

the proposed boundary is marked in pencil, it will be seen that it assigns to Great Britain almost the entire region (on its north side) drained by the Columbia River, lying on its northern bank. It is not deemed necessary to state at large the claims of the United States to this territory, and the grounds on which they rest, in order to make good the assertion that it restricts the possessions of the United States within narrower bounds than they are clearly entitled to. It will be sufficient for this purpose to show that they are fairly entitled to the entire region drained by the River; and to the establishment of that point, the undersigned purposes accordingly to limit his remarks at present.

Our claims to the portion of the Oregon Territory drained by the Columbia River may be divided into those we have in our own proper right, and those we have derived from France and Spain. We ground the former as against Great Britain, on priority of discovery and priority of exploration and settlement. We rest our claim to discovery, against her, on that of Captain Gray, a citizen of the United States, who, in the ship *Columbia*, of Boston, passed its bar and anchored in the River, ten miles above its mouth, on the 11th of May, 1792, and who afterwards sailed up the River twelve or fifteen miles, and left on the 20th of the same month, calling it "*Columbia*," after his ship, which name it still retains.

On these two facts our claim to the discovery and entrance into the River rests. They are too well attested to be controverted. But they have been opposed by the alleged discoveries of Meares and Vancouver. It is true that the former explored a portion of the coast through which the Columbia flows into the ocean, in 1787, (five years before Captain Gray crossed the bar and anchored in the River,) in order to ascertain whether the River, as laid down in the Spanish Charts, and called the *St. Roc*, existed or not; but it is equally as true that he did not even discover it. On the contrary, he expressly declares, in his account of the voyage, as the result of his observations, that "*we can now safely assert that there is no such River as that of the St. Roc, as laid down in the Spanish Charts;*" and, as if to perpetuate his disappointment, he called the promontory lying north of the inlet where he expected to discover it, Cape Disappointment, and the inlet itself Deception Bay. It is also true that Vancouver, in April, 1792, explored the same coast; but it is no less so that he failed to discover the River—of which his own journal furnishes the most conclusive evidence, as well as his strong conviction that no such River existed. So strong was it, indeed, that, when he fell in with Captain Gray, shortly afterwards, and was informed by him, that he had been off the mouth of a River, in latitude 46 degrees 10 minutes, whose outlet was so strong as to prevent his entering, he remained still incredulous, and strongly expressed himself to that effect in his journal. It was shortly after this interview that Captain Gray again visited its mouth, crossed its bar, and sailed up the River, as has been stated. After he left it he visited Nootka Sound, where he communicated his discoveries to Quadra, the Spanish Commandant at that place, and gave him a chart and description of the mouth of the River. After his departure, Vancouver arrived there in September, when he was informed of the discoveries of Captain Gray, and obtained from Quadra copies from the chart he had left with him. In consequence of the information thus obtained, he was induced to visit again that part of the coast. It was during this visit that he entered the River on the 20th October, and made his survey.

From these facts, it is manifest that the alleged discoveries of Meares and Vancouver cannot, in the slightest degree, shake the claim of Captain Gray to priority of discovery. Indeed, so conclusive is the evidence in his favour, that it has been attempted to evade our claim on the novel and wholly untenable ground that his dis-

covery was made, not in a national but private vessel. Such, and so incontestable, is the evidence of our claim, as against Great Britain—from priority of discovery, as to the mouth of the River, crossing its bar, entering it, and sailing up its stream, on the voyage of Captain Gray alone; without taking into consideration the prior discovery of the Spanish navigator, Heceta—which will be more particularly referred to hereafter.

Nor is the evidence of the priority of our discovery of the head branches of the river and its exploration less conclusive. Before the treaty was ratified by which we acquired Louisiana, in 1803, an expedition was planned—at the head of which were placed Meriwether Lewis and William Clarke—to explore the river Missouri and its principal branches to their sources, and then to seek and trace to its termination in the Pacific, some stream, "*whether the Columbia, the Oregon, the Colorado, or any other which might offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent, for the purposes of commerce.*" The party began to ascend the Missouri in May, 1804, and, in the summer of 1805, reached the head waters of the Columbia River. After crossing many of the streams falling into it, they reached the Kooskooska in latitude 43 deg. 34 min.—descended that to the principal northern branch, which they called Lewis's—followed that to its junction with the great northern branch, which they called Clarke's—and thence descended to the mouth of the river, where they landed, and encamped on the north side, on Cape Disappointment, and wintered. The next spring, they commenced their return, and continued their exploration up the river, noting its various branches, and tracing some of the principal; and finally arrived at St. Louis in September, 1806, after an absence of two years and four months.

It was this important expedition which brought to the knowledge of the new world this great river—the greatest by far on the western side of this continent—with its numerous branches, and the vast regions through which it flows, above the points through which Gray and Vancouver had ascended. It took place many years before it was visited and explored by any subject of Great Britain, or of any other civilized nation, so far as we are informed. It as clearly entitles us to the claim of priority of discovery, as to its head branches, and the exploration of the river and region through which it passes, as the voyages of Captain Gray and the Spanish navigator, Heceta, entitled us to priority in reference to its mouth, and the entrance into its channel.

Nor is our priority of settlement less certain. Establishments were formed by American citizens on the Columbia as early as 1808 and 1810. In the latter year, a company was formed in New York, at the head of which was John Jacob Astor, a wealthy merchant of that city, the object of which was to form a regular chain of establishments on the Columbia river and the contiguous coasts of the Pacific, for commercial purposes. Early in the spring of 1811, they made their first establishment on the south side of the river, a few miles above Point George; where they were visited in July following by Mr. Thompson, a surveyor and astronomer of the Northwest Company, and his party. They had been sent out by that company to forestall the American company in occupying the mouth of the river, but found themselves defeated in their object. The American company formed two other connected establishments higher up the river; one at the confluence of the Okanega with the north branch of the Columbia, about 600 miles above its mouth; and the other on the Spokane, a stream falling into the north branch, some fifty miles above.

These posts passed into the possession of Great Britain during the war which was declared the next year; but it was provided by the first article of the treaty of Ghent, which terminated it, that "*all territories, places, and possessions whatever taken by either party from the*