

FREDERICK V. HOLMAN'S AUTOCRAT OF THIS BIOGRAPHY OF THE KINDLY GREAT EMPIRE



This is a part of the address delivered by Frederick V. Holman on October 6, at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition. It is more than an address; it is a carefully prepared biography of the "Great White Chief," who for more than 50 years ruled firmly but always in a humane spirit, an empire of 400,000 square miles.

child, but the oldest son, his brother David being the third child. It is probable that Dr. John McLoughlin and his brother David were brought up in the house of their maternal grandfather, Theobald Wygant, an uncle of Sam in the Royal Highland Regiment (the famous "Black Watch" regiment).

Officers and their families, school, warehouses, retail stores, and shops. A short distance from the fort, on the bank of the river, was a village of more than 50 houses, for the mechanics and servants, built in rows, so as to form streets. There were also the hospital, bathhouse and salmon-house, and near by were barns, threshing mills, granaries and dairy buildings. The whole number of persons at Fort Vancouver, men, women and children, was about 800.

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M. R. PRESIDENT, Members of the Oregon Historical Society, Oregon Pioneers, Ladies and Gentlemen: When I was so greatly honored by being selected to deliver the address on Dr. John McLoughlin, the Father of Oregon, on this day set apart by the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in his honor and to his memory, I determined that it would be fitting to give you not only accurate history of his life and deeds, but also to verify all the dates and statements in this address by reliable histories of Oregon, by books written about early Oregon, by public records, by public and private documents, and by personal interviews with old Oregon pioneers. I believe there are no errors in my statements of fact. I also believe that my estimate and opinions of Dr. John McLoughlin and his contemporaries are as accurate as can be set forth in this address.

Dr. John McLoughlin was educated in Canada and Scotland. In 1821 he was in charge of Fort William, for the Northwest Company, when that company conspired with the Hudson's Bay Company. It was at Fort William he became acquainted with the widow of Alexander McKay, who was killed in the capture and destruction of the Tonquin, at Nootka Sound in 1792. They were married and married. The exact date I have been unable to ascertain.

lumbia River, and a part of her crew supposed to have been murdered and the wreck looted by the well-armed and manned schooner and 100 voyageurs to punish the Indians. Jewish Smith was a rival trader to the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1820 all his party of 15 men, excepting four, one of whom was Smith, were murdered by the Indians near the mouth of the Umpqua River. All their goods and furs were stolen. These four survivors arrived at Fort Vancouver, but not all together. They were all at the point of perishing from exhaustion and were nearly naked. Dr. McLoughlin sent strong party to the Umpqua River, which recovered these furs, of a value of \$2000. Smith, at his own instance, sold these furs to the Hudson's Bay Company, receiving the full value for the furs, without deductions. The effect of this Smith matter was far-reaching and long-continued. The Indians understood, even if they did not appreciate

In order that everyone may understand, I think it necessary to give first a brief statement of the Oregon country, and some facts relating to its early history. The treaty of June 15, 1846, between the United States and England fixed the present northern boundary line of the United States west of the Rocky Mountains. Prior to that time what was known as the "Oregon Country" was bounded on the south by latitude 42 degrees, the present northern boundary of the States of California and Nevada; on the north by latitude 54 degrees and 40 minutes, the present southern boundary of Alaska; and on the east by the Rocky Mountains, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It included all of the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho, and parts of the states of Montana and Wyoming, and all that part of the present Dominion of Canada between latitudes 49 degrees and 54 degrees 40 minutes, and west of the Rocky Mountains. Its area was approximately 400,000 square miles, an area about 25 per cent greater than that of the original 13 colonies at the time of the American Revolution.

Dr. John McLoughlin and wife had four children, whose names and order of birth are as follows: Elias, John, Wygant and David. They are all dead. Elias and David married Captain Epps, an officer in the English army. John McLoughlin, Jr., was murdered in April, 1854, at Sitka, Alaska, while in charge. Eloisa McLoughlin was Dr. McLoughlin's favorite child. She was married to William Glen Rae at Fort Vancouver in 1829. Her husband died in his marriage, a chief trader of the Hudson's Bay Company. He died in 1840. All of their children are dead, excepting two, who are granddaughters of Dr. McLoughlin, as follows: Mrs. Myrick and Mrs. Myrick, both now living in Portland. In October, 1850, Mrs. Rae was married to Daniel Harvey. There were three children of this second marriage, all of whom are now dead. Daniel Harvey died in his wife's life. She died at Portland in October, 1854. In Portland and its vicinity there are now living several children of Mrs. Wygant and Mrs. Myrick, and also the children of Mrs. Epps. David McLoughlin, the youngest child, was educated in England. He returned to Oregon, and later made his home in Idaho, where he died at an advanced age.

