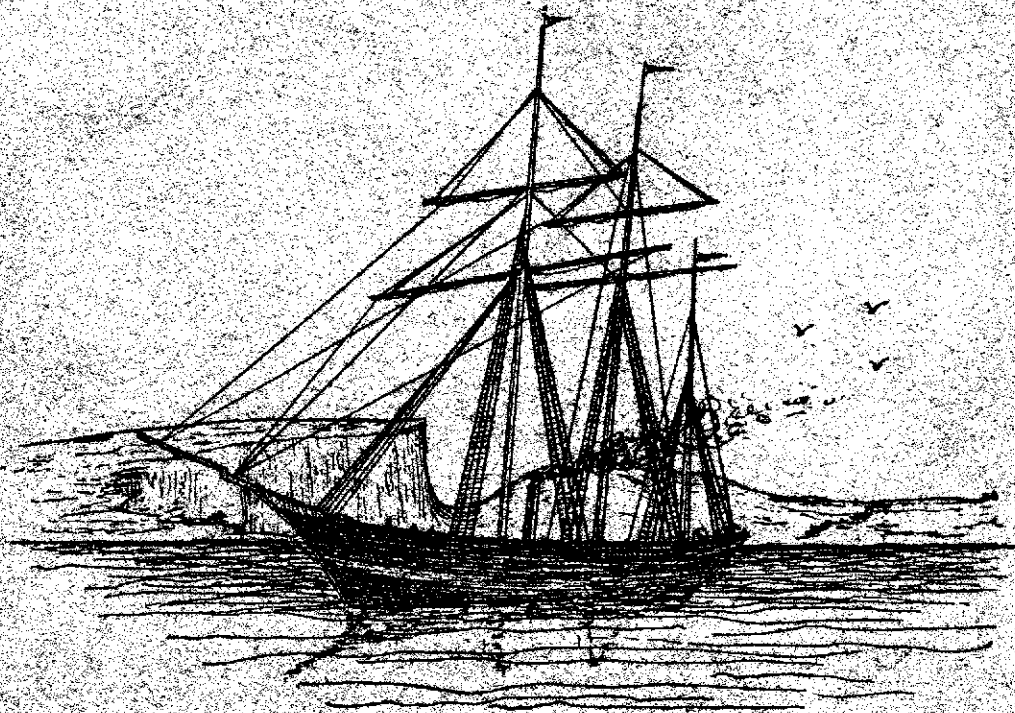


NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MAN
MERCURY SERIES
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OF CANADA PAPER NO. 131

MUSÉE NATIONAL DE L'HOMME
COLLECTION MERCURE
COMMISSION ARCHÉOLOGIQUE
DU CANADA DOSSIER N° 131

THE FRANKLIN ERA IN
CANADIAN ARCTIC HISTORY
1845 - 1859

Edited by Patricia D. Sutherland



National Museums
of Canada

Musées nationaux
du Canada

Canada

OTTAWA 1985

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN IN ALASKA

John R. Bockstoce

Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum,
New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740, U.S.A.

Abstract

This paper examines the chronology, strategy and logistics of the search for Franklin in Alaska, 1848-1854.

Résumé

Cet article examine la chronologie, la stratégie et la logistique des recherches effectuées en Alaska de 1848 à 1854 pour retrouver Franklin.

In January 1848, HMS *Plover* sailed from England on a seven year voyage to Bering Strait and the western Arctic. She was sent in search of Sir John Franklin's expedition which nearly three years before had vanished into the Arctic while searching for a northwest passage. The *Plover's* was the first departure of the 16 sea expeditions and five land expeditions that took part in the search. Although more than three quarters of a million pounds were spent on the effort, at the beginning no one knew where Franklin had gone and at the end only one essential fact was confirmed: that Franklin and all his men had perished (Gibson 1937: 53).

Since the *Plover's* departure, a number of writers have addressed the subject of the search for Franklin, but most of them have focussed on the searches in the eastern Arctic. The *Plover's* voyage, and indeed the entire search for Franklin in Alaska, has received comparatively little attention for two reasons. First, the fleet of eight ships that operated via Bering Strait was only about a fourth the size

of the eastern fleet. Second, although the operations in the eastern Arctic were for the most part too far north and west of where Franklin's men were lost, they were at least nearer than were the Alaskan searches, which took place between 1500 and 3000 kilometers from the last position of Franklin's ships. Nevertheless, the Alaskan searches had a sound basis in logic and were carried out efficiently, despite the impediment of being 27,000 kilometers by sea from England and receiving communications only once a year.

When Franklin departed from England in 1845 he headed a superbly outfitted expedition. He had an excellent staff and two strong ships. His provisions were ample for three years with a year's leeway. There was little concern for the men's safety until two years had passed without word from the expedition. At that point, with anxiety rising, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty began planning expeditions to meet Franklin the following year, but his orders had been drafted so loosely that it was impossible to know where he had gone.

Depending on how successful he had been in traversing a northwest passage, Franklin's expedition could have been found anywhere in the vast area from Baffin Bay to Bering Strait. To cover the possibilities, the Admiralty sent out three expeditions in 1848.

The eastern expedition was led by Sir James Clark Ross who was given two ships, HMS *Enterprise* and HMS *Investigator*. They were to follow Franklin's presumed route, entering the Arctic via Baffin Bay and Lancaster Sound. The second expedition, led by Sir John Richardson and assisted by Dr. John Rae of the Hudson's Bay Company, was to concentrate on the central area. They were to descend the Mackenzie River and travel east along the continental coast as far as Coppermine River. If Franklin had completed part of a northwest passage, he might be found on this stretch of coast.

The third expedition was to enter the Arctic from the west via Bering Strait. Two ships were chosen for the western expedition. One, HMS *Herald*, under Captain Henry Kellett, was at that time engaged in charting the west coast of Central America. To assist the *Herald* the Admiralty planned to send out from England HMS *Plover*, a sturdy, beamy vessel that had formerly been in the East India Company's service. The *Plover*, laden with supplies, was to winter at Bering Strait as a depot ship for Franklin.

The Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty planned to have the *Plover* meet the *Herald* at Panama in the spring of 1848. The ships were to sail together to the town of Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula. There they were to take aboard interpreters for their work in the north. The ships were supposed to reach Bering Strait about July 1, 1848 and then were to send four boats north along the Alaskan coast to search for a good winter harbour for the *Plover*. The *Herald* was then to transfer additional supplies to the *Plover*

before heading south for the winter. The Lords of the Admiralty also decided to send Lieutenant W.J.S. Pullen to join the *Plover* at Panama. He was to lead a boat expedition along the north coast of Alaska as far as the Mackenzie River, searching for evidence of Franklin.

The western and central expeditions thus were intended to cover the entire continental coast of North America from Bering Strait to the Coppermine River in the summer of 1848. But the western division of the search started badly. Almost at once the plans were changed, and for the next six years the expeditions in the west had to improvise in order to accomplish their mission.

Possibly recognizing that only one vessel would be needed to procure intelligence and interpreters while the other's time could be more profitably spent at Bering Strait, the Admiralty changed the *Plover's* orders. She was instructed to go directly to Bering Strait from Panama. The *Herald* alone would now stop at Petropavlovsk.

