of the famous botanist, David Douglas (Douglas of the Douglas Fir) was killed by the Blackfeet.

Letter from Alexander C. Anderson to Governor Simpson, from Fort Colvile, April 17th 1850, D.5/28 HBCA:

"McDonald (Angus McDonald, of course) at the Flatheads has on his part done less than last year, owing chiefly, if not entirely, to the incursions of the Blackfeet, which greatly impeded the motions of the Flathead Indians. They have suffered severely. About 85 of their number, through war and disease, have vanished since last year. The audacity of the Blackfeet is increasing; and, besides their success in scalps and murder, their different parties carried off from the vicinity of the Flatheads no less than 334 horses in all. Fortunately we lost none; but we have to lament the death of one of our servants, David Finlay, a son of the late David Douglas, who was murdered by a party within 3 miles of the house."

Alexander C. Anderson was also to write to the Chief, Governor and Council:

.....Owing to the ungenial summer, our harvest proved comparatively unproductive; equaling Fort Colvile, 18th April 1850, To Governor in only, but not exceeding, that of 1848. Every measure to secure a good crop has this year been taken, by breaking up new land &c; and with God's blessing, I trust the return will be plentiful.

The account current exhibits a small apparent deficiency upon last year - arising from the partial failure of returns at the Kootenais and Flatheads, where sickness and war have had a most detrimental effect. I regret to say that the poor Kootanis have suffered much from the former cause; and from both combined, 85 of the Flatheads are reported to have deceased since last

Spring. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that a diminution of returns has occurred. The increasing audacity of the Blackfeet rendered the position of our people in the Flathead Country rather insecure; but Mr. McDonald has been authorized to take measures to obviate these extraordinary risks; at the same time having due regard to the interests of the trade. Beside a number of their people slain, the Indians had endured a loss of between 3 and 4 hundred horses by pillage; and on our own parts I have to report the death of one of the Company's servants, David Finlay, Interpreter at the Flatheads, He was met by a party of Blackfeet who had just been repulsed from an attempt on the establishment. They shot, stripped, and scalped him. A considerable amount of cash is now flying about the country, in the possession of Indians. Of this we have secured a share, upon outfit 1849, amounting to about 400 dollars. I apply to the Board of Management for some additions to my outfit in certain articles, to be imported from Langley, which will enable me to draw in, possibly, a considerable amount of this wandering specie. The tariff of sales for it is high; equivalent to between 3 & 4 dollars per Made Beaver of our ordinary fur-prices. Upon the whole, Gentlemen, I have the satisfaction to state that the affairs of the District entrusted to my superintendence are in a sufficiently prosperous condition; and I trust that the results of the past Outfit, all circumstances duly considered, will be satisfactory to yourselves."

"Jan. 17, 1850. "Sunday. Fine warm day. In the afternoon a packet of Letters arrived from the Interior, and brought the Walla Walla Accounts. One of the men in the Flat Head Country has been killed by the Blackfeet (David Finlay) then returning to the camp after being out hunting."

Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages 73.

David Finlay is thought by my friend, Jack Nisbet, author of several books on David Thompson and David Douglas, to be the son of Jocko's daughter, Josephte, before she married Alexander Dumont. But he could also be the son of Jocko's son, Kiakik, or the son of Jacques Finley and grandson of Patrick Finley. A David Finley is shown on Father De Smet's Finly Family Tree that was drawn in the 1850's. At any rate he was a HBC apprenticed clerk and interpreter in the years 1843-1850, mostly at Fort Connah.

A note on David Finlay's father, David Douglas:

Douglas was called "King George's Chief, or Grass Man." Douglas was wandering the West collecting flora and fauna for the Horticultural Society of London and had papers from the London Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company saying he was to get all the provisions and assistance he needed from HBC employees in America. A Scot botanist, David Douglas was in fact Oregon's first tourist. According to Jack Nisbet, his latest biographer, Douglas had at least 85 plants named after him. His main job was to send plants back to London in seed form or as live plants so they could be developed and sold in the Society's seed catalogs. Nisbet says that he was very good at it and more successful than most. He wrote two journals of his explorations, "A Sketch of a Journey to the North-Western Parts of the Continent of North America During the Years 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827" and "Journal of an Expedition to North-West America; Being the Second Journey Undertaken by David Douglas, On Behalf of the Horticultural Society." Courchane, page 27.

"Finlay, or Benetsee, was an itinerant trader among various Indian tribes from British Columbia to California. He dealt in trinkets, beads, fancy colored cloths, powder and lead; also at times whiskey and rum, which he exchanged for furs and buffalo robes. He acquired a considerable herd of horses in California, which he bought with him to the Rocky Mountains.

Having thus become somewhat independent, he chose for a home a pleasant spot in what is today Powell County or Benetsee Creek, afterward known to fame as Gold Creek. In this quiet retreat he felt safe from the raids of the Blackfeet, and from that base continued his trade to the Pacific coast. After one of these trips, in 1852, Finley came home infected with gold fever, which had raged around him in the California camps. He was impressed with the remarkable resemblance of the country in general surrounding his ranch to the district in California where he had seen gold washed, and particularly impressed by the resemblance of the sand and gravel bars of Gold Creek to the streams he had seen worked for the yellow metal in the west. He therefore set to work at once and began panning in the gravel as he had seen it done. After many efforts he found some fine particles that resembled gold, and accumulated a teaspoonful, which he took to the Hudson's Bay post and showed to Angus McDonald. McDonald sent it to another of the company's posts and it was pronounced to be gold.

Finlay was out of provisions and had no furs to trade for necessities, so McDonald gave him a months provisions and such tools as could be procured; in other words, to use the western term he `grub-staked' Finlay, who in turn was to share the fruits of his efforts with McDonald. After washing out two ounces, Finlay came to the conclusion that he was a better trader than miner and ceased his operations." The Pioneers; Vol. I; Sam E. Johns; p.45-46.

In 1852 Angus returned to take charge of Fort Colville and the next year, 1853, he was promoted to chief trader and in charge of Fort Colville and the smaller interior posts of Fort Shepherd, Kootenais, Flathead, and Okanogan.

In 1853, 1854, and 1855 Captain Isaac Ingalls Stevens came through the West exploring for a railroad to the Pacific Ocean and making a geographic survey of the Mission Valley. The post was now part of Washington Territory.

In 1855 at Fort Nisqually in the future Washington Territory HBC man, Edward Huggins wrote of meeting Angus McDonald :

The Board of Management of Hudson's Bay Company's affairs, with headquarters at Fort Vancouver, Columbia River, had decided that the "Fur Returns" from the different posts, or trading establishments in Oregon and Washington Territory, for the year ending May 31st, 1855 - which hitherto had been taken to Fort Vancouver - should this year, be taken to Fort Nisqually (which post is situate on Puget Sound, six miles south of Steilacoom, directly upon the high road between Olympia and Tacoma) by way of the Cascade range of mountains, through Naches Pass, and the supply of goods required by these posts, and servants, for the trade and wants of the ensuing year should be obtained at Fort Nisqually and freighted back by the horse that carried the furs.

The principal reason for making this order was because Fort Nisqually was overstocked with goods, the usual kind required to carry on trade with Indians, and a small selection of the finer kinds of goods, to satisfy the demands of the now fast increasing white population coming into the country to find employment at the large saw mills in operation and in the course of construction, and also to take up claims - farms - under the United States' liberal land laws.

We at Fort Nisqually made preparations for packing the goods for the interior posts long before the arrival of the Brigade of Horses bringing the furs. A small press was made by one of our Canadian carpenters. It was a primitive affair but answered all purposes. Its pressing power was the wedge and it made a compact, small bale. Each bale weighing about eighty pounds, two of which made a load for a horse and weighed 160 pounds, a load quite heavy enough for a common pony weighing from 700 to 1,00 pounds to pack over such roads and trails as are found in this mountainous country. Some of the goods couldn't be pressed and such were put in strong boxes. Shot and ball were put in rawhide casings, which required to be strong enough to prevent loss en route.

On the 27th of June the Fort Journal states that "three French Canadians arrived at the Fort and presented an order from Mr. Angus MacDonald, the officer in charge of Fort Colvile [Fort Colvile up the Columbia River named for Andrew Colvile of the HBC Committee], for flour and other provisions for the use of the Brigade, which was in the mountain approaches and would probably arrive in about five days." They were correct in their prediction, for on the 2nd of July at about midday, I was startled to see a tall, rather slim man ride into the Fort, dismount and walk towards the large house where he was met and kindly received by Doctor Tolmie. This was Angus MacDonald of Fort Colvile, and now in charge of the Brigade of upwards of 200 horses, most of them packed with furs, the result of the year's trade of Fort Colvile, Walla Walla, Boise, Hall, Okanogan, Nez Perce and the Snake country.

I had heard a great deal about MacDonald and was anxious to meet him, which desire was soon gratified, for Doctor Tolmie brought him to the packing room where I was working and gave me an introduction to him. He was rather a good looking man, about six feet in height, straight and slim, but was said to be very wiry and strong. He had a dark complexion, with long jet black hair reaching to his shoulders and a thick long and very black beard and mustache. He wore a dressed deer skin over shirt and pants, a regatta or rowing shirt and had a black silk handkerchief tied loosely around his neck. He had a black piercing eye and deep sonorous voice, with a low and rather monotonous manner of speaking. He was fond of telling Indian stories and legends, and would sometimes keep the audience entranced and spellbound, when walking slowly to and fro in the large Nisqually reception room, telling some blood curdling Indian story, in which he had borne a conspicuous part. He could talk several Indian languages and had lived a long time amongst the Blackfoot Indians and was full of interesting stories of adventure amongst that one time savage tribe. He was excessively fond of living the life of an aborigine and would much prefer to live in a tent or lodge than in a house built in accordance with civilized plans. He was fairly educated. He read a great deal and was well up on the politics of the day. He was a good French linguist but his native tongue was the Gaelic of the Scotch Highlands, and he was very fond of singing, or chanting, in a deep, not by any means musical voice, Gaelic songs and verses improvised by himself.

Sometimes Dr. Tolmie would join in, when he sang or attempted to sing, some old and well known Scotch ditty. The Doctor could talk and understand Gaelic although he wasn't a native Highlander, but came near being one, having been born in Inverness. The Doctor was very fond of music and although he was not the possessor of a voice like "Marios" or "Jean de Resche," he could sing a great variety of Gaelic songs. But as for MacDonald he was never tired of chanting Gaelic lines. I should think it was something like the late Signor Folis' voice, the great basso, when suffering from a very bad cold. The most astonishing thing about it was that "Mac" labored under the idea that he was a fine singer, and the possessor of a voice which only required a little training to be equal to any of the leading basso profundos of the day. He was married to either a Nez Perce or a Kalispel, the daughter of a leading chieftain, and had several children by her. One a girl named Christine, who was said to be quite good looking, for a long time was the belle of Colvile.

MacDonald was a staunch Briton, and was very plain spoken. In fact, I thought he was sometime offensively rude when talking to Americans. He made a visit to us during the San Juan difficulty, and I recollect that I once took him to Olympia where he never missed an opportunity for getting into a wordy quarrel with some American upon the San Juan question. I thought that more than once I saved him from being assaulted for talking so contemptuously of decent Americans. It was only the fact of his being my friend that saved him, but he didn't appreciate it, and continued as abusive as ever until at last I refrained from taking him with me when I visited adjoining towns. One time at Fort Steilacoom [U.S. military post 6 miles from Nisqually] he got into an argument with an officer just as prejudiced against the British as was "Mac" against the Americans and a challenge to fight a duel was very nearly the result, but I succeeded in calming troubled waters. "Mac" would have fought in a minute and the American officer was a regular fire eater.

Not very long after his arrival there came trotting into the Fort yard the first detachment of the Brigade, about 20 horses, all laden with packs of furs and in charge of two men. Detachments continued to arrive until upwards of 200 pack animals were inside the Fort yard and about 25 men were in charge of them. There were also spare animals for packing and riding and not a few were packed with tents, cooking utensils and what little provisions remained. Unloading the animals immediately commenced, each detachment being attended to by the two men to whom its care belonged.

The valuable lot of furs was turned over to me and I had 20 men selected to watch them. There was a lot of work to do with these furs, exposing them frequently to the air, beating and getting them ready for making into larger bales for shipment to Victoria. Amongst the lot of furs received were a large number of Foxes, Marten and Mink, small but valuable furs and strict watch had to be kept over them to prevent peculation by Indians. Sometimes even white men would be trying to get away with a valuable Marten.

Some of the furs had been slightly damaged in crossing the many rivers along the route, but I was surprised to see them open up in such condition as they did. To give some idea of the extensive character of the fur trade at the few posts in the Rocky Mountain district, and in a

country not at all remarkable for prolific returns, I will give here a statement of the kinds and quantities of the furs I was now handling and just delivered by the pack train.

1,200 Bear skins (250) of the Grizzlies); 200 Badgers; 2,500 Beaver; 350 Fisher (a beautiful fur scarce and hard to catch. It is something like the Marten, only very much larger, and a first class skin was worth here from \$5 to \$8 and in the London market would fetch probably \$20 to \$30); 12 Silver, 80 Cross Silver and 334 Red Foxes; 185 Lynx (prime fur); 1,500 Marten; 575 Mink; 8,000 Musquash; 412 Land Otter; 580 Wolves (prime fur) and 45 Wolverine.