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Early Settlements and Joint Occupation.

The first settlement on the Columbia River was made by the Pacific Fur Company, which was organized and controlled by John Jacob Astor. It founded Astoria, March 22, 1811. On October 16, 1811, the establishments of the Pacific Fur Company in the Oregon country and all its furs and supplies, were sold, at less than one-third of their value, to the Northwest Company, of Montreal, by the treaty of Astoria, signed on October 20, 1811. The Northwest Company continued to carry on its business at Fort George and at other points in the Oregon country until its cessation with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.

Nature seems to have used an especial mould for the making of Dr. McLoughlin. Physically, he was a superb specimen of man. His height was not less than six feet four inches; he was beautifully and most perfectly proportioned. He carried himself as a man, which gave him an appearance of being more than six feet and a half high. Mentally he was endowed to match his magnificent physical proportions. He was serious and dignified; he was true and just; he was truthful and scorned to lie. The Indians, as well as his subordinates, soon came to know that if he threatened punishment for an offense, it was as certain as the offense occurred. He was absolute master of himself and of those under him. He allowed none of his subordinates to question or to disobey. This was necessary to conduct the business of his company, and to preserve peace in the vast Oregon country. He was facile princeps—there was no second. And, yet, with all these dominant qualities, he had the greatest kindness, sympathy and humanity. He treated his men as stern and manlike characteristics to govern the employes and dependents of his company, and to conduct its business in Oregon in the Oregon country.

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The Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company.

The Hudson's Bay Company was established in 1607 under a charter granted by King Charles II. The Northwest Company was formed in Montreal in 1783. It became the great rival of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Northwest Company. The Hudson's Bay Company was a member of the Northwest Company and opposed the coalition in a most determined manner. He would not sign the coalition agreement, as he considered it unfair to himself and to his associates in the Northwest Company. But the Hudson's Bay Company knew of Dr. McLoughlin, and it employed him as chief factor. The management and to build up the company's business in the Oregon country. He was given plenary powers. He was the man for the place and the time.

When he first came to Oregon it was not safe for the Company's parties to travel except in large numbers and heavily armed. In a few years there was practically no danger. A single boat loaded with goods or furs was as safe as a house on the Columbia River. It was Dr. John McLoughlin who did this by his personality, by his example, and by his influence.

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Genealogy and Early Life of Dr. John McLoughlin.

Dr. John McLoughlin was born October 18, 1784, in Parish La Riviere de Loup, Canada, about 65 miles below Quebec. He was baptized November 3, 1784, at the Parish of Kamouraska, Canada. Both of his parents were Roman Catholics. His father was John McLittle, a native of Ireland. Of him little is now known, excepting that he was a man of high character. He was accidentally drowned in the St. Lawrence River, the date I have been unable to ascertain. It was probably while his son John was quite young. For convenience, I shall hereafter speak of John McLoughlin, the younger, as Dr. John McLoughlin, or Dr. McLoughlin. His mother's maiden name was Angeline Fraser, a very fine woman. She was born in the Parish of Beaumont, Canada. She died in Canada, July 2, 1842, aged 53 years. Her father was Malcolm Fraser. At the time of his retirement from the army and settlement in Canada, 1782, he was a Captain in the Eighty-fourth Regiment of the British regular army.

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Punishment of Indians.

The policy of the company, as well as that of Dr. McLoughlin, was to keep Americans, especially traders, out of the Oregon country. The difference was that Dr. McLoughlin believed that they should be kept out only so far as it could be done lawfully. But he did not allow them to be harmed by the Indians, and he let the Indians know that he would punish for offenses against the Americans as he would for offenses against the British and the Hudson's Bay Company. In his early years in Oregon on two occasions he caused an Indian to be hanged for murder of a white man. When the Hudson's Bay Company's ship William and Ann was wrecked on Sand Island, in 1823, at the mouth of the Columbia River, and a part of her crew supposed to have been murdered and the wreck looted by the well-armed and manned schooner and 100 voyageurs to punish the Indians.

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and employes had lived on fresh and salt venison and wild fowl. Dr. McLoughlin gave the American settlers prior to 1823 the same terms as he gave to the French and British. But so many of these were American settlers were much incensed at the refusal of Dr. McLoughlin to sell the cattle, although they accepted the terms of the Hudson's Bay Company. It has been asserted that Dr. McLoughlin intended to maintain a monopoly in cattle. But if that was his intention, as he refused to sell, where was to be the profit? Dr. McLoughlin intended to create a monopoly, he himself assisted to break it. That such was not his intention is shown by his helping the settlers to procure cattle from California in 1825.

