

**ADVENTURES**  
**OF THE FIRST SETTLERS ON THE**  
**OREGON OR COLUMBIA RIVER:**

**BEING**

**A NARRATIVE OF THE EXPEDITION FITTED OUT BY**  
**JOHN JACOB ASTOR,**

**TO ESTABLISH THE**

**"PACIFIC FUR COMPANY;"**

**WITH AN ACCOUNT OF SOME**  
**INDIAN TRIBES ON THE COAST OF THE PACIFIC.**

**BY ALEXANDER ROSS,**  
**ONE OF THE ADVENTURERS.**

**LONDON:**  
**SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.**  
**—**  
**1849.**

## PREFACE

HAVING been one of the first commercial adventurers to the Columbia River, and having spent fifteen years of my life travelling among the savage tribes west of the Rocky Mountains, I was induced, from time to time, to note down such incidents and opinions, illustrative of savage life and manners, as appeared to me either new or interesting.

To the characteristic details of Indian life, I have added that of personal adventure, the trials and misfortunes which the first adventurers had to undergo among the Indians in that quarter; connecting therewith an account of the trade and commerce of the country during the early days of that bold spirit which animated the first explorers of the Columbia.

These different subjects have been arranged and [iv] linked together in their natural order, so as to form one complete narrative, embodying the history of "the Pacific Fur Company."

It is not an arm-chair narrative, derived from hearsay tales, but the result of practical experience on the spot. From beginning to end, I had personally to act my part in the scenes described; they passed under my own eyes; and the account altogether may derive more value from being authentic than from any adventitious embellishment bestowed on it.

While on this part of our subject, it may be observed that there is an error which most travellers, especially those pioneers who first penetrate into dark and remote

regions, fall into: they generally run into the extreme, and spoil a simple story by colouring. Not content to leave nature in its simple garb, they must brighten or darken, magnify or diminish, everything they describe, until at last the real likeness of the thing is entirely effaced, and truth itself, by over-refinement, is thrown into the shade.

What belongs to oneself is generally viewed with a partial eye; and perhaps that partiality influences [v] my own opinion as to the interest of the subject before us. In reference to this subject, however, others have written on it as well as myself. Let our readers, therefore, judge for themselves.

In presenting the present work to the public, I have no very sanguine expectations. All I aim at is to lay before my readers a faithful and impartial statement of what took place, during my own times, in a quarter hitherto but little known.

Freedom from imperfection is not to be expected; yet, on the whole, I hope that this volume will prove to the calm inquirer, in all matters connected with the subject generally, a sure and satisfactory guide: allowance being made for any changes that may have taken place since this account was written—thirty years ago.

*Red River Settlement, Rupert's Land.*  
Aug. 1, 1846.