The men accompanying MacDonald were a cosmopolitan crowd. There were Scotchmen, French Canadians, Halfbreeds, and Iroquois Indians. The foreman was a Scotch Highlander and when at home was in charge of a little trading post amongst the Blackfoot Indians. The Canadians were strong, wiry fellows, and amongst them were men who had been in the employ of the company for fifty years. The Iroquois or Halfbreed Iroquois were the best looking men in the band. The handsomest and strongest man amongst them was a halfbreed Iroquois and French Canadian. He was very strong and agile, and being the champion athlete amongst his own people, he challenged our hands to run a foot race and other games requiring strength and endurance. Although amongst our staff were some strong and powerful fellows this Iroquois beat them all, and at running a foot race he beat them badly.

These men of the Brigade were great fellows to brag and crow and they were constantly taunting our fellows and claiming their superiority. Our men, especially the Englishmen, and several were attached to the place, felt humiliated at the idea of this Iroquois beating them so easily. They were aware that one of the clerks of the establishment, a young Englishman likewise, was able to outrun them all easily and they felt satisfied that this young fellow could beat the Iroquois champion. They begged him to accept the braggart's challenge and they felt satisfied that he could take the laurels from the brow of the fastest runner in the Colvile, Nez Perce country.

The young Englishman was a little doubtful of his ability to beat such a muscular, strong looking fellow and resisted the importunities of the Nisqually men for some time. But the conduct of the Brigade men became so insufferably boastful, that he at last gave in and agreed to run the champion a short race of 100 yards. The coming contest caused a great deal of excitement and so confident were the Colviles of winning that they offered to bet almost all they were worth upon their man, but the young clerk would not allow the Fort men to run any risk of losing and refused to run if they insisted upon betting.

MacDonald laughed at the idea of the young man for a moment thinking he could compete with such a well known runner as their champion, but agreed to act as starter with, I think, Doctor Tolmie and Mr. Peers acting as judges. The race was to be run in the evening after the day's work was over. In the summer time and in the evenings, it was customary for the young people and a few old ones likewise, to assemble at the water gate, where there were seats placed at the foot of the palisades.

Then young men would have games, run races, throw the hammer, put the stone and pitch quoits. These sports would bring around us many Indians, who would sometimes join in the games but not often.

The starting point was down the road, west of the gate. A line was drawn and 100 yards measured off, terminating almost opposite the small gate where another line was made. The first man to cross this line was the winner. Between 6 and 7 p.m. a large crowd had assembled at the gate, for the coming race had caused quite an excitement and many Indians from the Nisqually and Puyallup rivers had come to witness the struggle, for the clerk was well known to the Indians and was rather a favorite. At the time appointed the contestants appeared. The Iroquois, Edourd Pichette was his name, wore a gaudy, loud colored shirt fitting tight around his big, barrel-formed chest. A handsome red silk belt around his waist and a pair of thin cotton drawers which showed his handsome, muscular legs to good advantage. He was a splendid figure of a man, such a chest he had. It was round like a barrel and altogether he looked a fit model to satisfy any fastidious painter or sculptor.

The young Englishman stripped well also, and I noticed that MacDonald was astonished when he saw his well developed chest and powerful arms, for the young man was a leader in the prevailing games throwing the hammer, putting the stone and pitching the heavy iron quoits.

All was now ready for the race. The Halfbreed was cool and confident of success, as were his fellows who, to the last, were anxious to bet their last shirt and inch of tobacco (the tobacco sold to the men came in large 100 pound rolls and was like a rope and about one inch in diameter) upon their favourite. The starting place was 100 measured yards west of the water gate, a small postern gate which led to the creek, the "Sequallitchen" river. At the time its boards were perforated with holes, made with bullets fired by the Snoqualmie Indians when they attacked the Fort in 1849. It was here that poor Leander Wallace fell, shot to death by these same Snoqualmies.

Well all was ready and at an agreed upon signal from MacDonald a fair start was made. The young Englishman jumping ahead at the start and, to our astonishment, he increased his lead until the end of the first 50 yards when Pichette, the Iroquois, shortened the distance between them to about three yards. From then on to the winning sprint the handsome young Iroquois shortened the distance, but to the intense disgust of MacDonald and his company the Englishman won the race by a distance of about four or five feet.

Oh, the howling and hurraing by the English part of the crowd. "Sacreeing" and other demoralizing French expressions from Canadians and the silent jubilant looks of the Nisqually Indians. It was all very pleasing to the English victor. Edourd Pichette earnestly begged the Englishman to run him the distance of one mile, or half a mile and down to two hundred yards but the Englishman was wise and refused to run any more and was content to rest on his laurels. The young man's reputation as a great runner, who had defeated the Rocky Mountain champion, spread over the Indian country between Colville and the base of the Rockies. [Nowhere in the manuscript is the name of the young clerk given but Mr. Huggins himself neatly fits every descriptive detail and may well have been the athlete who prudently 'retired' undefeated.]

A dance was given by Dr. Tolmie to the MacDonald band of packers before leaving for their homes. One of the large stores was emptied of goods and it became a fine dancing hall. A room about 60 feet in length and 30 feet in width, its floor was rather rough but that didn't trouble the

dancers. One or two of the Canadians were fair fiddlers and of course a liberal supply of whisky was provided and nearly all the young Indian girls and Halfbreeds in the neighbourhood were there. In those days there were quite a number of French Canadians, ex-Hudson's Bay Company servants, married to Indian women and living in this country.

The Indian women and the Halfbreed Women and girls were passionately fond of dancing and almost all the Indian women had an original way of dancing, a step of their own. It was very comical to see them, ten or a dozen at one time. "Jigs" were their favourite dances and they would stand facing their partners and keep time to music by simply bobbing or jumping with both feet from the ground at the same time.

We had in our employ at that time about ten Kanakas (Sandwich Islanders) and to vary the entertainment I would persuade these men to dance some of their native dances. They would cheerfully comply, and standing in a row would begin a wild and monotonous chant, keeping time by moving their bodies with great exactitude and twisting about, in which I could see no dancing but merely posturing and sometimes it seemed to me to be an unseemly performance in the presence of ladies.

One of the men attached to Fort Nisqually was an Englishman named Dean (one of the two sons of Mr. Thomas Dean, the Bailiff sent out by the London directorate to supersede Dr. Tolmie). He was a genius, a comical character and a natural musician. He could sing comic songs in character and was, for a time, the life of the place. He made, in the course of two or three hours, a common tin whistle upon which he could play fairly well tunes from operas. He made a set of Punch and Judy figures, or dolls, and he would go through the performance of Mr. Punch and his wife, Judy, just as clever and good as I have often seen it performed in London.

It was arranged that he should give his Punch performance at MacDonald's party. He did so and I never before saw a party of men so pleased and delighted in my lifetime. Several of the men had never been out of this country in their lives - had never been inside a theatre. Young Dean's Punch and Judy show was a revelation to them. There was one old chap in the crowd whose manifestation of pleasure particularly pleased me. He was a Canadian Frenchman, a very stout old man, small in stature but very strong and muscular. He was upwards of 60 years of age, and had been in this country all his life. He understood enough English to follow Punch's show, and to witness that old man's expression of delight was, to me, a far better show than Mr. Punch's. Oh, how the old man would laugh. He would lay down upon the floor, kick up his heels and burst into paroxysms of laughter, almost causing all of his fellows to do likewise. I am sure this old fellow and others of the band never forgot Monsieur Punch and I can fancy how often the story of the show would be told by the campfire and in the wilds of the trappers' camps in the Rockies.

The horses had put on flesh and their backs had nearly healed up when the Walla Walla contingent was ordered to get ready to start for home. On the 18th of July the Brigade of 55 horses, laden with goods, started for Fort Walla Walla and on the 25th of July, 1855, MacDonald with the remainder of the train left for Colville, taking with them 76 horses packed with goods.

Doctor Tolmie received a communication from MacDonald after he had arrived safely at his journey's end and his letter was very interesting indeed. He left here in July and in the month of September the Indian War broke out. We, at least Doctor Tolmie, knew the condition of the minds of the Indians and had been in communication with Governor Stevens on the subject, but had no idea that the outbreak was so imminent. MacDonald's letter opened his eyes and alarmed him greatly.

The Walla Walla party, which had left Nisqually a few days in advance of the main body, became alarmed at something they providentially had learned on the road, and encamped before entering the foothills and awaited the arrival of MacDonald. Lucky for them they did, for if they had continued along ahead, no doubt they would all have been murdered. Being Hudson's Bay Company people would, in my opinion, have made no difference to the murderous young scoundrel, Qualchen. To get possession of what would have been to the hostile Indians such an immensely valuable lot of goods as were in the pack train, the bloody minded young villain would have murdered the entire party, including MacDonald, without the slightest feeling of compunction.

MacDonald's influence amongst the Indians must have been very great indeed to have allowed him to come scatheless through such a danger. He was looked up to by the Spokanes, Nez Perce, Blackfeet, Kalispels and indeed all the tribes between the Yakima valley and the Rocky Mountains, as a great medicine man, although a white man. I have no doubt that reputation, along with the ability to talk to the Indians in their own language, permitted him to pass safely through the ranks of the Indians, who were almost on the eve of declaring themselves hostile, and safely conveying such a valuable lot of goods to their destination.

The preceding article was written by Edward Huggins, clerk at Fort Nisqually between 1850 and 1870. The article appeared in the 1961 summer edition of The Beaver magazine.



Michel Ogden

Third in charge of the post was Michel Ogden, from 1853 to 1861 as clerk and postmaster. He was the son of Peter Skene Ogden and Julia Rivet (Revais) and was born on September 29, 1824. He was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, as was his father.

In 1842 he and Michel Martineau were transferred from the Thompson's river post to Fort Alexandria, they traveled there with Alexander Caulfield Anderson, the new Chief Trader. One of Ogden's chores at Fort Alexandria was to secure the barley from the rats. Nancy Marguerite Anderson deals with both of these men in her new book "Pathfinder" (see title, etc. below) she says that Martineau was a favorite character of hers, and she usually refers to me as Marineau, or Louis Desasten, and that the Martineau rendering comes from Bruce Watson, a British Columbia historian.

On May 12th, 1843 he was in the Fort Alexandria brigade to Fort Kamloops and then back to Fort Alexandria with Chief Trader Alexander C. Anderson where they arrived on May 22nd. That August he accompanied Anderson and some Indians set off from the fort with horses to meet the incoming Kamloops brigade. While with Anderson at Fort Alexandria he learned among other things how to raise potatoes!

From the Fort Alexandria journals of Alexander Caulfield Anderson, ancestor of Nancy Marguerite Anderson who furnished these bits of news from Fort Alexandria:

"Thurs. 15th (Dec. 1842) -- Fine. Michel Ogden and Marineau ret'd from Barge [the Native village south of Fort Alexandria]. They have brought a mere nothing -- say some half score Beaver & a few small furs. The Indians have not hunted at all in that direction since last summer. A great many, from all directions, were assembled at the Barge, & they one & all make great promises for the future.

Saturday 17th -- Thomas, who came here with Marineau for his rations -- sought his horses, but did not succeed in finding them.

1843 -- "Fri. 6th Jan. -- Snowing in the morning. Then a violent south wind arose & the snow drifted much. Sent Marineau & Michel Ogden off before day to the Island to see after the Torche who remained there last night. I was fearful that he would attempt to cross in quest of the mare & share her fate; but they found him all safe and crossed him without difficulty a little higher up, where the ice is quite solid. I reproach myself with not having sent Marineau yesterday, by which measure the loss of the mare would have been avoided. [Torche is a horse].

Marineau is spending his time at the Horse Guard, obviously. "Sat. 13th -- Misty and rather colder. Marineau returned from below accompanied by Thomas, who come for his rations. But I wonder is the man I thought was Mariscotte, is Marineau? These names are handwritten, and not necessarily clearly written! "These horses, it is necessary to state, were lost prior to my arrival, Mariscatte having been alone down at the guard & apparently having neglected them. Since Thomas has been there I have every reason to be satisfied with their care of the horses...."

Aug. 1843, "29th ... Marineau visited the horses & crossed more to fort. At present stationed here. A.C.A., Gendron, Therouiac, Marineau, Michel Ogden, I Linneard, Edouard Montigny (Tout Laid, Jack & Baptiste [?] Indians). And at the Chilcotins, Mr. McLean & Bapt. Lapierre. Friday 1st Sept., "He [Linneard] & Marineau, with M. Ogden & an Indian, afterwards carting barley of which 10 cart loads were brought home."
About six months of journals missing.

[no date] "Want of ink has interrupted my journal for a time but now by the arrival of Marineau from Colvile, I have received a supply. He & Gendron arrived here yesterday (18th) but there was no intelligence of import, further than the safe arrival of Mr. Ogden at Colvile on the 16th ulto.

Saty. 20th -- "Marineau at apres, Gendron sifting flour. [Apres is saddles and saddleblankets, harnesses, etc.]

Marineau is nowhere around the fort until September 1844: "...find myself with Marineau, Gendron, Therioac and Michel Ogden ... to conduct the duties of the place.

Thurs. 5th December -- "Poor Marineau, having met with severe lacerations of the eye, lies [in a bad way] & suffers much. I am doing what I can to relieve him.
[He bleeds him].

Saty. 7th -- "Marineau is much relieved. His eye is now, I trust, out of present danger.

Tues. 10th -- "Michel Ogden & Laframboise set out in quest of the two horses left behind by Marineau.

Mon. 30th & Tues. 31st -- "Marineau & the Indn lads cutting wood.

Sat. 8th May -- "This morning Mr. Lane set out for Colvile on his way to Canada. Two retiring servants accompany him, Lefevre & Thirouiac -- Marineau & Gendron also, to return to Alexandria.

