

*Pacific Coast Survey of*  
*1849 and 1850*

By Lewis A. McArthur

Portland, Oregon  
1915

The first survey of the Pacific Coast by the United States Government was made in 1849 and 1850. The field work was done principally by Lieut. Commanding William P. McArthur, U.S.N.,<sup>1</sup> and Lieutenant Washington A. Bartlett, U.S.N.<sup>2</sup>, assistants in the Coast Survey. There are some details of the life of Lieut. Commanding McArthur and the work he carried on on the Pacific Coast that may be of interest to students of Oregon history.

William Pope McArthur was born on April 2, 1814, at Ste. Genevieve, Missouri. He was the oldest child of John and Mary Linn McArthur. His mother was a sister of Dr. Lewis Fields Linn, who was later to become Oregon's champion in the United States Senate. Dr. Linn took a decided interest in his nephew, and at the uncle's request, the youth was appointed a midshipman in the United States Navy on February 11, 1832. The first few years of his service were spent in the South Pacific Station, and in April, 1837, he was granted three months' leave. Two months later he was granted permission to attend the Naval School at Norfolk, to perfect himself in his studies.

Early in the winter of 1837-8 the government organized an expedition to the Everglades of Florida, and placed it under command of Lieut. Commanding L. M. Powell, U.S.N. McArthur served as commanding officer of one of the two small vessels of the expedition, with the temporary title of lieutenant. The expedition was a mixed command of sailors, soldiers and marines. Among the members was Joseph E. Johnston, who later became one of the greatest generals of the Confederate Army. Johnson had graduated from West Point in 1829, served in the Black Hawk campaign, was stationed at several forts along the Atlantic seaboard, and in 1836 accompanied General Scott to Florida as a member of his staff. Shortly thereafter Johnston resigned from the army, and took up the study of civil engineering. When the expedition of 1837 was sent to the Everglades, Johnston volunteered to accompany it as topographical engineer. Acting Lieutenant McArthur and Johnston became firm friends, and continued to so until the death of the former.<sup>3</sup>

The expedition landed at Jupiter Inlet about the 10th or 12th of January, 1838. Johnston and McArthur warned Powell as to the tricks of Indian warfare, but Powell would not listen, and as a result the command was ambushed, and had it not been for the bravery and coolness of Johnston, the column would have been annihilated.

McArthur was badly wounded in both legs, and was carried to the boats by a faithful negro sailor. Johnston kept the men in orderly retreat and undoubtedly prevented greater loss of

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<sup>1</sup> The author of this paper is a grandson of William P. McArthur and a son of Lewis Linn McArthur.

<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Atherton, in her "California, an Intimate History," says that Bartlett was the first American alcalde at Yerba Buena, and that he changed the name of the village to San Francisco in 1846.

<sup>3</sup> "General Johnston" by Robert M. Hughes; Appleton, 1893, gives further particulars of Scott's campaign, and the expedition described here.

life. Later a surgeon removed the ball from one of McArthur's legs, but the other could not be extracted, and annoyed him until the day of his death.

McArthur was sent to the Naval Hospital at Norfolk, and while recovering, courted and married Mary Stone Young on May 3, 1838. His wife was the daughter of Lieutenant John J. Young, at that time superintendent of the Naval Hospital. During the next two years he saw service on various vessels, and on September 24, 1840, was ordered to the brig *Consort*, [this vessel was detailed for naval survey service and was not attached to the U.S. Coast Survey] detailed to the Coast Survey. The cruise lasted over a year, and during that time a survey was made of the Gulf of Mexico. From that time on his work was almost entirely with the Coast Survey, duty calling him to nearly every nook and corner of his country's coast line.

In the fall of 1848 he received the following instructions, dated October 27, and signed by A.D. Bache<sup>4</sup>, Superintendent U.S. Coast Survey: "I have been directed by the Treasury Department to make arrangements for commencing the survey of the Western Coast of the United States. A land party has been for some time organizing under the charge of Assist. Jas. S. Williams. I am directed also to organize a hydrographic party, to accompany or speedily to follow the land party, and you have been assigned to the command of the party. You will please therefore make all preliminary arrangements in conformity with oral instructions already received, or such as may suggest themselves as proper to you under circumstances, observing the usual routine in regard to estimates, etc. If no more suitable vessel for your purpose can be obtained, the *Schr. Ewing*, the transfer of which from the Revenue Service has been directed by the Secretary of the Treasury, will be assigned to you.