Methodist Missions and Missionaries.

With Wyeth's second expedition, in 1824, came the first Methodist missionaries: Rev. Jason Lee, Rev. Daniel Lee, his nephew, and three laymen. They arrived at Fort Vancouver, September 17, 1824. They were also hospitably received by Dr. McLoughlin, and treated with every consideration and kindness. Boats and men were furnished by Dr. McLoughlin, and the missionaries to explore the country and select a proper place for the establishment of their mission. In the McLoughlin Document, he says: "In 1824, Messrs. Johnson and Daniel Lee, and Messrs. Walker and P. L. Edwards came with Mr. Wyeth to establish a mission in the Flathead country. I observed to them . . . that the most hospitable entertained by Dr. McLoughlin until February 3, 1833, when he left Vancouver for his home overland. He was accompanied by three of his men, the rest staying at Vancouver. In 1834 Wyeth again came overland to the Columbia River with a large party. On the way he established Fort Hall (now in Idaho) in direct opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company, as he had a perfect right to do. He and his party arrived at Fort Vancouver September 14, 1834, and were hospitably received by Dr. McLoughlin. Immediately on his arrival, Wyeth started in active competition with the Hudson's Bay Company. It was the beginning of a commercial war between the two companies, but not a warfare on honorable lines. In the end Wyeth was beaten by Dr. McLoughlin and sold out his entire establishment to the Hudson's Bay Company. For Dr. McLoughlin to have acted otherwise than he did would have shown him to be unfit to hold his position as chief factor. Wyeth was too big and too capable a man not to understand this. In Wyeth's journals of his two expeditions he speaks in the highest terms of Dr. McLoughlin and of his treatment of Wyeth's party. Through his life the highest regard for Dr. McLoughlin. Wyeth was a man of great ability, enterprise and courage. His expedition deserved a better fate. He was a high-minded gentleman. Although his two expeditions were failures, he showed his countrymen the way to Oregon, which many shortly followed.

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Early French Canadian Settlers.

After the death of Dr. McLoughlin there was found among his private papers a document in his own handwriting. This document was written shortly prior to his death. It gives many interesting facts, many of which I shall presently set forth. This document was given to Colonel J. W. Nesmith by a descendant of the Oregon Pioneer Association by Colonel Nesmith in 1886. It was printed at length in the transactions of that association for that year, pages 46-52. I shall hereafter refer to this document as the "McLoughlin Document." In this McLoughlin document he says: "In 1823, from what I had seen of the country, I formed the conclusion from the mildness and salubrity of the climate, that this was the finest portion of North America that I had seen for the residence of civilized man. He had the same manlike quality of being a far-seeing man. Thus early he saw that what is now Western Oregon was bound to be a populous country. It was evident with this view that he located his land claim at Oregon City in 1825. He could endeavor to have settlers locate in the Willamette Valley and thus preserve a great extent of the fur animals in other parts of the Oregon country, and especially north of the Columbia River.

Presbyterian Missionaries.

For convenience I shall first mention the Presbyterian missionaries, although they came two years later than the first Methodist missionaries. Rev. Samuel Parker was the first Presbyterian minister to arrive in Oregon. He came in 1825. He started to Oregon with Doctor Marcus Whitman, but Whitman returned East from Green River to obtain more associates for the mission. This came out on Dr. Whitman in 1825. Parker returned by sea, reaching his home in 1827. On Dr. McLoughlin's invitation, Parker stayed at Vancouver all Winter. He was supplied, free of charge, with boats and crews to explore the country, and with clothing and goods with which to pay the Indians employed by Parker. In 1835, Dr. Marcus Whitman came to

Oregon. With him came his wife, Rev. Henry J. Spalding and wife and W. H. Gray, a layman. They arrived at Fort Vancouver, September 1, 1835. He then went to the mouth of the Willamette River, and all necessary and convenient assistance to the missionaries was freely given. When these missionaries arrived at the mouth of the Willamette River, the clothes they had on. They concluded to locate one mission near Walla Walla, and another near the present City of Lewiston. His wife, Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding remained at Vancouver for several months, while their husbands and Gray were erecting the necessary houses at the missions.

When Jason Lee and his party were ready to leave for their new home, Dr. McLoughlin was anxious to send a boat and crew to transport them and the mission goods to the new mission. He loaned them seven oxen, one bull and seven cows with their calves. In his journal, Jason Lee says: "I never remember embarked in one of the company's boats kindly manned for us by Dr. McLoughlin, who has treated us with the utmost attention, politeness and liberality."

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