Mon. 10th -- "Fine weather. On Saturday night, notwithstanding every precaution that I had taken, the rascally dogs from above broke into the yard, and having forced their way into the poultry house, destroyed nearly all the turkeys & one half of the hens, before they were discovered. Fortunately I overheard the noise & saved the remainder. 4 hen turkeys only remain. 33 or 34 head of all sorts have been destroyed. I have sent a note after Mr. Lane to endeavour to send me a couple of turkey cocks by Marineau.

At Fort Alexandria: "In May 1843, the "men of the establishment busy getting seed into the ground." Potatoes can be sown from seed, but for the most part potatoes are grown from seed potatoes -- that is, sections of cut up potatoes that contain the "eyes," or seeds for the future crop. On June 15th 1843, "Michel [Ogden] & 2 Indian lads hoeing earth round potatoes in garden, which are now long enough."

On July 8th, "Our potatoes & turnips which have been duly thinned & hoed are thriving well. The barley is earing fast."

Fish Out of Water: chapter 5 page 17

In 1843 he was still at Fort Alexandria and traded for three thousand salmon at the barrier near the Chicotin post, but returned from his expedition to the 'Chutes' with none. Salmon was scarce and the winter of 1843 the Indians around the fort nearly starved to death.

In 1844 the Fort Alexandria Post Journal, 1843-45, B.5/a/6, fo.8A mentions that he again went out to trade for salmon. He returned to Fort Alexandria with the news that there few salmon to trade. Hungry times for the post personnel and Indians again, although the wheat crop had been good and that help stave off starvation.

Thurs. 5th December -- "Poor Marineau, having met with severe lacerations of the eye, lies [in a bad way] & suffers much. I am doing what I can to relieve him. [He bleeds him].

Saty. 7th -- "Marineau is much relieved. His eye is now, I trust, out of present danger.

Tues. 10th -- "Michel Ogden & Laframboise set out in quest of the two horses left behind by Marineau.

In March, 1845 Ogden traded for salmon at Grand Lac (Quallgualbows) to the south of Fort Alexandria. In June he to a derouine (trading trip) to Chilcotin to trade furs but only got a few. In July he went to Thleuz-cuz to trade tobacco for salmon.

In late August, 1845, Michel's father, Peter Skene Ogden paid a visit to Fort Alexandria, with him he had Father Nobili and Donald Manson. In September Michel returned by horseback to Fort Alexandria from the Rapids with seventy horse loads of dried salmon, an estimated 15,000 fish. Four days later, he set out again with sixty horses to pack in the fish he planned to trade for at the Barriere on Chilco River, and at the end of themonth he returned ith eleven thousand salmon. A good Chinook salmon and sockeye salmon year.

November, 1845 Michel had returned to Fort Alexandria from the Chilcotins with martens, beaver and fox, and immediately set off for Quesnel's River, to return in a few weeks with 70 or more martens and 29 beaver.

"Michael Ogden was also learning the ways of the Hudson's Bay Company. A week before their letter to Sir George Simpson, Ogden and Douglas had written to A. C. Anderson directing him to explore a new route from Fort Langley to the Thompson River and assigning Michael as one of his aides." Peter Skene Ogden Fur Trader, Archie Binns, Binford & Mort, Publishers, Portland, Oregon, 1967, page 318.

So in 1847 he was with Alexander C. Anderson on his Second Exploration of a brigade route to Fort Langley through the rugged canyons and falls of the Fraser River. Michel Ogden may have been with Anderson on his first exploration trip in 1846.

On May 5, 1848 Alexander C. Anderson packed up and left Fort Alexandria with his family and the New Caledonia brigade. He had been ordered to take charge of Fort Colville and was to summer at Fort Kamloops. Donald Manson was with him and this is probably when Michel Ogden left the north. Instead of Fort Vancouver Anderson was going to the new Fort Victoria.”
"Fish Out Of Water" manuscript by Nancy Marguerite Anderson, 2008 (Nancy has since published this in the title "Pathfinder: A.C. Anderson's Journeys in the West," Heritage House, and will be out in the Fall of 2011, at the moment she is doing the index.)

April 12, 1848 Walker wrote:

“I had some talk with a young man who requested to be baptized." footnote 50: "The reference is to Michael, the half-breed son of Peter Skene Ogden." From "Nine Years Among the Spokane Indians," The Diary of Elkanah Walker- 1838-1848, edited by Clifford M. Drury, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1976, pages 463-464

Then on April 15, 1848 Walker wrote: "I have felt some anxiety about baptizing Michael (Ogden). I should much prefer to perform the ceremony according to our practise but I know it will be more pleasing to all to perform it according to the Episcopal rite." Walker baptized him on April 16 (a Sunday) 1848, at Fort Colville, and he simply wrote: "I baptized Michel Ogden."

In September, 1851, Angus McDonald and Michel Ogden set off for Fort Connah..” Fish Out of Water:Chapter 7 page 34

"D.4/46 Letter from Gov. Simpson to Donald Manson, June 19th 1853
fo. 130 -- You must really put a check on the "Club-Law" which prevails in your district, it makes the service so unpopular that it is difficult to [entice] men to join it. I can easily understand that the men are very troublesome and difficult to control, at times richly deserving punishment which you are right to inflict, but let it be in any other shape than corporal chastisement. We fear that [Donald] McLean and [Michel] Ogden use their fists very freely, and I think you should caution them on the subject ... G. Simpson" Donald Manson and club law Nancy Anderson nananderson@shaw.ca

In 1853 Angus McDonald was re-assigned to Fort Colville, and this left Michel Ogden in charge of Fort Connah in Montana. They were brothers-in-law through their Indian wives, Angelic and Catherine.

When Fort Hall was abandoned by the HBC owing to Indian troubles in 1856 he was ordered by his superiors to transport the fort's supplies and trade goods by packtrain to Fort Connah. He did this during July and August of 1856.

In 1853 "the survey parties found him living in a camp located near a point of painted rock on Lake Pend d'Oreille, but this must have been a temporary trading camp. When Lieutenant [John] Mullan passed through the Flathead Valley in April, 1854, he obtained supplies at Post Creek and remarked that Ogden was the factor. The chattels of Fort Connah were increased considerably in 1856 when Ogden brought supplies and goods from Fort Hall, Neil McArthur's old post which was being abandoned by the Hudson's Bay people because of Indian depredations. "Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger," George Weisel, 1955, page 103.

Evidence of William Charles, in H. B. Co. Ev. H. B. Co. Claims, 173. This was the end of the company's occupation at Walla Walla, later known as Wallula. The end of their occupation of forts Hall and Boise occurred about the same time, Fort Boise a little earlier, and Fort Hall a little

Also on September 24, 1854 the Catholic Jesuits, Fathers Adrian Hoecken, Joseph Menetrey, and Lay Brothers McGean, Claessens, and Specht, founded St. Ignatius Mission about six miles south of Fort Connah. They were guided to the area by the Pend d'Oreille chief, Alexander. The valley was good with "wonderful soil, good grasses, plenty of water furnished by creeks and springs, and timber nearby which could be used in council fires, logs, and lumber for building." McAlear, p23. Where they soon built a saw mill and a flour mill, further destroying the remoteness of the area. "The first saw mill was a crude affair made of wagon wheels, a circle saw, and a carriage, but it served the purpose." McAlear, 131. "By the end of the year a log hut (which still stands today), 82 Flatheads had been baptized, a chapel, two houses, a carpenter and a blacksmith shop were built." McAlear, p23. Later two more saw mill were built by the government one in 1861 at the Jocko Agency and the other in the 1890's at a spot near Ronan." In 1904 Ben Cramer built one near Polson on Flathead Lake.

By the Easter of 1855 over a 1,000 of the local Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai had moved in to surround the Mission with their teepees and 12 log houses, both a flour and a saw mill were erected. "Barns were built to shelter livestock brought in from Fort Colville as sustenance for the missionaries and their helpers." Ibid. p24

Back in 1854 the new governor of Washington Territory had stopped at St. Ignatius Catholic Mission. He had appointed Thomas Adams as a special Indian agent whose main job was to get the three local tribes ready for a big pow wow to be held in July, 1855 at Council Grove. Those attending were Father Hoecken, Chief Victor of the Salish (Fatheads), Chief Alexander of the Upper Pend d'Oreilles and Chief Michelle of the Kootenai tribe. From this meeting came the Flathead Reservation and the Confederated Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribe.

In July, 1855 at Hellgate when Isaac Stevens made the treaty with the Flatheads, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai tribes, it brought out the fact that Fort Connah was still operating on American soil, and would now be on the Flathead Reservation. Stevens wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: "the treaty guarantees the Indians the undisputed possession of their Reservation as against the claims of the Hudson Bay Company growing out of their Trading post on Prairie River [Post Creek] within the limits of the Reservation. It consists simply of three old and small log houses. Not over two acres of land has ever been cultivated. An estimate will be submitted of its value in my annual report. Notice will be given to cease trading with the Indians at that Post, and if persisted in the buildings will be torn down and the Traders sent out of the Indian Country."

The Flatheads were to become farmers and received the necessary equipment and merchandise to this purpose. Farm irrigation had come with the Jesuit missionaries in 1855 when they and their Flathead followers dug ditches to move the water from the Mission Creek to the Mission fields. It wasn't until 1872 that the U.S. government built irrigation ditches in the Jocko Agency area that diverted the waters of Jocko River and Finley Creek to the timothy hay and clover fields that

grew naturally on the reservation. Soon the Flatheads were growing other grains, fruit and vegetables.

In the spring of 1856, Dr. R.H. Lansdale was the first Indian agent and he established the Jocko Agency. He went to Salt Lake City that May for supplies and help, and he returned with an assistant, Henry G. Miller and his wife, who is considered the first white woman to live on the Flathead Reservation. The Flatheads were amused to see her riding side-saddle. That year the Jesuits had taught the Flatheads how to plant potatoes and wheat. Lansdale was replaced by Major John Owens later that year, and he now was in charge of the Indians in both the Bitterroot Valley and the Jocko Agency. Due to the problems of traveling the distance between the two agencies the Jocko Agency was closed down in June of 1857. Owen now devoted all his time in the Bitterroot. He held the post from 1856 to 1862. "His official position brought patronage to his post in the Bitter Root Valley and enabled him for several years almost to control the Indian trade of the region, much to the disadvantage of the traders at Fort Connah." Partoll, page 407.

"Though competitors in business Ogden and [John] Owen were great friends; they frequently visited each other and traveled together. While taking his winter's returns of furs to Fort Colville in 1858, and again in '59, Ogden joined Owen's pack strings going the same way." Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger," George Weisel, 1955, page 103.

The 1855 Blackfeet Treaty made in October of that year, supposedly terminated the war between the Flatheads and Blackfeet. It has been said that Michel Ogden and the Flatheads did not get on good terms because of his trade practices.

"An event in the affairs of Fort Connah during 1856 was the arrival of the supplies and trade goods from Fort Hall, another company post several hundred miles to the south, which was abandoned owing to Indian troubles. Michael Ogden, in charge of Fort Connah, transferred the merchandise by pack train in July and August under orders from his superiors. He made the round trip from Fort Connah to Fort Hall and return without incident." Partoll, page 407.

"In Bitterroot Valley, the Flatheads' hunting and digging was impeded more and more by white cattlemen and settlers. As the result of shifts in population and new overland routes for immigration and trade, the Hudson's Bay Company closed out its business at Fort Hall, moving its wares to a log cabin called Fort Connah, built in 1846, six miles northwest of St. Ignatius, where trade continued under Michael Ogden while the company sought to replace Fort Colville with a new post on British soil.

In view of Stevens' prohibition, Lansdale had sternly ordered the bay in 1857 to stop trading with the Indians, but the company, referring to rights granted it in the 1846 boundary settlement, continued to sell and buy from whites and Indians." Fahey, John, The Flathead Indians, 1974, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, page 104

The Jocko Agency was re-opened in 1859 and a new agent was seated there, H. M. Chase. But in 1860 John Owen was again sent to the Jocko, but this time he had two agricultural assistants. A

store house, blacksmith shop, millwright shop and two houses were built and a small farm was put into operation. Later a saw mill and a flour mill were started and this put two each in the valley.

U.S. Census 1860, Washington Territory, Free Inhabitants in Bitter Root Valley, County of Spokane, Territory of Washington, September 14, 1860

House	Name	Age	Sex	Color	Occupation	Birth pl.	Real
146/104	Michael Ogden	33	M	Hb	Trader	W.T.	
	Angelick "	25	F	Hb		W.T.	
	Sarah "	9	F	Hb		W.T.	
	Angelick "	6	F	Hb		W.T.	
	Peter "	3	M	Hb		W.T.	
	Grace "	9m	F	Hb		W.T.	

"In November, 1860 he was with Chief Alexander (Tum-cle-hot-cut-se) and his band of Upper Pend d'Oreille, when they were attacked by a war party of 200 Assiniboine and Cree. Twenty Pend d'Oreilles were killed and twenty-five wounded, of which five were to die later. Among the dead was Chief Alexander's son, Penitzu." "Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger," George Weisel, 1955, page 62.

