

## **Lieutenant William Peel, British Naval Intelligence, and the Oregon Crisis**

**Barry Gough**

On 20 July 1844 the grand old line-of-battle ship HMS *Collingwood* set sail from Portsmouth bound for Cape Horn. *Collingwood* was the flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir George Seymour who, as Commander-in-Chief of British warships on Pacific Station, carried orders from the Admiralty to do his utmost to protect British interests in those parts of the Pacific within his command. In particular, he was instructed to watch over the interests of Tahiti and the Society Islands, where France seemed ascendant, and to protect British persons and property in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, where French and US imperial intentions were apparent. He was further to defend — without force, if possible — British claims to California and especially to Oregon, where the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) maintained an *imperium* in a region jointly held by Britain and the US.<sup>1</sup>

Seymour carried with him the weight of the Foreign Office. The quarterdeck diplomacy he was to exercise was entirely in keeping with domestic expectations. A cool head in what were thought to be trying circumstances, Seymour was the prototype of the cautious, clear-thinking amphibious diplomat enjoined to protect British interests with the maximum degree of show and the minimum amount of armed might. A well-heeled aristocrat, with landholdings in Warwickshire, Ireland and Prince Edward Island, he was an intimate of Britain's ruling classes. In short, in George Seymour the government had a person able to anticipate what would be acceptable in either peace or war half a world away from Westminster and Whitehall. In turn, the admiral delegated day-to-day activities to a couple of frigates and a handful of sloops that patrolled the Pacific.

Going out to the Pacific in the flagship was a young RN lieutenant who had just passed his examinations. Even though William Peel, third son of the Prime Minister, was appointed to the steam sloop *Cormorant*, he became involved in a secret mission: to investigate the state of affairs of the besieged British interests at the Columbia River. Should diplomatic initiatives fail to achieve a peaceful resolution to a seemingly intractable problem, force would be necessary to support the HBC.<sup>2</sup>

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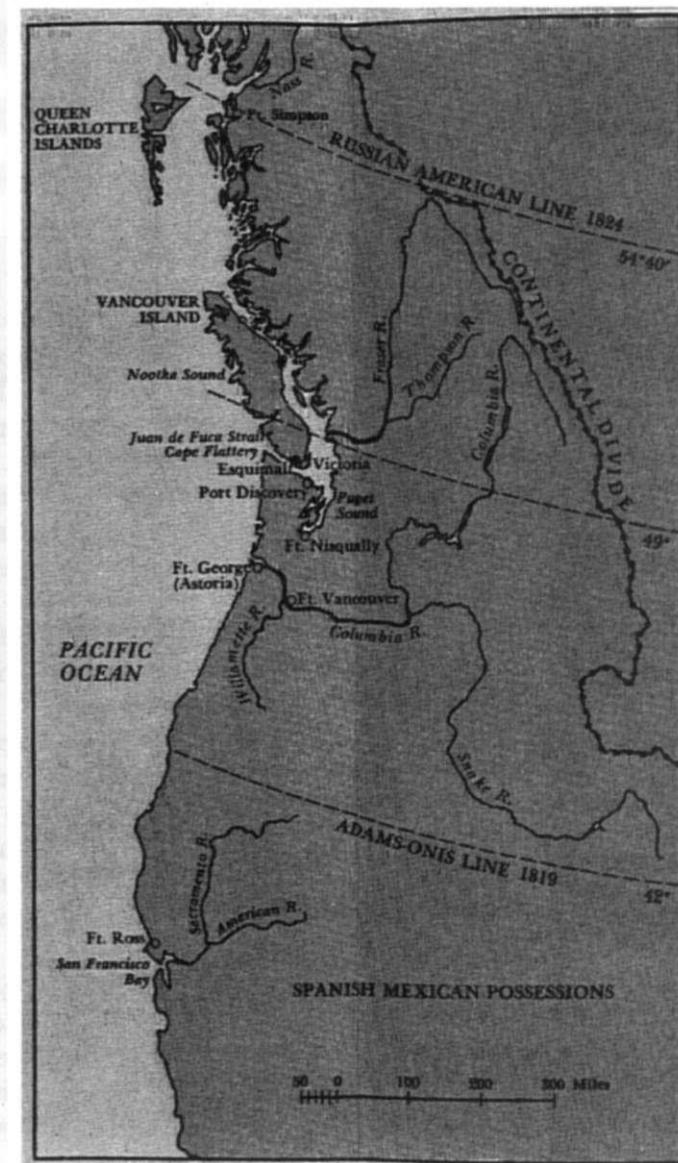


Figure 1: The Northwest coast of North America, showing principal settlements and boundaries.