"The fitting out of this vessel and her dispatch at as early a moment as practicable is desirable, say before the first week of November.

"I do not deem it desirable that you should make the voyage in the vessel, as you cannot complete work now in hand, nor so well seize the most prominent objects of the Western work as by making the journey over the Isthmus, and joining the vessel at Panama or San Francisco. The specific duties required of you will be stated later in instructions.

"You are authorized to go to New York in connection with the transfer of the *Ewing* at such time as you may deem best."

Lieut. Commanding McArthur left New York on one of the new *Aspinwall* steamers, and in due time landed at Chagres. The only route across the Isthmus was up the Chagres River in boats, and thence by mule train over the trail to Panama. Chagres was congested with a motley crowd, from all quarters of the earth, making its way to the California gold fields. Among the

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Dallas Bache was one of America's foremost scientists, and was a grandson of Benjamin Franklin. He was born at Philadelphia on July 19, 1806, and died at Newport, R.I., on February 17, 1867. He served in many positions of note, and was superintendent of the Coast Survey from 1843 to 1867.

fortune hunters were many characterless men, and even fugitives from justice. They threw off all restraint, and perpetrated so many crimes, that the authorities were powerless. Prominent residents appealed to the more responsible Americans, and asked their co-operation in putting down the violence. Lieut. Commanding McArthur spoke Spanish fluently and accurately, and this coupled with the fact that he was an American officer, caused him to be put at the head of an impromptu vigilance committee. He and his colleagues took the lead so effectively that within forty-eight hours the lawlessness was ended.

When he reached Panama, here too were found many gold seekers, many ill from fever, and the place was overcrowded because of insufficient transportation to San Francisco. Passage tickets were commanding exorbitant prices.

Anchored near the island of Taboga was the ship *Humboldt*, 500 tons burden, owned by a Frenchman, J.B. Ferand, used as a store ship for coal, and bonded in a large sum to remain there in that service. So great was the pressure to leave Panama, that a delegation waited on Ferand, and persuaded him to forfeit his bond, and send the ship to San Francisco, if he could secure four hundred passengers at \$200 each, and providing that no cooked provisions were to be furnished by him except as could be prepared "once a day in a large fifty-gallon kettle." Hot coffee was to be distributed in the morning, and hot tea in the evening, and from the perusal of Lieut. Commanding McArthur's letters, it seems probable that the tea and coffee were prepared in the same large kettle with the meat and vegetables.

Four hundred persons were found who would pay the price, and Ferand had the hulk overhauled. When the *Humboldt* was watered and victualled, Ferand found he had no captain and he opened negotiations with McArthur, who agreed to navigate the ship to San Francisco, in order to clear the city of Panama of as many men as possible, as the fever was daily growing more prevalent.

McArthur boarded the ship after the passengers were on board, and at once saw that there were more than the contracted for number, and that the ship was badly overcrowded. He made an investigation that showed that Ferand had sold four hundred and eighty tickets. He ordered the last eighty passengers to go ashore, and proceeded to enforce the order without delay. Fortunately a British brig<sup>5</sup> put into Panama that day and her captain was willing to take the rejected passengers at the same rate.

The *Humboldt* sailed on May 21, 1849. Lieut. Commanding McArthur enforced strict discipline, as being the only means of securing safety and comfort of the passengers and crew. Among the former was Collis P. Huntington, for many years president of the Southern Pacific Company. In the spring of 1890, he recounted to Lewis Linn McArthur, the third son of Wm. P. McArthur, some of [the] incidents of the trip. He stated that there was one exceptionally

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<sup>5</sup> Julius H. Pratt, in the "Century Magazine" for April, 1891, gives an account of his trip to California in 1849, and describes the voyage of the *Humboldt* in greater detail. He states that the British brig that arrived so opportunely was the *Corbiere*.

turbulent fellow aboard, who endeavored to provoke a quarrel with him, and threatened other passengers. When this reached Lieut. Commanding McArthur's ears, he immediately sought out the disturber, and cautioned him not to repeat his annoyances. The man resented this violently and McArthur immediately took his weapons from him and had him put in irons. In a few days his spirits had cooled, and he asked for pardon and promised that there would be no more troublesome conduct on his part.