"Office Flathead Agency
Fort Owen Bitter Root Valley, W.T. Dec. 21, 1860

Sir,

I returned last evening after an absence of two weeks to the Jocko Reservation. While there I heard of Alexander's approach with his defeated & scattered camp. I went to see him. My feelings were shocked at the scene his camp presented. Women with their children slung upon their backs had traversed the whole 400 miles on foot from the point on Milk River where they had been defeated. They were literally worn out & exhausted. The loss of horses they sustained by the attack of the Assinaboines & Crees was so great that most of their camp equipage had to be abandoned on the battlefield. They were estitute of provisions & clothing. I immediately ordered the Indian Dept. pack train from the Jocko to this place for stores. I issied them four head of oxen. Alexander had lost a son in the fight, a young man of much promise, some 20 years of age. He found his son's body in a horribly mutilated state, scalped, stripped & heart cut out. Some of the wounded have since died. Dr. Mullan was prompt & effiecient in rendering assistance to the wounded that succeeded in reaching home. They numbered [-----?] Some fifteen operations of a difficult nature had to be performed. Extracting arrow points, bullets, &c&c. The Pend's Oreilles had twenty five wounded (five of the latter since dead) and lost 290 head of horses. Ogden, a 1/2 breed who was one of the party, gave me a trilling & interesting account of the attack & the battle. He says the Assinnaboins numbered some two hundred, or thereabouts. They were a War party all on foot & uncumbered with families, lodges, horses, &c&c. Nothing in the world saved the complete & entire extermination of Alexander's Camp but the amt of plunder the attacking party had come in possession of. The 290 head of horses, which they were eager to secure, beyond a doubt. The Pend Oreilles made every effort that a

brave and gallant band could do to recover some of the animals they had lost. But they were overcome by numbers & had to quietly submit to their fate & beat a retreat toward their far distant home. It was hard. They had just reached the buffalo. They were in fine spirits. On the evening of the night of the attack the tired Camp, on bended knees, offered their thanks to almighty God for the prospect then before them. Alexander in a short harangue told his Camp that "here we will Make our winter's meat & return. Secure your fleet horses for tomorrow's chase, &c&c Little did the unsuspecting Camp know what awaited them. Before the dawn the Camp was surrounded & between the report of the rifle, the wailings of the women, the neighing of the horses at the picket, & the sheet of fire that encircled the Camp from the rifles of the attacking party, you can form but a slight conception of what followed. Mr. Ogden says it was about one hour before day when the attack was made. Alexander's Camp was still asleep. The attacking party approached the lodges, cut an opening with the knife through which they thrust their rifles & discharged their deadly contents. The heart bleeds at the thrilling story. Alexander thirsts for revenge. He talked to me with moistened eyes. He says he must visit the Sleeping place of his son & people. I tell him I appreciate his feelings. I sympathize deeply with him. I had a long talk with him. I have no doubt myself, but there will be a large war party in the field this spring. I have had to purchase ammunition for camp, none having been sent up with the annuity goods from the East.

Respect &c Jno Owen, Ind. SubAgent &c&c W.T." The Ninepipes Museum of Early Montana Quarterly Newsletter, Summer, 2003, Issue #14, p1.

In 1861 he fell from his horse injuring his head which caused an unsettled mind, and this forced him to relinquish Fort Connah to Lachlan McLauren. "Men and Trade on the Northwest Frontier as Shown by the Fort Owen Ledger," George Weisel, 1955 103: "After he fell from his horse in 1861 unsettling his mind he forgot where he had hidden a substantial sum in gold dust some place on his property.' (I never heard of anyone ever finding it.)

He and Angelic Bonaparte had about 8 children:
Issac, Peter, Agate, Michael (Michel), Angelique, Sarah, Grace and Susan.

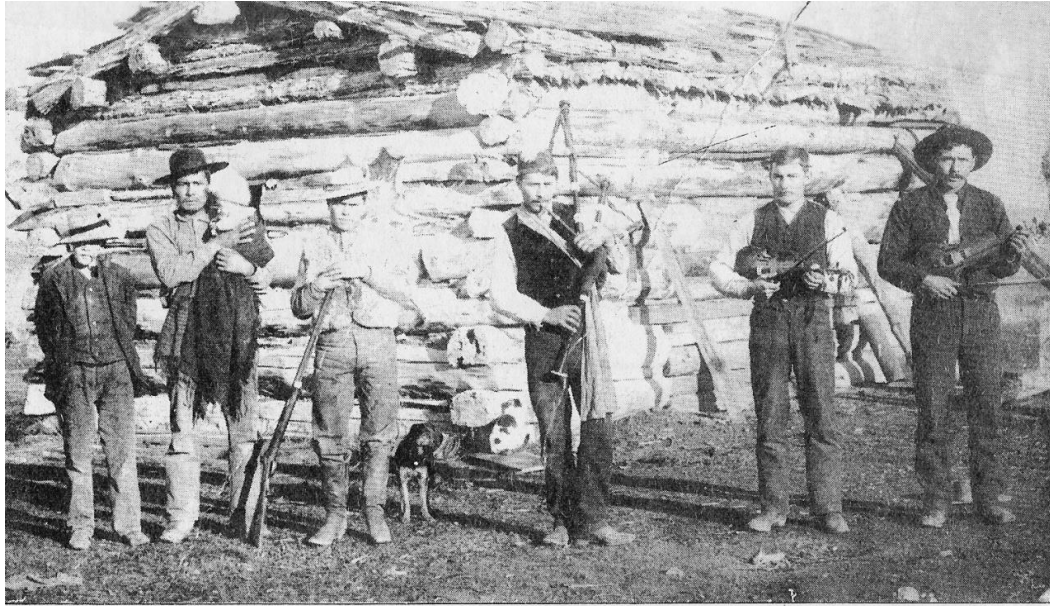
Michel owned a home on Higgins Avenue in Missoula, Montana. "Fort Connah: A Frontier Trading Post", A, J. Partoll, Pacific NW Quarterly, XXX Oct. 1939, page 407.

In the St. Ignatius Mission, Montana Marriage Book 1856-1873 we find:

1863

"12 April Junxi in matrimonium Michaellem Ogden & Angelicam. Testes Atele & Isabella consanguinea Angelica. U.Grassi"

The book "The Ogden Family in America, Elizabethtown Branch, and Their English Ancestry: John Ogden, The Pilgrim, and His Descendants, The Seventh Generation, page 183. This states that Michel Ogden had a second wife, Julia Bordeniun, the widow of C. Bordeniun, and she died on July 28, 1886. What happened to this woman?



THANKS TO WALT MC DONALD we have a really splendid Down Memory Laner this week. The group assembled outside the old storehouse (now departed) at Fort Connah included, from left, Charlie Graham, Pete Ogden and unidentified child, Joe McDonald, Alex McKinsey and Sam

Pablo. And of course those are the famous Angus McDonald bagpipes being played in the center. One man's identification is missing, and we'd be glad to fill it in next week if anyone knows.

Lachlan McLaurin

In 1861 Lachlan McLaurin took charge and lived there until 1865. In a letter to T.D. Duncan from Duncan McDonald he wrote: "But who started farming at the head of the lake? It was Angus McLeod, Joe Ashley, Irvines, Michquam Finley, and one of the first traders was Laughlin McGauvin, in 1865 to 70 they all left on account of Blackfeet so bad."

One account has his name Weis Auran aka Laughlan MacLaurin, and that he was the brother-in-law of Johnny Grant, the son of Fort Hall's Richard Grant.

"Joe Ashley, for whom Ashley Creek is named, had come to the Flathead in the mid-1840s. He and Angus McDonald (an HBC trader), Peter Irvine (a Shetlander), Francois Finley, and Laughlin McLaurin and several others farmed in a small way at the head of the lake. McLaurin (also spelled McLaughlin, McLaren, or McGauvin) was among the first traders at a post near the head of Flathead Lake. Ashley succeeded McLaughlin as trader, under the supervision of Angus McDonald of Fort Connah. In the late 1860s several of the families living at Ashley Creek left the area because of Blackfeet raiding, some only temporarily. Ashley stayed on, later moving to the foot of Flathead Lake and then selling out in the 1880s and leaving the area (Shea 1977:39-40; McCurdy 1976:71-72; Johns 1943.)"

The third student to stay at the Sisters of Charity's school of St. Ignatius was the wife of Lachlan McLaurin of Fort Connah, which was a few miles away. She was listed as M. Grant. "Mrs. McLearn stayed at the school only until February 23, 1865. She was fifteen years old. Together with the two Brown girls, she was registered in the "Tribal Column" as Metisse. Mrs. McLaurin was a daughter of Richard Grant, HBC trader at Fort Hall, Idaho. From MISSION VALLEY NEWS, July 1, 1976, page 13--"The Sisters of Providence - 1864-1976---by Sister Providencia, S.P.; "A Shining from the Mountains, Sister Providencia Tolan, S.P., 1980, page 91.

NAME: McLaurin, Lachlan		PARISH:		ENTERED SERVICE: 1861		DATES:	
<u>McLaurin, Lachlan</u>							
Appointments & Service							
Outfit Year <i>(See p. 21 Men)</i>	Position	Post	District	Dept.	HBCA Reference		
1861-1865	Clerk in charge	Flathead [Fort Connah]	Fort Colville	Western	B.226/g/9-12		



Filename: M'Laren, Lachlan (fl. 1861-1865) JHB1998/10 ; April/99/mhd

In 1858 to 1862 The Mullan Road from Fort Benton, Montana to Walla Walla, Washington was being built. At one point the road was only 40 miles south of Fort Connah. “It became the main artery of immigrant travel and the thoroughfare for gold seekers, traders, trappers, and others who entered the region in their personal pursuits.” Before long the town of Hellgate, Frenchtown and Missoula Mills (later Missoula) sprang up along the road. This all distracted from Fort Connah the significance as a trading place.

In 1863 Fort Connah became part of Idaho Territory.

In 1864 Fort Connah became part of Montana Territory, a “special map showing the newly created county divisions and settlements was prepared by Walter W. DeLacy for the use of the legislature. Fort Connah was shown to be in Missoula County and indicated on the map as “H. B. Post.” The acts of this historic legislature gave evidence that the frontier seclusion in the wilderness that had sheltered Fort Connah so long was forever broken.” Partoll, page 410

When gold was discovered in the Kootenai district in southern Canada the miners traveling through Montana stopped at the post for supplies. This did not escape the notice of the Flathead Indian agent, Charles Hutchins, who urged Governor Sidney Edgerton to send an American trader to the reservation to compete against the HBC post.

Also in 1864 the first hospital on the reservation was established at St. Ignatius Mission by four nuns, Sisters of Providence. They came up from Oregon by horseback.

Napoleon Fitzstubbs

In 1865 Napoleon Fitzstubbs became the postmaster. There is a Fitzstubbs that married Mary Anne Campaville, daughter of Dick "Kimpilets" Richards and Antoinette "Tah-tsin-no" "Allsnoo" Bonaparte. Eugene Felsman refers to him as Louie "Fitch" Stube.

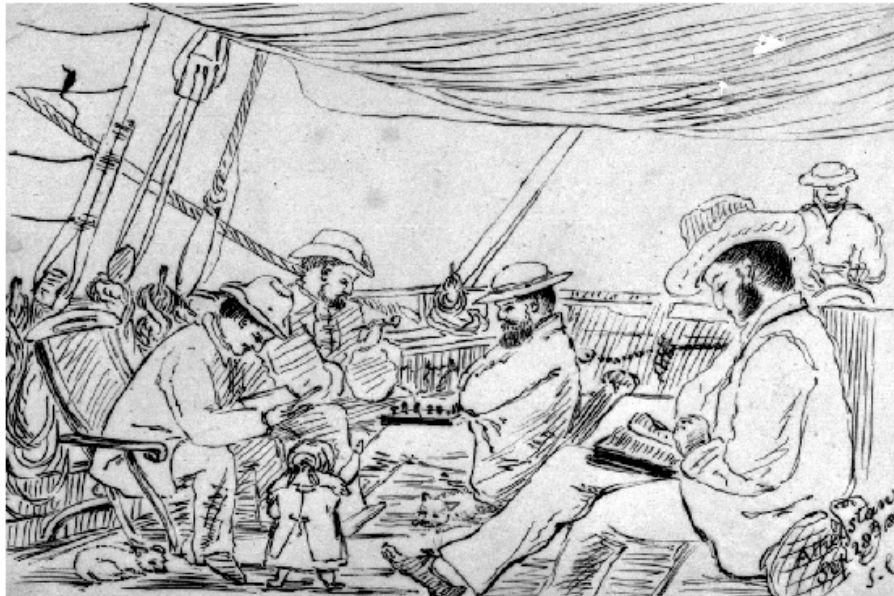
“Open opposition developed in 1866 when the new Agent, A. H. Chapman sought the removal of trader Napoleon Fitzstubbs, whom he called "Stubbs." He asserted that Fitzstubbs "was sent there by the Hudson's Bay Company with orders to remain there and trade until he was forcibly ejected from the reservation." Chapman seems to have favored decisive action, for in his letter of March 3, 1855, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs D. N. Cooley he concluded "If said Stubbs has no legal right on this reservation and it meets with your approval, I will proceed to eject him and his goods from the same." With the Commissioners approval and that of Montana Territory Governor Edgerton, ex-officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Montana Territory he was to be ejected by Chapman. But he was not ejected and the HBC still held to the “sit tight” of before.



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Title: "athelstan" [Showing Deck of Ship To Bc- Captain ...

Processed From Host on Sun Sep 18 15:15:58 2011

The second man from the left is identified as Captain Napoleon Fitz Stubbs and it might be the same as the N. Fitzstubbs of Fort Connah. In 1860 when he circumnavigated Vancouver Island.