Source: Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast* (Vancouver, 1971).

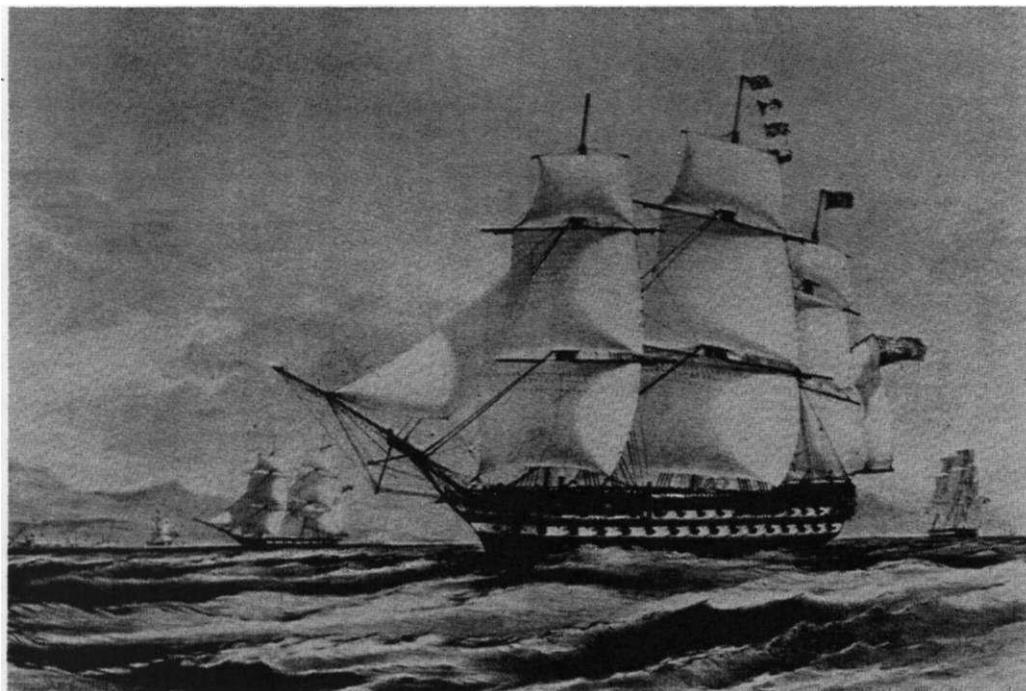


Figure 2: HMS *Collingwood*, flagship of Admiral Seymour. Lithograph by Vernon.

Source: Courtesy National Maritime Museum and Oregon Historical Society.

William Peel was an excellent choice. A dedicated professional, Peel believed that an officer should subjugate his own interests to those of his service. Moreover, he impressed observers in both Parliament and the RN, none more so than a young cadet on *Collingwood*, Clements Markham (later the distinguished President of the Royal Geographical Society), who held the nineteen-year-old in high esteem. Marked for special assignments such as reporting on the state of Oregon, Peel was destined for a remarkable career. "Very few men have crowded so many glorious achievements into so brief a space of time," concluded Markham, who insightfully added that "still fewer have done so much good by their example and their influence. He was the perfect model of what a British naval officer ought to be."

At that time the much-coveted Oregon Country remained outside the undisputed sovereignty of either the UK or the US, although both had substantial claims that were mutually recognized as early as 1818. But in the early 1840s pioneers coming over the Oregon trail and into the Willamette valley, along with missionary and political pressures

to annex Oregon, California and Texas — as well as to control Hawaii — were potent forces in "manifest destiny."<sup>5</sup> "You need not trouble yourselves about Oregon," a British foreign secretary sagaciously advised an American negotiator, "you will conquer Oregon in your bedchambers." In such circumstances, the British could do little more than "show the flag," undertake a military reconnaissance, put up a little bluster, and wage a strong diplomatic war. While this complicated story cannot be recounted here, it is intriguing that in 1845 one attempt to forestall the Americans was being mounted by a British naval agent. In fact, he was not alone. Already preceding him on a secret military survey of Oregon "as private travellers" were two British army officers, Henry Warre and Mervin Vavasour, whose secret reports likewise concluded that it was impossible to defend British interests by force.<sup>6</sup> The British government prepared for every contingency, developing extensive plans to defend Oregon in the event of war with the US. Although in these circumstances every scrap of data was of potential national importance, Britain deemed these small reconnaissances sufficient.