The passage was very slow, requiring forty-eight days to reach Acapulco. When *Humboldt* reached that port the passengers and crew were almost famished because of a shortage of food and water.

After a week's delay, the *Humboldt* proceeded to San Francisco, which port she reached in due time.

By the middle of September, 1849, the *Ewing* had arrived from New York, and Lieut. Commanding McArthur was installed aboard, but no sooner had he prepared for operations, than an incident occurred which gave him great annoyance.

While the schooner was lying in San Pablo Bay, Past [sic; Passed] Midshipman Gibson was ordered ashore for some purpose, taking five men and a boat. When the boat had proceeded some distance and the men thought themselves out of sight of the *Ewing*, they seized Gibson and threw him overboard, and made for the nearest shore. Fortunately McArthur was looking through his glasses at the time, and saw the whole occurrence. [See the follow-on articles by R.R. Lukens and Erwin G. Gudde for more accurate accounts of this incident.] He dispatched a boat to the relief of Gibson, who was rescued, and the deserters were overtaken and captured. They were tried by court martial, and two were condemned to be hanged, and lashes were ordered for the other three, as was the custom in those days. One of the leaders, John Black by name, was hanged on board the *Ewing*. In all of his letters McArthur mentions the inability to get men to carry on the survey, which was greatly delayed, and this fact discouraged him sorely at times. The high wages and allurements of the gold fields kept men from entering the government service at a few dollars a month, and such men as could be secured were generally worthless.

San Francisco was in the midst of the gold excitement, and in a letter dated September 23, 1849, McArthur wrote to his father-in-law, John J. Young, who was now a commander in the Navy, as follows: "People are still crowding here from all parts of the world, and everybody seems to be as crazy as ever, but good order seems to prevail, and you would be surprised to see how quietly business is carried on - everything shipshape and orderly. There is already a good police in San Francisco, and the same was established yesterday in Sacramento City, so if a Vagabond comes out here to cut up his capers, he is quite mistaken.

"There is no especial news here except that the convention for forming a state and state laws has been in session for some time, and have acquitted themselves with great dignity and good sense. They will have good, wholesome laws, I have no doubt.

"The joint commission for the selection of sites for Fortifications, Navy Yards, Docks,

etc., etc., are all here on board the *Massachusetts*. They are without men and have done absolutely nothing. They have borrowed some men from the Commodore <sup>6</sup> to enable them to run over to the Sandwich Islands and ship a crew. . . . It is asserted that the islands are nearly depopulated already. I hope seamen may be had there, as I may be compelled to recruit there myself."

On October 26, 1849, Lieut. Commanding McArthur wrote to Commander Young, dating his letter from San Pablo Bay. Among other things he says:

"This country is truly one of the greatest wonders of any age. The increase of population is truly wonderful. Let us estimate San Francisco at 100,000 souls, Sacramento City 40,000, and Stockton 35,000 or nearly. Eighteen months ago there was scarcely 100 people in all three. There [are] many other places springing up into importance, and I am now making a survey of a place where great improvements must take place. But as it is an island, it will probably be reserved by Government, and I presume to think that it will be the site for the Navy Yard.

"As soon as I get through with this work, I will go on a cruise of reconnaissance to the northward, and hope to be repaid by some discoveries. At all events, I would be pleased to leave San Francisco for a time.

"Captain Williams has not been able to do any work for want of hands - his men all left him but one, and he is waiting to know whether he may be authorized to give California prices for assistants. He expects to hear from the Superintendent on the subject by the next steamer. The joint commission for Yards, Docks, Fortifications, etc., are used up. They are on board the *Massachusetts*, and will go to the Islands (Sandwich) in a few days for men. I may go there also bye and bye to run away from the incessant rains which are said to prevail with winter.