Further complications set in. The *Herald's* captain, Henry Kellett, found that there were not enough fresh provisions available at Panama for both the *Herald* and the *Plover*. By the end of March 1848, Rear Admiral G.F. Seymour, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy's Pacific Station at Valparaiso, Chile, realized that time was getting very short for the expedition to reach Bering Strait during the brief season of open water. He sent a steamer to Panama to tow the *Herald* west, out of the calms of the Gulf of Panama, so that she could sail to Honolulu quickly. There she could take on provisions in a port accustomed to supplying vast quantities of stores for the American whaling fleet. At Honolulu the *Herald* could also wait for the *Plover*. The *Plover* was already at sea, but it was likely that she would touch at one of the ports on the west coast of south America. Seymour

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN IN ALASKA

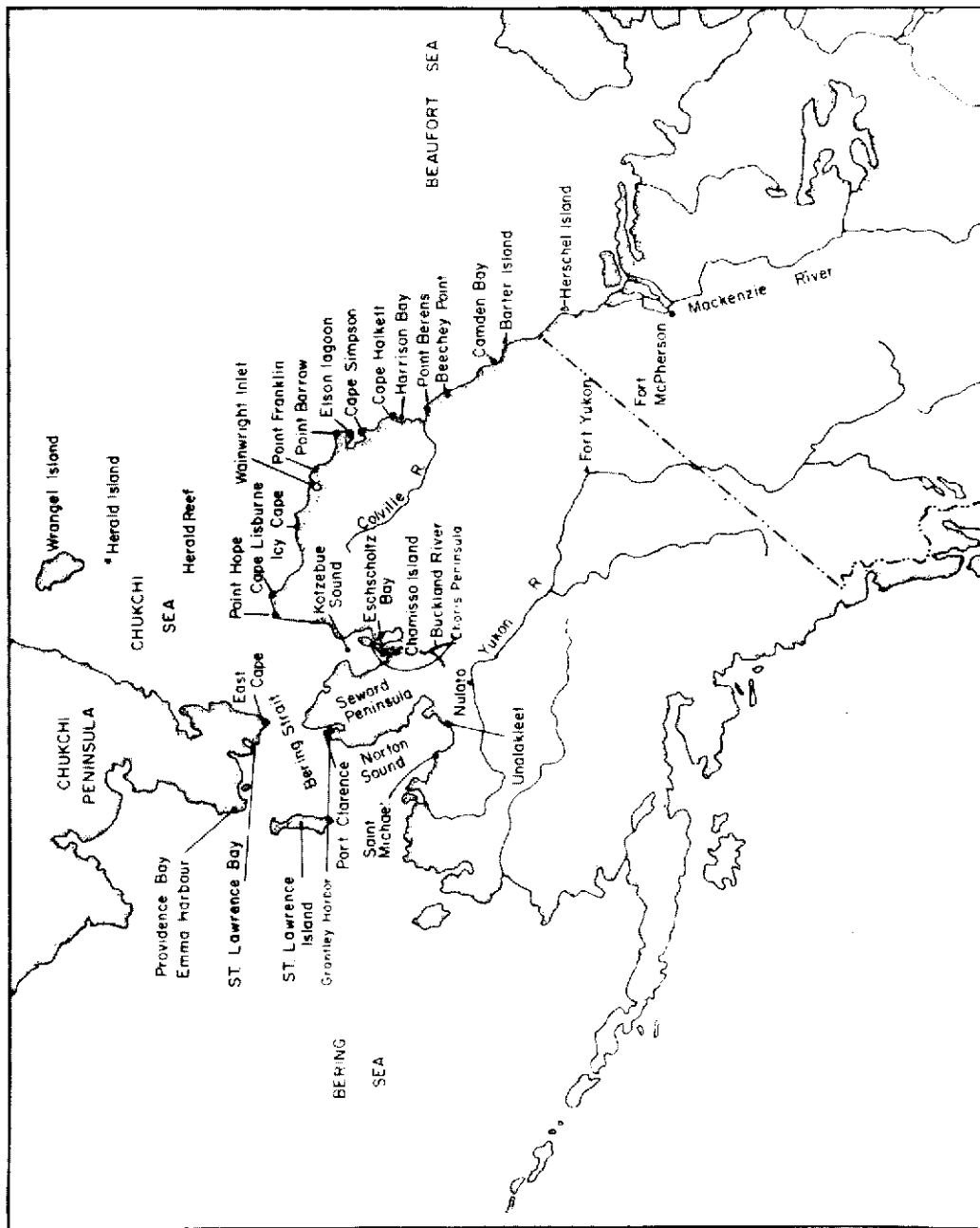


Figure 1: Map of Alaska, showing locations mentioned in text.

planned to instruct her captain, Commander T.E.L. Moore, to go directly to Hawaii (Great Britain 1848: 1, 74-81; 1849a: 11-20).

This change of plan meant that Lieutenant Pullen arrived in Panama only to find that the *Plower* would not touch there. With no way to join the *Plower* until the following summer, Pullen served aboard HMS *Asia*, the flagship of the Pacific fleet, until 1849 when he was taken aboard the *Herald* for her return to Bering Strait (Pullen 1979: 27-30). The *Plower* herself was forcing another change in the already much-changed plans. Although she proved to be sea-kindly, the *Plower* was slow. By May, when she should have been near Hawaii, she had only reached the Falkland Islands.

Also in May, the *Herald* left Panama under tow. Apparently Kellett had been able to obtain his provisions in Central America after all, because he sent his companion surveying vessel, HMS *Pandora*, to Honolulu to wait for the *Plower* while he headed for Kamchatka. But the *Plower* was moving so slowly that not until July 4 did she reach Callao, Lima's seaport. By then the *Herald* was nearly 10,000 kilometers ahead of her.

The *Herald* was also moving slowly. On August 8, a month after she was due in Bering Strait according to instructions, she reached Petropavlovsk, the last remotely civilized outpost on the way to her destination. Kellett remained there a week, learning what he could of the land and seas before him, and hoping in vain that the *Plower* might overtake him. Kellett knew, however, that the autumn weather in Bering Strait was brutal; if he were to have any time for searching for Franklin in 1848, he had to push on at once (Seeman 1853, II: 5-9).

The *Herald* arrived at St. Michael, a Russian American Company trading post at the mouth of the Yukon River, at the beginning of September. There, Kellett took aboard an interpreter, Pavil Oglayuk. Bosky,

as the British called him, was a half-breed native who had lived for a time in Bodega Bay, California. Although he spoke no English, and the British spoke no Russian, they could communicate in Spanish (Great Britain 1849a: 16; Seeman 1853, II: 8).

On September 14 the *Herald* reached Chamisso Island in Kotzebue Sound, north of Bering Strait. The men climbed to the top of the island and found a monument pole with carved records of Kotzebue's discovery of the sound in 1816, of subsequent visits by Russian vessels, and of Frederick William Beechey's visit in 1826, but there was no record of Franklin having visited the island. The *Herald* was the first British vessel to pass north of Bering Strait in 22 years (Ray 1983: 95-102).

Mid-September is late in the arctic autumn. Most of the natives who camped at Chamisso in the summer had already moved up the rivers to their winter quarters. The sailors found only four natives, and they were too frightened to be of much use as informants. One, however, told Bosky an odd tale, recounted by one of the *Herald's* crew:

Our Russian interpreter was here informed by an old man, that he had heard from a person who had just arrived from the head of the Buckland River, that "he had seen a party of men dressed like sailors, with an officer, having a gold band on his cap and brass buttons. They had come from a main body, who were further inland, and had bought up all the venison; they could not speak, or make themselves understood to any of the natives; the spot where they are is ten days' journey from this overland, but a boat could reach it in a very short time." (Euryalus 1860: 228-29).

"A piece of information which", according to Berthold Seeman, the naturalist aboard the *Herald*, "opened a field for various but fruitless endeavours."

The *Herald's* men made a brief reconnaissance of Eschscholtz Bay to check on the rumour, but the weather quickly turned so cold that Kellett feared that he might be frozen in for the winter. They hoisted anchor on September 29 and passed through Bering Strait on October 2.