Lieutenant Peel's first problem was how to get to the Northwest quickly. Once through the Straits of Magellan, he transferred at Valparaiso from the flagship to the steam sloop *Cormorant*, and then intentionally "ship-hopped" to the frigate *Thalia* and eventually to the frigate *America*, in which he voyaged to Puget Sound. In the days of sail, the 18,000-nautical mile voyage from England consumed at least half a year; but even by shifting berths under urgent orders, it took Peel a wearying thirteen months and eight days to reach the Strait of Juan de Fuca, due mainly to the slowness of *America*. Young Peel seems to have kept his mouth shut as to his intentions, for another midshipmen recorded in his memoir that Peel's passage aboard *America* was simply to complete his sea-time and thereby receive his commander's commission.<sup>7</sup>

We have no idea what transpired in discussions between Admiral Seymour and Lieutenant Peel. Moreover, we have no indication as to what Captain John Gordon — brother to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the fourth Earl of Aberdeen —, *America's* commanding officer, told Peel of the possible state of "the Oregon." That the son of the Prime Minister and the brother of the Foreign Secretary were engaged in personal as well as naval inquiries on the Pacific Coast did not go unnoticed in Monterey, capital of Alta California, where the United States Consul, Thomas O. Larkin, remarked: "When we find a Brother of Aberdeen and son of Peel in company we can not [but] wonder at it. I consider that Peel and Aberdeen hold more power over the whole world than the united strength of any three or four kings or Empires."<sup>8</sup> Doubtless others must have pondered this dual deployment of political force in British naval attire, an indication of how seriously the British viewed the situation. Admiral Seymour, of course, was equally concerned that British interests be protected. All these parties were anxious to allay fears of the HBC that its interests were being neglected. An additional motive was to demonstrate to the British populace on the banks of the Columbia that their government intended to protect them. As long as war threatened, the Foreign Office and the RN intended to put a serious face on the matter.



*Figure 3:* Rear-Admiral Sir George Seymour, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific during the Oregon Crisis. From a mezzotint after J. Lucas.

*Source:* Courtesy National Maritime Museum and Oregon Historical Society.

Admiral Seymour would have liked to have sent a man-of-war into the Columbia River, but the perilous channel at its entrance prohibited such a show of force. Seymour's predecessor, Read-Admiral Richard Thomas, had directed the sloop-of-war *Modeste* to support British interests on the coast.<sup>9</sup> Accordingly, Seymour deployed *America* in Puget Sound, expecting that in due course a sloop or brig might be able to enter the river and anchor off Fort Vancouver to give assurance to British traders and settlers.

HMS *America* arrived off Cape Flattery on 28 August 1845. Captain Gordon intended to call at the HBC's principal base on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, Fort Victoria, where he had dispatches to deliver stating that Britain intended to protect its besieged national interests in the Pacific Northwest. But *America* had no pilot or information on how to reach the post; since the waters were uncharted, Gordon failed to locate the hidden entrance to Camosun Harbour leading to Fort Victoria. Accordingly, *America* headed for Port Discovery, Captain George Vancouver's old anchorage. While *America* lay at anchor in the lee of the Olympic Mountains, Peel crossed by boat to Fort Victoria to learn from the HBC traders of the state of affairs on the Columbia and to secure the services of the Company's steamer *Beaver* for a reconnaissance of Puget Sound and beyond to Fort Nisqually and the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. But *Beaver* was not available, and Gordon detailed *America's* launch to take Peel and Captain H.W. Parke of the Royal Marines on the first leg of their mission.<sup>10</sup>

Here it may be useful to recount the reminiscence of the Chief Factor at Fort Victoria on these proceedings. The fur trader, Roderick Finlayson, wry of humour and nimble of wit, recorded that he stayed aboard *America* for three days and told his fellow Scot, Gordon, all he could about the country. Gordon paid a return visit about which Finlayson recounted the details:

The object of the vessel coming here was to obtain full information & report to the English Government previous to the settlement of the boundary line. During my stay on board Capt. Parke of the Marines [and] Lieutenant Peel, a son of Sir Robert Peel, were sent across to the Columbia River to obtain information & report on the country in relation to its value to Great Britain. Capt. Gordon crossed with me to Victoria in a launch, where he remained some time. We had some fine horses for the use of the Captain and his officers & we paid them every attention. We went out on one occasion to Cedar Hill to shoot about the first of June. The country looked beautiful, carpeted as it was with beautiful wild flowers. Capt. Gordon was a great deer stalker. We met a band of deer & had a chase after them on horseback. The deer ran into a thicket into which the horses and their riders could not penetrate and of course no deer were had.

