

The following is the captain's account:

On Thursday, Sept. 23, 1852, sailed from Skidegate's harbor, east side of Queen Charlotte's Island, bound to Edensaw's harbor, at North Island. We had on board the chief, Edensaw, and his wife and child, with two of the Skidegate Indians, one of whom had been to California in the above named vessel. His name is Winnett. Nothing extraordinary happened until we rounded Point Rose, on Saturday, Sept. 25, when a canoe came alongside the vessel. They told Edensaw they were from Fort Simpson, and were bound to Masset Harbor. He asked me to allow some of them to come on board; but as that was quite against my rules, I refused. They then traded some fish for tobacco, and went away. On the following morning, (Sunday,) at about half-past nine o'clock, some canoes came off from Massett Harbor, we being about four miles off, to the northwest. I commenced trading with them for fish, believing that to be their object, as nearly all the canoes had more or less fish in them. I now counted twenty-five canoes around the ship, but never suspected an attack, having had a similar number around her before. I therefore continued trading on the starboard side of the quarter deck.

The chief, Edensaw, was passing the tobacco into the canoes, one of the seamen lowering the fish into the hold, and another on the main deck, at the port gangway. While in this scattered position, a large canoe came along on the port side, and one of the Indians jumped over the nettings on the deck. I ran from the quarter deck to stop him and make him leave the ship, but at this signal the vessel was boarded simultaneously on all sides by at least one hundred and fifty men. I was in a moment completely surrounded and overpowered. Robert Ford, the man in the gangway, was knocked down and stripped of his clothes;

*M.S. Skidegate
Sept
April 9, 1853*

James Cornden was served in the same manner; John Caulfield ran aloft; Robert Lang (the mate) made for the cabin to arm himself; the cook was caught in the galley, and Henry Smith at the wheel. All of these were unarmed. I rushed at the first Indian who boarded, and was about to fire at him, but was seized by two others from behind, thrown on my back, and dragged towards the stern of the vessel. Here I managed to break away from them, but was immediately covered by five or six muskets pointed at my breast, and was only saved by the chief's wife forcing herself between the Indians and myself. The chief then came up to me, and by dint of force dragged me away from them towards the cabin.

Previous to this he had been defending the cabin against about twelve Indians, all armed with knives and most with muskets. Here I found Robert Lang, with a musket, about to fire; but I prevented him from so doing by telling him that we were overpowered, and by killing one of them would cause the loss of all our lives. As it was, one man was standing over me with his knife close to my neck, for the purpose of despatching me, but grasping his wrist I prevented him from accomplishing his design. Edensaw then came up to this man, and from some conversation between them, the intentions of the latter were suddenly changed, and from being an enemy he became my friend. Notwithstanding this reinforcement, (our number being only ten,) we could not prevent a sudden rush that was made, by which the cabin was immediately broken open, and a fight ensued between the chief and one of the other men, in which the former had his nose nearly cut off. During this time I managed to make my escape to the after cabin, where I found four of my men secreted, all being stripped naked, and one slightly wounded in the side by a musket ball.

However anxious the chief, Edensaw, and his party may have been to preserve our lives, they appeared equally anxious to share the

plunder with the Massett tribe, for on our departure from the cabin they began to ransack the whole vessel, cut down all the sails, and let go the anchors. They removed all the spare sails from the hold, as well as the fish and stores. They also took the safe out of the lazarette, (which was placed there for safety,) containing \$1,500--\$1,000 in gold and \$500 in silver, besides several amounts of private cash, amounting to about \$200. During the whole of this time they were shouting most vigorously for my life. I was therefore obliged to keep myself secreted, as it was their intention to shoot both me and my men if we made our appearance. In the meantime Edensaw made a treaty with them to spare our lives for a quantity of cotton and tobacco, whereupon they began cutting the upper deck of the after cabin and the bulkhead at the same time. By this manœuvre, and their numbers, they overpowered Edensaw and his men, and forced us to quit the after cabin. While I was making a rush for the outer cabin, one of the fellows made a thrust at me with his knife, which I avoided by falling down among their feet, and thus scrambled out on deck. Here I was taken prisoner by a chief named Scowell, who told me in pretty good English that his wife's father was a Boston man, and that he would protect me. It being impossible for me to return to Edensaw, I went with him to his canoe, where I was covered with a blanket for protection, when we immediately made for the shore. After many privations and difficulties encountered on the land, both by the mate and myself, we at length reached Fort Simpson, where we were received by Mr. John Work, chief factor of the Hudson Bay Company, from whom we received every attention and kindness that it was in the power of man to bestow. Having stated our case to him, he immediately despatched a canoe for the remainder of the men, three of whom he was fortunate enough to recover, and one Edensaw himself brought to the fort.

In concluding this narrative, I have to return my sincere thanks to Mr. John Work, chief factor, and Capt. W. McNeill, of the Hudson Bay Company's establishment at Fort Simpson, for their kind attentions to myself and crew.

MATTHEW ROONEY.

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CIVIL SERVICE