Heavy weather forced them to pass by St. Michael on their way south, because the village sits exposed in a cul-de-sac surrounded by very shallow water. Shortening the trip to the tropics no doubt pleased the sailors, but Bosky could hardly have been pleased: the *Herald's* next port of call was Petropavlovsk, where Kellett put the interpreter ashore to spend the winter. It was a year before Bosky was able to return to his home in St. Michael. He was payed off at the rate of a dollar a day for his summer's work, plus some winter clothing from the ship's stores. The *Herald* then headed for Mazatlan, Mexico, to resume her surveying duties until her return to Bering Strait the following summer (HMS *Herald* logbook; Seaman 1853, II: 70).

In the meantime, no one knew where the *Plover* was. After the *Plover* had left Hawaii on August 25, it had taken her a month to reach the Aleutian Islands. Moore then sailed her toward Bering Strait via the safest but longest route, going west around the Aleutians, a detour which added 1500 kilometers to the voyage. The *Plover* reached St. Lawrence Island near Bering Strait in the middle of October, having unknowingly passed the southbound *Herald* about a week before. The island was covered with snow, and the men knew that winter was not far away.

Moore pressed on, but he was under a severe handicap: he had not received the charts of the area that the Admiralty had sent him. He sailed northward cautiously, sounding frequently as he worked his way around the west end of Saint Lawrence Island. Three days later he saw that the *Plover* was not only making no progress

against the northeast wind and current, but had slipped back 50 kilometers on her previous day's position. He took the most sensible course of action. Closing with the shore of the Chukchi Peninsula, he began searching for a sheltered winter anchorage (Great Britain 1850: 35; HMS *Plover* logbook).

He was lucky. Almost at once the men spotted a cleft in the high hills before them, and Moore sent two boats to examine it. The report came back that it was a deep bay with a safe anchorage behind a low sandspit. In the meantime a number of the local natives paddled out to the *Plover* and indicated that fresh water was available on shore. The next day Moore took the *Plover* inshore and anchored at the mouth of the bay (Hooper 1853: 12).

Moore then canvassed his officers on how best to proceed. Should they push on to Bering Strait? It was late in the season. They might be trapped by ice and unable to find a safe harbour. Should they drop back to Petropavlovsk? There their usefulness as a searching party would be nil. Or should they stay where they were, in this unexplored but promising harbour? The answer was clear. They stayed. A few days later the water began to freeze. Moore moved the *Plover* into the bay and into an inner embayment which he called Emma Harbour. The large outer bay he named Providence Bay, and the anchorage behind the sandspit Plover Bay.

Emma Harbour was a good choice. It was well protected from moving ice, had fresh water, and nearby was a Chukchi village of seven huts. On the slopes of the surrounding hills the men could see the village's reindeer herd grazing. Moore reasoned that he would be able to barter for fresh meat during the winter, and thus be able to combat the onset of scurvy.

On October 28 Moore had chosen the wintering site. The next day the sailors began sending down the *Plover's* yards, housing-in the upper deck and building a

house on shore for supplies. The house on shore freed space in the ship and allowed for an emergency cache of provisions should the ship be lost to ice or fire during the winter. All was ready on November 8. Ten days later the *Plover* was firmly frozen in and the natives began driving out to the ship with their dog teams.

The Englishmen got along extremely well with the Siberian natives. Throughout the winter natives visited the *Plover* almost daily, often bringing presents of reindeer meat. Moore developed a particularly warm relationship with the local chief, Akool. When on December 20 a granddaughter was born to Akool, the men aboard the *Plover* fired a 21-gun salute in honour of the occasion. Moore christened the child on December 28 -- surely the first christening to take place on the Chukchi Peninsula. In celebration they fired rockets from the ship.

A by-product of the sailors' association with the Chukchi was the natives' acquisition of a taste for alcoholic spirits, which they called *tanuk*. The word "tanuk" was attributed to Moore; it was said that when Moore was on the trail he would occasionally stop for a drink of rum, saying to his guide, "Come Joe, let's take our tonic."

Whenever the natives visited the ship, the sailors quizzed them for information about any white men that might have been reported in the country, and as soon as the men had learned a bit of the native language Moore sent out travelling parties to search for Franklin's men. One of these parties, led by the mate William Hulme Hooper, reached as far as East Cape at Bering Strait to check on the report of a shipwreck near there. The rumour may well have been a garbled account of the sighting of the whaling bark *Superior*. In the summer of 1848 the *Superior's* Captain, Thomas Roys, had sailed her 1500 kilometers beyond the rest of the whaling fleet to explore for whales in the Bering Strait

region. He spent a month cruising there, and the *Superior* and the *Herald* were probably the only foreign vessels to pass through Bering Strait that summer.

By the spring of 1849 men of the *Herald* and the *Plover* had honed their skills in polar navigation, and the *Plover's* men had developed skills for living through the Arctic winter in the comparatively benign environment of the Chukchi Peninsula. But despite their efforts in searching for the Franklin party, they could conclude only that Franklin's men were neither near Kotzebue Sound nor on the Chukchi Peninsula.

At the beginning of April 1849, the edge of the shore-fast ice at the mouth of Providence Bay began to break up, signalling to the *Plover's* men that spring was approaching. Moore set the crew to rerigging the ship for sea. While the margin of open water moved farther into Providence Bay toward the ship, the sailors began sawing a trench out of Emma Harbour. On June 13 the *Plover* was afloat in relatively clear water, although loose floating ice still hemmed in the ship.

Almost at once, Moore received word that the natives had sighted two ships not far away. He sent Henry Martin, the second master of the *Plover*, to investigate. A few days later Martin boarded the American whaleship *Tiger* of Stonington, Connecticut, and the British sailors found that they would have plenty of company in the Arctic. Reports of the *Superior's* whaling success in 1848 drew 50 whaleships to Bering Strait in 1849. By 1852 the number had grown to more than 200 (Great Britain 1850: 35-7; Hooper 1853: 61-3; HMS *Plover* logbook; Bockstoce, in press).

The *Plover* finally reached her designated point of rendezvous at Chamisso Island on July 13 1849 -- a year and a half after she had sailed from England. Moore climbed to the top of the island and found the post with the names of the ships that

had been there before. He thus learned for the first time that the *Herald* had been in Kotzebue Sound in 1848.

But the *Plover* was still out of touch with the rest of the world and, most important, the Lords of the Admiralty had not heard from the search expeditions. No one knew where Franklin was. In the winter of 1848-49, no word had been received in England from either James Clark Ross' expedition to the eastern Arctic, or from Richardson's and Rae's on the continental coast of the central Arctic. As the navigation season of 1849 approached, the Lords of the Admiralty, no better off than they had been in 1848, had to plan for any number of contingencies.

The Lords Commissioners sent instructions to Captain Henry Kellett, who was again surveying with the *Herald* at Panama, to return north with a year's worth of provisions for the *Plover*. To gain enough room for the stores, he was to load the *Herald's* guns and equipment aboard the *Pandora*. Kellett was ordered to stop at Honolulu and Petropavlovsk in case the *Plover* had wintered at either place, and then to go to Kotzebue Sound. If he did not find the *Plover* at Chamisso Island, he was to search north along the coast as far as Point Barrow.

If he did not find the *Plover*, Kellett was to put the *Herald* into winter quarters at Chamisso. If, however, Kellett should find the *Plover*, he was to help her establish herself in her wintering site and then to leave for the south before the foul weather of autumn set in. In that case the *Herald* was to go no further south than Honolulu in the winter of 1849-50 -- to be able to return quickly to Bering Strait in the summer of 1850 (Great Britain 1849b).

