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Washington and Oregon

Stock#: 77101
Map Maker: Colton
Date: 1855
Place: New York
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 15.5 x 12 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

Detailed, Early Map of Oregon and Washington Territories

Striking early J.H. Colton map of Oregon and Washington Territories published four years before Oregon statehood.

The map is dated 1853, but it was first published in 1855.

Oregon and Washington Territories stretch east to Nebraska Territory, encompassing present day Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. Nebraska Territory covers the Dakotas to the east, with Utah Territory and the state of California to the south. North of the 49th parallel are "British Possessions." A fine decorative border rings the map, although the tip of Oregon breaks the neatline to the right.

The majority of the counties of Oregon and Washington are clustered west of the Cascade Mountains. The only counties east of this range are Walla Walla and Skamania in Washington and Wascopen in Oregon.

Running from Seattle south and then along the Columbia is "Governor Stevens Route & Line of Proposed Pacific R. R." Isaac Ingalls Stevens (1818-1862) was the first governor of Washington Territory, after it was separated from Oregon Territory. En route to his post, he also led a railroad survey that would connect the Pacific Northwest to the East.

Rivers and mountains are shown in detail, including the Lewis and Clark Forks of the Columbia River. The



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former is also known as the Snake River, a part of the Oregon Trail famous for its rapids. The Oregon Trail was already past its heyday when this map was made, but the impact of the settlers that walked and drove that trail is evident here. Indigenous peoples are also acknowledged, however, with the names of tribes inscribed over the areas they inhabit.

In a dotted line across the map is the route of John C. Fremont in 1843. The route ends at Mt. Hood and passes south into and around Utah Territory. This is one of five expeditions led by Fremont in the 1840s and 1850s, earning him the nickname of the Pathfinder. On the fifth and final journey, he surveyed the route for a Transcontinental Railroad. He was also on the first US Senators elected from the new state of California.

The creation of Oregon and Washington Territories

At the Convention of 1818, negotiators from Britain and the United States decided upon a joint occupation of the land west of the Continental Divide and between the 42nd parallels. This treaty was to last for ten years before being re-negotiated, but Britain asked for a review in 1826. This began twenty years of consultations and discussions that eventually ended in 1846, when the powers agreed a treaty that created the Oregon Territory. The borders of the territory were finalized in 1848.

The new territory was more densely settled south of the Columbia River. The area north of the river was called Northern Oregon and was split into two giant counties, Lewis and Clark. In 1851, the territorial legislature also added Thurston, Pierce, King, and Jefferson counties. By 1854, only 4,000 settlers lived in Northern Oregon, but they were beginning to feel alienated from their southern neighbors.

Far from the territorial seat at Salem, Northern Oregon residents and businessmen met at Cowlitz Landing in August 1851. They requested that Congress create a new territory, Columbia, to represent their interests. Congress largely ignored the Cowlitz Convention, but a second effort in November 1852 at Monticello (Longview) was more successful. The governor of Oregon Territory supported their congressional petition, arguing that the few residents of the new territory would be balanced by the vast commercial potential of Puget Sound.

Congress created the Washington Territory on March 2, 1853. They altered the name from Columbia to Washington ostensibly to honor the nation's first president, but more practically to avoid confusion with the District of Columbia. Initially, the territory encompassed what is now Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming. However, Idaho Territory was founded in 1863 after gold was discovered there and Washington legislators feared their capital would have to shift east of the Cascades.



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Detailed Condition: