

be set and only a few Indians be permitted on the vessel at one time. But Thorn was headstrong and vehemently scouted the idea of any danger from a lot of savages that an officer of the American navy should fear. The next day the Indians began coming aboard as usual, apparently eager to trade. Canoe after canoe arrived until the vessel was covered with savages. Suddenly a signal was given and the Indians fell upon the crew with short clubs they had carried concealed under their skin mantles and with knives they had just bought from their victims. The struggle was short, but bloody. Captain Thorn was a brave and powerful man. Drawing a clasp knife from his pocket he strewed the deck with dead and wounded men before he was finally felled by a blow on the head and dispatched with knives and clubs and thrown overboard. McKay was knocked down and thrown into the sea before he had a chance to do anything, and the women in the canoes killed him. Mr. Lewis, the ship's clerk, was stabbed in the back and fell wounded down the companion way. It was not long before every man on deck was disposed of. Seven of the crew were in the rigging when the attack began, four of whom succeeded in descending into the cabin, the others being killed in the attempt. They procured arms and ammunition and drove the savages from the vessel, and finally discharged the deck guns into the retreating canoes, doing great execution. That night, leaving Mr. Lewis, who refused to go with them, the survivors took a boat and endeavored to escape. Mr. Lewis, abandoning all hope, determined to blow up the vessel and with it himself and as many of the savages as possible. The next day the ship lay quietly at anchor and the Indians came out in canoes to reconnoitre. Lewis came on deck and with friendly signs invited them on board. At last a few of the bold ones ventured over the rail, followed by others until the decks and sides swarmed with them. Suddenly the vessel blew up and became a total wreck. More than a hundred were killed and as many more were maimed for life. The four men who attempted to escape were captured and tortured to death in the most horrible manner. News of this dreadful massacre was brought to Astoria a few months later by the Indian interpreter, the only survivor, who had been held as a prisoner.

While this sad tragedy was being enacted, affairs progressed rapidly at Astoria. The fort was completed and everything was placed in readiness for an opening of the expected large trade with the natives of the Columbia. On the first page is given a view of this post as it appeared while in the possession of the Americans. On the fifteenth of July a canoe, manned by nine white men, was observed descending the river, and when they landed at the fort they were found to

be a party of employees of the powerful Northwest Company, headed by David Thompson, a partner in that great organization. He had been dispatched from Montreal the year before, for the purpose of taking possession of the mouth of the Columbia before the Astor party should arrive. He had experienced much hardship, disappointment and delay; had been deserted by nearly all his party, and now, with but a few faithful ones, he arrived too late to accomplish his mission. The Americans were in possession. The Northwest Company held a warm place in McDougal's heart, and as that gentleman was in charge at Astoria, Thompson received a cordial welcome, and was bountifully supplied with provisions and necessaries for his return journey, notwithstanding the fact he was but a spy upon his hosts. When he set out upon his return, eight days later, he was entrusted with a letter to Mr. Astor, giving the president of the company information of the safe arrival of the *Tonquin*, the founding of Astoria, and the absence of the vessel upon a trading voyage to the north, for the destruction of the ship and tragic death of the crew were as yet unknown at the fort. With Thompson went David Stuart, at the head of a party of nine men, with instructions to establish a post on the Upper Columbia. This he accomplished by founding Fort Okanogan, near the mouth of the Okanogan river. In the fall Stuart sent half his men back to Astoria, not having sufficient provisions to subsist them all through the winter. The schooner whose frame had been brought out in the *Tonquin*, was constructed during the summer, and was launched on the second of October, receiving the name of *Dolly*. She was the third craft constructed on the upper coast, and the first built along the Columbia river. While these steps were being taken by the party which reached Astoria by sea, the other one which attempted the overland journey was suffering terrible hardships.

The land party was under the command of Wilson Price Hunt, and was composed of McKenzie and three new partners, Ramsey Crooks, Joseph Miller and Robert McLellan; also, John Day, a noted Kentucky hunter; Pierre Dorion, a French half-breed interpreter, and enough trappers, voyageurs, etc., to make a total of sixty people. They reached Fort Henry, on Snake river, October 8, 1811. Small detachments were, from time to time, sent out in the Rocky mountains to trap, who were to use Fort Henry as a base of supplies and a depot for furs.

The remainder of the party continued the journey down Snake river and met with a continuous succession of disasters. Antoine Clappin was drowned in passing a rapid, and soon after famine reduced them to a pitiable condition. They were finally forced to separate into small detachments, one party going under Crooks, another under McKenzie, and a third under