

## NOTES ON ROBERT GOODWIN

BY: M. Hykaway

Robert Goodwin was born in England, about the year 1761. He signed a contract May 3, 1781 in London with the Hudson's Bay Company as a Surgeon. His age was stated to be "about 20 years."<sup>1</sup>

Among the passengers on the company ship King George III to James Bay in the summer of 1781 was Robert Goodwin who disembarked September 1 at Eastmain, on the east side of the bay.<sup>2</sup> There he remained until June 8, 1782 when the journal noted "Mr. Robert Goodwin the Albany Surgeon went for that place."<sup>3</sup>

He took an indirect journey via Moose Fort. In that post journal it is recorded on June 15 that "Mr. Goodwin with three Englishmen and two Indians arrived from Eastmain."<sup>4</sup> The same journal notes on June 20 that "Anthony King sailed for Albany in the long boat with a cargo of blankets, salt geese, etc." and several passengers among whom is listed Mr. Goodwin.

The June 22, 1782 entry in the Albany journal records, "Mr. Goodwin arrived from Moose."<sup>5</sup> He remained at Albany Fort as surgeon until September 5, 1786. The contract he signed was for a three year term but he remained for five years. His annual salary was £40 plus pay for his services as ship's surgeon on the voyages to and from Hudson Bay. That pay rate was £5 per month while on shipboard.

The experience of acting as company surgeon began at Eastmain where several incidents are recorded, such as January 23, 1782, "James Folster by a tumble broke one of his ribs;" April 24, 1782, "all indians set off to hunt except 1 man and his family that is left here he having froze his hand, legs and knees very much in the winter so is now under the Surgeons care"; May 3, 1782, "Indian cut himself with a hatchet and cannot get the blood stopt. The Surgeon went away immediately for their tent."

Several weeks after Robert Goodwin arrived at Albany a request came from Moose for his assistance because the Chief Factor, Mr. Jarvis had become ill. However, the day before the message was received Robert Goodwin himself had come down with "an intermitting fever and vomiting" so he was unable to travel. Thereafter he became more deeply involved with life in the wilderness Fort through the next four years.

---

<sup>1</sup> H.B.C.A. A 32/3 fo. 61

<sup>2</sup> H.B.C.A. C. 1/385 mf M36

<sup>3</sup> H.B.C.A. B. 59/a/57

<sup>4</sup> H.B.C.A. B.135/a/65

<sup>5</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/80

By September 5, 1782 Edward Jarvis had become Chief at Albany, and as he himself had begun his career as a company surgeon his journals carry many notes of the illnesses that prevailed. One of the first observations he recorded was " some Indians dying of consumption the Englishmen also ailing."<sup>6</sup> Many years it seems that after the ship had been in, there was a spate of severe colds that laid up a number of the men. This wave of illness was troublesome because they had to work feverishly during the fall months preparing for the rigors of the coming winter. There was cargo to stow, or to pack for quick trips upriver to Henley and Gloucester, before the ice formed. They had their Fall Goose Hunt to obtain winter provisions . They had to dig up and store their potatoes and any other vegetables they had been able to grow. During late July and August they had to try to get sufficient hay cut and cured to sustain their livestock. After the ship had sailed and they had completed cargo exchanges between the James Bay. ports, they had to get their buoys and markers up and their own boats hauled ashore for the winter. For all they had to accomplish, their staff was small enough, and illness of any numbers created very real difficulties, apart from looking after their sick members.

In late winter and spring, very frequently, illness again disrupted their activities, but from an entirely different cause. Scurvy made its appearance from about February onward, and in fact, in some years men were noted to be suffering from scurvy in midsummer. Although they were aware it was in some way related to their restricted diet -mostly salt meat, oatmeal, barley, and bread, with some butter and cheese - they had no effective treatment. In such circumstances, they sometimes butchered one of their cattle herd and gave the meat to the invalids. Oddly enough, the fresh meat sometimes seemed to help them, though at times a few men were so severely ill that they were invalided for prolonged periods, and occasionally deaths occurred.

Another hazard of late winter and spring was snow-blindness for those travelling between their houses at different locations. At times they resorted to travelling at night to lessen this risk. However, night travel did not lessen the risk of frost-bite, but this sometimes occurred from individual carelessness or even foolishness. The officers at the Forts and subsidiary houses. tried to keep the men well-shod and clothed. On some occasions, unsanctioned liquor was involved.

The types of firearms they used led to accidents from time to time, and some of the men were not skilled with axes and hatchets, so that cuts from these tools were fairly frequent. The carpenters employed also had accidents with their tools. The overriding problem following accidents was the onset of infection for which there was little they could do in those times. There were obviously, from their descriptions, men who died of gangrene, and likely other infections that can be dealt with easily today.

---

<sup>6</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.3/A/81*

In the twenty-two years that Robert Goodwin spent in the Hudson Bay territory he himself had several minor illnesses, but during the last ten years of his life he suffered mostly from recurrent attacks of Gout. This problem seemed to be confined to the officers, of which a number were afflicted, but the other employees did not seem to have it. Robert Goodwin's gout seems to have been the cause of his death at the early age of 45 years.

During the fall of 1782 when the goose hunt was well underway, a message from one of the Indians engaged for this purpose was received on October 10th. He reported that his wife had fallen and appeared to have fractured her thigh. Two days later the journal records, "Mr. Goodwin very humanely went to visit the woman mentioned on Wednesday."

On the following day he returned " with an account of the Geese being nearly gone and the young woman having broke the patella."

There are no further reports of illness until after the new year began. Then on January 13, 1783 there is a note, " 8 men in ye Surgeons list 4 being lame and 4 with the Lues Veneria." This appears to be one of the rare references to venereal disease.

During the winter of 1783 news of the French raid on Fort Prince of Wales reached Albany and they became apprehensive that summer could bring a resumption of the attacks. They decided that they needed to prepare to defend themselves and their establishment. The journal entry for February 24 includes the following item, " Began with Mr. Goodwin's assistance to teach our men Ye Manual Exercise" . The military drill continued along with other defense preparations until August 17 when a military watch was instituted: " this day made a beginning of military duty" . In the meantime other duties had to be continued and they were still beset by illnesses. March 6 there is a note, " Jenkin Daniel ill with a strained back" . On March 19, " two men sick five convalescent ye Scurvy begins to make its appearance, there is little fresh partridge." On March 20, " Daniel Laughton exceeding bad with ye scurvy " . On March 22 the surgeon's list had expanded to 11 men. On March 26 the entry states, " 2 sick 6 convalescent supposed to be chiefly occasioned by so long living on salt provisions. Killed a cow and divided among them." On April 1 they had some relief of their problem. " 4 families of indians came in----two of them brought a large quantity of venison a very seasonable relief to our poor men who are perishing by inches with ye Scurvy " .

April 2 notes the disruption caused by scurvy, " 10 in the Surgeons list so that we can scarcely get wood enough cut to keep us warm." From that time onward the scurvy reports recede in the journal and other events take a more prominent place.

The Moose Fort journal of 1781-1782 mentions in the spring that some of the Indians were proceeding northward for "Esquimaux hunting." At Albany on April 19, 1783 the Chief notes, "Traded an Esquimaux boy who I found the Indians were for murdering if I had not done so, paid 30 Beavers for him and hope as he is only about 7 years old a promising tractable child he will make a useful servant to Ye Company, being traded on Easter Eve named him Easter."

With spring and the return of the geese they commenced their goose hunt. For this they employed both some of their own men and Indians that had come in with their winter furs. They have several locations, and eventually established a permanent residence at one site. This relieved them of finding sufficient space for storing their salt geese at the Factory and also probably enabled them to carry them by sled over the frozen marshes in the winter. There were some years in which they seemed to send large supplies southward to Moose Fort.

In 1783 the May 7 entry reads, "sent Mr. Goodwin in a boat with gunpowder shots and brandy to Ye Indians returned with 165 geese."

On August 9. the entry apparently refers to their preparations against attack, "sent a packet to Moose Fort for Medicines and Chiurgical Instruments." They would undoubtedly need extra supplies to deal with battle wounds should the circumstance arise. As the summer wore on and their own ships arrived safely, their fears apparently abated. Their confidence increased so that on September 17, "in the evening Mr. Edward Jarvis, Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Mauginest went down to the sloop -to proceed to Moose,"<sup>7</sup> They, and other passengers returned to Albany on September 25.. It may have been a business trip but it could, as well, have been just a pleasure jaunt - a visit and a change of scene.

Each of the Bay forts maintained a sea-going sloop which they used seasonally to off-load cargo from the ship, to transport that and other goods between the establishments and for some passenger transportation. To manage the sloop they tried to have a man with sailing experience on their staff. In the off-season he would be employed at other work.