"[October] 27th. Today I commence work investigating the conveniences and inconveniences of Mares Island Straits with a view of ascertaining whether it would be a suitable place for a Navy Yard. I sincerely believe it to be the only good place in the whole bay. The weather is still warm and pleasant - much more so than in August. Thousands of geese and brandts cover the hills in every direction, eating the wild oats, and the Coyotl, a small animal resembling a Fox, spoken of by Prescott (see *Conquest of Mexico*), is also very abundant.

"I am very much surprised to find so few fish here. We have not caught the first one, and yet they are very abundant further up the Rivers."

In December the *Ewing* made an extended trip to the Hawaiian Islands. Previous to his

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<sup>6</sup> Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones, who had the frigate *Savannah* as his flagship. He commanded the American naval forces in the battle with the British near New Orleans in December, 1814, and it was he who made the premature attempt to capture Monterey, California, on October 19, 1842. When he found that the United States and Mexico were not at war, and that California had not been ceded to England, he withdrew his landing party.

departure from San Francisco, McArthur was deeply concerned about his health, but the beneficial climate of the islands restored him to his natural condition, and he returned to San Francisco early in 1850, greatly improved in body and in spirit.

This same spring, however, brought new disappointments to Lieut. Commanding McArthur. Interested as he was in the Coast Survey, the desultory way in which the government carried on the work discouraged him. For weeks the *Ewing* lay idle in San Francisco Bay, while the government refused to pay the wages demanded by sailors. Few if any could be secured at the small pay offered by the Department. McArthur chafed at the delays, and finally after much labor the vacancies in the crew were filled, and on April 3, 1850, the *Ewing* sailed out of the Golden Gate headed for a reconnaissance of the northern coasts.

Just before leaving for the northern coasts McArthur wrote to Commander Young, dating his letter late in March. In addition to certain family matters, he wrote as follows: "I have made up my mind to be disappointed with regard to the probability of our usefulness on this coast. Capt. Williams has as yet done nothing and Heaven only knows when he may be able to proceed with his labors. I have abandoned the hope of his being able to do anything. I feel confident that no work can go on at the present wages of the country as it would require the whole of the Coast Survey appropriation to keep a party together. Wages are still from five to twelve dollars per day, and if anything still rising as the mining season opens. I have written to the Professor and laid my views fully before him.

"In a few days I go to the mouth of the Columbia River and shall make a reconnaissance of the coast both on my way up and returning. I propose also to choose Points for a Light house, Buoys, etc., at the mouth of that river. I shall then be at the end of my tether. It will take about 3 months to perform what is at present required of me and the Superintendent in that time will perceive how utterly vain it is to think of carrying on work here. I am now under the impression that we may be recalled or ordered to disband here in less than six months.

"The country is improving very much in this vicinity and I do not doubt but that San Francisco will be a large and beautiful city, already it has its public Square and churches and other public Buildings which give it an air of importance. The country is becoming daily more settled and improved, but not so much as might be supposed from the great number of immigrants."

On April 13 he wrote Commander Young from Trinidad Bay as follows: "I may safely say that the only happy days I have spent in the country have been spent since we started. I am at last at work and most usefully employed in making a reconnaissance of the Coast as we go up. Great success has so far attended the undertaking, and I must say that I shall have good cause to congratulate myself if I am permitted to complete the work to the Columbia River. I am operating on my own hook (as the saying is) Capt. Williams being unable to obtain men with which to operate.

"We have completed a very correct outline of the coast, its headlands, Bays, Rivers, and indentations from San Francisco to this place, as well as carrying on our soundings as we go, and

the results are such as to please me very much. We have discovered many important errors in the charts of the coast, and shall probably discover greater discrepancies as we go to the north, as less is pretended to be known of the country in that direction.