When Kellett received these orders in the spring of 1849, an epidemic of cholera was sweeping Central America and few supplies were available. Kellett took the *Herald* to Honolulu, where he took aboard

not only fresh provisions but also Lieutenant W.J.S. Pullen, who had missed going aboard the *Plover* the year before. The *Herald* reached Petropavlovsk on June 23. Kellett learned that the *Plover* had not been there, but he heard a rumour that she had wintered somewhere to the north. To the Englishmen's amazement, amid several American whaleships in the harbour was an English yacht, the schooner *Nancy Dawson* of the Royal Thames Yacht Club. Her owner, Robert Shedden, had brought her north from Hong Kong to help in the search for Franklin. The two vessels left the harbour together.

At 9 a.m. on July 15, the day after the *Plover* reached Chamisso, the *Herald* stood in toward that anchorage. Only a few hours earlier, Moore had sent out two boats under the command of Lieutenant W.A.R. Lee to survey the coast to the north. As soon as Moore saw the *Herald* he had the *Plover's* guns fired, signalling Lee to bring the boats back. The crews immediately began transferring supplies from the *Herald* to the *Plover*. A few men were exchanged as well, principal among them Lieutenant Pullen, who replaced Lee, and thus joined his ship 14 months after he left England.

Kellett was the officer in charge. He examined the anchorage near Chamisso Island and judged it to be an acceptable place for the *Plover* to spend the coming winter. Then he and Moore went ashore and supervised a crew digging up a cask of flour and beads that Frederick William Beechey had buried for Franklin (then on his second expedition to the North American Arctic) more than 20 years before. Half the flour was found to be in good condition, and Kellett entertained his officers with pies and puddings made from it (Ritchie 1967: 258-59).

A few days later the *Herald* and *Plover* stood out of Kotzebue Sound together, and almost at once saw the *Nancy Dawson* approaching. By July 19 the three ships

were off Point Hope with bowhead whales spouting all around them and with American whaleships in sight. The ships worked their way north through shoals of birds, seals, whales, and the "continual bellowing" of vast herds of walrus, using boats to scout close to shore. They were continually boarded by Eskimos who, Kellett reported, came "alongside fearlessly, and disposed of every article they had, the women selling their fur dresses, even to their second pair of breeches, for tobacco and beads." (Great Britain 1850: 13).

On July 25 they reached Wainwright Inlet. Kellett sent parties in to see whether the inlet could be used as a wintering site for the *Plover*. The men found, however, that the bar at the mouth of the inlet was too shallow for the ships. Kellett pressed on with his fleet. Time was of the essence. By then, Franklin's expedition had been out of touch for four years. Presumably the men were at the end of their supplies, and possibly they were somewhere between Wainwright Inlet and the Mackenzie River. But it was considered dangerous for ships to proceed farther up this coast where no ships had ever been. Kellett also knew from Beechey's, Franklin's and Dease and Simpson's explorations that the water was very shallow along shore as far as the Mackenzie. Kellett consequently ordered Pullen to begin his boat expedition to the Mackenzie (Great Britain 1850: 13).

While the ships waited off Wainwright Inlet the men loaded four boats. The largest of the boats was the *Owen*, the *Herald's* pinnace, a 9-meter decked schooner. The *Plover's* yawl-rigged pinnace, which was only half-decked, was also to go. Two partially-covered 8-meter whaleboats made up the rest of the party. They were outfitted with more than 70 day's provisions for the 25 men, as well as with extra rations for Franklin's men.

Pullen was instructed to try to go as far as the head of the Mackenzie Delta and

return to the *Plover* that summer -- a distance of 3000 kilometers. This was clearly impossible. If he found himself unable to return, Pullen was to go up the Mackenzie to a trading post from which he could send messages overland to the Admiralty.

Pullen's expedition started out at Wainwright Inlet on the night of July 25, 1849. In four days the boats were within 15 kilometers of Point Barrow, but there the men found themselves completely blocked by the ice. They tied up to a large piece of grounded ice to wait for a change in the pack and, to their surprise and comfort, the *Nancy Dawson* arrived to wait with them. The boats worked their way to Point Barrow on August 1, but there they were again stopped by the pack which was hard on the land.

Pullen used the time to go ashore and trade with the natives and bartered for an umiak to carry some of the supplies. After a wait of several hours, the ice began to lift and just as they were getting underway the *Nancy Dawson* came into sight once again. Unsure whether or not the Eskimos were hostile, Shedden was doing his best to keep an eye on the boat expedition. The *Nancy Dawson* rounded the point and became the first ship to enter the Beaufort Sea.

Here Shedden turned back. Pullen pushed on and was at Cape Simpson two days later. There Pullen decided that the two larger boats would be a handicap in shallow waters. He appointed Henry Martin to lead the *Owen* and the *Plover's* pinnace back to the ships southwest of Point Barrow, and continued eastward with 13 men in the two whaleboats and the umiak, heavily laden with provisions.

As they made their way across Harrison Bay, two strong gales threatened to swamp Pullen's overloaded little boats. The men were soaked to the skin with the flying spray. At Point Berens, on the east side of the bay, they stopped to dry out and to

bury a cache of provisions. They were met by a group of Eskimos who appeared to be friendly. While some of the men surreptitiously buried the cache, Pullen engaged the Eskimos' attention by handing out presents. Still uncertain about the Eskimos' intentions, and hardly reassured when an Eskimo attempted to steal a shovel, Pullen got his men underway as soon as possible. They moved on a few kilometers before stopping to cook dinner. The Eskimos followed in increasing numbers.

Pullen and his men pushed off again and passed several Eskimo camps, reaching Beechey Point early on the morning of August 12. The point had been named by Franklin at his farthest westward penetration in 1826. They landed and were soon surrounded by a group of Eskimos that Pullen estimated to number at least 80. To Pullen's surprise, one of the Eskimos had a musket; no firearms were thought to have reached this region. The man with the musket approached the sailors and demanded gunpowder. Pullen refused. The Eskimo returned to his group but returned with a large number of men, all armed with bows and arrows. The sailors immediately launched their boats and, after some tense moments, moved on.

The Eskimos shadowed the small group for several days, apparently waiting for a chance to catch the sailors off their guard and overpower them. At one point, when Pullen's party had gone ashore to cook a meal, two large umiaks, carrying some 40 men, beached close to them and fired several arrows. The British returned fire with their muskets while the Eskimos were still out of range. Evidently frightened, the Eskimos dropped to the ground and the British safely set sail.

Pullen's men finally outdistanced the Eskimos and on August 18, near Barter Island, they buried another cache of provisions and set up a signal pole for Franklin. They passed the 141st meridian,

the treaty line between the Russian and British possessions in North America. On August 21 they were at Herschel Island, and on September 5 they reached the Hudson's Bay Company Post of Fort McPherson on the Peel River, a tributary of the Mackenzie. Pullen's group thus finished a significant open boat voyage without serious incident, but they had determined only that there were no signs of Franklin on the coast west of the Mackenzie River (Great Britain 1852a: 23-30).

Once Pullen's party had pulled away from the fleet at Wainwright Inlet in July, Kellett returned to his own searches. He ordered Moore to take the *Plover* to find suitable wintering sites while he took the *Herald* west, searching along the ice edge in waters where no ships had ever been.

On August 9, in the northern Chukchi Sea, the *Herald* overhauled the carcass of a dead whale. The creature had been killed by whalers some time before. No doubt they had stripped it of its blubber and baleen and set it adrift. In any case, it would have been bloated, gaseous and fetid, and would have had masses of sea birds wheeling around it and feeding on it. Kellett then devised a novel method of communication. He ordered the men to set a flag up on the carcass, and to bury a bottle containing a message in the putrefying mess. The message notified the *Plover* of the *Herald's* whereabouts, but there is no record of its receipt.

Sounding carefully, Kellett pushed on. Suddenly, when they were more than 250 kilometers from the nearest point of land in Alaska, the soundings jumped from 36 to 13 meters. There was no land in sight, and Kellett named the feature Herald Shoal. Kellett kept on to the northwest and on August 17, as the lowering clouds parted ahead of the vessel the tiny granite bastion of Herald Island loomed before them, rising vertically to a height of 360 meters. They were the first men to see the island; Kellett

went ashore and took possession in the name of Queen Victoria.