The summer of 1783 had been a cold one and the geese had poor success with their nesting. Therefore, the results of their fall goose hunt was far under their estimated needs. It was the beginning of a difficult winter. After the freighting of supplies to Henley House, about 160 miles upriver was completed, the Chief assigned two men on October 27 to hunt partridges, fish and rabbits a few miles inland. They sent these hunters, and at other times woodcutters, out to tent. There they lived throughout the winter months,

---

<sup>7</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/82

only returning to the Fort to bring in the produce of their hunting and fishing, to obtain some supplies or to spend Christmas.

After the cargo had been received and stowed they had to check it over. On October 28 the entry ends with, " the others in the warehouse with Mr. Goodwin and self examining packages in which we find .some mistakes." It was always a lengthy wait for their requests to be met. In ordinary circumstances it would take a year, and if for any reason their orders for goods were not completely filled or were overlooked, it would be even longer.

Most of the journals list the occupations of the officers and the tradesmen, very frequently by name, but sometimes by trade. For instance the October 29 entry ends, " the Taylors at work for Mr. Goodwin and James Hudson the cook as usual."

Due to the anticipated shortage of food, on November 2 the Chief " put myself officers and men to half allowance of geese " but he attempted to make some amends by increasing the flour allowance by 2 lbs per week.

A few days later they had one of their very infrequent holidays. On November 5, "gave the men a holiday ----- having worked incessantly for a long time past. Made a bonfire in the evening and burnt Guy Vaux and drank prosperity to Church and State. " The custom of observing Guy Fawkes day persisted for a number of years being carried on at different houses.

In late November there was a mild epidemic. Eight men including the Chief and Mr. Goodwin were ill at the same time with sore throats and stiff necks. However it was a brief episode and by December 4, " Mr. Goodwin, two men and self put the trading warehouse in order."

Although Christmas was always observed quietly as a religious day, sometimes some of the officers would exchange visits between Albany and Moose, and the men apparently had some leisure from Christmas Day until after New Year's. These are the only occasions when recreation is mentioned. Then there are references to the men playing football the day after Christmas and New Year's Eve. They probably had no need for exercise in itself. Many of the men led an arduous life of outdoor work and lengthy treks overland or by water. The officers, though busy, did not likely have the same degree of outdoor activity and therefore took their recreation in brief hunting expeditions in the Marshes.

Sundays were their only days of rest and their activity was apparently limited. The senior officer was expected to lead the religious service, but on occasion, this was omitted. Some times, there were Indians who had come to trade or they were extremely busy with cargo stowage, etc. or in some instances the Post Master

was ill. In view of the times in which they lived it is probable that few of the men except the officers were literate enough to read to pass the time on these days they observed " religiously."

The winter of 1784 continued with unabated food shortages, and though their two hunters brought in a few rabbits from time to time, on the 31st of January one returned " brought his bedding home having only got 12 rabbits last week."

Somewhat earlier, on January 14 they received some trading goods requested from Moose, " 45 blankets and other articles." They had insufficient food to keep their dogs in good condition, as recorded in this notation, " hauled by dogs most of which are in very poor condition. One poor creature was obliged to be fetched and carried home across the mens shoulders being too weak to walk even without his sled."

If the food shortage affected the men at the Fort and their animals, it seems to have been an equally hard winter for some of the Indians living on the land. On February 18 three men were sent out to a group they had heard from, " with provisions to the starved Indians."

Scurvy had made an early appearance. On February 11 the entry contains this note, "the shipwright taken ill with the Scurvy." . During this time they "served out mustard and vinegar to our men in hopes to prevent or at least retard the approaches of the scurvy."

Several weeks later the Chief remarks that conditions are similar to the earlier famine year of 1772, which he had seen. However, they had to continue their activities as best they could, so in late February several men were engaged in " breaking in two young oxen." It seems these animals were chiefly used in winter to haul wood and timber from their cutting area to the Fort. On March 4 they sent 4 men " with all our dogs to haul blankets from Moose."

As the late winter passed, a number of Indians who could travel the distance congregated around the Fort to be sustained by whatever food they could be provided. On April-5 the journal remarks, " we have now upwards of 100 Indians to feed daily."

In late April several men were assigned to haul salt geese from their cache at Capusco. They returned on April 27, "most of the men that returned from Capusco either lame or snow-blind," and " 3 others down with scurvy."

The spring and summer wore on through the goose hunt, the launching of their boats, setting of buoys after breakup, getting their livestock out to pasture and their gardens dug and planted.

On July 21 as a party was ready to set out for Moose Fort, they returned after a short distance, "meeting Indians with the Moose packet they came to request the immediate assistance of Mr. Goodwin their Surgeon having fractured his leg."<sup>8</sup> Robert Goodwin must have been away some weeks and the date of his return is obscure. It was not until October 2 in the journal for the following year that his name appears again.

The problems of 1783-84 are summarized in a separate journal, and in particular the scurvy problem is given some prominence. They had tried a variety of treatments, -" lemon juice, Elixir of Vitriol and B. vinegar had little effect mustard the men would not eat."<sup>9</sup>

During September of 1784 they were very short of firewood and sent a party of 10 men to find some and raft it home, " not having a single stick on the plantation,"<sup>10</sup> September 25.

Another shortage had been noted in the August 1 entry which mentions several Indians coming in to trade. The most notable was evidently, " a third brought a large white whale which is a great acquisition as we have long been without oil to our lamps." A whale or one or two seals were .only occasionally brought in, and after each reception there was a spate of blubber-boiling to replenish their oil supply.

The fall goose hunt got under way and October 6 notes, " Mr. Goodwin acting as steward and salting the few geese as they come in."

On October 26 in this year they collected their cattle from the marsh where they had grazed out during the summer months. It seems that they frequently had to just turn them loose and did not have manpower to keep a close watch on them. During these months, the cattle grew wild and were often difficult to herd back to the Fort. With the lack of a lookout, the cattle were also at risk of slaughter by the " Northern Indians" as they left the Fort after trading. On this occasion in 1784 they collected 15 " all they could find" and 3 of these had their tails cut off. This annoyance with depredations on their cattle - and later mentioned, their pigs - went on for a good many years. As time went on they did set out a more regular watch over their herd. In spite of the harsh conditions they kept their cattle operation over many years and the herd grew in numbers, though they limited those they wintered over to about 40. Keeping this number in some of their lean years, when the summer had been short and cool or rainy leaving them with a marginal hay supply, proved a difficult task. There were some springs that were late arriving or the water remained high, when

---

<sup>8</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/83

<sup>9</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/84

<sup>10</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/85

their hay supply was so low, that they resorted to collecting willow branches to feed the cattle. In these years, they lost a few, but it is amazing that they nursed the majority through these crises.

Once back on pasture, the cattle revived and improved rapidly in condition. In other years circumstances were relatively good, and the herd thrived and multiplied so that they provided Moose Factory with hundreds of pounds of beef and veal. It is possible that at least some of the salt meat sent to the inland houses may have come from Albany itself, though meat continued to be shipped from Europe. During the winters, sometimes it would be noted that a man was making "meat rundlets" as well as fabricating other barrels or wooden chests "for the Trade."

One of their men died November 21, possibly from Epilepsy. He had two fits in the course of two days and did not revive after the second. It appears to have been a known problem with him, and the journal writer attributes his death to his refusal on all occasions "to be bled." On December 11 there is an entry about the health of the Fort, "a universal Coryza prevails - - - in some cases accompanied with sore throats."

This winter of 1784-85, though colder seems to have passed more or less routinely and the spring seems to have come fairly early, for on May 4 there is the remark, "two making hot beds to raise cabbages if the grubs will let us."

In late June the Chief, Mr. Jarvis, was ill for several days and some of his duties were undertaken by the more junior officers, as for instance on June 28, "Mr. Goodwin and Jn Best traded part of the Indians of yesterday."

They continued their gardening efforts and on June 29 and July 4 there is a further reference, "the armourer and Mr. Allen sticking pease." Both officers and men, as available, were employed in their gardens.

In late September the goose hunt got underway and on September 26, "Mr. Goodwin very obligingly offered me his services to serve out powder there."<sup>11</sup> This refers to Bond's Creek. On the following day Robert Goodwin went out with nine men to give out the required powder and returned with "upwards of 500 geese."

Over the years, the Indians had come to rely on the Forts as a refuge for the sick and infirm. On October 8 the entry notes, "an Indian came in to be supported at the Fort having lost the sight of both his eyes," and another brought in his aged mother.

---

<sup>11</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.3/a/86*



Although in some seasons the garden produce is not listed in kind or amount, this year notes on October 11, "Cragie taking up turnips." In fact their gardens were plagued by vagaries of weather and pests, so that some years their produce was limited. Then there was the problem of keeping it stored through the winter. As the months passed, they frequently had to employ men in picking over their stored potatoes, etc to eliminate the spoiled ones.