James McKenzie

In 1866 to 1867 James McKenzie was on duty at Fort Connah. James McKenzie was the son-in-law of Angus McDonald having married his daughter, Christina. He had worked for Angus McDonald at Fort Colville and according to his wife, Christina McDonald McKenzie (Williams) was the last clerk at that post. Fort Colville was closed down on June 8, 1871 and all the personal property and records was taken over the Sherman Creek Trail to Fort Victoria, British

Columbia by the McKenzies and the traveling companion, Joe LaFleur. They had bags of gold dust with them.

James McKenzie was promoted to chief trader in 1870 and assigned to Fort Kamloops, where he resigned from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1872. "Between 1866 and 1871, there were five men in charge [of Fort Kamloops] in quick succession, James Bissett, H. Moffat, William Charles, Robert Skinner and James McKenzie. Little is known about these men. Business at Kamloops was also less of the fur trade than the transition of the post to a retail outlet catering to miners, ranchers and farmers in the vicinity. "The Fur Traders of Kamloops," Ken Favrholt, curator and archivist of Kamloops Museum and Archives, December 11, 1986, page 5.

Angus McDonald traveled north to visit them and wrote of the singing of McKenzie and Arthur Thomas Busby (a registrar of the British Columbia Supreme Court at that time), "The other daughter (of Chief Factor William Connolly), Agnes, is widow of the Colonial Secretary Busby. This gentleman was highly sociable and a great musician. Before he and Christina's husband McKenzie, died, both entertained the English church at New Westminster (B.C.) on a Sunday afternoon. Both felt the horns [?] and Bushby sat down to the organ, while McKenzie helped all he could with his Highland voice. These poor fellows played and sung alone, making that church ring as it never did before, but the two never played there again, for death soon found them both." Angus McDonald: A Few Items Of The West, edited by F.W. Howay, William S. Lewis and Jacob A. Meyers, Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 8, 1917, page 225.

He opened his own trading post and operated it until his death in 1873. Christina spent much of this time back at Fort Colville with her father, her mother had moved to Fort Connah in 1870 with the children and Angus was soon to follow. Angus' son Donald McDonald took over the property at Fort Colville.

After McKenzie's death Christina took over the Kamloops Trading Post which she ran until 1877 when she sold out. After a short time at Shuswap Prairie she moved to Cow Creek, Montana.

In 1869 the United States paid \$450,000 for "the possessory rights and claims of the Hudson's Bay Company. The payment was for Old Flathead Post as well. "In the spring of 1870, Chief Factor Roderick Finlayson made a personal inspection of the company posts in the Colville district, in which Fort Connah was located. It was apparent to Finlayson that the fur trade regime was over, and that Fort Connah should be abandoned. Finlayson wrote from Victoria on July 1, 1870 to the London Committee of the HBC:

"The Flathead Post in Montana another outstation, from which we received a fair lot of Furs last year [was inspected], and as its immediate abandonment would cause serious loss arrangements were made to continue its business until the close of the Outfit, when Mr. C.[hief] T.[rader] McDonald in his instructions is directed to close it, and have the property there realized to the best advantage, before the Accounts closed next spring." Partoll page 413

Angus McDonald was in charge of the Colville district to the required steps to close the post in the spring of 1871. Duncan McDonald was the last clerk at the post and attended to the details. Later the McDonald family acquired the post and the surrounding land. It had been used up to

that time as a store and afterwards a residence up to 1945-1946 when a man and a woman were living in the small building, remembered by Dr. Joe McDonald

Angus McDonald returned to Fort Connah in 1871 after he retired from the Hudson's Bay Company to claim the site as his home. Even after Angus moved to Fort Colville a part of the McDonald lived at the Fort Connah site. "The post had been the haven of safety for Mrs. McDonald and children during the Indian difficulties of 1856 and 1858 on the Pacific slope of the Rocky Mountains, when Angus sent them on extended visits among the Flatheads. A liberal verbal lease had been granted Angus by the Flathead-Salish Indians, and they welcomed his return to their country." Partoll, Angus McDonald, page 145.

Angus began raising stock and spent time writing, he wrote many manuscripts including long poems and several plays, one about the Whitman Massacre.

"Cattle raising began on the reservation in the late 1850s when traders bought exhausted cattle from emigrants going to Oregon, usually in the vicinity of today's Pocatello, Idaho, drove them to the Jocko Valley to fatten, then resold them to other emigrants the following spring. Some of these cattle were traded to Indians for horses and were the source of the Indian herds. This livestock furnished by the HBC of Fort Colville was considered by some to be of low quality. A higher quality of cattle was brought in by the Jesuit priests in 1855 and also by the U.S. government a little later. The Mission Valley with its good grasses and plenty of water was an ideal cattle range. Soon Fort Connah's prairies were full of cattle.

During the 1850s Neil McArthur, first agent at Fort Connah, and Louis Mallet drove herds from Oregon into Bitterroot and Jocko Valleys for the winter, then drove them back westward to trade in the spring. John Owens recorded that in 1856 traders or stockmen who came to western Montana included Louis Brown and a Mormon trader, Van Etten, who was accompanied by George Goodwin, Bill Madison, James Brown and F. W. Woody.

The cattle ranching industry became concentrated among a handful of white men who were married to Indian women. Angus McDonald (who had a verbal lease to lands around Fort Connah) raised cattle near the fort. Other men (some former employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, some free traders) included Peter Irvine and his son William, Dave Cachure (Couture), Charles Allard, and Michel Pablo." <http://www.flatheadreservation.org/timeline/documents/cattle.htm>

"With the closing of Fort Connah trading post in 1872, Angus McDonald returned to his ranch on the Flathead that he had established in 1847. The ranch was located about a mile south of Fort Connah, with the ranch building situated just west of Post Creek.

Angus McDonald prospered in the cattle business; at one time his herd numbered 2,000 head, and the ranch carried 200 horses. Remaining in the valley, his sons Tom, Joe, Duncan, and Angus C. also entered the livestock field and thrived. When the Northern Pacific Railway was built through Arlee, Ravalli, and Dixon, Duncan McDonald obtained a contract to furnish the road crews with beef, and the venture proved to be quite profitable.

The cattle king of the McDonald family proved to be Angus C. Locating in the Big Draw country, just inside the reservation boundaries, Angus C. and his sister, Margaret, raised a good grade of white-faced cattle. According to their nephew, Charles McDonald, on one roundup they sold 2,000 head from their herd and still had enough cattle remaining to begin the foundation of another herd.” The Fabulous Flathead, the Story of the Development of Montana’s Flathead Indian Reservation, as told to Sharon Bergman by J.F. McAlear, President of the Reservation Pioneers, 1962, The Reservation Pioneers, Inc. & Treasure State Publishing Company, pp. 45-46.

“By the fall of 1872 a large house had been built near the fort, constructed of logs, rough-sawed lumber, and adobe brick. This was the McDonald “mansion” to house the parents and the large family. Frequently the teepees of visiting friends surrounded the home. And the large pasture was picketed with the horses of the guests. The Mission Mountain range lent an air of dignity to the setting; and McDonald Peak, named after Angus, posed as a sentry of his domain.” Partoll, page 145.

During the Nez Perce War of 1877 Angus and his family watched the developments with a keen eye as there was a strong bond of kinship between them and the Nez Percés. Partoll, Angus McDonald, page 145. Duncan even joined White Bird’s band and went to Canada.

On March 6, 1881 Father Jerome D’Aste wrote in his diary: “I was called at McDonald’s for the old woman.” Bigart, page 52.

In 1885 Angus McDonald had 800 acres of land “under fence,” but no crop.

“Shortly before his death, Angus was interviewed by W. F. Wheeler, who observed in November, 185, that “Mr. McDonald, at the age of sixty nine years is in vigorous health. He still lives at the beautiful spot he selected as a home nearly forty years ago in 1847. He has ample means, and bids fair to live in the picturesque Mission Valley many years to come.”

Angus died at Fort Connah on February 1, 1889 and his death was mentioned in “the New Northwest, February 8, 1889. Catherine would died in 1892. Angus has written down several stories about Catherine, one was “An Indian Girl’s Story of a Trading Expedition to the Southwest about 1841,” a journey she made with her father, Baptiste Coquin (Rascal), before she married him. Her mother was Margaret DeNaie and does not seem to have been a member of that 1841 trading expedition.

In the woods behind Fort Connah is the McDonald cemetery where Angus McDonald is buried and about 25 others. “The gravestones were shipped from Scotland, Angus’ is of white marble, and a few of the stones have decorative sheep carvings mounted on the top of them.” Shawna Grenier, 1983 MVN.

Duncan McDonald

In 1867 Duncan McDonald became the last clerk to take charge of the post. He served there until 1871.

Angus wrote to his son-in-law, James McKenzie from Fort Colvile on June 4, 1870 "See Duncans fixd at the Flat-Head Post and if you join your fate with mine North or somewhere I'll do everything in my power to help you and make you happy."

"Duncan McDonald was born at Fort Connah – "in 1849 in the month of March about the end of the month," he wrote nearly seventy years later . 'As my father was away and my mother was not educated,' Duncan added, 'she could not tell the day.'" He was taught by tutors hired by his father to read and write. "Although McDonald once replied to a question about his schooling, "Education—I never had any education," his later career belies that comment. Although almost completely self-taught, over the years he became highly skilled with words. An astute observer, he moved easily in the Salish world and that of Montana white society. Toward the end of his long life (he lived until 1937), newspaper reporters turned to him regularly on a variety of Native issues. One reporter, M. O. Hammond of Toronto, called him "well read and bright." Another, Ellen Nye termed him "almost a savant among his red brethren." Reporter H. T. Balley called him "the sage of the Flathead. In 1922 McDonald led a group of news people to the remains of the Kullyspell house, the first trading post in the Northwest, which was established by Welsh explorer David Thompson in 1809. On another trip he led Montana reporters to the site of the first Flathead Indian agency. On many an occasion McDonald spoke of his boyhood growing up on the old HBC trading post." American History - Scots in the American West 1790 – 1917 - Scotland and the American Indians.

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/american_indians.htm

Some years later, Thomas Adams – who was one of Governor Isaac I. Steven's party when the latter negotiated with the Flathead people at Hell's Gate – described Fort Connah as 'a wooden building, about twenty-four by sixteen feet, of one storey, with a bark roof; one wooden bastion about fourteen feet square' and two storerooms, each ten feet square; also a log corral about sixty feet square.'" "Scottish Highlanders, Indian Peoples – Thirty generations of a Montana Family" James Hunter, Montana Historical Society Press, Helena, Montana, 1996. Page 130.

Adeline Beaver short story on Duncan:

Miss Beaver has tackled a large subject for this week's "Early Days" column: Duncan McDonald, the second son of the trader Angus McDonald. Duncan moved with equal ease among the white and Indian friends, and accordingly Miss Beaver is presenting the story in two parts. The first, here, gives some of Mr. McDonald's Indian background. Next week it'll be Duncan McDonald the white man working for Indian causes.

In 1936 the Dixon Woman's Club was giving a public birthday party for a distinguished citizen, Duncan McDonald, second son of the trader Angus McDonald.

Not only was there to be party, but a special honor was to be accorded Duncan's wife. The highest peak in the Bison Reserve, in summer easily reached by car, had been given his wife's name, Quilsee, and the women of Dixon were placing a permanent marker there in her memory.

Duncan McDonald told how they followed the early customs and were wed with the usual Indian ceremony, which, he said, "usually lasted 'till the end of the trail." However, two years later they had a Christian marriage ceremony.

He prized an oil painting of Quilsee, which showed her in white woman's dress with a feather stuck gaily in her hair. Duncan would reminisce, "Yes, I married a sure enough wild woman." Then continue, "Oh, the goodness, the virtue of that woman. She was lithe and beautiful in youth, and a joy and comfort all the 50 years of our life together."

Duncan McDonald cherished most tenderly a native dress that Quilsee had fashioned of soft, white buckskin, fringed at the sleeves and hemline. Of unusual beauty was the yoke of the dress, ornamented with a pure and ancient type of Indian handicraft. The yoke, a solid mass of color, was made with brightly colored porcupine quills, neatly and painstakingly woven together. The belt, moccasins and gloves all decorated in the same manner completed this beautiful outfit.

Mr. McDonald resided at Dixon, near the junction of the Jocko and Pend d'Oreille (Flathead) Rivers. But at the first signs of winter, this hearty pioneer would seek the steam-heated comfort of his favorite hotel in Missoula. So that winter of 1935-36, when the snow lay three feet deep, and the thermometer stuck at -20 degrees below and lower, Duncan waited in Missoula for spring; and returned to Dixon just in time for his birthday, March 30.

Duncan McDonald was born at Fort Connah, last of the Hudson's Bay Company trading posts in the United States. He was the second of 13 children born to the chief trader, Angus McDonald and his wife, of the Nez Perce tribe. During childhood the children kept close to their mother, learning the Indian language, customs and traditions, accompanying her on tribal jaunts to gather berries or other delicacies.

As they grew other their Scotch father saw to it that they were versed in the ways of the white man. They received an education, above average for that time and place. All became lovers of books and intelligent readers and talkers. Duncan read constantly and always without glasses.

Mr. McDonald wore white man's clothes or Indian, as the occasion or mood demanded. His war bonnet, which he wore in a spirit of pageantry and fun was patiently fashioned by Duncan himself. All materials and workmanship were of native origin. Eagle feathers were already scarce by 1880, but every feather in the headdress was a fine large one direct from that majestic bird. They were colored with natural dyes and their stems patiently wrapped with gaily colored strands of grass or hair. While the whole thing was made and adjusted to the head, the columns of feathers swayed majestically as the wearer moved. When wearing Indian costume, Duncan often rode his favorite pinto pony, for which he had traded 12 fine steers.