Almost at once the men spied another land mass to the west. It seemed to be about 60 kilometers away at the nearest and was apparently vast, running far to the north. There were a few small islands to the east of it. Kellett headed west toward this new land, but the pack ice blocked his way. These islands were, in fact, the eastern headlands of Wrangel Island. The vast landmass beyond was cloud. Kellett had been deceived -- as have many arctic mariners -- by the peculiar atmospheric conditions which produce the appearance of land at a great distance. Kellett named one of the islands after the *Plover*. Not until 1867 was Wrangel Island's southern shore delineated. Captain Thomas Long coasted along it in the New London whaling bark *Nile*, and named the entire island after Baron Ferdinand Von Wrangel, who had reported the loom of this land during a journey on the Siberian mainland nearly 50 years before (HMS *Herald* logbook; Great Britain 1850: 16-17).

When the ice stopped him east of Wrangel Island, Kellett turned the *Herald* southeast. Near Point Hope she fell in with the *Nancy Dawson*, which was escorting the boats back from Point Barrow. These vessels kept on for Kotzebue Sound while the *Herald* turned briefly northward to Icy Cape and then returned, rejoining the *Plover* and the *Nancy Dawson* at Chamisso Island on September 1. The *Owen* with Moore aboard was at that time surveying the Buckland River.

When Moore returned, Kellett took several boats back up the river and enjoyed excellent relations with the natives there. Kellett was puzzled by the friendliness of the river natives; two decades before they had been actively hostile to the crew of HMS *Blossom*. Kellett attributed the change in the native's attitude to the presence of Bosky, the interpreter who had been taken

aboard at Petropavlovsk. Kellett supposed that he was able to tell the Eskimos that the British were there for peaceful reasons. It is more likely, however, that the three ships and large number of well-armed men quartered at Chamisso Island kept the Eskimos quiescent.

By September 26 the carpenters from both the *Herald* and *Plover* had finished building a supply house on shore, and had completed the initial winter preparations for the *Plover*. She would winter on the east side of the Choris Peninsula near Chamisso Island.

One problem remained. Robert Shedden lay mortally ill aboard the *Nancy Dawson*. To make matters worse, his crew had refused duty on the way back from Point Barrow. Moore had been forced to put three of the men in irons and to station a corporal and two marines on board the yacht.

The men aboard the *Herald* and *Plover* were genuinely grateful for Shedden's assistance. He had put his vessel at risk to help Pullen; he had freely given his stores to the expedition, and he had cached provisions for Franklin as well. Kellett consequently sent the second master of the *Herald*, W.F. Parsons, aboard the yacht to navigate her to Mazatlan, Mexico, where he would rejoin the *Herald*. Kellett weighed anchor on September 29 and reached Mazatlan on November 14. In the harbour, amid a gaggle of stampedeers heading to the California goldfields, he found the *Nancy Dawson* which had arrived only a few days before. There Robert Shedden died, and was buried in Mazatlan's Protestant grave yard. His last wish was that the *Nancy Dawson* be returned to her builder in England. She was, and thus became the first yacht to circumnavigate the world (Great Britain 1850: 9-22; Euryalus 1860: 260-61).

After the *Herald* left for the south, the *Plover's* crew prepared their ship for the arctic winter. They dismantled the *Plover's*

upper masts and carried most of her provisions ashore for storage in the house. Without her provisions the ship was much lighter, and Moore moved her into her winter quarters near the shore in four meters of water.

All winter Moore sent out travelling parties in search of Franklin. One of the most interesting journeys was undertaken by Lieutenant Bedford Pim. In 1848, when the *Herald* visited Kotzebue Sound, the Eskimos had told the sailors that there was a report of white men travelling in the interior. In November 1849 Moore heard another vague rumour about two ships being east of Point Barrow. It seemed possible that the two stories might refer to Franklin's men. Pim offered to go overland to St. Michael, the Russian American Company trading post at the mouth of the Yukon River, to find if any such news had filtered down the river to the traders (Great Britain 1850: 29ff).

He set out in March 1850 with Bosky, the native interpreter, and reached St. Michael in early April. Pim talked at length with the chief factor, and at first concluded that the report of white men in the interior referred to a party of Hudson's Bay Company men. It probably did. Alexander Hunter Murray had set up a trading post at the confluence of the Yukon and Porcupine rivers in 1847. Later, however, Pim changed his mind and decided that in all likelihood the story was a report of a small starving group of Franklin's men. Pim returned to the *Plover* at the end of April and summarized his investigations for Moore, reinforcing the idea that Franklin's men were somewhere in Alaska.

The middle of June brought terror to the *Plover's* crew. By then the spring melt had progressed far enough to begin breaking up the ice in the bay. As the rivers began to run with the spring thaw, the masses of water flushed the ice across Eschscholtz Bay and hard onto the east

shore of the Choris Peninsula where the *Plover* lay. For nearly three weeks the crew watched in horror as the ice floes pushed the ship toward shore, time and again nearly crushing her. Then, as the force eased through a change of wind or tide, the men had to kedge the *Plover* slowly and laboriously back into deeper water -- only to have the whole process repeated again and again.

While the *Plover's* men were coping with the winter of 1849-50 in Kotzebue Sound, in England it was becoming increasingly clear that nothing whatever had been learned of Franklin's whereabouts. Provisioned for three years, his expedition had by then been gone four and a half. The expeditions of James Clark Ross and Richardson and Rae had turned up nothing. Baffled, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty canvassed a group of polar experts for their views on where Franklin might be. A number of them suspected that Franklin had pushed west from Lancaster Sound and was somewhere near Banks or Melville islands, or farther to the west (Great Britain 1850: 74-9).

James Clark Ross's expedition had recently returned to England but the Admiralty ordered his two ships, the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, to return to the Arctic, this time via Bering Strait. Five other expeditions would enter the Arctic via Baffin Bay. The *Plover*, no longer in the van, was to become a depot ship for the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*.

There was still a large body of ice in Kotzebue Sound on July 15 1850, when the *Herald* returned from the south with new supplies for the *Plover* at Chamisso Island. While the men transferred supplies to the *Plover*, Moore told Kellett of the rumours of white men in Alaska. Kellett had not yet heard reports of the progress of Pullen's expedition the previous summer, and he thought that the stories of ships east of Point Barrow might refer to Pullen's group.

JOHN R. BOCKSTOCE

He ordered Moore to take the *Plover* north along the coast to investigate.

The *Plover* reached Icy Cape on July 23. Moore immediately set off with 13 men in two boats, hoping to run up to Point Barrow in a lead of open water between the pack ice and the shore. He reached Wainwright Inlet the same evening, and although he found a large group of Eskimos there, he learned nothing of interest from them. He kept on, and the next day, near Point Franklin, buried a cache of provisions for search parties -- or for Franklin.

On the 27th the boats arrived at Point Barrow and ran east nearly 80 kilometers, closely charting the coast as he went. He turned back at Cape Simpson and returned to Point Barrow on August 2. During the trip in the Beaufort Sea he examined Elson Lagoon, and found that although most of it was very shallow, one small area was deep enough to harbour the *Plover* for the winter. A week later the party rejoined the *Plover* off Wainwright Inlet.

While Moore was underway on the boat survey, Kellett took the *Herald* to Cape Lisburne to bury a bottle with information for Captain Richard Collinson, commander of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator* expedition to the waters near Banks and Melville islands. Then Kellett headed north for the ice. He found it quickly -- 80 kilometers south of where the ice edge had been in 1849.

