

“Extract of a Letter from St. John’s, dated August 1, 1811”

“Lieut. Buchan returned from his expedition up the Bay of Exploits, about a month ago. It appears, that in the month of January he, with a party of sixteen or seventeen of the crew of the ‘Adonis’ in exploring the interior of the country came up with three wigwams, occupied by about seventy of the native Indians, by whom he and his party were received in a friendly manner; that after staying with them some time, he endeavoured to make known to them his intention of returning for the purpose of presenting them with such articles as he had been supplied with, and which he apparently made them understand would contribute to their comfort and convenience. Four of the natives voluntarily went with him and two of his marines, with equal confidence, agreed to remain with the Indians until his return. Three out of the four Indians, however, parted from him in the course of the first day; the other remained with him all night, and returned with him and his party back to the wigwams the next morning, which they found had been totally abandoned and at no great distance from which they found the dead bodies of the two marines, they had left behind, both of whom had been murdered and their heads severed from their bodies; upon discovering which, the remaining Indian ran off with the utmost speed, and neither him, nor any of the others, were they able to come up with afterwards.

Thus, unfortunately has ended our attempt to open friendly intercourse with the natives of this Island. Lieut. Buchan says that he clearly understood, by signs which they repeatedly made to him to cross over an adjoining lake, that their principal encampment was in that neighbourhood and that they were much more numerous than we had formed nay idea of. He seems anxious to engage in a second expedition, but thinks it advisable to send a considerable augmentation of force to ensure success to the undertaking. Whether any further attempt will be made at present or not is uncertain.

Source: *London Times*, November 27, 1811.

We learn by letters just received here from Newfoundland, dated June 5th that the expedition which left St. John’s in the autumn of last year, under the direction of Capt. Buchan of H.M.S. Grasshopper having for its object, to open a communication with the aborigines of the island, by way of the Bay of Exploits, had failed and that skilful and intelligent officer with his persevering companions had returned.

It appears that the Grasshopper having reached the river, from St. John’s in December last, was housed over and made secure, to enable the persons left on board to encounter the inclemency of a Newfoundland winter. Mary March the female native Indian prisoner, who was to have been the medium of communication with her native friends died on board the Grasshopper, before the expedition could set out from the bay of Exploits.

About the middle of January, Captain Buchan, Mr. C. Waller, midshipman, the Boatswain, and about sixty men, proceeded with sleighs on the ice, containing their provisions &c. as also the body of the female Indian, and the spot having been pointed out by Mr. Peyton, a merchant who accompanied the expedition where the rencontre took place between his party and the Indians when the husband of Mary March was killed, her body ornamented with trinkets &c. was deposited alongside that of her husband.

Source: *London Times*, July 10, 1820.