"I shall start from here tomorrow and shall stop at Pt. Georges, distant about 40 miles to the northward of this place. . . . There are also vessels there and a settlement has been made. Rogues or Klamet River is my next stopping place, after that then the Columbia. I may be detained at point Georges Pt. some days, as I shall endeavor to secure the bodies of Lieutenants Ricd. Bache and Robert L. Browning, who were drowned at that place.<sup>7</sup>

McArthur's next letter to Commander Young is dated Astoria, Oregon Territory, June 3, 1850. Among other things he says:

"We are now in Oregon, where I shall remain until I receive further instructions or orders. I hope such will be given me as will permit us to proceed at once to work. We can live better and cheaper here than in any part of the coast. The salmon is fine and abundant, but not so good as the shad. Butter is plenty at 62 to 75 cts pr.lb., fresh beef 20 cts.pr.lb. The climate is agreeable and healthy. The water is not inferior to any in the world. The face of the country is too uneven to permit as general cultivation, still it will and must soon become a great agricultural and stock growing country. The scenery is beautiful and in some places and some points of view the grandest that the eye ever beheld.<sup>8</sup>

"Lt. Blunt who is now with me has traveled considerably through the country and is so much pleased with it, that he has taken a section of land and made a regular claim to it, he has also taken one for myself and one for Lt. Bartlett, both adjoining his! What do you think of that? I intend to have my claim registered according to the custom of the country and protect it as long as I may be on the coast. I may be able to sell it this fall to the emigrants. It lies in the Willamette Valley and is represented to be a beautiful location. If I could hold it for 5 years it would be a fortune.

"You can scarcely imagine the change in the prospects of this country since the discovery of the new south channel, and the arrival for the first time of the Pacific Mail Steamers. Property has advanced materially, and points along the river are of much importance, which have hither

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<sup>7</sup> Lieutenant Richard Bache and Lieutenant Robert L. Browning were drowned on the northwest coast of California on March 27, 1850, while making some special surveying investigations. Lieutenant Bache was the younger brother of Professor Bache.

<sup>8</sup> Among those who made the trip from San Francisco to the Columbia River on the *Ewing* was William H. Packwood, now of Baker, Oregon, who is the sole survivor of the Oregon Constitutional Convention of 1857. Judge Packwood was one of a small party of the First U.S. Mounted Rifles that was transported from San Francisco to Oregon in the *Ewing*. For his description of the trip, see the **Oregonian** for February 20, 1915.



passed unnoticed.

"The greatest difficulty existing here at present is the want of acts of Congress to define the extent of land claims and to regulate all matters attending the surveying and giving titles, etc. Nothing exists in the shape of law. There already exists much confusion, which is not likely to decrease till laws be passed.

"The great probability is that Oregon will develop more rapidly for the next ten years than any other part of the United States except California. You will soon be startled with the cry that gold is found in Oregon. I have no doubt of its existence myself. It has already been found as far north as Rogues River and the mines on that River are being worked successfully. Several exploring expeditions are scouring the different directions. Their return is looked for with intense interest. You may depend upon receiving letters by every opportunity, but especially now by the regular mails. I do not like to trust my letters to ships. They are neglected and lost."

On July 16, 1850, McArthur wrote Commander Young as follows from Astoria: "Since I last wrote you I have been all through Puget's Sound, Hoods Canal, Admiralty Inlet, etc., etc., I went over in the Steamer *Carolina*. We stopped at Victoria on Vancouver Island, and spent a very pleasant night with Governor Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company. In the morning we went over the farm, visited the dairy, and garden and fields. Everything wore a charming aspect. The wilderness is now in its incipient smile. In a few years it will increase to a broad grin.

"The waters of the sound are a strange and peculiar anomaly. The deep blue sea runs up inland passing between straits but half a mile wide with a depth of over an hundred fathoms. Bays, Harbors, Inlets and Roads startle you at every turning, forming a perfect labyrinth. We journeyed on to Nisqually in the steamer and there I took possession of the "Ship *Albion*" seized by the collector of the district. She was seized for a most flagrant violation of the revenue laws and also for committing depredations on our timber, etc., etc. I would have brought her here but could not obtain a crew. We then came across the country traveling through a splendid grazing country for the first 24 miles. Our horses being tired, we tarried 'till morning with an old *Missourian*. The next day we reached the Cowlitz, traveling all day through the most excellent farming country I have ever beheld. We staid all night at the house of an old Canadian who treated us very kindly. We started the next day in a canoe down the Cowlitz and arrived at the mouth of the Columbia without accident, where I found I had been absent from the *Ewing* just one month! I found the sweet little craft all right. Whilst at Nisqually we spent 4 days at the farm of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Society, and witnessed the interesting process of the shearing of *ten thousand* sheep!

