

NAME: HODGSON, John

PARISH: Westminster, London **ENTERED SERVICE:** 1774

DATES: b. 1763

Appointments & Service

Outfit Year*:

Position:

Post:

District:

HBCA Reference:

**An Outfit year ran from 1 June to 31 May*

John Hodgkin, a son of Ephraim Hodgson and a native of the parish of St Margaret's, Westminster, London, was born about 1763 and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company as an apprentice in 1774. He was educated at the Grey Coat Hospital at Westminster and was engaged by the Company when they were beginning to establish posts inland in opposition to the Canadian free traders. It was thought that his superior education in mathematics would prove useful in "making Observations and taking the Distance of Places and making Plans" when he should go on inland service. Hodgson sailed from the Thames on board the Company's ship Prince Rupert and arrived at Albany Factory via Moose in September, 1774. He spent the winter of 1774-75 at Albany, and from the season 1775-76 until the end of the season 1777-78 he was employed at Henley House. He returned to Albany during 1778 and remained there until 1781, being employed in writing and keeping accounts except for a brief period early in 1779 when he was sent inland to take observations at Henley and Gloucester Houses. Another exception was made in June, 1780, when he accompanied Philip Turnor, the newly appointed surveyor of the Company, from Albany to Gloucester House and back. A full account of this journey will be found in J.B. Tyrrell (ed.) Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor between the Years 1774 and 1792 (Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1934) In the autumn of 1781 Hodgson was sent to Henley House as second, and from February 7 to April 9, 1782, he was in charge whilst John McNab, the master, was absent at Albany completing arrangements for repairing the damage caused by fire at Henley House on January 12. Hodgson again had charge of the post during the summer of 1782. In the following October he returned to Albany, where he was employed until February, 1783. On February 16, news reached Albany from Severn that Forts York and Prince Wales had been captured by the French under Lap erouse in the previous August, and that William Falconer, the master of Severn who was visiting York at the time, was amongst the prisoners. It was immediately decided to send Hodgson with provisions and trading goods to relieve the summer master at Severn and take charge. He left Albany on February 21, 1783, and on March 31 arrived at Severn, where he managed the business successfully until the post was abandoned on August 20. He arrived back at Albany on September 10, 1783. During the next three trading seasons he served as second at Henley House, and during each summer he had charge of the post whilst the master took the returns of trade to Albany. With the beginning of the trading season 1786-87, John McNab took charge of Albany and Hodgson succeeded him as master at Henley; for the next seven years he retained this position, only leaving his post to make brief visits to Albany.



APPENDIX

In the autumn of 1793 Hodgson sailed from Moose Factory to England on the Company's Ship King George, and in the following summer he returned to Hudson Bay on the same ship. During the winter of 1794-95 he established Ernest House at Martin Fall on the Albany River, but in February, 1795, he was obliged to leave for Albany, where his services were needed owing to the death of John Kipling, the seconds, in the previous November. Hodgson remained at Albany until the summer of 1796. In July, 1796, he returned to the charge of the post at Martin fall and retained this position until he succeeded McNab as master of Albany in 1800. By a commission dated May 25, 1803, Hodgson was appointed Chief Factor of Albany and he remained in this capacity until the autumn of 1807, when he left for England on the King George. In the summer of 1808 he returned to Hudson Bay on the Prince of Wales and resumed his former charge until the summer of 1810, when he received intimation from the Governor and Committee that his services would no longer be required. His dismissal was due to his mismanagement at Albany and to the reorganization which had recently taken place within the Company. He has instructed to hand over his charge to Thomas Vincent. Hodgson, accompanied by his family, left Albany in August, 1810. He later purchased a farm and settled in the vicinity of the Lac des Chats on the Ottawa River. On May 27, 1815, Colin Robertson made the following entry in his Diary: "...saw Mr. Hudson & family late of the Hudson's Bay Company. He received us as well as the situation he was placed in would permit, passed some high encomiums on his former employers, and seemed happy at seeing them take active measures to regain their commerce, there appeared to be very little difference in his mode of Life from that of the Indians. One room served him for dining room, bedchamber & kitchen, - he talked upon a grand scale - his boundaries were the Atlantic and Pacific oceans- the produce of the lands, between those great seas, must pass through the Hudson's Bay C Territories, he was very eloquent on this subject, but in the middle of his harangue a large Pig entered the room which cut the thread of his discourse. Just as I was about to leave Mr. H. he informed me that he was many years Gov. of Albany, but really I think the upper works of his excellency is a little deranged."