While Duncan McDonald was always the white settlers friend, yet on the other hand he held the friendship of the Indian and knew many an inside story of various far west Indian troubles.

Next week, some occasions when the knowledge of both races was of value."

"As a young man Duncan McDonald worked as the last agent the Hudson's Bay Company had at Fort Connah where his father, Angus McDonald, had operated a trading post and where Duncan himself was born in 1849, the year of the California gold rush.

Later he was concerned with his large land holdings and his numerous herds of cattle and horses.

When the Northern Pacific Railroad came through in 1883, Duncan McDonald acted as their trusted guide and interpreter, contracting for overland freight and supplying much of their meat requirements.

At the close of the Nez Perce War (Chief Joseph's War), he visited those members of the band, who had made it over the line into Canada, with Looking Glass.

Duncan listened to their stories and learned, first hand, many matters relating to the campaign. He also acted as interpreter for the government officials who had to bring the Nez Perce back to the United States.

He went as interpreter for the Indians on several missions to Washington, D.C. He often related how once he attended a banquet dressed in Indian costume when the two sons of the British ambassador were serving as waiters to get a better look at the Redman from the West.

Before Peter Ronan became agent, the terms of the Hellgate Treaty of 1855 were not being carried out. The Treaty promised a carpenter, blacksmith, etc., to assist the Indians in learning the ways of the White Man. The agent received the money allotted for these workers, but little or no instruction was provided.

McDonald wrote the Deer Lodge newspaper, The Missoulian being unfriendly to the Indians, as follows. "What the Indian wants is an agent that will either give them what the Treaty calls for, or show in what way this money is expended, also, let him be honest, sober and upright."

Duncan McDonald was always interested in history and it was through his efforts that the ruins of the "Kullyspell", Kalispell house were found on the shores of Pend d'Oreille Lake in Idaho.

The same year, 1924, he helped to find all that was left of the log barricade and cabin built by David Thompson in 1807. Here, near Thompson Falls, the "Salish House" monument was erected.

Duncan McDonald was an authority on the history of the Northwest. He was keen and alert and his first-hand knowledge and recollections of past events were eagerly sought. Students from the United States and Canada frequently consulted in person or by correspondence. He had actalent for recognizing events of historic interest and the ability and willingness to convey to others his knowledge and enthusiasm.

Most of his papers and relics of interest may be seen at the Montana Historical Society in Helena."

"Duncan McDonald remembered and retold much of the history of the Salish, (Flathead) people.

He said that when you come through Evaro and travel west for about five miles, you are traveling over one of the most historic spots in Western Montana. This area was the battleground of the Flathead and Blackfeet Indians.

Here about 1818, one of the hardest fought battles between the tribes took place. Here the Flathead, Kalispell, Spokane and Nez Perce tribes joined forces against the Blackfeet. This was the largest group of men ever to fight in a common cause.

The battle was swift and bloody, with the action ranging over the entire area. Many a man fell in the fighting and among them was Chief Arlee's father. Later he was found, the body stripped and mutilated.

The Flatheads and their allies were driven back and defeated. They, for the most part, were fighting with bow and arrows; while the enemy Blackfeet were using a great number of guns and were well supplied with ammunition." Adeline Beaver From Mission Valley News, (no date) "Early Days by Miss Beaver

"Duncan gained his initial audience shortly after the Nez Perce war of 1877. Both McDonalds believed that the Native version of the conflict deserved publicity. They contacted a local newspaper, the Deer Lodge *New North-West*, and the paper paid Duncan's expenses to travel to Canada to interview White Bird, to whom he was related, plus a number of other Nez Perce leaders. Together with his father, Duncan reworked his extensive notes into a series of essays that the *New North-West* published in several installments from January 1879 forward. The editors boasted that the data in the articles "can be relied upon as authentic from the Nez Perce standpoint."

The lengthy articles on the war and the Native retreat were both well written and crammed with detail. There was no question of McDonald's perspective. "The gallant Seventh Infantry!" he said. "It should be called the cursed Seventh. They were not satisfied in killing Indians whom they found asleep. They must kill women and children, too." The articles also provoked several white responses: one merely asked for more details, but another accused McDonald of down playing Native atrocities against white families. These newspaper essays by Duncan McDonald were probably the first authentic historical accounts written from the Indian perspective. American

History - Scots in the American West 1790 – 1917 - Scotland and the American Indians.

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/american_indians.htm

"Duncan McDonald assumed many roles in Montana society. Not only did he write the first Indian-perspective history, he was also the first American Indian to compile a list of Coyote tales and systematically present them to white audiences. Like his father, an inveterate storyteller,

McDonald first told his versions of Coyote tales over several sittings to University of Montana journalism dean A. L. Stone, who later printed them in a series of articles in 1912.

Coyote tales played an important role in almost all American Indian societies. Trickster, sexual athlete, and general all-around nuisance, Coyote served as a perfect source to explain the origin of things as well as to convey moral lessons about behavior. Psychiatrist Carl Jung later became fascinated with Coyote. Modern Indian educators still draw on Coyote tales, and today they are formally taught in elementary schools across the Navajo Nation. Working with Stone, McDonald was probably the first person to make them available to white audiences. One Coyote tale will suffice here:

One day long ago, the Holy People began to hang the stars in the heavens. The stars lay in a heap in a large wicker basket, and one by one, the Holy People picked them up to hang in their proper places.

Coyote wanted to help. "Let me hang stars, too," he said. "I would be very good at this."

The Holy People said no. You're too untidy, they told him. This task has to be done with great precision. We can't have sloppy, careless people like you hanging the stars.

Coyote sulked and went away. For days he hid behind the bushes watching. It seemed to him that the Holy People took forever just to hang a single star. They would never be able to finish at this rate.

Finally, Coyote could stand it no longer. One day when everyone was away, Coyote raced over to the basket full of stars. He grabbed it and ran to the edge of the mesa. With a great heave he scattered the stars all across the heavens.

And that's why the stars look the way they do today.

Duncan McDonald became a fixture of early twentieth-century Montana society. Tourists who frequented the region often sought him out, and in 1909 he enthralled a group at the Roman Buffalo Round-up with Coyote tales and stories of early Montana. A Toronto *Globe* reporter listened to McDonald's yarns for more than two hours, later remarking: "It was most interesting, and we had quite a discussion over the morality of the white and red men.""¹ American History - Scots in the American West 1790 – 1917 - Scotland and the American Indians. http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/american_indians.htm

Charley Russell wrote a short story about Duncan:

"Dunc McDonald

Dunc McDonald, the breed, tells about a buffalo hunt he has when he's a kid," says Rawhide Rawlins. "Like all things that happen that's worth while, it's a long time ago. He's traveling with his people, the Blackfeet – they're making for the buffalo country. They're across the range

– they ain't seen much maybe – an old bull once in a while that ain't worth shootin' at, so they don't disturb nothin'. They're lookin for cow meat and lots of it. (Actually, Duncan was probably with the Flatheads or Nez Perce, the Blackfeet were more Russell's tribe as he stayed with them for awhile.)

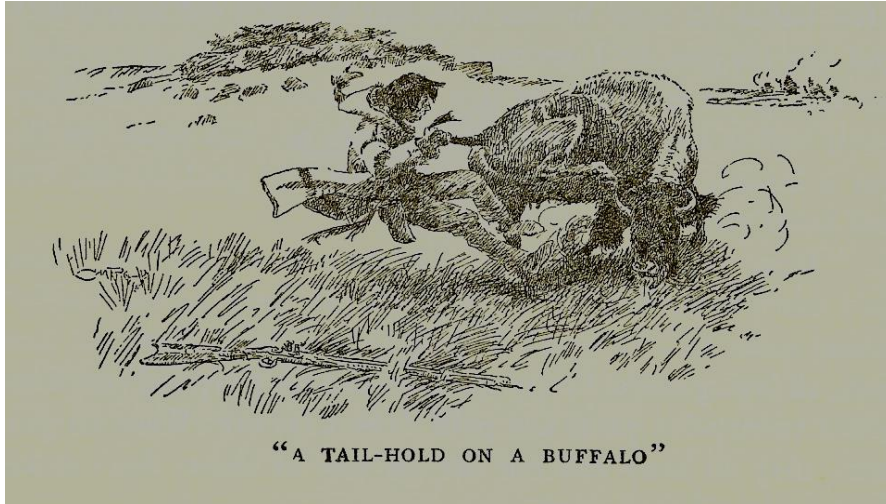
“Dunc's traveling ahead of the women with the men. As I said, it's a long time ago when Injun's ain't got many guns – they're mostly armed with bows and arrows. There's one old man packing a rifle. It's a Hudson Bay flintlock but a good gun, them days. Duncan is young and has good eyes that go with youth. He sees a few buffalo in some broken hills, and tells this old man if he'll lend him his gun, he'll get meat. The old man don't say nothin', but taking the gun from its skin cover, hands it to Dunc. Dunc wants bullets and the powder horn but the old man signs that the gun is loaded, and one ball is enough for any good hunter. The wolf hunts with what teeth he's got.

“Dunc knows he won't get no more so he rides off. There ain't much wind, but Dunc's getting' what there is, and keepin' behind some rock croppin's he get pretty close. There are five cows, all laying down. Pretty soon he quits his pony and crawls to within twenty-five yards and pulls down a fat cow. When his gun roars, they all jump and ran but the cow he shoots don't make three jumps till she's down.

“When Dunc walks up she's laying on her belly with her feet under her. She's small but fat. When Dunc puts his foot agin her to push her over, she gets up and is red-eyed. She sure shows war. They only hold Dunc can see is her tail and he ain't slow takin' it. The tail-hold on a buffalo is mighty short, but he's clamped on. She's tryin' to turn but he's keepin' her steered right – and he's doing fine till she starts kickin.' He first one don't miss his ear the width of a hair. If you never saw a buffalo kick it's hard to tell you what they can do, but Dunc ain't slow slippin' his hold.

“there's nothin' left but to run for it. This rock croppin' ain't over two feet high, but it's all there is. These rocks are covered ground cedar and Dunc dives into this. He gophers down in this cedar till a hawk couldn't find him. He lays there a long time, his heart poundin' his ribs like it will break through. When the scare works out of him he raises, and there agin the rock rim lays the cow – it's a lung shot and she's bled to death.

“There's only one hold, says Dunc, 'shorter than a tail-hold on a buffalo – that of a bear.'” Trails Plowed Under – Stories of the Old West, Charles M. Russell, Doubleday 7 Co., Inc., Garden City & New York, 1927, pp. 15-16.



Drawing by Charley Russell of Duncan McDonald and the cow buffalo.





May 7, 1889

"D'Aste Diary: I paid Duncan McDonald 16 dol. for 8 sashes, he claimed unpaid. He paid Bill for the Stage Co. 47.85. I went to Duncan's." "A Pretty Village - Documents of Worship and Culture Change, St. Ignatius Mission, Montana, 1880-1889", edited by Bob Bigart Salish Kootenai College Press/University of Oklahoma Press, 2007, pages 292.

"Notes From The Mission Newsy Niblets From Our Man at St. Ignatius.

D. McDonald has completed his new blacksmith shop and is now ready to serve his customers at all kinds of blacksmith work, etc." The Missoula Gazette (Daily) June 30, 1890, p1.

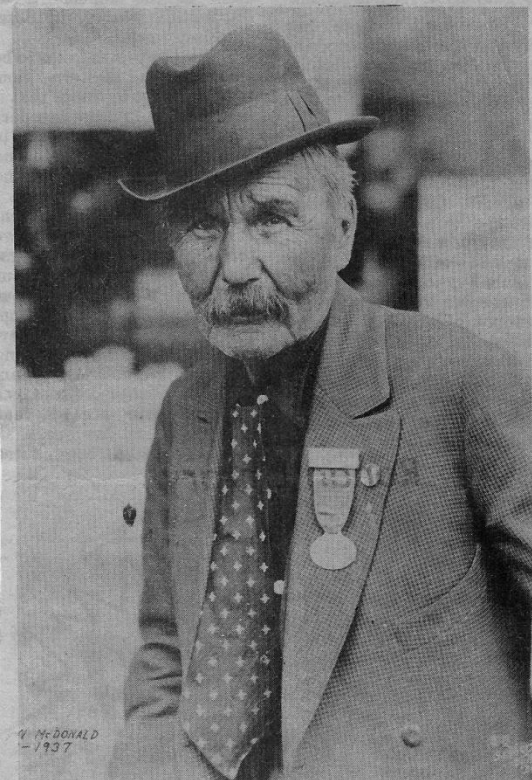
January 7, 1890

"D'Aste Diary: I slept at Duncan's, room without fire! Spent in Missoula 17.35 for the house and bought a pair of pants for me. I am tormented with piles. I came back at night with Dr. Crain, but he went before to Thompson Falls. I came home at 2 o'clock in the morning. F Canestrelli went to the Kootenays." "Zealous in All Virtues - Documents of Worship and Culture Change, St. Ignatius Mission, Montana, 1890-1894, edited by Bob Bigart, Salish Kootenai College Press/University of Oklahoma Press, 2007, page 17.

After Major Peter Ronan left the agency he was replaced as Agent by his cousin and clerk, Joseph T. Carter, in 1893. Agent Carter did not like Duncan and considered him trouble.

Early Days

by Miss Beaver
Duncan McDonald
Part II



Duncan McDonald, 1849-1937 Photo from 4-Winds Trading Post



Louise (Schuntah) "Red Sleep" Quilsee McDonald, Duncan McDonald and Quiunhachya.