Kellett turned back and when he was 80 kilometers from Cape Lisburne, was amazed to sight the *Investigator*. She had left Hawaii after the *Enterprise*, but her captain, Robert M'Clure, had made an unusually fast passage of only 26 days from Honolulu. Boldly striking straight north, he had sailed through the Aleutian chain rather than taking the more cautious route skirting the west end of the island chain. The short-cut had saved the *Investigator* 1500 kilometers, and M'Clure had passed Collinson's ship, the *Enterprise*.

Because Collinson was commander of the expedition, Kellett suggested that M'Clure wait for the *Enterprise*, but M'Clure refused to wait and pushed on in a strong northeast wind "under every stitch he could carry". Apparently driven by a desire for personal glory, he hoped to be the first to traverse a northwest passage.

The *Plover* saw the *Investigator* on August 5 but did not communicate with her. The *Investigator* rounded Point Barrow and on August 11 reached the Jones Islands, near where Pullen had had his tense encounter with the Eskimos the year before. Two umiaks full of Eskimos came out to the ship. Although they appeared friendly, one of the men carried a musket -- probably the same man who had threatened Pullen (Seaman 1853, II: 179; Great Britain 1851: 21; M'Clure 1856: 73; Great Britain 1854: 26).

Ten days after seeing the *Investigator*, the *Plover* met the *Herald* at Cape Lisburne. Moore told Kellett that Elson Lagoon at Point Barrow could be used as a wintering site. He hoped to harbour the *Plover* there for two years, and to send another boat expedition along the coast. Kellett, however, vetoed the idea. M'Clure had told him of Pullen's safe arrival on the Mackenzie. Furthermore, he thought that in the event of heavy summer ice at Point Barrow, the *Plover* might not be able to work out of Elson Lagoon to meet her supply ship. Grantley Harbor, the inner embayment of Point Clarence, seemed to be the only safe choice for a wintering site; it was impossible to get into Wainwright Inlet, and Kotzebue Sound had proved dangerous. Grantley Harbor was spacious and well protected from moving ice.

Moore therefore sailed the *Plover* south toward Port Clarence on August 15. Along the way he searched for the *Enterprise*, which was by then two weeks overdue. After a stop at Chamisso Island to bury emergency provisions, he arrived in Port Clarence on August 30 without having seen the

Enterprise.

Meanwhile, Kellett waited for the *Enterprise* for a few more days at Cape Lisburne, then took the *Herald* to St. Michael to check on the rumours that Bedford Pim had reported during the winter. To Kellett's disappointment he found that Pim's informants, the chief factor and his assistant, had been transferred to Sitka. Nevertheless it seemed to him that the Russian American Company's trading post at Nulato on the Yukon River would be an excellent place to get first-hand information about the white men that had been reported in the interior (Great Britain 1851: 22).

Kellett returned to Port Clarence to check on the *Plover's* preparations for the winter, and was surprised to find the *Enterprise* in the harbour. Kellett had assumed that the *Enterprise* had passed him unseen and gone into the Arctic. Collinson had, in fact, passed Kellett about August 13, but when the *Enterprise* reached the ice edge, Collinson had found no passage open to the east into the Beaufort Sea. He had returned south on August 30, stopping at Point Hope where he discovered the buried bottle with a message from the *Herald*. He thus learned that his subordinate, M'Clure, had passed him and had gone on into the Beaufort Sea (Collinson 1859: 59-69).

Collinson intended to have the *Enterprise* take the *Plover's* place. The *Plover's* men had already put in two northern winters and Collinson wanted to allow them to spend the winter in the south. But as he began warping the *Enterprise* through the narrow channel into Grantley Harbor, the wind changed and forced the ship aground. Only when 100 tonnes of the *Enterprise's* supplies had been unloaded, was she floated free of the strand. Collinson considered wintering north at some other site, but he concluded that in the following spring he would be able to get into the

Arctic earlier if he arrived from the south. The Bering Strait region is usually ice-free when most of its harbours are still frozen. The *Plover* was already anchored in Grantley Harbor, and Collinson decided to leave her there. He planned to winter the *Enterprise* in Hong Kong, bringing fresh supplies in the spring (Great Britain 1851: 14-16, 42).

The *Herald* left Port Clarence at the end of September, bound back to England via Hong Kong and Singapore. The *Enterprise*, after another journey north to the ice edge and an inspection of the coast, sailed from Port Clarence on October 7. Collinson first went to St. Michael and put ashore a party of three: Lieutenant John Barnard, Assistant Surgeon Edward Adams and one sailor. They were to spend the winter and to try to reach the Russian American Company's post at Nulato to check on the rumours that Pim had reported (Great Britain 1852a: 66; Collinson 1889: 80-81).

The *Enterprise* then sailed to Sitka, arriving there November 1. Collinson stopped long enough to tell the Governor of Russian America about the progress of the search for Franklin, and the Governor supplied the *Enterprise* with fresh provisions *gratis*. Collinson also met the great Russian explorer and geographer M.D. Tebenkof. Tebenkof had carried out explorations of the Bering Sea, and had recently completed work on an atlas of the area. He readily shared his knowledge with Collinson. The Russians also offered to send 18 Aleuts and 20 Kayaks north to assist in the search in 1851. The *Enterprise* left Sitka in mid-November, touched at Hawaii and reached Hong Kong in February.

Meanwhile, the *Plover's* men settled in at Grantley Harbor for their third northern winter. Apart from an outbreak of scurvy, the winter passed without significant problems, thanks in part to the good relations that the British enjoyed

with the Eskimos of the region (Great Britain 1852a: 201-03; HMS *Plover*, journal of John Mathews; Collinson 1889: 131).

In February Moore sent a party to St. Michael to check on Lieutenant Barnard's group. It was not until April 6 1851, when Thomas Bouchier returned to the *Plover*, that Moore had his report. The news was deeply saddening. At first the winter had gone fairly well with the group at St. Michael. Bosky, the interpreter, was living at St. Michael that winter, and he helped the sailors question travellers who visited the site. Initially the men heard only repetitions of the rumours that white men had been murdered on the north coast of Alaska. But on December 23 1850, Vasili Maximov ("Wassele Maxemoff"), the factor in charge of the post at Nulato, arrived at St. Michael. Maximov confirmed the stories of white men to the east, but explained that the men were traders rather than the lost Franklin party.

In the summer of 1849 Maximov had been on a trading trip upriver from Nulato. There he met Indians who were well supplied with trade goods: "muskets, powder and shot, English knives, beads, tobacco, and a few preserved meat tins." With the exception of the meat tins, the manufactures all appeared to be the types that the Hudson's Bay Company sold. The Indians said that the white men who sold them the goods had been living on the river for two years. The following year Maximov had received a letter from Alexander Hunter Murray of the Hudson's Bay Company stating that in 1847 he had established Fort Yukon, a trading post on the Upper Yukon at the point where the Porcupine River joins the Yukon (more than 150 kilometers inside the borders of Russian America, it was later learned).

Nevertheless, when Maximov returned to Nulato, Lieutenant Barnard decided to go with him to explore the area. Leaving Adams and the sailor at St. Michael to interrogate

any natives who might visit the post, Barnard hired Bosky to accompany him as interpreter. They set off to interrogate any natives who might visit the post, Barnard hired Bosky to accompany him as interpreter. They set off at the end of December (Great Britain 1852a: 73-78; Edward Adams journal). Adams had no word from Barnard until February 24, when a native appeared at the fort with a shocking letter:

Dear Adams

I am dreadfully wounded in the abdomen, my entrails are hanging out. I do not suppose I shall live long enough to see you. The Cu-u-chuck Indians made the attack whilst we were in our beds. Bosky is badly wounded, and Darabin [Maximov] is dead.

I think my wound would have been trifling had I medical advice. I am in great pain; nearly all the natives of the village are murdered. Set out for this with all haste.