On October 14 Robert Goodwin is noted to be still out at the goose hunt site, but on October 18 there is a remark that, "game being partly gone shall therefore send for Mr. Goodwin tomorrow," and on the following day, "sent 9 men in a boat to fetch Mr. Goodwin and the guns from thence."

In early November they found themselves the recipients of yet another Indian patient, when on November 3, "an Indian child had had arm shot off brought to the Fort for support."

On November 28 the Chief notes, "self Mr. Goodwin and David Sanderson hunting saw more partridges than three years past." As well as shooting these birds, they also set nets to catch them.

With his interest in medical matters, on January 7, 1786 the Chief reported the birth of a deformed calf fetus (his spelling; fatus). This event may have had some relationship to the fact that their hay supply was meager due to the previous wet summer, because on January 23 he notes further that "cattle and horse in poor condition" for this reason.

In another respect, the Chief had a better winter because he had been brought a "Canada Stove," to heat his quarters. He found it advantageous in a number of ways, not least being the fact that it consumed less wood than his fireplace.

In late winter they began their preparations for the summer transport of supplies to their inland houses, of which at that time they had two. These were Henley House, which was the oldest with a somewhat checkered history, and Gloucester House, much more recently established. On March 30 the note in regard to this activity reads "the writers and 4 men with Mr. Goodwin and self in the warehouse packing bales for Gloucester." Again on April 26 there is another reference when the Chief, Robert Goodwin, James Hudson and David Sanderson were "packing guns and goods for Gloucester."

In late April they began to prepare for their gardening, as on April 28, "five men wheeling manure into the garden;" On May 4 they were preparing 3 hotbeds and they had drawn the conclusion that the vegetables prevented scurvy, "not a man at present being affected with it."

They were able to begin their summer river travel in late May, so on the 23rd they sent their men with supplies to Gloucester and Henley Houses, On the following day they were busy with garden seeding, "self

Mr. Goodwin and two men in the gardens sowed carrots, pease and planted potatoes." Two days later they sowed beans and more "pease." On June 5 they were "transplanting cabbages and killing grubs." But disaster was never far away. On June 8 "frost killed beans and some of the cabbages." They were not deflected from their efforts for on the following day they planted "5 beds of early Dutch turnips."

Although long periods passed without mention of their livestock, a few days later there is a note that their horse was lame due to a bad shoeing.

By this time Robert Goodwin had spent five years with the Company and so on September 5 the Chief notes in his journal the usual formal conclusion of contract, "discharged Mr. Goodwin from your Honours' Service." He departed that day, among other men, for England. The Sea Horse III log registers him as a passenger, and he reached London at the beginning of November, 1786.<sup>12</sup> His movements for the next months are unknown.

The journal for the next year at Albany registers the arrival of the English ship on August 30, 1787 Robert Goodwin returned to North America on that ship, this time as a fur trader. On September 13 he and another man received "their dispatches and they set off for Gloster."<sup>13</sup> This place was not Robert Goodwin's final destination on this trip. He proceeded eventually to the more distant Osnaburgh House which had been established in the past year. He remained at Osnaburgh House, on an arm of Lake St. Joseph, as Master until the spring of 1794.

Having departed from Albany, Robert Goodwin and John Kipling, along with 16 more Englishmen as crew and staff and 1 Indian reached Gloucester House on October 7, "in two battaux"<sup>14</sup> Two days later 13 of the Englishmen were sent back to Albany. Robert Goodwin remained at Gloucester House for the next four months, leaving for Osnaburgh on February 13, 1788. During these months, it appears that further preparations were undertaken for his sojourn at Osnaburgh since such notes as on November 5 and November 6, and later, on January 19, January 22 and February 1, the journal records "Taylor at work for Mr. Goodwin". Also on January 9 "the carpenter making a box for Mr. Goodwin." His own time and services were not being wasted, as for instance on January 20 "Jacob (an Indian) so very ill that Mr. Goodwin was obliged to Blister him." The following day this man is noted to be "a little better".

<sup>12</sup> *H.B.C.A. C.1/1050 mf.2M125*

<sup>13</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.3/a/89*

<sup>14</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.78/a/17*

On February 13, 1788 Robert Goodwin's departure is recorded thus; "Despatched Mr. Robert Goodwin with 6 men for Osnaburgh House 2 extra to help them lf2 way". These two extra men were back at Gloucester on February 25 "had left them at the Snake Falls all well".

On February 26, the man in charge of Osnaburgh recorded the arrival "2 pm Mr. Goodwin and Sutherland with 3 men arrived from Gloster"<sup>15</sup> From that point Robert Goodwin took over the House and the journal. As is common to the majority of journals, much of the recording deals with very humdrum daily chores and weather observations, but periodically there are entries that give a view of conditions in the countryside, their relations with the Indians, and their own efforts to provide themselves with necessities to maintain their lives and houses in remote and isolated areas.

On March 18 he notes, "an Indian woman came in starved." On March 26 the men's activities are recorded thus, "clearing roof of snow cutting treenails of birch, birch for hatchet helves." On April 11 he records that he is "encouraging Indians to supply (them) with meat so they could carry more trading goods rather than provisions". They were also "putting birchrind tentings on roof to prevent leakage".

Also in April he notes that they had clothed an entire family of indians. This family included 3 wives and 17 children - a fairly expensive encouragement to trade.

During the early spring the men were "clearing stumps etc. for garden". On May 19 they had a heavy rainfall which caused them some problems because their house leaked badly.

On May 21 when a number of Indians were encamped near the house for trading, he records that an Indian had hanged himself and he had tried to revive him "immediately bled him" - but this measure proved useless. On the following day they obtained "42 lbs of bears flesh" from some other visitors.

In following days he says that the Indians were looking over their establishment and that of a French Canadian to determine who had the greatest stock of goods and brandy. He also notes that, they are rather short of some trade goods mentioning especially "tobacco, knives, etc."

On May 28, he sent several men to get cedar for paddles, and he with two others was "in the garden". On June 4 the battaux arrived from Albany. When the boats were unloaded in a few days and sent back to Gloucester, he sent in them 19 bundles of furs, "part of our trade". Again on June 4 he remarks on the shortage of trade goods and especially laments, the lack of "blue corded cloth" saying the indians "despized the sight of the red corded cloth".

---

<sup>15</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/2*

During this early June he also met two strangers. One was an American from Albany, N.Y. by the name of David Michael. He arrived at Osnaburgh from Lake St. Anne "almost naked and starved". The other arrived on June 8. Curiously this man had the same surname; he was Peter Goodwin of Montreal. Both men felt they had been badly treated by their own traders, and had deserted. They wanted to be engaged by the Hudson's Bay Company at Albany.

At many times they had very poor catches of fish from their nets, but in this same month of June they had a very sizable catch but he said, "cannot use it for want of salt and vinegar". As the summer wore on he commented on "the avaricious demand for brandy" by the Indians.

On July 3 the season had progressed sufficiently that he is able to record "men transplanting cabbages". In late July they received more of their goods from Gloucester in 4 battaux. This load actually arrived on July 26, and after several days of unloading and stowing their supplies, he wrote, on July 30, "preparing to sett off tomorrow with my Trade 4330 13/20 made Beaver". For a very recently established post as Osnaburgh House was, this seems to have been a very good return on their investment. In fact it seems that it was a much more productive place than Gloucester which had been established much earlier. The correspondence with John Kipling who was at Gloucester shows either that Robert Goodwin had very high expectations or that he was trying not to appear boastful. He speaks of having traded "only" certain quantities of furs from time to time,, but these amounts were indeed higher than John Kipling was receiving.

In the back of this first journal kept at Osnaburgh House by Robert Goodwin there is a "Mess Book". In it the amounts and variety of provisions they used are regularly accounted for. By our standards, it was a very restricted diet.

The European provisions consumed were listed as follows:

Bacon

Scotch barley

Butter

Cheese

Flour

Beef (salted)

Pork (salted)

oatmeal

Raisins

Rice

Brown Sugar

Vinegar

The "Country provisions" obtained were:

Venison Rabbit

Beaver Partridges

Fish Geese

From time to time they had some variation, such as on one occasion, they were traded moose meat and wild rice; on another occasion they got 90 lbs. of fresh sturgeon.

Early in the following journal, 1788-89, at a time that Robert Goodwin would still be absent on his trip to Gloucester House, there is a comment that "Indians to the Northward of the House have set all the woods on fire."<sup>16</sup> Such an occurrence caused them a great deal of concern since, depending on how it spread, their own shelter and provisions were threatened. However, this fire; they got out quickly and they suffered no harm.