"We have now nearly completed our work here and will soon top our boom southward reconnoitering the coast toward San Francisco, stopping there for provisions, etc., etc. From there we shall go to Point Conception and perhaps San Diego.

"Notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances under which we have labored, we shall have obtained many very important results and now we have a land party under way we will proceed more rapidly. This winter I shall perhaps be at San Diego, and the next by the blessing

of God I shall be at home."

The next letter is dated at San Francisco, August 27. "We arrived here safely on the 22nd. from a cruise along the coast. We have been successful in surveying the mouth of the Columbia River and up the same as far as Astoria. You will be surprised when I tell you that the dangers of the navigation of this truly magnificent river have been vastly exaggerated. We have crossed the bar sometimes as many as ten times a day for weeks together. More vessels have visited the Columbia within the last year than perhaps ever before and not the slightest accident has occurred. We have completed our work faithfully. I feel sure the Superintendent will feel as much gratified as I do.

"On our way from the Columbia River we were successful enough to make a good reconnaissance of the whole coast from Cape Disappointment to this place and the limits of error may be estimated at one mile in longitude and an ½ mile in latitude. This I consider quite a triumph. We visited every river, bay and headland, and in fact sailed nine-tenths of the way within half a mile of the shore, anchoring every night and resuming our work in the morning. My fame (if any be merited) will rest upon this reconnaissance. I most heartily wish I could send you a copy of it.<sup>9</sup> The scale is ten times as large as that of Captain Wilkes and every accessory has been successfully attended to.

"Upon my return here I find San Francisco very much improved. The Bay is alive with steamers of every size and beautiful brick buildings adorn many of the streets. Business is quite lively and the El Dorado is flourishing rapidly."

On September 15 McArthur wrote from San Francisco: "For my own part I do not deem a geodetic survey required at present. A reconnaissance and the establishment of Latitudes and Longitudes of the principal points, headlands Bays, anchorages, harbors, etc., with a selection of points for Lighthouses and Buoys and general Sailing directions would in my opinion meet the present exigencies and would enable us to investigate the manner, the best manner, of operating for the future. I have already expressed myself in these terms to the Supdt. and I believe his opinion coincides with mine.

"Every day almost I meet some friend or acquaintance from the States. Dr. Rutter, and Dr. Wilson<sup>10</sup>, a young brother of Holt, is also here as well as several others from Portsmouth. Washington is also represented and at the Columbia River I met two troupes of Artisans from Baltimore, all old acquaintances.

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<sup>9</sup> The three sheets of the Pacific Coast reconnaissance chart were engraved, printed and published in 20 working days from the time the drawings were first received at the Coast Survey Office in Washington-a remarkable record. They are on a scale of about 1-850,000 or approximately 1 inch to 13-5 miles. They may be found in the volume of accompanying papers to the annual report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey for 1851.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. R.B. Wilson, for many years a prominent physician of Portland.

"Commodore Jones is in many respects the finest naval officer I have ever met. In point of foresight and good judgment he surpasses any."

On October 13, 1850, he wrote: "Since my arrival from Oregon I have been very engaged in preparing our work and reports for the past season and will complete everything tomorrow and place all in the hands of Lieut. W. A. Bartlett, who is charged with the charts, etc., and takes them on to Washington." Lieut. Commanding McArthur, in this letter described briefly his visit to the Hawaiian Islands the year before and his entertainment at the hands of His Hawaiian Majesty Kamehameha III. McArthur mentions the fact that by this time wages in the vicinity of San Francisco were gradually resuming normal figures. On October 31 he wrote of the gloom cast over the city by the bursting of the boilers of the *Mariposa*, which killed some 30 persons. He had now been away from home for two years, and the departure of Bartlett, together with the knowledge that he would be away from his family for another year at least doubtless prayed on his mind, but on November 21 he received welcome news from Professor Bache to the effect that a contract was being signed for a 225-ton steamer<sup>11</sup> for the Pacific Coast work. McArthur was directed to return to Washington at once to examine the vessel and prepare plans for the season of 1851. Under these flattering circumstances and overjoyed at the prospect of so soon seeing the family he had for so long been separated from he set sail from San Francisco for Panama on the *Oregon*, on December 1. Alas, he was never to reach his home. When but shortly out of San Francisco an acute attack of dysentery prostrated him completely, and despite medical assistance he died on December 23, 1850, just as the *Oregon* was entering Panama harbor. He was buried on the Island of Taboga. In 1867 his remains were moved to the Mare Island Navy Yard by Lieut. Commander McDougall.