(Signed) JOHN BARNARD

(Great Britain 1852a: 208)

Adams immediately asked the Russian factor for a dog team and men. It took several days to round up the outfit, and Adams did not reach Unalakleet until March 1. He was held up for a couple of days there by the thawing river. By chance, while he was at Unalakleet the party from the *Plover* arrived. Adams pushed on with the *Plover's* interpreter and four Nulato Indians who were visiting Unalakleet.

When Adams reached Nulato he pieced the story together. Barnard had arrived there on January 16 and stayed in the trading post. On February 15 at about five o'clock in the morning, Maximov happened to go outside his log cabin and found about 80 armed Koyukon Indians there. They grabbed him and stabbed him with a knife, but he managed to break free and stagger, mortally wounded, into his room just in time for his native wife to bar the door. The Indians then burst into Barnard's room (Great Britain 1852a: 74-75).

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN IN ALASKA

It appears that Mr. Barnard was awoke by the noise of their approach, and asked what it was? Pavil [Bosky] answered, "The Indians are come; take your gun and shoot them." Both barrels of his gun had been left loaded with small shot; these were fired; but from the direction of the shot-marks on the wall, I think they must have gone off whilst he was struggling with the Indians. He then appears to have struck with the butt until the stock broke, and he fell dreadfully wounded. Before Pavil had time to get out of bed, an attempt was made to stab him; but the knife, badly aimed in the dark, passed between his arm and side. Being without a gun or other weapon, he warded off the spears with a blanket, and took five of them away, with one of which he wounded some of the Indians, and ultimately cleared the room, although badly wounded with three arrows which were sticking in his body. The Indians then left the house, and congregated on the bank of the river, planting their shields in a row so as to form a wall, as if to attack the other building. At the time of the arrival of the Indians, a woman was in the cooking house, boiling her kettle; she saw them, but dared not go out until they were in Maxemoff's house, when she ran to the barracks, and alarmed the men, who were all asleep. By this time the Indians had collected outside, and one of the men fired from a window and killed one of them, when the rest immediately snatched up their shields, and made off for the woods.

They then went down to the village, and finding the unsuspecting inhabitants asleep succeeded in murdering all but four; one man, who made his escape, and three women, whom they took away captives. They killed men, women, and children, fifty-three in number; and after eating part of one of the men, set fire to the houses, and took their departure, carrying one man, who had been wounded by Pavil,

on a sledge. The Indian who was killed they left behind; he was pitched down upon the river, and afterwards was eaten by the dogs....

Mr. Barnard lived till the morning of the following day, but was too severely wounded to be able to write any account of the affair....

I found upon my arrival at Darabin [Nulato] that they had buried neither Maxemoff nor Mr. Barnard; and upon examining the bodies I found that the former had one wound about two inches in length, under the left clavicle; the latter had received nine wounds in all; one large one in the left side, below the ribs, from which a large bunch of intestines had protruded and become strangulated, evidently the cause of death; two in the back, 1 1/2 inches in length, from spears; four in the right side of the chest, one from a spear and three from arrows; one slight cut under the chin, and another across the back of the right hand. The bodies having been kept in the uninhabited house were so firmly frozen that there was not time during my short stay to make a more minute examination.

I buried Mr. Barnard on the 16th March, in the burial ground at Darabin, some of the Russians, at my request, firing a volley over his grave, at the head of which I placed a board, inscribed with his name, the cause of his death, &c.

Adams was at a loss to explain why the Indians had attacked Nulato. In all, the Koyukons killed 56 people in the village, of which more than 50 were Indians. Recent research suggests that Barnard had stumbled into an internecine feud, and that he and the other foreigners were simply killed by chance along with the local Indians.

Adams left Nulato March 18, carrying Bosky, whose wounds had healed enough to allow him to ride on the sled. Ten days later

Charles Vernon, the *Plover* had gone south. With provisions running low, Maguire sailed to Cape Lisburne where the *Plover* and *Amphitrite* were supposed to rendezvous. The men boarded the *Amphitrite* on August 12 and six days later they found the *Plover* at Port Clarence (Great Britain 1852b: 48-59).

The *Plover's* men made a cache of provisions on shore in Grantley Harbor, and left for the north on August 21. The *Amphitrite* sailed for San Francisco Bay on September 6. At Point Barrow the *Plover's* men settled in to an unpleasant winter. Scurvy broke out, and the Eskimos proved to be aggressive and overbearing. Their winter search operation had to be curtailed as well. To make matters worse, during the winter the men often found a wide lead of open water running east-west across the horizon. Maguire had planned to explore northward over the ice to Kellett's hypothetical landmass where the *Enterprise* or *Investigator* might be wintering. He put an end to these quixotic adventures, but in the spring did not fare much better. He tried to probe along the coast to the east but his sledges were weak and overloaded, broke down frequently, and Maguire never got very far. Furthermore, he learned nothing of importance (John Mathews Journal; Rochfort Maguire Journal; Great Britain 1854a: 160-85).

The only intelligence that the *Plover* gathered that winter was from an Eskimo who visited the ship from about 120 kilometers to the east. He carried a letter from McClure, who had given it to him nearly three years before when the *Investigator* had sailed into the eastern Beaufort Sea.

In July, while the *Plover* was still frozen in, Maguire sent two boats south to meet his supply ship. This expedition, too, ended in failure: both boats were crushed in the ice within 80 kilometers of Point Barrow, and the men straggled back to the *Plover* on foot. The *Plover* finally broke out

of Elson Lagoon on August 9 1853, and the next day she met the *Amphitrite* south of Icy Cape. The two reached Port Clarence on August 15 and the usual surveys, caulking, and transfers of men and supplies got under way.

On August 22, just as the *Plover* was heading seaward to return to Point Barrow, she met HMS *Rattlesnake* at the entrance to Port Clarence. The *Rattlesnake* was under the command of Henry Trollope, Maguire's old shipmate aboard the *Herald*. She had been sent north to act as a depot ship for the winter at Port Clarence. The *Plover* was to return to Point Barrow to act as an advance fall-back position for the crews of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, while the *Rattlesnake* was to serve as a fall-back position for the crews of all three ships in case the *Plover* might be lost. Trollope was to build a large house on shore at Grantley Harbor -- large enough to house 70 men. Thus, by 1853, the British naval activities near Bering Strait had become a watch for the *Enterprise*, now gone two years, and the *Investigator*, now gone three. There was little hope for Franklin (Great Britain 1854a: 147-48, 156-58; 1853: 1).

After taking on fresh provisions from the *Rattlesnake*, the *Plover* went back to Point Barrow, the *Amphitrite* to Hawaii, and the *Rattlesnake* moved into Grantley Harbor. The *Plover* was warped into her anchorage in Elson Lagoon, and began her sixth northern winter (Great Britain 1855: 905-13). As soon as the ice was thick enough, Maguire set out to the east with a sled party in search of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*. He learned nothing on this trip. The winter proceeded without incident, and he set out again in April. This time he had to turn back near the Colville River delta because his party met a band of armed Koyukon Indians who began following his sled with, thought Maguire, every intention of trying to kill the sailors.

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN IN ALASKA

At Grantley Harbor things were also relatively uneventful. Trollope sent travelling parties out from the *Rattlesnake* all over the western Seward Peninsula, but of course learned nothing. On June 25 1854 the *Rattlesnake's* men saw HMS *Trincomalee* sail into Port Clarence. She was arriving from Honolulu with orders and supplies, among them four cattle and twenty pigs. Most important, however, she brought news of the *Investigator*. The *Investigator* had spent two winters frozen in Mercy Bay on the north coast of Banks Island, and the crew was on the verge of starvation when they were discovered by Lieutenant Bedford Pim. He had been aboard both the *Herald* and the *Plover*, and was at that time serving on HMS *Resolute* which had entered the Arctic via Baffin Bay. McClure ordered his men to abandon the *Investigator* and his men had walked out to the eastern Arctic, thereby becoming the first people to traverse the Northwest Passage (Great Britain 1854b: 2).