The Captain felt much disappointed & was anything but happy. I said to him that I was very sorry we had missed the deer &c, and also remarked

how beautiful the country looked. He said in reply — "Finlayson, I would not give the most barren hills in the Highlands of Scotland for all I see around me." We went back to the fort. I was then a bachelor, had a cot slung in the bare walls which I handed over to the Captain, whilst I and the officers slept on the floor. In the morning we had a nice salmon for breakfast. The Captain seemed somewhat surprised and asked where the salmon was had. "O! We have plenty of salmon," was his reply. "Have you got flies and rods?" said the Captain. "We have lines & bait," was the answer & sometimes the Indians take them with the net & c. "No fly, no fly," responded our guest. So after breakfast we went to fish with the line, from a dinghy. When we came back we had four fine salmon, but he thought it an awful manner in which to catch salmon.<sup>11</sup>

This flighty reminiscence cannot be taken too seriously. As an early historian remarked, "Doubtless this incident was the origin of the local fiction circulated for many years after the settlement of the Oregon Boundary Dispute, that 'Great Britain lost Oregon, forsooth, because the salmon of that country did not know enough to take the fly.'"<sup>12</sup> "What a country," Gordon is supposed to have said, "where the salmon will not take to the fly."<sup>13</sup> But the story makes good copy and enjoys a long life.<sup>14</sup> On another occasion Finlayson wrote: "I was constantly on board [British warships] to dinner and the officers used to chaff us about being here. They only wanted to be sent and that they could take the whole of the Columbia country in 24 hours."<sup>15</sup>

How to evaluate these anecdotes is difficult for the working historian. How much does sport contribute to foreign policy? Finlayson advised his immediate superior that Gordon and the naval officers "were well pleased with their jaunt."<sup>16</sup> Of Captain Gordon's opinions of the Pacific Northwest, James Douglas, then at Fort Vancouver, wrote his superior, Sir George Simpson, that "He does not think the country worth five straws and is surprised that Government should take any trouble about it...He did not appear at all friendly to the Hudson's Bay Company, and told me plainly that we could not expect to hold the entire country."<sup>17</sup> It is tempting to conclude that Gordon wrote off British interests because of miserable hunting exploits and unconventional fishing technique. But this does not show in his official correspondence to the Admiralty, and if Gordon thought little of Oregon he did so in comparison to California, which he thought an altogether more important prize and well worth the urgent attention of the British government.<sup>18</sup>

Peel's instructions from Gordon, in keeping with orders that had their origin in the Admiralty's September 1844 instructions, outlined the main purpose of the mission. Their Lordships specified that Gordon was to detach officers of prudence and intelligence to make inquiries. He was to cause them to be accompanied by a party sizable and strong enough to secure them from attacks by predatory Indians or ill-disposed persons yet small enough to avoid attention.<sup>19</sup> At Fort Nisqually, at the head of Puget Sound, Peel was to hire guides to take the party by the usual route to Fort Vancouver. From the HBC's resident at Nisqually he was to obtain instructions as to how to reach the Columbia. Peel

was enjoined by Captain Gordon not to give the Americans "cause of jealousy or offence" unless in self-defense. He was to deliver a letter from Gordon to Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, Director of the HBC's Western Department headquartered at Fort Vancouver, which explained that the frigate had entered the straits to protect British interests in Oregon. Most important, Peel was to learn with McLoughlin's assistance "the actual state of the Country on the Banks of the River Columbia, and the district called Oregon." He was particularly instructed to examine the new settlement on the Willamette and to report on the settlers, laws, American military protection, forts, establishments, armed vessels and any other useful information.<sup>20</sup> He was also to note what support and military protection settlers had, or could expect, from the US. The assignment called for tact and discretion, Gordon knew. And in young Peel he had the perfect instrument.

