



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla, CA 92037

[www.raremaps.com](http://www.raremaps.com)

(858) 551-8500  
[blr@raremaps.com](mailto:blr@raremaps.com)

## Map of the Oregon Territory From The Best Authorities. 1849

**Stock#:** 68158  
**Map Maker:** Wilkes  
**Date:** 1849  
**Place:** New York  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 13 x 8.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

This is the second edition of Wilkes map from the United States Exploring Expedition, showing remarkable details throughout the region. This is the reduced version of Wilkes' of Oregon Territory, a map that made a major contribution to American cartography and was widely considered the most detailed map of the region north of the Sacramento River. The map includes an inset of the Columbia River from Walla Walla to Cape Disappointment.

Wilkes' map provided an early accurate depiction of Oregon Territory, a thinly settled part of the United States even in the 1840s. Wilkes supported the popular view that the northwest boundary of America should be 54 deg. 40' North, the famous "54-40 or Fight" controversy, championed by Senator Lewis Linn. This map was used to support his claim that was based on 'topographical' grounds and was instrumental in setting the scene for American interests in the territory, despite the fact that the map does not extend so far north, nor is there a clear geographical divide.

The map covers the region from Fraser's Fort and Fort St. James in British Columbia south to the upper Sacramento River, and from the Pacific coast to the Black Hills east of the Rocky Mountains. The map provides excellent detail of the region including dozens of forts, watershed, and other place names. A large inset map "Columbia River Reduced from a survey made by the U.S. ex. Ex. 1841" depicts the river from Ft. Walla Walla to its mouth, where one of Wilkes' ships, the Peacock, was lost on the infamous Columbia Bar. It includes details of missions, Indian villages, and the major mountains with north oriented to the left.

As noted by Wheat:

*This map was in many respects the most detailed of this extensive area yet published, and for*



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*the main Oregon region and the Hudson's Bay Company territories to the north it was an accurate, really quite extraordinary, map . . . This map had much influence on the later maps of the area.*

The map was quite popular and was used to illustrate several gold rush era overland guide books.

#### **The U. S. Ex. Ex.**

The US Exploring Expedition, shortened to the U. S. Ex. Ex., was a major expedition taking place from 1838 to 1842 centered on exploring the Pacific Ocean and the surrounding coasts. The expedition, sometimes popularized the Wilkes Expedition, after its second commanding officer Charles Wilkes, was a long time in the making. John Quincy Adams had already approved the mission as early as 1828, but repeated funding attempts were stalled. Shortly before the voyage happened, Commodore Jones resigned due to the vast amount of procrastination that had taken place.

The expedition was finally launched under the talented Charles Wilkes in August of 1838. The voyage set sail towards Madeira, before rounding Cape Horn. The Ex. Ex. traveled throughout the Pacific for three years, visiting many islands including Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, before voyaging to the Columbia River, which they reached in 1841. Extensive travels were taken throughout the island, and when the Peacock ran aground, the crew set up Peacockville. From there, surveys departed northwards and southwards, completing such tasks as an extensive survey of northern California. The crew could depart in September and return to New York in 1842. Despite the success of the expedition, Wilkes would be court marshaled on his return due to his mistreatment of subordinates.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Minor toning along one fold.