

Journal of Alexander Ross

Alexander Ross was a Scottish fur trapper who was employed by the British Pacific Fur Company during 1824.. He explored areas in both Utah and Oregon. This is part of his record "Journal of Alexander Ross—Snake Country Expedition" The Iroquois were a nation from the East and John Grey worked for a British trapping company. [Changed for easier reading using ChatGPT.] Original found at <https://archive.org/details/jstor-20609944/page/n6/mode/1up>

Later today, John Grey, a strong-willed Iroquois leader, came to my lodge to tell me that he and ten others had decided to leave the group and turn back. I asked him why. He said they didn't want to miss the spring hunt by staying here, were tired of being in such a large group, and didn't like to dig through snow or make roads. John said he was not a soldier or a slave and that no one could control him. I told him he was a free man with a good reputation and warned him not to ruin it. If his group left, the whole expedition could fail. **Monday, 5th.** About fifty Nez Perce [a Native American tribe] arrived from the buffalo country, carrying lots of food. Our men started trading with them so quickly that soon we had almost no bullets left, and the Nez Perce had little food left either. Whenever our people meet other tribes, they seem to lose all sense—trading everything they have! It's foolish that the company even allows this to happen. We then learned that Laurent's earlier trip back was not for supplies, but because the Iroquois had sent him to bring these Indians to trade with us. This visit left our men nearly empty-handed and cost about 100 bullets to send the visitors away happy. **Monday, 17th–28th.** We decided to make a cache [hiding place] here. Hiding furs in places where Indians often pass through is dangerous.

Original

Late today John Grey, a turbulent leader among the Iroquois, came to my lodge as spokesman to inform me he and ten others had resolved; to abandon the party and turn back. I asked him why? He said they would lose the spring hunt by remaining here, were tired of so large a band, and did not engage to dig snow and make roads ... John answered he was neither a soldier nor a slave; he was under the control of no man. I told him he was a freeman of good character and to be careful not to stain it... If his party walked off the expedition would fail...Monday 5th. Were visited by fifty Nez Perces just arrived from buffalo country loaded with provisions. Our people commenced a trade with them so brisk that hardly a ball was left among the freemen nor a mouthful of provisions amongst the Indians. When these people meet Indians, a frenzy siezes them. What madness in them, and what folly in the company to be furnishing such people with means. It was now we learned the truth of Laurent's trip back. He was sent by the Iroquois to get these Indians to trade with us. This visit has left our people almost naked and cost 100 balls to send our visitors off pleased...Monday 17th 28 . Resolved to make a cache here. Hiding furs in places frequented by Indians is a risky business.