On February 8, 1851, the members of the Coast Survey met in Washington to pay tribute to the memory of William Pope McArthur. Professor Bache and Brevet Major Isaac I. Stevens, U.S. Engineers, who was at that time attached to the Coast Survey, addressed the meeting and appropriate resolutions were passed. Professor Bache's words perhaps best summed up the work of Lieutenant Commanding McArthur, and showed the feelings of the Survey toward the deceased officer. Professor Bache said:

We are met here, as you all know, to pay a melancholy tribute of friendship and respect to one who was dear to us all - dear as a brother to many of us. Instead of greeting his arrival among us as we had fondly-hoped, in health, we meet to mourn together over his loss from our band. The work which he has accomplished will live forever. Surrounded by circumstances the most difficult, perhaps, which ever tried the constancy, the judgment, the resources of any hydrographer, he vanquished circumstances. His reconnaissance of the western coast, from Monterey to Columbia river, and his preliminary survey there, were made in spite of desertion, and even mutiny; in despite of the inadequacy of means to meet the truly extraordinary circumstances of the country. Happy that in his officers he had friends devoted to him and to

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<sup>11</sup> The **Corwin**. Before the vessel was completed it was decided that time could be saved by sending the steamer **Jefferson** to the Pacific Coast. The **Jefferson** was dismantled in a gale off Patagonia, and had to be abandoned. It, therefore, became necessary to send the **Corwin** after all.

their duty, especially happy in the officer next to him in the responsibilities of the work.

Prostrated by an attack of fever of a malignant type, contracted while preparing his vessel for sea, Lieutenant McArthur nevertheless persisted in volunteering for the charge of the hydrographical party on the western coast. A subsequent relapse did not abate his determination to enter as a pioneer upon this arduous service, trying alike to his powers of mind and body. Steady in the midst of excitement, he laid his plans in the way to command success. Seizing the peculiar wants of the hydrography of that coast, he applied all his energies to supply them. The gratitude of his fellow citizens there is already his; the praise of a new country, the resources of which he had aided in developing.

He has been called away just as his wishes were realized, ample means provided, and the first and worst difficulties overcome. In his letters and reports he urged strongly the necessity for enlarged appropriations, and for a steam vessel for the hydrography. His last letters from this office brought him news that both his wishes were gratified, and called him home to make the enlarged arrangements for continuing his work. The arrival of Mr. Cutts with instructions, as late as the beginning of October, confirmed the necessity of his return, and he took passage in the steamer *Oregon*, commanded by his friend, Lieutenant Patterson [Carlisle D. Patterson, who had spent many years on the Coast Survey and was destined to become the fourth Superintendent of the Coast Survey.]

An attack of dysentery prostrated him completely, and from this, in spite of the best medical attendance, of such nursing and attendance as only the circumstances to which I have referred could insure, he rallied but for a time, and sunk to his final rest before he could be landed at Panama. His remains were consigned to a foreign soil, to be brought, let us hope, to his country, where all his affections centered.

He has not lived in vain. His name will ever be bright in the annals of our Survey, whether in the more usual labors on our Atlantic coast, or as the pioneer on the shores of the Pacific. Always advancing as life advanced - the last his crowning work.

Professor Bache having concluded his remarks, Lieut. Washington A. Bartlett, U.S.N., arose and said.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen: After the appropriate and feeling remarks of the chairman, it is unnecessary for me to add more than to say that when I left Captain McArthur on the western coast he was in excellent health and buoyant spirits, in view of what had been, and what he hoped yet to accomplish. It was my good fortune to be long associated with him, and that association caused me to love him as a brother. I will not detain you, but offer the following resolutions for your consideration:

1. Resolved, That the civilians and officers of the army and navy engaged on the United States Coast Survey, now assembled in Washington, have received with feelings of deep emotion the melancholy intelligence of the death of Lieut. Commanding Wm. P. McArthur, U.S. Navy, Assistant in the Coast Survey; and that in his sudden and unexpected decease the navy has lost

one of its

most gallant and accomplished officers, and the Coast Survey one of its most zealous and efficient laborers.