On his return to Osnaburgh Robert Goodwin settled into the routine of life at this wilderness house. But as so frequently happened, they did not receive everything they needed from Albany, so on October 20 he notes that he himself was making candles "not having any from Albany".

On December 15 he records, "got 1 white partridge first one seen there." During the winter, which was severely cold with a heavy snowfall, he reports starvation among the Indians.

In the spring,, as usual, they got their garden planted, but on June 5 "Hailstorm and shower washed out all plants in garden".

On August 9 he left Osnaburgh House on the annual summer trip downriver to Albany Fort. From that date until his return on October 11 the house was in the charge of James Sutherland. On October 4 this man notes an Indian lieutenant "who was dangerously wounded here 22nd June by ----- and am happy to see

---

<sup>16</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/3*

him entirely recovered owing as he says to the medicines which Mr. Goodwin gave him."<sup>17</sup> On October 11 he remarks on the arrival of several men and ended "at 5 pm Mr. Goodwin with-3 battaux arrived also." The following day Robert Goodwin resumed his charge at Osnaburgh House.

Again the winter, 1789-90, passed with their routine chores of site maintenance, net-fishing and wood-gathering, etc. with a few Indians coming to trade. Their busiest trading periods were early fall and then in the spring, when the rivers had opened. There were times when the Indians risked their lives in their canoes with the melting ice to arrive early.

In the spring of 1790, on May 24 and May 25 Robert Goodwin writes of his concern for an Indian that had come in a trading party. He examined him for "a swelling on the right side of abdomen", and warned him not to drink. However, the man-disregarded the advice and went to drink with the others and on the following day he again mentioned this man, "I am apprehensive he will not live. I am fearful he is hurt inwardly." The Indian departed with his party shortly after and his ultimate fate is unrecorded.

On June 11 he noted the arrival of an Indian from the north, "Strange Capt came in said all the people in his country were dying of Smallpox" During these early June days especially noted on June 10, they were involved in their gardening efforts, "3 digging ground for transplanting cabbages".

As usual, the journal concludes with Robert Goodwin's departure for Albany Fort, this year on July 29 with twelve men and 2 battaux. He returned on October 16, "in two small Battaux from Albany"<sup>18</sup>.

By the winter of 1790-91 life in the wilderness was becoming quite routine, and the daily notes are brief and factual giving weather, chores and assignments. March 10 he records, "the men, as yesterday 2 gone to tie woods to get birch for sleds". This cryptic note does not explain what he used such medicines for.

On August 8 he left for Gloucester House to meet with the Chief.

The next journal records his return thus: September 4, "at 9a.m. Mr. Goodwin Best and McKay arrived from Gloucester House accompanied by (22 men named) in four Battaux".<sup>19</sup> Two days later Robert Goodwin resumed the journal himself.

One of the most urgent tasks at this time of year was getting their garden produce up, and so on September 22 he notes "John Whimister and self taking up potatoes".

---

<sup>17</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/4*

<sup>18</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/5*

<sup>19</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/6*

Knowledge of the house was evidently spreading abroad. On September 27, "In the evening two strangers came in from Lake Winipeg bro't a few furs". During these years they were gradually pushing farther inland. In the summer of 1791 the journal records James Sutherland's return from Red Point Lake and that it was "17 days journey with 14 carrying places". John Best who had come to Osnaburgh House with Robert Goodwin on September 4, continued on from there and some weeks later sent a letter to Robert Goodwin dated September 29, "we got all safe to Red Lake our 17th day from Osnaburgh House - "

During these years too, they were employing more "Canadians". They more frequently knew the countryside and river ways and the languages of the Indian. However, they didn't always fit the mold of disciplined workers the company required. On February 18, Robert Goodwin allows himself a mild outburst of exasperation "the Canadians are such gluttons and so lazy they will hardly look for anything". This outburst was caused by their acute shortage of meat and fish and the refusal of one of their "Canadians" to go hunting for them. Consequently for 3 days, February 28, February 29, March 1, the notes read, "gave ye men Potatoes this day", "Potatoes this day:" "nothing but potatoes for the men".

Among his concerns was a planned trip to Gloucester House during these winter months. They were so short of provisions that he did not know whether he would be able to send the men. However, they finally did procure some fish from their nets, so he "laid by" 32 lbs for the journey and gave the rest to the men. On March 11 two men "set out with 5 days provisions and 13 lbs flour per man". The usual arrangement was that they would be provided with the food necessary for the return journey at their destination.

The next few months proceeded routinely and by early May they were again busy in their garden. The May 10th entry states "men at work in the Gardens".

Any fresh meat no matter what the source was welcomed, and so on July 22 he records "two Indians from ye north came in with a fresh beaver 5 ducks and ye flesh of a Catt".

On August 8, 1792 he concluded this journal and left on his trip downriver to Albany. There is another "Mess account" in the back of the journal listing the kind and amounts of provisions served out to the men. The list is as follows:

Bacon

Butter

Beef (salt)

Chocolate

Cheese

Flour

pts. of oil

Gal. of rum

salt

sugar loaf

Tea - Bohea

Fish

Venison

Brandy

Vinegar

Some time after his return to Osnaburgh House, on September 24, he notes "men taking up my potatoes which are very few only 4 ten gallon kegs".<sup>20</sup> On October 23 he records "obliged to feed the old Indians. as they cannot hunt which is heavy on me for Flour, engaged them to make me snow shoes for the winter". On October 31 he notes, "One canoe of Inds. came a woman with 4 children having left her husband almost starved gave them some flour, she intends to hunt rabbits (or God only knows what). I shall be obliged to give her children flour at times to preserve their lives". This woman did remain in the general area but began to fish in the lake nearer the "Canadian's house". In about a month, on December 3, she returned to Osnaburgh in distress, "Canadians thieved all her fish from her".

Later on he remarks that there were few rabbits around that winter, and so a source of food for both the Indians and themselves was limited.

On January, 1793 he states "men began to make sleds ready to go to Gloster House". About a week later, on January 16 the note reads, "the men brewing".. In most of their establishments they made "small beer" using the molasses they were provided .

On February 10 the entry reads "Taylor cutting out shoes and beaver mittens for ye men".

---

<sup>20</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/7*



A party of Indians came in on March 4 and "went hunting deer, left 2 old women and a child for me to take care of".

On May 7 he reports that a message had been relayed to him from the Canadqs "they intended to stop them (Indians) from coming to ye doctor". Apparently no overt trouble arose. On June 12 "4 men gone for stones for ye oven, the rest building and making a loom". On July 14 they had a severe windstorm, "blows a heavy gale. Drove our birchrind tentings etc. all off ye roof of the House, hurt the potatoes blew ye Turnips and Cabbages almost useless."

During that year he had arranged to have 5 canoes and "1 large one" built by Indians at Lake Sal. On July 27 he remarks that one had been delivered and he would have to "send men to get the other five".

On July 31 and August 4 he notes "Hugh Petrie bad with the Scurvy."

Again the New journal begins in the early fall and the months passed with hard work 'and deprivations, with the occasional small alteration of routine, such as on January 1, 1794 when he records "Gave the men a treat,"<sup>21</sup> (Brandy); and then again on January 6, this time "to finish Christmas." This was, of course, the old Twelfth Night.

Ordinarily the only rest period the men had was on Sunday when the master was expected to hold a religious service, and Christmas when they had usually a two week period of relaxation. The Sunday service was sometimes dispensed with if- they were very busy or hurried in completing cargo exchanges, etc, or on some occasions when the Master of the house was ill.

On May 12 Robert Goodwin-reveals an experimental side to his nature when he records "men digging in the garden sett some Indian corn to try if it will come to perfection here".

Much earlier than usual, within a few days, he left on his annual downriver trip to Martins Fall which was to become their regular meeting place in the following years. The men from Albany would transport cargoes of supplies to Martins Fall which were exchanged for loads of furs. The Albany Chief would follow at a later date and meet with the traders and give them their orders for the following year.

The return of Robert Goodwin to Osnaburgh House is recorded by James Sutherland on July 27. He remained only four days, and then set out for his new charge, Brandon House, on the Assiniboine River. The note of July 31, 1794 at Osnaburgh reads "Departed for Red River Mr. Robt. Goodwin". He was accompanied by 19 other men.