Dr. John McLoughlin now takes up the story in a despatch to London of 20 November 1845:

On the 8th September Lieutenant Peel (son of the Rt. Honble. Sir Robert Peel) accompanied by another officer Capta. Parke of the Marines arrived here [Fort Vancouver] with a Letter...from the Honble Capta. Gordon of Her Majesty's Ship *America* which they left anchored in Puget Sound, by which I was most happy to learn that he was sent here to assure Her Majesty's subjects of "firm protection in their rights." When Lieutenant Peel arrived Chief Factor [James] Douglas was on a tour in the Willamette with Captain [Henry] Warre and Lieutenant [Mervin] Vavasour, and were (as was well known would be the case) received by all the Settlers in the Willamette with the utmost hospitality of which their means would admit, for although these men are rough in their manners their hospitality and kindness to strangers are proverbial. Lieutenant Peel and Captain Parke accompanied by Mr. [Thomas] Lowe (one of our officers whom I sent for the purpose) visited the Willamette, and they also appeared well pleased with the reception they received.

On the 16th September Mr. Douglas accompanied by Lieutenant Peel and Captain Parke left this [place] to proceed to the *America*. I wrote Capta. Gordon...and Mr. Douglas went to the *America* to give any further information Captain Gordon might require for Her Majesty's Government. Chief Factor Douglas found the *America* at Port Discovery, remained on board three days with the Honble. Captain Gordon, and handed him a copy of my correspondence with the Methodist Mission about the Falls and of my report to you on Messrs. [William A.] Slacum and [Hall. J.] Kell[e]y's narrative [on colonization prospects and American claims to Oregon], and Dr. [Lewis F.] Linn's Speeches [in the Senate on annexation]. As these Narratives and Speeches are circulated

in the Pacific, I considered it but proper that British officers should be informed of their gross misrepresentation.<sup>21</sup>

Douglas took passage in *America* and crossed the Strait of Juan de Fuca to southern Vancouver Island. There he left Gordon and Peel and made his way to Fort Victoria. On his eventual return to Fort Vancouver he called at New Dungeness, where he found HMS *Modeste*, an eighteen-gun sloop commanded by Thomas Baillie, which had previously entered the Columbia to show the flag, but on McLoughlin's recommendation had shifted to Puget Sound. McLoughlin put the H B C's need for naval support this way:

although all the people are very quiet, and I do not apprehend the least danger, and still the visit of a British Man of War to this place has both a moral and political effect, and shews that our Government is ready to protect us....We will treat him and his officers with that attention and cordiality to which the Flag under which they serve and the service they render us entitle them.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, Peel was composing his report and making copies of enclosures. He wrote two letters summarizing his findings. The first is a matter-of-fact, military assessment of the territory's geography, forts and settlements addressed to Captain Gordon; it eventually found its way to the Admiralty and the Foreign Office.<sup>23</sup> The second is a different type of document, sent directly to the British minister in Washington, Richard Pakenham, who was conducting the tricky negotiations with the US over Oregon. It contains political overtones of interest. To Pakenham, Peel explained that at Fort Vancouver he had met two British army officers, Warre and Vavasour, on a secret military reconnaissance. Peel argued that if the forty-ninth parallel were to be the international boundary, then Vancouver Island, commanding the straits, possessing a good harbour, and planned as the principal depot of the HBC on the Northwest Coast, must be retained by Britain. As for California, the growth of settlement between the Willamette and Sacramento valleys foretold, Peel concluded, eventual American control of the port of San Francisco, a prize that would give the US "a decided superiority in the Pacific."<sup>24</sup>

In order that the British government should receive Peel's report as soon as possible Captain Gordon, after sailing for Hawaii, decided to send the young courier home as soon as possible. At Honolulu Peel boarded an American ship for Mazatlan and thence overland to Vera Cruz, where he boarded a Royal Mail steam packet for Havana and London. On this journey he brought additional information, mainly Captain Gordon's report of 22 October addressed to Admiral Seymour. He also carried a copy of Dr. McLoughlin's 15 September warning to Gordon that:

unless active measures are taken by the Government, for the protection and encouragement of British influence, this Country will pass into other hands, as the overwhelming number of Americans who are from year to

year coming to the Country, will give an American tone and character to its institutions, which it will be impossible afterwards to eradicate.<sup>25</sup>

Sending Peel home met with Admiral Seymour's approval, for he thought the young man's personal observations would be worth many pages of a report.<sup>26</sup>

