

**NARRATIVE OF A VOYAGE TO THE
NORTHWEST COAST OF AMERICA
IN THE YEARS 1811, 1812, 1813, AND
1814 OR, THE FIRST AMERICAN
SETTLEMENT OF THE PACIF. [1854]C**

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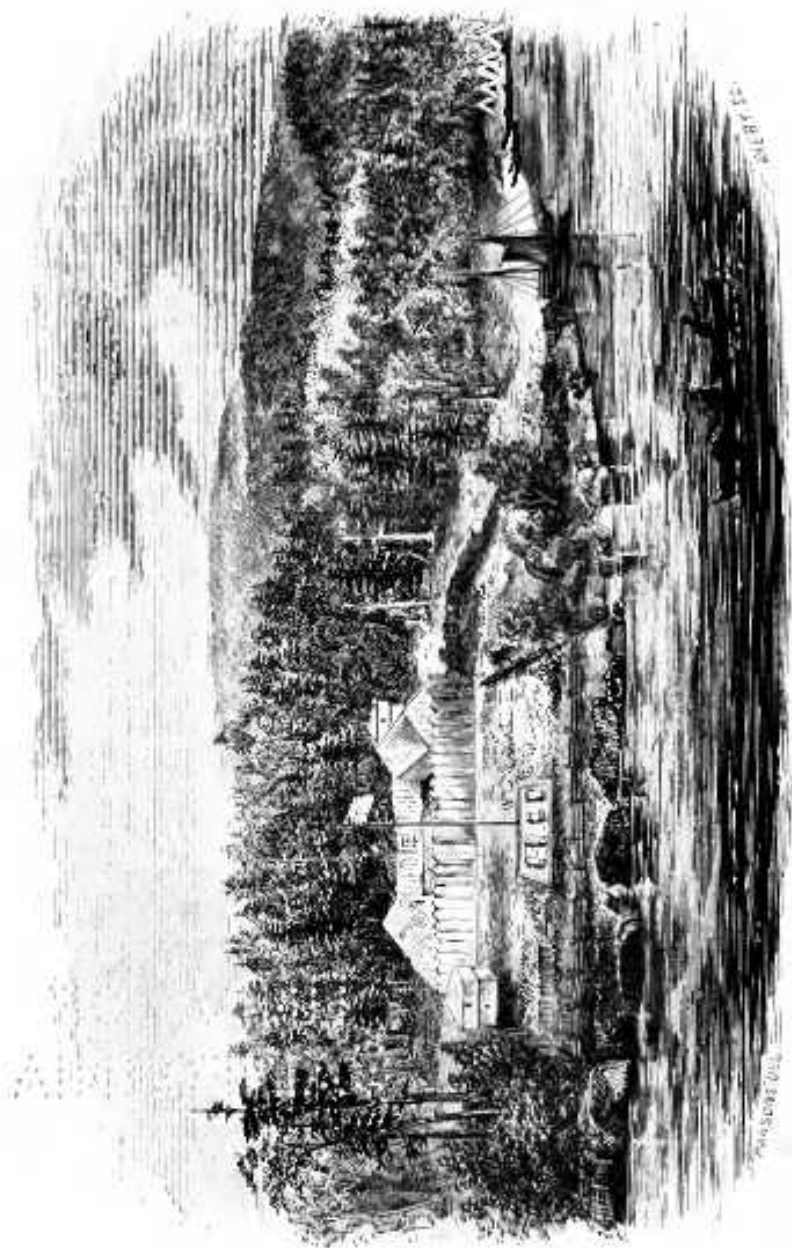
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GABRIEL FRANCHERE & J. V. HUNTINGTON

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ASTORIA, AS IT WAS IN 1813.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN 1846, when the boundary question (that of the Oregon Territory in particular) was at its height, the Hon. THOMAS H. BENTON delivered in the United States Senate a decisive speech, of which the following is an extract:—

“Now for the proof of all I have said. I happen to have in my possession the book of all others, which gives the fullest and most authentic details on all the points I have mentioned—a book written at a time, and under circumstances, when the author (himself a British subject and familiar on the Columbia) had no more idea that the British would lay claim to that river, than

Mr. Harmon, the American writer whom I quoted, ever thought of our claiming New Caledonia. It is the work of Mr. FRANCHERE, a gentleman of Montreal, with whom I have the pleasure to be personally acquainted, and one of those employed by Mr. ASTOR in founding his colony. He was at the founding of ASTORIA, at its sale to the Northwest Company, saw the place seized as a British conquest, and continued there after its seizure. He wrote in French: his work has not been done into English, though it well deserves it; and I read from the French text. He gives a brief and true account of the discovery of the Columbia."

I felt justly proud of this notice of my unpretending work, especially that the latter should have contributed, as it did, to the amicable settlement of the then pending difficulties. I have flattered myself ever since, that it belonged to the historical literature of the great country, which by adoption has become mine.

The re-perusal of "Astoria" by WASHINGTON IRVING (1836) inspired me with an additional

motive for giving my book in an English dress. Without disparagement to Mr. IRVING's literary fame, I may venture to say that I found in his work inaccuracies, misstatements (unintentional of course), and a want of chronological order, which struck forcibly one so familiar with the events themselves. I thought I could show—or rather that my simple narration, of itself, plainly discovered—that some of the young men embarked in that expedition (which founded our Pacific empire), did not merit the ridicule and contempt which Captain THORN attempted to throw upon them, and which perhaps, through the genius of Mr. IRVING, might otherwise remain as a lasting stigma on their characters.

But the consideration which, before all others, prompts me to offer this narrative to the American reading public, is my desire to place before them, therein, a simple and connected account (which at this time ought to be interesting), of the early settlement of the Oregon Territory by one of our adopted citizens, the enterprising merchant JOHN JACOB ASTOR. The importance

of a vast territory, which at no distant day may add two more bright stars to our national banner, is a guarantee that my humble effort will be appreciated.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

It has been the editor's wish to let Mr. Franchere speak for himself. To preserve in the translation the Defoe-like simplicity of the original narrative of the young French Canadian, has been his chief care. Having read many narratives of travel and adventure in our northwestern wilderness, he may be permitted to say that he has met with none that gives a more vivid and picturesque description of it, or in which the personal adventures of the narrator, and the varying fortunes of a great enterprise, mingle more happily, and one may say, more dramatically, with the itinerary. The clerkly minute-

ness of the details is not without its charm either, and their fidelity speaks for itself. Take it altogether, it must be regarded as a fragment of our colonial history saved from oblivion; it fills up a vacancy which Mr. IRVING'S classic work does not quite supply; it is, in fact, the only account by an eye-witness and a participator in the enterprise, of the first attempt to form a settlement on the Pacific under the stars and stripes.

The editor has thought it would be interesting to add Mr. Franchere's Preface to the original French edition, which will be found on the next page.

BALTIMORE, *February 6, 1854.*