---

<sup>21</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/9a*

A footnote to his efforts at Osnaburgh House occurs on September 21 and September 22 when Thomas Fidler records that they had a sharp frost overnight and were digging their potatoes, but "Indian corn Mr. Goodwin planted has come to no perfection by the shortness of the summer is rendered useless by the frost".<sup>22</sup>

A year prior to Robert Goodwin's departure for Brandon House Donald H. McKay made the journey keeping a daily journal of his trip and subsequent building of Brandon House. He left Osnaburgh with 3 boats and 2 NW canoes and nineteen men on July 30, 1793. By August 10 he remarks "sailed a little this day got to the bottom of Lac Sul".<sup>23</sup> The next day while they were unloading, portaging, and reloading their boats he said that he "strained side by lifting Keg of powder". On August 12 they camped "in the place of five falls." On August 16, a Friday, they "came to Mr. James Sutherlands house ----there is an oven here, stopped for the men to make bread".

On August 20 the note of their progress reads "we past through to Mr. Berrens' Lake. Five days later he speaks of the Sault of Jacques or Grand Rapids". On August 27 he states "made 3 carrying places in the white river" and arrived at Lake Dubonnet. By September 1 they were on Lake Winnipeg but said the low water in the lake was slowing their progress. On September 4 they started out at 6 a.m. and came to "the Ripples five miles along". On September 18 he notes "past Mr. John Ross's Fort where he was ---- by the Indians the year 1780". On the 20th "came to Mr. McNabb's Island. Within a few days they had arrived at their site and began a flurry of building to house themselves for the winter. By October 16 it was more or less complete and he baptised it "Brandon House".

In the winter that followed they kept several men employed in buffalo hunting. By spring they had prepared a number of 200 lb. Packs of "beat meat" to be deposited at strategic points for the return trip to Brandon House. Most of the men started back to Osnaburgh House on May 15 leaving a skeleton staff at Brandon House. By June 18 they had arrived in Lake St. Joseph and on the following day he concludes his trip journal as follows, "arrived O.H. where Mr. Goodwin etc. was. all well in health".

Robert Goodwin began his trip-journal on July 31, 1794 and he notes somewhat different place names on his way to Brandon House. For instance on August 17 they had reached Kettle Falls; on August 22 they were at Portage de Lisle fall; August 25, "got into the creek called Pinoway".<sup>24</sup> They camped on the creek overnight. August 30 they were at Silver Falls and on September 4 they were "within 8 miles Red

<sup>22</sup> H.B.C.A. B.155/a/10?

<sup>23</sup> H.B.C.A. B.22/a/1?

<sup>24</sup> H.B.C.A. B.22/a/2?

River mouth". By September 8 they had reached the "Asniboin fork" and on September 15 they "slept at a beach opposite an island" and he remarks on the shallowness of the river and the "sandy shoals".

They made an early start on October 1 and "went about 15 miles before breakfast". They "stopt at ---- creek" to clean their guns and then travelled the remaining 4 miles to arrive at Brandon House.

For the next month they busied themselves putting things in order and procuring firewood, etc. for the winter. However, on the evening of November 5 he writes, " let off some fireworks this evening and gave the men Grog".

They continued their preparations for winter and on November 13 he notes "2 men making sleds"; again on November 18 "men making sleds, kegs cooking etc." On November 20 he concluded a negotiation that would be important to trade life on the plains; he "Traded a horse this day".

It appears that it was about this time in his life, about 33 years of age, that he began to suffer from Gout intermittently, for on November 23 and November 24 he remarks, "self took bad with the Gout" and "Self hardly able to walk for the Gout".

In late November he sent John Richards out to a particular band of Indians in order to collect their debt. While with the Indians this man get very drunk with them and came back on November 29 with the tale that in his drunkenness he "helped kill a poor harmless woman". This presented a real dilemma since Robert Goodwin felt that such a deed demanded justice, but the man's services were also necessary to conduct their business- At the time he was the only one who spoke the language of the Plains Indians. In any event, there were no real options open to him.

Again, in late December he was having difficulty with Gout. He records on December 28 "self bad with Gout", and on December 31, "bad with ye Gout", and the following day, January 1, 1795, "self still lame with the Gout

About a month later, on January 29 he notes "men making potash", making it by burning poplar. The use for it becomes clear several days later when he records on February 2 "men mending sleds and making soap". The February 9 entry reads in part, "James Johnstone making a hand press (to pack furs). On February 12 he "traded some Indian corn from Indians at ye other houses". On February 16, "Indian brot parchment Leather for Pemekom". On February 20 he remarks "self bad with sore throat".

A few weeks later they began to make preparations for their garden. On March 15 he notes "2 men felling stockadoes to make a garden with".

From a remark on April 4, it is obvious that his horse had ranged free on the plain during the winter months. On this date he notes "Assiniboines -- came in - informed me where my horse is which I will soon send for". Two days later he sent one man with the Indians to get his horse.

Again, on April 9 there was a reference to soap - making. The note reads, "men burning poplar for ashes to make soap". A few days later, he himself was having more trouble with gout.

On April 23 he notes the passing, downriver, of three FrenchCanadian traders, Mr. Cadotte, Beaubien and Roch. These men had wintered at Grand Rapids. During this late April period they themselves were busy preparing for their own spring trip to Martins Fall. On April 27 the journal reads "all hands drying meat making Pemecon sewing parchment bags to put it in etc. etc.". On April 30, among other things he records "some washing". This would probably be a general clean-up in spring. They probably had little opportunity to keep themselves or their clothes clean during the winter. In spite of their limitations regarding personal hygiene, there are no references to lice at any time. Was it simply an accepted fact?

It seems that somewhere along he had acquired more than one horse for on May 7 he "sent John Richard and David Brown across the Plains - -to fetch the furs." Ten days later he and most of his men "set off for Osnaburgh House".

He concludes his first year journal at Brandon House by some comments on what he had learned there. He had become very interested in the Mandans and expressed a wish to "conduct an expedition to the Mandal country, where the N.W. company is supplied all their horses, they grow Indian corn, Kidney beans, also a sort of Tobacco" and concludes also that "Red River can supply the other settlements with Pemikom "•

By May 23 they evidently put up for the night on the Red River at a place which would now be the heart of Winnipeg. He wrote that the weather was cloudy and rainy and they put up "fearfull the furs will get damaged, we passed ye fork about 1 mile". They made good progress the following day, "put up at Nettle Creek for the night." On May 31 "slept at the first fall in the white river". The water way was low, so they "could not go out by way of the Pinnoway " .

On June 14 "went to the long carrying place put up for the night" On June 15 they were "carrying cargo the most part of the day" and then "went about 3 miles to the separation of the two rivers or properly called a Fork." On June 17 they "put up at Manitobas in Lake Sale".

Their arrival at Osnaburgh House is recorded at 2 P.M. on June 24. They had a two day rest there, and at 8 a.m. June 27 they continued on their trip to Martins Fall "with 3 battaux".<sup>25</sup>

On July 29 at 5 p.m. Robert Goodwin and his men arrived back at Osnaburgh House from Martins Fall and the writer remarks on his journey of "only 17 days".<sup>26</sup> They gave the men 1 day of rest but on July 31 and August 1 they were "preparing cargo" and "loaded 3 boats in the evening". Early on August 2 "Mr. Goodwin and men set out for Red River.

On September 25, 1795 the man who kept the summer journal at Brandon House remarks "about 3 p.m. Mr. Goodwin and (others---) arrived in 3 battaux".<sup>27</sup> The following day Robert Goodwin resumed his duties as Master at the House and continued the journal.

Shortly thereafter, on October 2, he notes a recurrence of his gout, "self took bad with the Gout in my foot". Nevertheless he and his men continued to study the resources of the Plains environment. On October 3 he notes "men gathering some Hops to take down for a sample they are very numerous here". There are no following remarks on whether they found these wild hops useful, to make beer.

Throughout October he complains from time to time of the disability caused by his gout, as on October 4, "myself lame with the gout", and on October 8, "self bad with ye gout hardly able to walk".

On November 3, he refers back to his interest in the Mandans, and adds additional knowledge obtained about, them, saying that they "grow Pumpkins and many other things". During this winter he sent a party of his men to the Mandan Country and makes a later note of part of their transactions there.

An ever-present danger they were well aware of and usually prepared for was fire. In some journals at various houses, there was note of a barrel of water kept in the house to put out chimney fires, etc. On January 16, 1796 they had such a chimney fire but were able to put it out with minimal damage to their dwelling.

On the prairie they-found different resources than those afforded them in the Northern Bay area, and these they explored as other food possibilities apart from the buffalo-hunting. One such commodity was the Maple tree. On April 2 he notes "David Spence and James work getting Mapple juice to make sugar". They were learning as much as possible from both Indians and other more-seasoned traders. The overriding consideration was the amount of provisions they needed to transport on the long river route from Albany.

---

<sup>25</sup> H.B.C.A. B.155/a/11

<sup>26</sup> H.B.C.A. B.155/a/12?