Now only the *Enterprise* remained to be accounted for -- apart, of course, from Franklin's ships. The *Enterprise* was the only reason for the *Rattlesnake* and *Plover* to remain north for the winter of 1854-55, and it seemed likely that by 1855 Collinson and his crew would have appeared somewhere, with or without the *Enterprise*. If no word had been received from the *Enterprise* by 1855, then both ships were to leave the Arctic, for no supply ship would be sent north. Thus the Admiralty appeared to be preparing to abandon hope of Collinson, as it had Franklin.

The orders continued that if the *Plover* should be unable to reach a safe winter harbour north of Bering Strait in 1854, she was to put her spare supplies aboard the *Rattlesnake* and head for the south. The *Rattlesnake* would then remain at Grantley Harbor. If the *Plover* could get into Elson Lagoon again for the winter of 1854-55, but was found unfit for an ocean passage the following spring, she was to be placed in

a safe harbour and her crew was to go south aboard the *Rattlesnake*. The orders went on ominously:

In the event of England being at any time involved in hostilities with any other power during your employment on the above service, you are clearly to understand that you are not to commit any hostile act whatever, the ship under your command being fitted out for the sole purpose of aiding those engaged in scientific discoveries, and it being the established practice of all civilised nations to consider vessels so employed as exempt from the operations of war.

On July 15 1854 the *Rattlesnake* sailed north from Port Clarence in search of the *Plover*. She arrived at Point Barrow July 30 to find no sign of the ship. Trollope then took the *Rattlesnake* south and landed at Wainwright Inlet on August 7. There he was "overwhelmed" by printed notices that the *Plover's* men had distributed to the natives. The *Plover* had passed there, bound to Port Clarence, two weeks before. The *Rattlesnake* sailed into Port Clarence four days later to find the *Plover* and *Trincomalee* at anchor (Great Britain 1855: 859-60, 900-01).

The usual surveys and transfers of supplies went on, and the *Plover*, although slightly leaky, was declared fit for another northern winter. The *Plover* left for her winter quarters at Point Barrow on August 19, and the *Trincomalee* sailed for San Francisco two days later.

The *Plover* reached Point Barrow on August 28. If things had gone as expected, the crew would have begun preparations for her seventh winter, but to the surprise of all, the Eskimos came aboard the ship and reported that four days after the *Plover* had left Point Barrow, a boat from the *Enterprise* had reached the point from the east. Five American whaleships were then cruising near the point, and they confirmed the story; in fact, one of them had spoken with the *Enterprise* on her way to Port

Clarence -- and just then the *Enterprise* herself hove into sight (John Mathews journal).

Collinson had spent two winters on the coast of Victoria Island, one of them in Cambridge Bay, not far, as it turned out, from where Franklin's ships had been abandoned. Theirs was the farthest eastward penetration of the Bering Strait fleet. On the way back toward Bering Strait the *Enterprise* was caught by the ice and forced to spend a third winter, this time in Camden Bay, Alaska, only 500 kilometers east of Point Barrow. On July 2, 1854, natives brought a notice to Collinson that had been printed on the *Plover* a year before. On July 10, when there was enough open water, Collinson sent Lieutenant C.J. Jago in a boat to Point Barrow, where he arrived only four days after the *Plover* had sailed.

By the time that the *Enterprise* had met the *Plover* at Point Barrow, Collinson had already been to Port Clarence, and as senior officer, he had sent the *Rattlesnake* south. The *Plover* and *Enterprise* then sailed back to Port Clarence and exchanged provisions before sailing south. The *Rattlesnake's* storehouse at Grantley Harbor was given to an Eskimo headman there. The *Enterprise* then headed for Hong Kong and England, the *Plover* for San Francisco. Thus ended the search for Sir John Franklin in the west.

The *Plover* entered San Francisco Bay on October 28, and anchored in Sausalito Bay. The *Plover's* men then heard the news of the Crimean War and of the disastrous Anglo-French assault on Petropavlovsk, in which the *Amphitrite* and *Trincomalee* had taken part, and in which 190 of the allied troops had been killed before the landing force was repulsed by the Russians.

A few days after the *Plover's* arrival, officers from other British ships held a survey of the *Plover* and found her unfit for further service. On November 20 the ice-

scarred *Plover* was taken across the bay to San Francisco to be sold at auction. A ship breaker bought her for 1350 pounds.

The *Plover's* crew moved aboard the Russian bark *Sitka*, which had belonged to the Russian American Company and which had been taken as a prize in the siege of Petropavlovsk. The *Plover's* crew sailed her back to England. Shortly before they left San Francisco, the *Plover's* men learned from an American newspaper that, near King William Island, Dr. John Rae had found the remains of some of Franklin's men (Rochfort Maguire journal; John Mathews journal).

REFERENCES:

Adams, Edward. Journal. Scott Polar research Institute, Cambridge.

Bockstoce, John. In press. *Whales, ice and men. The history of commercial whaling in the western Arctic, 1840-1936*. University of Washington Press.

Collinson, Richard. 1889. *Journal of HMS "Enterprise", on the expedition in search of Sir John Franklin's ships by Behring Strait, 1850-55*. London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington.

Cyriax, Richard J. 1939. *Sir John Franklin's last Arctic expedition, a chapter in the history of the Royal Navy*. London: Methuen.

Euryalus. 1860. *Euryalus; tales of the sea, a few leaves from the diary of a midshipman*. London: J.D. Potter.

Gibson, William. 1937. "Sir John Franklin's last voyage." *The Beaver*, June 1937: 44-75.

Great Britain. 1848. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers. Accounts and Papers, 1847-1848, Vol.41 No.264*.

1849a. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers, 1849, Vol.32 No.188*.

1849b. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers, 1848, Vol.32 No.497*.

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN IN ALASKA

1850. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1850, Vol.35 No.107.
1851. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1851, Vol.33 No.97.
- 1852a. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1852, Vol.50 No.1449.
- 1852b. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1852-53, Vol.60 No.82.
- 1852c. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1852, Vol.50 No.1435.
1853. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1852-53, Vol.60 No.444.
- 1854a. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1854, Vol.42 No.1725.
- 1854b. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1854, Vol.42 No.171.
1855. Parliament. House of Commons. *Sessional Papers, Accounts and Papers*, 1854-55, Vol.35 No.1898.
- Herald*. Logbooks of HMS *Herald*. Royal Geographical Society, London.
- Hooper, William H. 1853. *Ten months among the tents of the Tucki*. London: John Murray.
- Maguire, Rochfort. *Journal*. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.
- Mathews, John. *Journal*. Royal Geographical Society, London.
- M'Clure, Robert. 1857. *The Discovery of the North-West Passage by HMS "Investigator", Captain R. M'Clure. 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts.
- Plover*. Logbook of HMS *Plover*, 1848-1853. Public Record Office, Kew.
- Pullen, H.F. 1979. *The Pullen expedition in search of Sir John Franklin*. Toronto: The Arctic History Press.
- Ray, Dorothy Jean. 1983. "Two historical signal posts: early communication in the Alaskan Arctic". In *Ethnology in the Arctic. The Bering Strait Eskimo, Alaska History* No. 23 pp. 95-116. Kingston Ontario: The Limestone Press.
- Ritchie, G.S. 1967. *The Admiralty Chart. British naval hydrography in the nineteenth century*. New York: American Elsevier Publishing.
- Seeman, Berthold. 1853. *Narrative of the voyage of HMS "Herald" during the years 1845-51*. London: Reeve and Co.