Peel reached the Admiralty on 10 February 1846, the same day the Admiralty sent copies of the documents to the Foreign Office for the information of the Secretary of State, the Earl of Aberdeen. Aberdeen stood for peace and was not belligerent towards the Americans; even so, he wanted to maintain a firm hand and intended to defend legitimate British interests. He was not "in the pocket" of the HBC, and his advice to Pakenham was to exercise caution. Aberdeen knew that the British were about to make concessions and that, as he informed Pakenham, drawing the boundary at the forty-ninth parallel would "interfere with the possessions of British colonists resident in a district in which it is believed that scarcely an American citizen as a settler, has ever set foot."<sup>27</sup> Lieutenant Peel had warned that the Americans had made incursions into the territory north of the Columbia. In any event, Aberdeen had supported the large increase in naval expenditures and armaments proposed by Lord John Russell, the new Prime Minister, to send a clear message that the British meant business and that such wild claims as the Stars and Stripes flying as far north as 54° 40' was quite out of the question and that President Polk and the Senate had better think twice about such a position.<sup>28</sup>

While it is noteworthy that the recommendations of Lieutenant Peel and Captain Gordon are what the British government finally settled on, it is less certain that they affected either the discussions in Washington or the actions of the British government. On the one hand, such intelligence came at a decisive stage in the negotiations, which concluded on 15 June. On the other, in important ways they merely reinforced preconceptions that might well have been acted upon anyway. In the absence of new evidence, it appears unlikely that this debate will ever be resolved.

What of the participants in this imperial and international drama on the western fringes of the continent? As for Captain Gordon and the further voyages of *America*, it may be observed briefly that after reaching Honolulu and sailing for Mexican harbours he dallied taking on board a lucrative shipment of silver for the Bank of England, from which he stood to gain personally.<sup>29</sup> His superior, Admiral Seymour, charged him with dereliction of duty and he was court-martialled on his return to Portsmouth. Seymour's charge of "leaving his station contrary to orders" was fully proved and Gordon was severely reprimanded. But he did not lose his command immediately; instead, he was let down slowly and was eventually relieved of *America* and allowed to take advantage of a newly-initiated retirement scheme. In failing to bring credit on his country, himself, his family, and his service he made himself unemployable. At a critical juncture in the naval-diplomatic game being played out in London, Washington and the Northwest, Gordon, rather than staying on station to guard besieged British interests in Oregon, California and elsewhere, had chosen to go home with a lucrative freight. A lieutenant on board the frigate reported sarcastically of the court-martial that "after due deliberation to the pros

and cons, our worthy old Chief was doomed to be reprimanded, as indeed if a war with the United States had been brought on, he would have deserved to have been shot. Fortunately for him Polk and Aberdeen made it up somehow."<sup>30</sup>

And what of Lieutenant Peel? He went on to greater achievements. Promoted to Commander shortly after his return, he was awarded a Victoria Cross for conspicuous bravery and was named a Commander of the Bath during the Crimean War. In 1857 he commanded a naval brigade in the Indian Mutiny, was wounded at Cawnpore and was knighted. His life was cut short at the age of thirty-four when he died of smallpox in 1858. This "perfect model of what a British naval officer ought to be," as Clements Markham put it, had lived an imperial life of Kiplingesque proportions. As for Admiral Seymour, he got no rest from his quarterdeck diplomacy, for shortly after his return from the Pacific he was shifted to Halifax and Bermuda to worry about the besieged nature of British interests in the West Indies, the Bay of Fundy, the Newfoundland fisheries, and Honduras. Unable to stay the tide of American immigration in Oregon or hinder the US from supplanting the Mexicans in Alta California, he kept up his suspicions against the Americans and their navy in different waters. Even so, it is still a variant of how British naval might sought to curtail the growth of American ascendancy in the western hemisphere. In the end, Britannia could not rule these seas nor could Columbia wrest the trident: only later would it be surrendered with grace when other Great Powers threatened to reorder the world and disrupt the balance between a sea-based empire headquartered in London and a land-based continental power with its capital in Washington.