<sup>27</sup> H.B.C.A. B.11/a/3

It was on the 3rd of April that he recorded what happened when he sent Mr. Millar to the Mandan Country. He had lent this man his watch for the trip. When the Indians saw it they demanded it as part payment for the horse they were bargaining for. They evidently refused to trade unless it was included and so Mr. Millar returned to Brandon House without the watch.

They set out on their journey to Osnaburgh House on May 10. During part of this trip Robert Goodwin was suffering from a severe cold. On May 14 he records "very bad with cold and sore throat scarcely able to speak".<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless they made good time, arriving at Osnaburgh House June 17 at 2 p.m. with 8 battaux. The increased number of boats gives the appearance of a greatly expanded trade, but it may as well have been that they packed them lightly to make haste. There seems to have been some expansion of trade, since they left Osnaburgh House later with 4 boats 1 more than the year previous. They had as well begun to establish some smaller encampments subsidiary to Brandon House.

Two days after their arrival at Osnaburgh, Robert Goodwin was prepared to leave for Martins Fall, but some others of the traders arrived from other inland establishments. He delayed his departure until the following day, June 20. By this time James Sutherland was getting a little testy about the large influx of visitors since, as he said, he did not have sufficient brandy to provide 64 men.

On this occasion Robert Goodwin traveled all the way to Albany in order to board the ship for a return to England.

On September 15 the Albany journal states "Mr. Robert Goodwin and two children, Mr. Goodwin's son and Mr. Clewstones daughter went on board the sloop".<sup>29</sup> The log of the Prince of Wales I also records as passengers "Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Goodwin's son". They left the James Bay Settlements on September 23.

The following year, 1797, the ships log records "left Gravesend June 24th for Orkneys and Hudson Bay".

Robert Goodwin debarked at Albany among other passengers on August 20, 1797.<sup>30</sup> The arrival of the ship, always in late August or early September did not permit time to proceed inland before winter set in, so he spent the following winter and spring at Albany Fort.

The Albany journal notes on October 3 "2 men brewing with Mr. Goodwin and Bunn with 7 men hauled the seine with little success".

<sup>28</sup> *H.B.C.A. B155/a/???*

<sup>29</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.3/a/98*

Apparently, the officers of the Company had been concerned for some time about educating their children, and at this time were making attempts to teach them themselves. On November 4 the entry reads in part, "Taylor, Mr. Goodwin, G--- Instruct the youths"..

During these fall months there are a number of references to their livestock. On October 16 ;"8 men went for the sheep on the Flatts caught 6 could not find the 7th three has died during the summer" October 26, " Jenkin came for men to bring the stray cow and calf home". On November 13 "housed 29 cattle four still in the Marsh". In the meantime they had slaughtered two and there was still the strayed cow and her calf. That would bring their herd size to 37, but on November 19 the writer notes "W. bull calf from Europe died". On November 25 they finally got their cow and calf home "by sled on the ice". Then on December 3, "the English cow calf dead thus our hopes of an English Breed are frustrated".

As was usual they had sent their wood-cutters out to camp, so on December 6 "Mr. Goodwin went to the wooders" and a week later, on December 13, "self and Mr. Goodwin went to the wooders". These trips were probably to check both on their welfare and their progress.

On February 7, 1798 an entry reads "Mr. Goodwin shot a white fox on the dunghill" Around Albany they shot and trapped a wide variety of foxes. They noted from time to time red foxes, silver or black, cross-bred and occasionally white arctic foxes. During these years the officers and men received credit for their own hunting and trapping but later this ceased.

Throughout this winter Robert Goodwin was busy preparing-and organizing the goods and supplies for the inland trade. For instance on February 20 "three men with Mr. Goodwin put up the Inland shot", February 21, "1 man with Mr. Goodwin attending the still;" again on February 26, "Mr. Martin with Mr. Goodwin attending the still"; April 4,"finished the distillation".

On April 20, a date that indicates a fairly early and untroubled spring, the writer notes "27 cattle went off (to the Marsh), 13 kept at home".

From this it seems evident that they had a slight increase in their herd by calving.

During this winter there had been some hunger among some of the Indians, but it did not reach the mass starvation level that occurred in some years.

In early May, Robert Goodwin had a return of his gout problem. On May 3 the reference to him reads, "Mr. Goodwin in much pain", on May 4, "Mr. Goodwin confined to his bed", and on May 5 "Mr.

---

<sup>30</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.3/a/101*

Goodwin better". Nonetheless, on May 16 the journal states, "at noon Mr. Goodwin with 22 men and 27 Indians set out in two large and two small boats lightly loaded with 2 Battaux in tow for M. fall". On the following day the Chief states, "2 Indians went express with the Inland packet to Mr. Goodwin". A day later "the packeters returned from Mr. Goodwin Boats going on well". However, on May 31 "an Indian brought a letter from Mr. Goodwin bad hopes of the large Boats reaching the fall". This would suggest along with the early pasturing of their animals that it was a low water year.

On June 19 the Chief (McNab) arrived at Martin's Fall "where I found Mr. Goodwin and all well". In the meantime, Robert Goodwin had reached Martin's Fall on June 4 and had commenced keeping a journal there. He notes that they arrived "a little after 4 p.m."<sup>31</sup> and "Gave all hands grog twice being his Majesty's birthday". The following day he sent some of the men back to Albany.

June 5th, while at Martin's Fall, Robert Goodwin wrote a letter to the Chief about their progress and other company business. At the end of the letter is a postscript of a more personal nature. It reads "There is a Box marked for Me that was in the Hill House if you do not send her up wish you to be so good to open her having several things in it."

On June 9, 10; 11, 12 he reports on the state of his own health; "self taken with a fit of the Gout", "self very lame," "self scarcely able to walk", self very ill with the Gout". On the 16th he notes, "fire surrounded the house" and it took "all hands to quash". On June 18 there is an uncommon reference to mosquitoes. Among other duties and assignments is recorded "I repairs my canopy for ye Muskatoes".

The journal recordings were taken over by Robert Jackman on June 19, and from that point until Robert Goodwin's departure for Brandon House, there is a single entry about his activity. This occurred on June 21 when an Indian with a badly infected hand required medical assistance. It reads "the Indian set off Mr. Goodwin having given him Salve and dressing for his hand".

During those weeks, everyone had been busy transporting more supplies and sending some furs downriver to Albany. On July 12, "Mr. Goodwin land his men) set out in two Battaux for Inland". He carried a letter to Thomas Millar informing him to transfer the charge of Brandon House back to Robert Goodwin. He arrived there on September 22, 1798.

Evidently here, as well as at Osnaburgh House and Albany, the Indians had become aware of his medical training, because on September 28, among other daily occurrences, he notes "an Indian family brot

---

<sup>31</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.123/a/5??*



in a young lad that had the misfortune a few days ago to have his leg shot thro' by accident. I must maintain him should he live".<sup>32</sup>

October went on quite routinely except that for about a week, Robert Goodwin was complaining of a severe sore throat, so bad that on October 24, he said he was "not capable to perform Divine Service". During this same month he records that they have a plague of mice; on October 27, "self making traps for to try to get mice for we are overrun with them".

The success of buffalo-hunting was quite variable and during this early winter, as in others, he notes that they did not always succeed on a trip. This year, however, on a couple of occasions the hunter did shoot a "Cabray" as he called it. The term is a corruption of the French, Cabret - the pronghorn antelope. Therefore, there were a few at the time in the central Manitoba area.

On December 3, some trading Indians approached him with the request that they be given a flag such as they flew at the house. He said it was fortunate that he had been given a new one by the Albany, Chief, so he was able to satisfy the Indians on this occasion. He went on to remark that it would be a good thing to have a supply so they could comply with such requests. In the night that followed, several bands of Indians were drinking outside their gates and as usual on such occasions the English set out a watchman. In the course of the night, two women quarrelled about the attentions of one of the Indian men, and one woman undertook to hang herself. The watchman was able to reach her quickly to cut her down and save her life.

As in the Bay area, men exposed to long hours of outdoor work or travel in the late winter suffered from snowblindness at times. On March 13, 1799 the journal entry reads, "James Slator snow-blind".

On March 28, in beginning their preparations for the summer trip, "traded from them (an Indian band) 2 large tents to cut up in covers for ye crafts". A few days later, he complains again about a severe sore throat, and about two weeks later another man, Mr. Prince, was very ill with a sore throat so severe that he could not swallow. He was ill about ten days and did not begin to recover until Robert Goodwin had treated him with "a blister".

During April and early May they were preoccupied with their trip preparations and on May 14 he remarks, "the others making a sail out of the flour bags and drest leather together". On May 16 he notes "the South Plains all on fire opposite our Houses". Early that same morning they loaded their boats and set out from Brandon House.

---

<sup>32</sup> H.B.C.A. B.22/a/5??