"High Times on the Reservation

C. M. Walker, Wm. Sharp and William Harrington returned Saturday from the Flathead reservation where they had spent a week attending the New Years festivities. They went first to the old Hudson Bay post, where Angus C. McDonald now lives. On our New Years evening there was held what is said to have been the finest ball ever given on reservation. There are a large number of people of Scotch descent on the reservation, and they were nearly all present. Mr. Walker and Mr. Harrington had taken bagpipes with them, and to their music, loved by the Scot, the grand march was begun, with Mr. Sharp and Miss Maggie McDonald in highland costume leading the dancers. Dancing was continued until a late hour next morning. The music for the occasion, in addition to that furnished by the bagpipes, was furnished by an excellent orchestra, composed of Miss Maggie McDonald, Thomas McDonald, Angus C. McDonald and Charles Williams. The floor managers were Angus P. and Joseph McDonald.

A pleasant and unexpected feature of the evening was the marriage of William Irvin and Mrs. Larbie, two residents of the reservation.

On New Year's Eve a grand dance after the Indian manner was held at the residence of Mr. Ashley, at which a large number of the Indians were present.

After the ball at Mr. McDonald's Mr. Walker and Mr. Sharp visited a number of houses on the reservation, and stirred up the Scotch enthusiasm with the music of the bagpipes."

The Inter-Lake (Kalispell, Mt.) Jan. 10, 1896, p8.

"Duncan McDonald was up from Ravalli Monday." *The Ronan Pioneer*, Sept. 10, 1915, p4.

"Plains

Duncan McDonald of Ravalli was a visitor in Plains Friday." *The Daily Missoulian*, Oct. 8, 1919, page 3.

“Famed Montana artist Charles M. Russell knew and respected Duncan McDonald. Once they even worked together to help move a buffalo herd to Canada. In turn, McDonald praised Russell as a skilled student of Indian life and sign language. In a collection of short stories, *Trails Plowed Under* (1927), Russell immortalized him in a short story, "Dunc McDonald," which told of his harrowing escape from a wounded cow buffalo. Duncan McDonald thus emerges as the most famed Scoto-Indian cultural broker of the modern American West.” *American History - Scots in the American West 1790 – 1917 - Scotland and the American Indians*. http://www.electricscotland.com/history/america/american_indians.htm

"Personal Paragraphs

Duncan McDonald, of St. Ignatius, was in town Saturday." *The Flathead Courier*, Thurs., Apr. 12, 1923, page 7.

"Duncan McDonald, who now lives at Dixon, was a pleasant caller at our sanctum yesterday morning. Duncan says that the old Indians (the only ones who now live anything like the primitive life of our ancestors) are disappearing so fast that unless a great effort is made we may never again see a real Indian festival. He suggests that before another summer passes we make arrangements to have a great Indian gathering at some central point in the valley, at the old Hudson Bay trading post on Post Creek, for instance. He believes that such a gathering could be made very interesting if all the Indians traveled, cooked and camped in the primitive way in vogue before the coming of the white man, and suggests that motion picture concerns be invited here at such a time to make permanent records of aboriginal life for the edification of future generations.

Duncan McDonald also suggests that something should be done by the newly organized Lake county to preserve as a land mark the old Hudson's Bay trading post on Post Creek. This structure was erected by Duncan's father, Angus McDonald, Sr., in 1847. The elder McDonald, then in the employ of the Hudson Bay company, came here in that year to establish a trading post. The chief of the Selish tribe, Sil-lip-stu, advised the trader to build the post where it now stands, as that was an open spot where the frequent raids of the marauding Blackfeet could be warded off. The old log buildings are fast falling into decay, and something should be done to preserve the historic landmark. *The St. Ignatius Post*, Fri., July 13, 1923, p4.

Duncan's obituaries:

"Treasure State Loses Its Oldest Native Son, Duncan MacDonald. Taken from the *Kalispell Times* October 28, 1937

With the passing of Duncan MacDonald, Montana lost its oldest native son who had spent his entire lifetime of 88 years in Western Montana.

He was born at Fort Connah, near Dixon on what is now the Flathead Indian reservation, March 31, 1849. His father, Angus MacDonald, had built the fort in which he was born as a trading post for the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1847.

Fort Connah was one of the busiest trading posts in what is now northwestern Montana, to which Indians and trappers came hundreds of miles to deliver hides and furs and obtain food and other merchandise.

At the time of his birth, his father, a native of northern Scotland, was the factor in charge of the trading post. His mother was a Nez Perce Indian woman.

Fort Connah was the last trading post built in what is now the United States. When the international boundary survey in 1874 showed the fort on American soil, it was sold to the United States government and the trading company withdrew.

Duncan MacDonald spent the 88 years of his life in western Montana. He was a guide for the Northern Pacific railway engineering crews when the railroad was built through the northwest more than 50 years ago.

His father, a picturesque figure during the early history of the northwest territory, was an intimate friend of General McClellan, who chose the army trail from Fort Benton to Walla Walla, Wash., and of Captain Mullan, when the Mullan trail was built from Fort Benton to the Pacific coast.

Duncan MacDonald was recognized as an authority on the history of western Montana and Indian tribal lore. In 1924 he discovered the ruins of the Kullyspell (Kalispell) house on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille in northern Idaho, which he said had commenced to deteriorate before the advent of white settlers in the 1860's.

His wife died about 10 years ago, after they had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

Survivors include three brothers, Thomas, Joseph and Angus MacDonald, and one sister, Margaret MacDonald, all of whom reside in the Flathead and Little Bitter Root valleys.

Duncan grew to manhood at Ravalli. There were no hostile Indians, unlimited hunting and fishing and frequent trips always full of adventure. As a young boy he joined the Flatheads, Kootenais and Pend Oreilles on a scalping expedition against the Blackfeet.

On one secret expedition in which he and a party of Indians were commissioned to take food to a Canadian settlement, an event occurred that links his name forever to Montana. The party decided to cross the mountains over the pass along the North Fork of the Flathead river but their scouts discovered hostile Indians were waiting for them there. They evaded them by following the foot of the lake. They made camp and while there McDonald carved his name on one of the Stately cedars. Those who found the carving in later years called the lake, Lake MacDonald.

In 1867, at the age of 15, he was given the operation of the Hudson's Bay trading post on Post creek and conducted its business until the post was closed by the international agreement between the United States and Canada.

While in charge of the Hudson's Bay post, MacDonald learned that many of the hunters and trappers had traveled through Marias pass. The man's interest was great in the tales of prospectors' gold strikes and the Indian stories of mineral lode. In the winter of 1873, in the company of seven Pend Oreille Indians, MacDonald made his first trip through Marias pass. The party traveled on snowshoes and headed for Flathead lake. They were forced, however, to turn back to the main camp in Marias river.

The fabulous stories of mineral wealth continued to pour in, and in 1878, MacDonald, in company with Eugene Humbert and Batiste Pleaauf (Baptiste Plouffe?), started at Flathead lake and traveled again through Marias pass. They crossed the divide and continued on to Upper Two Medicine lake, where they camped two nights. MacDonald climbed to the top of the continental divide, but his exploration yielded no sign of the mineral lode. He returned home only to make another trip through Marias pass the following year in company with Robert MacGregor Baird and David Finlay. This prospecting trip likewise was unsuccessful.

Later he took part in war against the Blackfeet Indians. In 1877 he wrote a history of the Nez Perce Indians. Previous to this he was hired by the Northern Pacific railroad as an interpreter and he had a tie contract while the road was under construction. All through preliminary days of the survey and latter days of construction of the railroad through western Montana, he was an intimate friend and advisor of officials in charge of construction. He was of greatest service in helping to select routes through mountains. MacDonald was married in 1876 to Louisa Quill, a young Indian girl. She died in 1928. In memory of her, the highest peak in the national bison reserve at Dixon was recently named Quill by Prof. Morton J. Elrod of the State university of Montana. There were two children, a daughter, Mary, who died at St. Ignatius at the age of 4, and Peter, who died when 22.

After the close of the trading post in 1872, MacDonald engaged in stock raising, operating pack trains for the Hudson's Bay Co., and from time to time was occupied at placer and quartz mining. When the Great Northern was built in 1891, much of the supplies for its construction were shipped by the Northern Pacific railroad to Ravalli and from there were taken by stage to Flathead lake and across by barge to Somers. During his active years he had large herds of cattle, which roamed at will through western Montana.

(There was a paragraph here describing a Duncan McDonald that was a boxer..turns out he is not our's:

“ Dear Chalk,
I enjoyed reading the article. By the way, there was only one article all together?

The only suggestion I have is that you drop the paragraph about Duncan's boxing career. I first thought the newspaper stories about Duncan McDonald 's boxing matches were about Angus McDonald's son from Flathead, but later found a newspaper article pointing out that there were three Duncan McDonald's in Montana at that time and the boxer was a different person than the Duncan we are interested in. As you point out the ages of the two Duncan McDonalds are about ten years apart.

I assume you will not mind if I forward a copy of the email to the McDonald family here at SKC.
Thanks for the preview of the article.
Bob (Bigart)”

He was an authority on Indian legends, customs and early warfare. At one time he interviewed White Bird of the Bear's Paws and persuaded him to confer with officials sent by the United States to induce that chief to surrender. He entertained Chief Joseph when the latter was either on his way to Colville, or to Washington, D.C. Because MacDonald was half Nez Perce, it is likely he learned more of what took place on Snake creek than many other authorities.

He generously deposited most of his papers and relics of historical interest with the Montana historical society, yet he kept some keepsakes that could be seen on calls at the pioneer's home.

After the death of his wife, MacDonald became restless. He was often found in Missoula or in towns on the reservations. He was continually receiving letters from students of western history who wrote from many parts of the United States and Canada.

In 1929 he was the oldest pioneer to attend the state pioneer's convention at Butte. No man in Montana knew better the early history of Montana nor traditions and character of Indians than he." *The Pioneers* , V1, pp 153-157.

"State's Oldest Pioneer, Duncan MacDonald Dies Dean of Montana Residents Spent All of His 88 Years in Region.

Duncan MacDonald, son of a Hudson Bay trader, was the discoverer in 1924 of the ruins of Kullspell (Kalispell) house on the shores of Lake Pend d'Oreille in Northern Idaho. Mr. MacDonald was an authority on Western Montana history and great reader. Up until his death he read constantly and always without the use of glasses.

His death at Thompson Falls occurred near the monument marker of the memory of David Thompson, explorer, for whom the town of Thompson Falls was named. In 1924 he found all that was left of the log barricade cabins built by Thompson in 1807. It was at the present site of Thompson Falls where "Salish" house was established and from whence Thompson conducted his early explorations. Mr. MacDonald attended the celebration at Thompson Falls in 1933 when the monument to Thompson was unveiled. In speaking of the ruins of the old Kullspell house on Lake Pend d'Oreille, Mr. MacDonald said the chimneys collapsed probably in 1855, and before the early white settlers started coming in the sixties.

Born at Fort Conan.

Mr. MacDonald was born at Fort Conan on the present Flathead Indian Reservation, March 31, 1849, when it was open prairie land in the present Flathead valley. It was the year of the gold rush in California. The fort in which he was born was built by his father, Angus MacDonald, in 1847, two years before Duncan's birth. The fort was a popular trading post to which the Indians and trappers came hundreds of miles to deliver hides and furs.

Fort Conah was the last trading post built in what is now the United States by the Hudson's Bay company of Canada. When the boundary survey was made in 1874 it was found that the fort was on American soil and was sold to the United States and the trading coming moved out. Angus

MacDonald, father of Duncan, was a picturesque figure during the early history of the Northwest territory. He was a Scotchman.

Spends Life Here.

Duncan MacDonald spent all of his 88 years in the present Flathead valley and the Western Montana district. He was a guide for the Northern Pacific engineering crews when the railroad was built through the Northwest. His father was a close friend of General McClellan, who picked out the route for the army trail from Fort Benton to Walla Walla. Also he was a close friend of Captain Mullan when the Mullan trail was built through Missoula between Fort Benton, head of navigation on the Missouri river, and the Pacific coast.

Through the connections of his father, Duncan at an early age, acquired close contact with the early history of the Northwest. Mr. MacDonald was an authority on many early-day happenings. A few years ago when fear was expressed that the timber in the Mission range had been winter killed, MacDonald told of a similar occurrence of about 50 years ago when the timber turned brown up to a given height on the hillsides, apparently dead. However, it recovered the next spring and again took upon its original color.

Mr. MacDonald had been married more than fifty years when his wife died about ten years ago. On a recent trip here he told a reporter that their marriage was one of natural selection; that they were wed with the usual Indian ceremony but two years later were married with the Christian ceremony. He said that under the early customs when an Indian took a wife, in most instances they lived together to the "end of the trail."

Mr. MacDonald usually came to Missoula at the first signs of winter and had spent most of the winter here for years at the Shapard hotel. Missoula acquaintances had been expecting to see him come into Missoula as usual with the first storms of fall from his home at Dixon.

No word of his recent illness reached Missoula until early Saturday, and then on top of it came the news of his death.

Recalled Early Days.

Upon a recent trip to Missoula, Mr. MacDonald in talking to a press representative recalled many early day happenings of the present Western Montana district.

He recalled the giving away of the open prairie lands to the fences of the settlers. He recalled the execution of road agents, and even the names of road agents executed near Thompson Falls with their boots on and whose bodies were dug up by a heavy steam shovel when the new Clark's Fork highway was being built. He recalled names of Indians buried and whose bodies were uncovered during excavation near St. Ignatius for the new highway No. 93 through the Flathead. Mr. MacDonald was a personal friend of the late Marcus Daly, Montana copper king. He remembered minutely the early political feuds of Montana.