2. Resolved, That the successful reconnaissance of the western coast of the United States, from Monterey to Columbia river, and the preliminary survey of the entrance to the Columbia, accomplished under the most peculiar and extraordinary difficulties, while they are proofs of his unconquerable energy, determination and skill, have forever identified the name of Wm. P. McArthur with the progress of the Republic in the West.

3. Resolved, That we most sincerely sympathize with the bereaved and afflicted family of our generous and warm-hearted friend in their irreparable loss, and commend the widow and orphans to the gratitude of the Republic to whose service the husband and father was so ardently devoted throughout his life.

4. Resolved, That Professor A.D. Bache, Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey; Brevet Major I.I. Stevens, of the United States Engineers; Lieutenant M. Woodhull, of the United States Navy; Mr. J.J. Ricketts, of the United Coast Survey and Passed Midshipman R.M. Cuyler, of the United States Navy, be a committee to take the necessary measures to have erected, in the Congressional burying ground, a suitable monument commemorative of the services and virtues of the deceased.

5. Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be communicated to the navy and Treasury Departments, with a request that they be placed on the files, and also to the family of the deceased, and that they be published.

6. Resolved, That the officers of the Coast Survey will wear a badge of mourning for thirty days in further testimony of their regard for the memory of the late Lieutenant Commanding William P. McArthur.

Major Stevens, in seconding the resolution, addressed the meeting as follows:

I rise, Mr. Chairman, in the name of one of the co-ordinate services associated on duty here, to pay a tribute to the memory of Lieut. McArthur. I can add nothing to the remarks that have been already made. I simply propose to pay a tribute of feeling and respect.

It was not my fortune to know Lieut. McArthur personally. But I feel that I know him well through his works. They hold up his character as worthy of all respect and admiration. In prosecuting his labors on the Pacific shore he exhibited a constancy, an energy, and a rare force of command which enabled him to triumph over almost insuperable difficulties. These qualities would have made him conspicuous in any career. He possessed all the elements of the heroic spirit. Trials which bowed down the strength of strong men gave his feeble frame almost superhuman strength; and he accomplished, in the midst of sickness and physical depression, of

mutiny and desertion, labors that those most highly favored by health and appliances would have shrunk from. His example appeals to us with irresistible force. How can we yield to despondency witnessing his lion heart accomplishing its great purpose - giving vigor to a worn-out frame, and snatching success from the elements of defeat?

McArthur was an ornament to both services with which he was connected - to that larger service, the profession of his youth, in which he took such pride; and to that other service to which his maturer years have been applied. He has, in the words of the resolutions, for ever identified his name with the progress of the Republic in the West. It has gone into history, and will henceforth be associated with those of Decatur and of Perry.

The resolutions having been agreed to unanimously, the meeting adjourned sine die.

(Signed) A.D. Bache, Chairman

THORNTON A. JENKINS, Secretary.

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In 1876 the United States government built the schooner *McArthur* at Mare Island, California, and named her in honor of Lieut. Commanding William Pope McArthur. For the past 39 years the *McArthur* has been in practically continuous service in the work of the Coast and Geodetic Survey on the Pacific Coast. The vessel is 115 feet long and of 220 gross tons, and has long since served her usefulness. In his last annual report, Secretary of Commerce Redfield strongly condemns the government for requiring men to go to sea in such a ship.

In 1886, Lieutenant James M. Helm, U.S.N., surveying certain parts of the Alexander archipelago in southeastern Alaska, was in command of the *McArthur*, and he named McArthur Peak, 2239 feet high, on Kuiu Island, in honor of his vessel, and he also named Port McArthur on the same island for the *McArthur*.

The Coast and Geodetic Survey named McArthur Reef, in Sumner Strait, off the mouth of Clarence Strait, in the Alexander Archipelago, for the schooner *McArthur*.