They arrived back at Brandon House at 2 p.m. September 30, and immediately set to work with their fall chores. By this time they must have had a fairly large planting of potatoes, for on October 2 -Robert Goodwin states, "6 men taking up potatoes".<sup>33</sup> By this time,, too, the Sioux were increasingly warlike to the South, so when on October 10 "9 a.m. (six men) set off for the Mandans - hope they will keep clear of ye Sioux", he had some reason to be concerned for their safety. The route they followed was almost due south through the Turtle Mountains and hopefully westward of the Sioux.

A few days later he again is troubled by a severe sore throat, but it evidently did not prevent him from carrying out his trading negotiations, for on October 15 he notes, "traded a fine young horse to assist in hauling meat and firewood; two of our horses being sent to the Mandans, one mare and foal thrived in the summer, one killed by wolves at ye Halfway bank when the men came to meet the Battaux".

From late October to early November he is again beset by his gout problem, noted especially on October 17, "self poorly with a fit of ye Gout" and November 10 "self cannot lift my arm to my head for gouty pains". Buffalo-hunting this winter was not especially rewarding either for themselves or the Indians. On November 6 he records, "Mr. Prince and Persy Sutherland came home with part of an old scabby bull," this being after several unsuccessful forays.

On November 8 part of the entry reads, "Taylor making Leather Trowsers for the men". On November 23, "men packing furs in the hand press the mice destroying them being so numerous have killed upwards of 100". On December 1 and December 11 he engaged two Indians. December 1, "paid an Indian for smoking leather and other odd jobs about the House"; December 11 "engaged Indian to make snow shoes".

When his trading party returned from the Mandans, he records on December 20 what happened to one of his horses; "My fine black horse killed himself at ye Mandans running after ye mares by driving a piece of wood through his eye into his head and died on the spot".

On January 7, 1800 he notes, "Hugh Linklater, killed a Bull at Oak Creek". During this period he was making preparations to extend their gardens. He had men collecting "stockadoes, readying for an enclosed garden east of the house - I intend to plant Indian corn in ye old garden for my Horses to eat in winter".. At the end of January he remarks on the plight of the Indians.-"The Assinibois are starving eating their dogs such a year as this was never seen": In early February he also remarks on the lack of trade by the N.W. and "Free" traders but ends "for they do not run after Indians as we do here".

<sup>33</sup> H.B.C.A. B.22/a/6

Shortly afterwards he muses on the fact that it is apparently not a Leap Year and whether or not February ought to have 28 or 29 days. However, he must have had some sort of calendar provided since he concludes that if there were 29 days in February, Easter would not fall on the right day. It seems fair to believe that what he had was a church calendar.

In early March a message was brought to him that some Indians wanted to trade their furs but were afraid they would be intercepted by the other traders. On March 8 he sent out a party to meet them, but said he had to remain at the house, "having no one that understands Assiniboin except myself."

One day later a runner came from an Indian Chief with a message that his daughter had died and he wanted Brandy. There is more than a hint of cynicism in his record "made him a present of a 2 G. Keg of liquor to drown his sorrow".

On March 12 he writes, "George Henderson sick no medicine to give him." On March 18, he inserts laconically "an Indian shot another". On March 19 with spring breaking, "sent 2 men to gather Maple juice".

In early April he records that he had another sore throat. April 13th which was Easter,-he records as follows: "Easter Saboath. Divine service gave the men grog this day". He brings events up to date on April 25 when he remarks that he has had, over some time, to give pemmican to "begging starving Indians".

Although the preceding winter had apparently been quite dry with -little snowfall, il mid-April they had-a sudden storm with heavy snowfall. Their men were busy for several days afterwards "wheeling" snow out of the yard. Therefore it comas as a surprise to encounter the entry for April 27, "the plains all on fire." These fires must have been started by man because they were too early in the year to occur naturally.

On April 30 Robert Goodwin notes that their fresh meat is finished. During the fall and winter hunting they were able to accumulate in most years a fair supply of meat, but as spring wore on it became more difficult to preserve it. This meant constant inspection and removal of that which was spoiling.

On May 1, 1800 they, "began to lay the foundation of a new House for the men". This building program would progress during his absence over the summer. On May 7, "at 9 a.m. set off in 6 Battaux for Osnaburgh. "

He was accompanied by 19 men, leaving 10 at Brandon House. He closes this journal with the addition of a remark that they are never provided enough "European Meat" to last their return trip, "never receive more than 25 days European Meat to carry the men from Osnaburgh to pointau Futre."

They returned to Brandon House on the evening of September 12. The next journal begins September 13, "arrived late last night".<sup>34</sup> They immediately began to put into effect plans to improve their establishment a little more. On September 30, "sent men to ye woods for logs to make a new ice house". Again, he sent off a trading party to the Mandans and once again during the latter part of October and early November he had a protracted seige of his old gout problem. Also during November he said he "gave 2 canoes Indians a kettle of meat they look starved like."

On December 23 he adds an N.B. to his usual daily entry, "what is very surprizing 2 young dogs I sent to ye Mandans returned by themselves. I hope no enemy has fell in with our men." Later on the men did return safely, but it is indeed surprising that the dogs, running away from the Mandan village, made their way back to Brandon House, a long trek over the prairies.

During the new year, 1801, Robert Goodwin's health periodically gave him some problems, jut as well the health of the other men required his attention. On February 11 he writes, "Andrew Fubbister stuck a bone in his throat and cannot be removed." This problem went on for some time, for on February 19 he says, "Fubbister very bad". Nevertheless, the man must eventually have recovered because there is nothing recorded to indicate otherwise.

Among other shortages, he also had difficulty with medical supplies. On April 1 he exclaims, "God only knows where I am to get Medicines"

It seems that usually before they began their trips they had a day of target-practice. On April 29 he records such a day but adds his own twist, "The men exercising the small arms at the Target, the best shot to receive a Buffalo Robe".

During these years, their horses when not in use, grazed out on the plain. He had learned about hobbling them with weights so they could not wander too far. On thy 7 he went out and gelded three of them, using the term "cut" which is still used occasionally. On May 9 he records "one of my cut horses very sick owing to continued cold and bad weather, self cutting potatoes for seed". Leaving the horses on the plains obviously risked attacks by wolves, and also the possibility that they did not thrive on the dry buffalo grass over the winter. He had lost one in his first year due to either a massive infection or severe wounds that did not heal. His experiences in this regard probably led to his interest in finding an alternate winter feed for them, the Indian corn he mentions earlier. At this time the sick horse died on May 10 and he performed an autopsy on it.

---

<sup>34</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.22/a/8*

May 22nd when he left on his summer trip was the last time he saw Brandon House. The man who replaced him was John McKay and he makes several references to Robert Goodwin. On his trip to Brandon House, August 19 he notes, "camped in Mr. Goodwin's narrows",<sup>35</sup> on October 16, "the Musquitoe came in with an old horse lent to him by Mr. Goodwin".

John McKay displays some humour when he says on October 26, "at noon all the Indians went off drunk as possible. I really believe their horses and dogs were drunk also."

The winter of 1801 - 1802 was apparently a poor one for game, and on January 20 he records, "4 puppies died for want of food it seems dogs cannot live on potatoes as well as man". On February 19 he says further, "Indians starving they may thank Mr. Goodwin for planting so many potatoes or some of them would have surely starved and ourselves very bad off indeed".

It is of interest that among the band leaders Robert Goodwin knew there were several that signed the agreement for land transfer with Lord Selkirk in 1817. Robert Goodwin mentioned such names as The Crane, The Wolverine, The Beggar, The Blackman, The Hawk, The White Partridge and The Bear. On Lord Selkirk's map there is one clearly, The Blackman and one, likely, The Wolverine.

At Osnaburgh House in 1800 Robert Goodwin is recorded as arriving with 2 boats on July 20. On July 22 the note reads Mr. Goodwin's men making their bread in the evening 3 of the Red River Boats set off, and the following day, July 23 "Mr. Goodwin set off in the evening."<sup>36</sup>

In 1801, on June 24 the note records their arrival as follows "Masters Goodwin, Vince, Sutherland, Cobb and Miller arrived with 9 boats all well loaded with furs." They departed for Martins Fall 3 days later, "This morning Mr. Goodwin, Vince and Miller set off for Martins Fall with 4 boats". There is a remarkable difference in the length of time the trip took them in these two successive years, and one can only speculate on a difference of water levels in the river systems they had to travel.