Old Burial Ground

About five or six years ago when the new highway was being built into St. Ignatius from Ravalli reports were given out that skeletons had been unearthed by road crews, inquiry of Mr. MacDonald brought light upon the early-day burial ground.

He said that for years the old highway at the southern entrance to St. Ignatius passed over the old burial ground where several hundred Indians are buried. Mr. MacDonald said that when the road crews unearthed the skeletons of Indians buried 75 years ago it was on a section of the present road which was being built into the new by being widened and raised.

Graves Shallow.

When the bodies of the Indians were buried in the early days, Mr. MacDonald said, there were few tools with which to dig and naturally the graves were shallow. Now with the road program on, excavations are being made to make the fills for the road and bodies were found in that manner. Mr. MacDonald said that distant relatives of his wife were buried in the old cemetery, the first at St. Ignatius Mission.

Mr. MacDonald then went into the history of the matter. He said that back in 1844 Father Hoecken and Brother Classens were sent from St. Mary's mission at Stevensville by Father DeSmet to the Kalispell country, near the present site of Spokane. There they were to establish Ignatius mission, which they did on the Pend d'Oreille river north of Spokane among the Kalispell Indians.

Come to Flathead.

After several years the mission was abandoned because of the high water and Father Hoecken and Brother Claessens came to the present Flathead valley. After a study of the country they established the St. Ignatius mission where it stands today. That was in 1854. The mission church was established and a cabin for the missionaries was constructed. The land was located for the church and burial ground was laid out. Several hundred Indians were buried there. Later a second cemetery was laid out and now a third one is being used.

The missionaries acquired land for their church holdings in the then open country. But in later years when the land was surveyed it was found that the mission property line had been extended too far east and when the fence was built it was placed on the property lines, which left part of the old burial ground outside of the mission property.

"Because of the fence people walked around the outside and the strip of land east of the mission property came into general use and eventually became a road." Mr. MacDonald said, "Now it is being made into an improved highway."

Mr. MacDonald said there was no lumber in the district at the time with which to build coffins, that the church and cabin of the missionaries were built of logs which had bark on, and that the Indians were buried in buffalo robes with the bodies wrapped in either birch or cedar bark.

Strange Indian Death

Mr. MacDonald is an authority on many early happenings, and while in Missoula recently told an unusual story of an Indian death at Stevensville in the early days. The death occurred in the late 50's or the early 60's, as related by Mr. MacDonald.

An old Indian of another tribe was camped with his family in a tepee with the Flathead or Salish Indians at Stevensville. Mr. MacDonald said, and the old fellow was helpless while hostile Indians were lurking nearby.

"Finally he decided upon a means by which he should die," Mr. MacDonald said. "Carrying out the old man's wishes, he was placed upon the back of a saddle horse and his feet tied together with a rope suspended under the animal's belly. The horse was led to the river west of the old mission at Stevensville and a member of the family shot the horse when the animal was out in the deep water. When the horse rolled over dead in the river the old Indian strapped on his back went down the stream with him in the current and was drowned."

According to the story handed down to Mr. MacDonald by an uncle, the woman and children of the old man's family were weeping and wailing, but his instructions had been carried out.

Because of the threatened outbreaks the old Indian had decided he was too old to be of any good to his relatives and did not want them fighting the enemy to protect him. By getting out of the way in such a manner it was the aged one's belief that his tribesmen could make a better fight against the enemy than they could if they divided their efforts to protect the helpless." *The Daily Missoulian*, Oct. 17, 1937, p1: (Bob Bigart) Also see: *The Ronan Pioneer*, Oct. 21, 1937, p1.

"In 1947 – exactly 100 years after McDonald's arrival – a celebration began at the site of Fort Connah. By 1975 that annual party had turned to necessary work, an effort that formed the Fort Connah Restoration Society, in a desperate attempt to preserve this worn relic of Montana's history." <http://www.crownofthecontinent.net/content/fort-connah/cot41B080B7A5C95F256>

In 1975 Fort Connah's four acre plot and a small parcel nearby with the cemetery was deeded to the Fort Connah Restoration Society. The post was dismantled in 1976 and a new stone and mortar foundation was placed underneath and it was re-built in its original location facing McDonald Peak and the Mission Mountains. "But by that time, the McDonald's log cabin residence and a livestock shed shown in a mid-19th century painting by Peter Tofft had long since disappeared." Since the 1975 reconstruction, Fort Connah has sat dormant, little noticed by motorists along U.S. 93 a half-mile west, despite a roadside sign and turnout along the highway. The restoration society has been somewhat dormant, too, because no legal, permanent access to the site was available." Stromness, page A-14 The Flathead Culture Committee agreed to help as long as digging for artifacts was forbidden.

In 1980 a "Ft. Connah Day Camp" was held one mile east of the Post Creek store at the Charette Ranch by the Ponderosa Canpfire Council and St. Ignatius Canpfire and Bluebird organizations. It was held from June 9 to 13th and welcomed kids from the 1st to the 6th grades. Crafts, outdoor skills, nature lore, games, songs and other activities were featured. It was a camp out. The organizers were Lettie Gariepy and Mary Charette.

In 1983 appeared an article titled : History Project to Bring Students to Fort Connah.” A history of Fort Connah was written by 7th grader, Shawna Grenier. A school field trip was made to the old post with several students telling its history: Shawna Grenier, Carol Frisk, David Delaurenti, Mike Collins, Jon Schliep, Juanita Swaney, Paul Ross and Paul Gardener. These kids with their teacher Mrs. Decker cleaned the thick and tall brush away mowing it and fixing up the place in general. Roy Harbin had dismantled the old building to lay a concrete slab under it when re-assembled with most of the original logs. The Fort Connah Restoration society had no right of way to the fort or cemetery at this time. When it was organized the land owner promised a right of way. They got memberships and donations to restore the post and hired Roy Harbin to do the job at \$7,000 and the right of way cost \$450.00. The McDonald’s had sold the 6 acres of land in 1924. At this time Walter McDonald was the chairman of the society, and besides being registered in the National Register it was also registered with the Montana Historical Society.

On December 24, 1987, Walt McDonald’s house at the foot of McDonald Peak burned down. He made it outside to safety but his dog and friend, Muffy, died in the flames. Seventy-seven year old Walt had served on the Flathead Tribal Council for 24 years and was the trainer of the first cruiserweight champion of the world, Marvin Camel. Lost in the fire were Angus McDonald’s bagpipes, an old trunk brought by Jesuit Father Taelman from Belgium, another trunk from the Hudson Bay Company, beadwork, medallions, a grizzly hide and oil portraits of his ancestors, his gun collection and countless antiques. The fire started in the chimney and in four hours in was only in the smoldering basement. The bagpipes were a most prized possession of Angus McDonald, that he had brought with him from Scotland and took with him on visits to the Indian camps. “Often the echoes from the mountains of the land of the Flathead-Salish of western Montana reiterated the rhythm of Salish chants, augmented by the melody from the “bag that whistles,” as the Indians called the fascinating Scottish pipes.” Partoll, Angus McDonald, page144. And according to Albert Partoll in 1951 the bagpipes were at the Northwest Museum of the Montana State University in Missoula, Montana, as were a photograph of Angus and Catherine McDonald.

The Fort Connah Restoration Society:

Society trustees in 1996 included George Knapp and Dorothy Fifield.

Other board members:

Cornelia Francis, Dorothy Lane, Eric Shallock, Perry Francis, Rod Wamsley, Charles Sundstrom, Thomas Branson and Patrick Hartless.

In 1996 James Hunter, Scottish historian, film maker and journalist, came to the Flathead reservation and lectured in Missoula while he researched for his book. His lecture was titled: “The McDonald Family: How Scottish Highlanders Became Indian People in the Mission Valley, 1847-1996.”

In 1997 more land was purchased by the Fort Connah Restoration Society after it received the funding. Eighteen acres of land between the post and highway 93 made access to that place possible. Also acquired was a pedestrian easement from the McDonald family between that plot and the four acres the small log building sits on. Ronan State Bank had loaned them \$50,000 and promise a \$1,000 a year donation for the life of the 5-year loan. The total purchase price was

\$52,000. A foundation in California also donated \$14,000 for future restoring of the building, recreating since destroyed structures and visitor center. Eric Shallock starts a website for the Society. The land was purchased from the Norman Reum family.

In 2009 was the opening of Fort Connah, the Fort Connah Restoration Society used original drawings, early photographs and infrared photographs to complete the reconstruction of the original building. In the celebration hundreds of Mission Valley residents showed up, some in period costumes and equipment. Some 18th century log houses were donated to the Society and these were reconstructed on the now 18 acres compound. The Society chairman, George Knapp, was presented with a Pendleton blanket by Dr. Joe McDonald, president of the Salish Kootenai College. The Grand Entry at the Rendezvous was by the Flathead Veterans Warrior Society and a Scottish Bagpipe group and then the public. The Yamnucut Drum sang flag and honor songs. It was a two-day event it featured speeches, various frontier-based competition like hatchet and flintlock rifle competition, and Bob and Mo Rost were there with their crafts and wares, and Bob "Skinner" Kelley showed spectators how to shoot a flintlock. A teepee and tent camp was set up and people sold goods endemic of the 1800s and dressed in garb of the period.

"One of the three original buildings still remains and is believed to be the oldest standing building in Montana. The site of Fort Connah is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The remaining building is a hand-hewn, 375-square-foot log building that is the only surviving structure. The massive ten-inch-square hand-hewn beams are stacked horizontally to form the walls, the same type of construction used by the Hudson Bay Company. Aerial infrared scanning of the surrounding land shows tepee rings where Indians camped while trading.

http://fortwiki.com/Fort_Connah

"St. Ignatius - Gawkers, tourists, the curious and those who are fascinated by the West's buckskin-shrouded, muzzle-loading past came to Fort Connah by the hundreds this weekend to get a rare glimpse of history.

For the first time since 1947, the 163-year-old "fort" at the base of the Mission Mountains was opened to the public.

Despite its name, Fort Connah wasn't a military station - it was a trading outpost that was established in 1846 by the Hudson's Bay Co., explained George Knapp, chairman of the Fort Connah Restoration Society.

Donned head to foot in historically accurate beaded buckskin, the kind fur traders wore, Knapp served as the informative and gracious greeter for all who ventured into Connah's colorful past.

In today's world, this wide-open spot, like many of the valley's neighboring pasture land appears rather unremarkable, save for an obviously old and abandoned log structure.

Yet this humble building - primitive by modern standards - was a vital commercial link to trading posts far west beyond the Rocky Mountains, and far east, Knapp said.

Traders, trappers, hunters and tribal members from around the region gathered here to negotiate the price for or the purchase of precious goods - notably furs, buffalo meat, pemmican, rawhide cords and saddle blankets.

The stories of the people who came long before captured Jessica Frank's imagination as she slowly wandered around the 14-square-foot log trading post and took in the vast array of historic photos and artifacts from the fort's earliest years.

Questions filled her mind: Why here, why was this the place for a trading post?

"I'm just trying to picture what it's like to be a traveller at that time, how would you know this is here? How would you find it?" said Franks, who, when not travelling to historic places, which she loves to do, is a choir teacher at Sentinel High School.

"I'm also picturing the different kind of people you would meet here," she said. "This was probably a major communication hub, where news of the day was exchanged."

Deke Tidwell, a Missoula contractor who specializes in green building, was taken by the Fort's sturdy construction and its remarkable beams.

"The beams are impressive because of the fact that everything is hand-hewn," Tidwell said. "I'm always inspired by old buildings like this because we do some beam work, and we know how hard it is - but we have modern tools.

"They didn't, and that's what is so amazing about places like this."

Restoring the fort and opening it to the public has been a long-held dream for regional history buffs.

Preston Miller, owner of Four Winds Indian Trading Post in St. Ignatius, has been involved with the effort since 1969.

On Sunday, the last day of the weekend open house, Miller was celebrating the effort by bringing trade back to the trading post.

Handwoven baskets, cords of colorful beads, tomahawks, braided sweet grass and tobacco twists were among the goods he brought to sell.

His participation had less to do with retail sales, but everything to do with reviving a significant chapter of the region's history.

"I just think its great all these people can come here," he said. "It is something that has meaning to who we are and why we are here, and I think people under 30 are so distracted by computers and cell phones they don't appreciate or care about these things.

"Unless we hold events like this, they will never get it or know to remember, or value or take interest in these things that have historical meaning, really, for all of us."

Knapp said the restoration committee was pleased with the steady stream of visitors over the weekend, particularly on Saturday when he guessed several hundred people flowed through the fort property during the day.

The event was made possible because of favorable easement negotiations with neighboring landowners and because the access road to and from Highway 93 was approved for special events only.

Due to the large turnout, a fall event might be in order, Knapp said.

It's worth the time to walk around the fort, this place, which is considered the oldest structure in Montana, Franks said. For her, at least, the experience was enriching on many levels.

"Coming to a place like this, you are reminded that humans can survive with just the basics, not matter how hard the life is," she said. "You can still have a fulfilling, enjoyable life if have the right skills." Betsy Cohen

In 2011 one of the three original buildings still stands and it is believed to be the oldest standing building in Montana.

The Fort Connah Restoration Society is planning a visitor center, parking lot, small museum and guided tours. The Society has its Fort Connah and Hudson's Bay Company artifacts, which include a Hawkins rifle and a HBC gun, knives and trade tokens, are displayed at the Ninepipes Museum of Early Montana not far away. It is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

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