But in the wake of the flurry over Oregon the Admiralty, on instructions from the Foreign and Colonial Offices, sent ships-of-war into Puget Sound and even for a time into the Columbia. The number and power of British warships on Pacific Station was increased, for as Lord Aberdeen remarked, "At all events, whatever may be the course of the American Govt., the time is come when we must endeavour to be prepared for every contingency."<sup>31</sup> Although the HBC rarely was content with the number of British warships, their periodic visits to the Strait of Juan de Fuca during and after the crisis resulted in the use of Esquimalt as a port of refuge and repair. In consequence of naval actions in the Pacific during the 1854-1856 war against Russia, the Fraser River gold rush of 1858, and the San Juan Islands' boundary dispute of 1859, Esquimalt grew as a supply depot, repair facility, and rendezvous, becoming Pacific Station headquarters in 1862, a position it held almost without exception until 1905, when the British reorganized their overseas squadrons. Vancouver Island thus became the British anchor of empire.<sup>32</sup>

And what of the fur traders? James Douglas retreated to the north with the HBC, became governor of Vancouver Island, and resisted the lawlessness during the BC gold rushes. He was knighted and retired as venerated founder and protector of British dominions in the far west. His former senior in the company, John McLoughlin, became an American citizen and the "Father of Oregon." Long party to supporting American immigration in the Willamette and Columbia, he has achieved a venerated place in the history of Oregon as written by Americans. The divide between Douglas and McLoughlin

signifies the end of the old fur empire and its bifurcation into new territories, sovereignties, and political identities.

In the larger framework of time and space the worries of an aging British admiral, the pecuniary pursuits of a British frigate captain, and the imperial inquiries of a young naval lieutenant may have little moment except for the most curious student of history interested in such arcane, recondite matters. But together they do much more. The rivalry of Americans and British for the Columbia and Willamette is the stuff of legend, and a century and a half after the event we now look back on it in wonder and ponder why it ever happened. But as to naval power, Seymour, Gordon and Peel could not stay the tide of American settlement. Unless Britain intended to rule by the sword and send in regiments of infantry and artillery the game was up. Seapower alone could not forestall the American conquest of Oregon, for American domination of the territory was an outcome of transcontinental expansion, over which the Royal Navy by itself could exert no influence. Although the RN could show the flag and flex its undoubted might, its dominion did not extend beyond the coast. This is the most important lesson of this entire episode: that the Royal Navy had finite limits as an instrument not only of projecting but, more important, of exercising imperial power.

## NOTES

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1. Seymour's various instructions, reports and activities can be followed in the footnotes to Barry M. Gough, *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1914: A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy* (Vancouver, 1971), chapter 3, as well as in Great Britain, Public Record Office (PRO), Foreign Office (FO) 5 (America) and 58 (Pacific Islands), and Warwickshire Record Office (WRO), Seymour of Ragley Collection (SRC). Many of these documents are printed or listed in Abraham P. Nasatir and Gary Elwyn Monell (comps.), *British Activities in California and the Pacific Coast of North America to 1860: An Archival Calendar Guide* (San Diego, 1990). Material for this essay is largely drawn from WRO, SRC, as used in my "H.M.S. America on the North Pacific Coast," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, LXX, No. 4 (1969), 292-311.

2. In this role Peel was not Seymour's messenger, as has been incorrectly argued. See Joseph Schafer, "Documents Relative to Warre and Vavassour's Military Reconnaissance in Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, X (March 1909), 56; Melvin Clay Jacobs, *Winning Oregon: A Study of an Expansionist Movement* (Caldwell, ID, 1938), 242.

3. Albert Markham, *Life of Sir Clements R Markham* (London, 1917), 40-41; William O'Byrne, *Naval Biographical Dictionary* (London, 1849), 889; J.K. Laughton, "Sir William Peel," *Dictionary of National Biography*, XLIV (1895), 224-225.

4. See, however, Frederick Merk, "The Oregon Pioneers and the Boundary," *American Historical Review*, XXIX (1924), 681-699; Merk, *The Oregon Question: Essays in Anglo-American Diplomacy and Politics* (Cambridge, MA, 1967); John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869* (Berkeley, 1957); and James Gibson, *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* (Vancouver, 1985). The complex interrelationships of Texas, California and Oregon in Anglo-Ameri-

can diplomacy are analyzed in David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War* (Columbia, MO, 1973). British military-diplomatic dispositions are analyzed in Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815-1908* (Berkeley, 1967).

5. Quoted in Pletcher, *Diplomacy*, 103.

6. PRO, War Office (WO) 1/552, Warre and Vavasour to Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, no. 1 (10 June 1845) and no. 2 (26 October 1845).