Having left Brandon House on May 22nd, Robert Goodwin reached Martin's Fall on July 4th. There he met John Hodgson and the two proceeded down-river to Albany. John Hodgson's journal entry for July 16 reads, "This day about 2 p.m. I arrived at the Factory in company with Mr. Goodwin."<sup>37</sup>

The journal for the 1801-1802 season is one of the few Albany journals that is missing. There is however no indication that Robert Goodwin went to England, so it is quite likely that he spent the next several years at Albany. The journal for 1802-1803 beginning on August 25 does not record his arrival by

<sup>35</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.22/a/9*

<sup>36</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/16?*

ship. The first record of him during this year is on August 27, "myself and Mr. Goodwin with 2 men packing Goods for Martin's Fall and Henley".<sup>38</sup>

During the next few days they sent off these goods and started their fall goose hunt. On September 14 there is a note "self and Mr. Goodwin putting warehouse in order". On September 21 it reads, "self and Mr. Goodwin opening out cargo and stowing them away in the warehouse". On the following day with the fall freighting and the goose hunt in full operation, he notes "Mr. Goodwin, the surgeon and self (3 people) are all at present at home". On September 27 the entry states, "Mr. Goodwin and boys taking up vegetables".

The note for October 1 reads, "self and Mr. Goodwin in the warehouse all day with Indians, Jas Hodgson assisting-Mr. Goodwin being rather infirm".

At the end of January 1803 they began their liquor distillation. This process was recorded on several occasions. January 31, "This day began the process of rectification of Spirits, myself Mr. Goodwin Jas Hodgson and Steward attending it." It is mentioned again on February 21, and then on March 21 "distillation hereby completed".

They had difficulty again this year with the reappearance of Scurvy. April 18 states, "3 men sick with the Scurvy". They had found a different treatment however, and on April 25 the report on the men states, "The people afflicted with the Scurvy recovering fast, they constantly use the Malt Essence".

After the river opened, Robert Goodwin preceded the Chief to Martin's Fall. The entry on May 24 reads, "Reed a few lines from Mr. Goodwin who says the water is good but the ice on the shores very high". The Chief himself left the Factory for Martin's Fall on June 18, and they returned to Albany together on July 13. For the next few days Robert Goodwin was busy in the warehouse, as is noted on July 14, "Mr. Goodwin and Mr. McCormick assisting in overhauling stock;" July 16 "Mr. Goodwin in the warehouse with Indians giving Summer Debt".

Beginning in late January 1804, Robert Goodwin was again much involved with the distillation of liquor, which covered a period of about three months.

On May 10 a party was sent off to Martin's Fall and the entry ends "also Mr. Goodwin as passenger to resume his station at R.R."

<sup>37</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/104

<sup>38</sup> H.B.C.A. B.3/a/105

On May 19 the Chief received a letter from Robert Goodwin saying that "the large boats must be left at Henley". On May 24 there was another letter saying that Robert Goodwin with 2 other men "could not get above Old Henley".

On June 11 the Chief himself departed for Martins Fall, while he was there he learned from the men coming down from the interior that John McKay had disobeyed his order to leave Brandon House, making it necessary to reassign Robert Goodwin to Osnaburgh House.

He reached Osnaburgh on August 6, 1804, "I arrived this day."<sup>39</sup> On the 8th he notes, "self bad with the Rheumatism". On September 10, he says, "In the night obliged to take one Chief into the House some of the Indians cut his nose nearly off and one side of his face". On August 15 he notes, "Indians brot meat and berries".

During the fall they began building a new house at Osnaburgh and he mentions some progress, but this journal becomes very sketchy. It becomes obvious from his frequent remarks about the state of his health that he was having great difficulty carrying on. In passing he does remark on the fact that it was another winter of starvation among the Indians.

During January, February and March, 1805 he seems to be quite crippled and frequently unable to move around much. However, the work assignments of his men went on, and on May 17 he notes "men finished digging the garden".

June 12, 1805 was his last journal entry, and the journal ends abruptly with no further entries by anyone. Robert Goodwin died on June 22, 1805. The Chief received the news of his death while at Martin's Fall, and the writer of the summer journal at Albany received the news on July 6, when "2 boats returned from Henley and Martin's Falls, brought the disagreeable news of Mr. Goodwin's death, the 22nd ULT. on his journey to Martin's Fall".

On reading the Martin's Fall journal of the Chief, it appears that the above statement was incorrect. It seems fairly certain that Robert Goodwin never did set out from Osnaburgh, that his health rapidly deteriorated to the point where they could not move him. The Chief describes it as the gout going to his stomach. Did he have a heart attack?

Later on at Albany, On August 28 "in the Evening put up Mr. Goodwins' property to auction which produced £23.16." This was a customary practice with the personal effects of the men who died in the service of the company. In many instances this auction would have concluded the affairs of the man as far as

the company was concerned, with the exception of notifying relatives when the ship reached London. However, such was not the case for Robert Goodwin, as indeed for several others.

Although the journals give a frequent - in some periods, daily, account of his whereabouts and activities, there was another side of his life that seldom intruded into the official documents of the company. The journals of this time were sent annually to the headquarters in London, and the policy had been to discourage any firm connections with the Indians except for the furtherance of trade. At the same time, the Company policy did not permit wives or families to accompany the men, nor did they try to convert the Indians by sending Church representatives or missionaries.

The men who came out must have of necessity, led very hard and lonely lives, and inevitably, with encouragement from the Indians themselves, they did take up with Indian women. Robert Goodwin was one of those who did this. Apparently he had a long-term relationship with one called Mistigoose. By her he had 3 daughters and the son he took to England in 1796.

After the death of Mistigoose somewhere around 1800, he established a relationship with Jenny, daughter of Puckatawanish, an Indian "Lieutenant" trading at Albany. By her he had 1 daughter, Anne.<sup>40</sup>

He apparently had friendly feelings for all Indian women and while at Albany bought at his own expense ribbons and other fripperies to delight them. This later was taken up as company policy. His attitude was at variance with the viewpoint of his employers, as he sought to acquaint Indian women with English styles of clothing. He was also among those men who felt that their children should be educated and receive work training. He actively worked towards this end, but did not live long enough to see the school that was established at Albany. The efforts of these interested men were at best spasmodic and diluted by other more pressing duties.

It is evident that he felt a real sense of responsibility toward his own children. While in England in 1797 he had a will drawn up providing a small legacy for them. In 1803, after the birth of Anne he wrote a codicil to that will to include Jenny and Anne, possibly with the presentiment that he would not live many years.

During his career with the Hudson Bay Company he seems to have achieved a modest prosperity. Certainly he did not become as rich as some other men, but the investment of £500 at 3% did provide for some "extras" for those five people he left behind in North America. This money was paid out to his legatees

<sup>39</sup> *H.B.C.A. B.155/a/1??*

<sup>40</sup> *H.B.C.A. A.36/7 fo.17d*



through the Company for many years, in fact until the death of Margaret in 1881. She was the last survivor, dying in Manitoba where she had moved with her husband and family.

The fate of his son, William Adolphus Barmby Goodwin, who he took to England in 1796, is unknown.

## ROBERT GOODWIN - SUMMARY

- ? 1761 - Born - England
- May 3, 1781 - signed H.B.C. contract as Surgeon
- departed to North America
- September 1, 1781 - disembarked at Eastman
- June 8, 1782 - left Eastman for Albany Fort,  
via Moose Fort
- June 22, 1782 - arrived at Albany Fort
- 1782 -September 5, 1786 - Surgeon at Albany Fort, leaving for  
England on September 5.
- August 30, 1787 - returned to Albany Fort as fur trader.
- September 13, 1787 - left Albany for inland assignment.
- October 7, 1787 - February 13, 1788 at Gloucester House  
with John Kipling.
- February 13, 1788 - left Gloucester House to take over  
Osnaburgh House as Master.
- February 26, 1788 - arrived at Osnaburgh House.
- 1788 -July 31, 1794 - Master at Osnaburgh. House, with annual  
trip downriver each summer.
- October 1, 1794 - arrived at Brandon House as Master.
- 1794 - May 10, 1796 - Master at Brandon House with annual  
trip down the Albany River.
- September 15, 1796 - embarked for England from Albany Fort  
with his son.
- August 20, 1797 - arrived back at Albany Fort.
- 1797 - May 16, 1798 - at Albany Fort
- May 16, 1798 - left Albany for Martin's Fall.
- July 12, 1798 - left Martin's Fall for Brandon House.
- September 22, 1798 - arrived to take up his charge at Brandon  
House.
- 1798 - May 22, 1801 - Master at Brandon House, with annual trip  
down the river systems to Martin's Fall.
- ? 1801 - 1804 - Second to Chief at Albany.  
(Albany journal 1801 - 1802 missing)
- May 10, 1804 - left Albany to resume Brandon House post,  
but was reassigned to Osnaburgh House.
- August 6, 1804 - arrived at Osnaburgh House.
- June 22, 1805 - death occurred at Osnaburgh House.