7. John Moresby, *Two Admirals: Sir Fairfax Moresby, John Moresby: A Record of a Hundred Years* (London, 1913), 51.

8. John Hawgood (ed.), *First and Last Consul: Thomas Oliver Larkin and the Americanization of California — A Selection of Letters* (San Marino, CA, 1962), 33. Monterey was a bee-hive of consular intrigue. For a summary of British reports from Alta California, see Russell M. Posner, "A British Consular Agent in California: The Reports of James A. Forbes, 1843-1846," *Southern California Quarterly*, LIU (1971), 101-112.

9. The *Modeste* made two visits to the Northwest Coast preventing, as the commanding officer stated, the British and Americans from coming to blows on the Columbia. Seymour's secret orders to Commander Thomas Baillie, 12 August 1845, are in WRO, SRC, CR 114A/414/1, 151-154. See also "H.M.S. *Modeste* on the Pacific Coast, 1843-47: Log and Letters," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, LXI, No. 4 (December 1960), 408-436.

10. P.W. Brock, "H.M.S. *America*" (Unpublished mss., Maritime Museum of British Columbia, n.d.), 8.

11. Quoted in Leigh Burpee Robinson, *Esquimalt, Place of Shoaling Waters* (Victoria, 1948), 29-30.

12. *Ibid.*, 30.

13. Roderick Finlayson, quoted in John T. Walbran, *British Columbia Coast Names, 1592-1906*

*to Which are added a few Names in Adjacent United States Territory: Their Origin and History* (Ottawa, 1909), 210.

14. See, for instance, Gough, *Royal Navy*, 73; and Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Toronto, 1958), 87.

15. Roderick Finlayson, "History of Vancouver Island and Northwest Coast" (Unpublished mss., British Columbia Archives and Records Service, Victoria, n.d.), 35.

16. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg (HBCA), B226/b/1/, f. 37d, Finlayson to McLoughlin, 24 September 1845.

17. HBCA D5/16, Douglas to Simpson, 20 March 1846; Ormsby, *British Columbia*, 87.

18. Gough, *Royal Navy*, 74.

19. F.V. Longstaff and W. Kaye Lamb, "The Royal Navy on the Northwest Coast," *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, IX, Nos. 1-2 (1945), 21.

20. Gough, "H.M.S. *America*," 301.

21. HBCA, B223/b/33, 2-38. Emendations and explanations added. The original is printed verbatim as "Report of John McLoughlin," 20 November 1845, in W. Kaye Lamb (ed.), *The Letters of John McLoughlin from Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee, 3rd Series, 1844-46* (Toronto, 1944), text quoted at 146-147.

22. *Ibid.*, 148.

23. PRO, Admiralty Papers (ADM) 1/5562, Cap G14, Peel to Gordon, 27 September 1845; PRO, FO 5/459, Secretary of the Admiralty to Aberdeen, 10 February 1846.

24. PRO, FO 5/457, Peel to Pakenham, 2 January 1846. See also Leslie M. Scott (ed.), "Report of Lieutenant Peel on Oregon in 1845-46," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XXIX (1928), 51-76.

25. McLoughlin to Gordon, 15 September 1845, copy in Lamb (ed.), *Letters*, 302-303.
26. WRO, SRC, CR 114A/418/2, Seymour to Vice-Admiral Sir William Gase (Admiralty), 8 April 1846; Nasatir and Monell (comps.), *British Activities*, 1041.
27. Quoted in Jacobs, *Winning Oregon*, 241-242.
28. This and related British diplomatic activities may be traced in Wilbur Jones, *Lord Aberdeen and the Americas* (Athens, GA, 1958).
29. On the provisions for the shipment of specie, coin and bullion, see Barry M. Gough, "Specie Conveyance from the West Coast of Mexico in British Warships c. 1820-1870," *Mariner's Mirror*, LXIX, No. 4 (1983), especially 425-426.
30. Gough, "H.M.S. *America*," 311.
31. British Library, Add Mss. 43/123, f. 2476, Aberdeen Papers (private), Aberdeen to J. Pakenham, 2 April 1845. For further discussion of British diplomatic and naval responses, see Gough, *Royal Navy*, 68-70.
32. Gough, *Royal Navy*, chaps. 6-10; Gough, *Gunboat Frontier: British Maritime Authority and Northwest Coast Indians, 1846-1890* (Vancouver, 1984).