

LESSON 1 SUMMARY

The Oregon Country

SS.8.A.4.1; SS.8.A.4.8; SS.8.E.1.1; SS.8.G.4.2; SS.8.G.4.3;
SS.8.G.4.4; SS.8.G.5.1; SS.8.G.5.2

1. MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recall that under the terms of the Adams-Onís Treaty, Spain also gave up lands it controlled in the southeast. Complete this organizer to show how the Adams-Onís Treaty affected U.S. territory on opposite ends of the country.

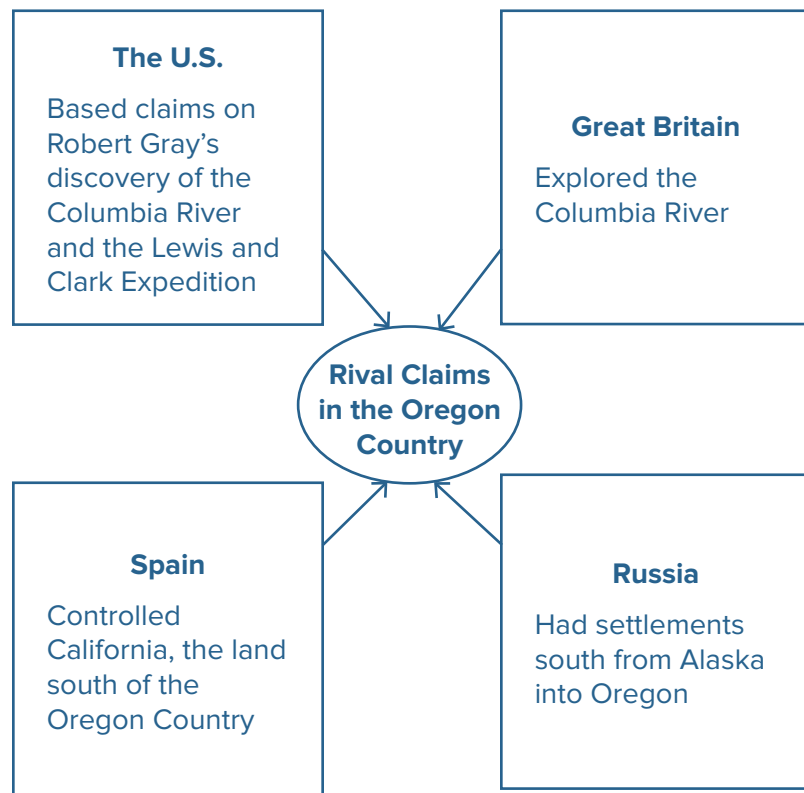
Lands Spain
Ceded to the
U.S. under the
Adams-Onís
Treaty

In the Southeast:

In the Pacific Northwest:

Rivalry in the Northwest

The Oregon Country was a huge area located north of California, between the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains. It covered far more land than today's state of Oregon. And, in the early 1800s, its lands were claimed by four different nations.



Adams-Onís Treaty

Control of the Oregon Country was especially important to the United States. Settlements in Oregon would give Americans access to the Pacific Ocean.

LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued*

In 1819, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams convinced Spain to sign the Adams-Onís Treaty. Under the treaty, the Spanish agreed to give up their claims in Oregon. They also set the limits of their territory at what is now the northern border of California. In 1824 Russia also gave up its claims to lands south of Alaska.

Great Britain, however, would not give up its claims to the Oregon Country. In 1819, the United States and Great Britain agreed to **joint occupation**. This meant that people from both countries could settle there.

Mountain Men in Oregon

The first people from the United States to live in the Oregon Country were fur trappers. They came to trap beaver, whose skins were in great demand. Fur companies bought the skins to sell as furs in the United States and Europe.

The fur trappers were tough, independent men who spent most of their time in the Rocky Mountains. They became known as **mountain men**. The mountain men traded with Native Americans and often adopted Native American ways.

Over time, the mountain men could no longer make a living by trapping. Overtrapping had reduced the number of pelts available, and changes in fashion had reduced demand. Some mountain men moved to Oregon and became farmers. Others used their knowledge of the area to guide settlers on the long trip to the Oregon Country. They carved out several east-to-west passages that played a vital role in western settlement. The route they used most often was called the Oregon Trail.

Oregon and Manifest Destiny

By the 1830s, many Americans had heard about the good farmland in Oregon. With economic troubles in the East, more and more settlers began traveling to the Oregon Country seeking a fresh start.

2. RECOGNIZING RELATIONSHIPS

How did the economic factors of scarcity and supply and demand affect the lives of the mountain men in the Oregon Country?

LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued*

ANALYZING MAPS

3. On a separate sheet of paper, describe the route of the Oregon Trail, using the map to identify geographic features settlers followed along the way.

4. EVALUATING

Look at the map of the Oregon Country. Circle the line of latitude $54^{\circ}40'$ N. Now circle the line of latitude 49° N. Does setting the final border at 49° N seem like a fair compromise over control of the Oregon Country? Why or why not?

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman

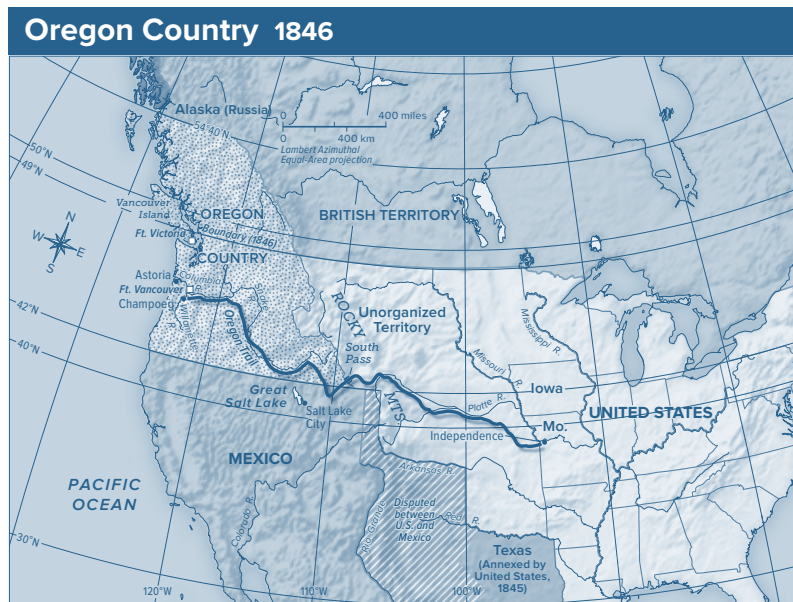
Among the first settlers were Dr. Marcus Whitman and his wife, Narcissa, who went to Oregon in 1836. The Whitmans built a mission among the Cayuse people to provide medical care and convert the Cayuse to Christianity.

Settlers traveling to Oregon often stopped to rest at the Whitmans' mission. In 1847 the people at the mission began getting measles. Many Cayuse children died. The Cayuse blamed the Whitmans for the deaths. They attacked the mission and killed the Whitmans and 11 others.

Along the Oregon Trail

The Whitman massacre was a shocking event, but it did little to stop the flood of pioneers heading for the Oregon Country. These pioneers were called **emigrants**—people who leave their country—because they left the United States to go to Oregon.

The Oregon Trail stretched for 2,000 dangerous, rugged miles. Settlers on the trail carried all their belongings and supplies in canvas-covered wagons. People called the wagons **prairie schooners** because, from a distance, they looked like ships called schooners. Over the years, tens of thousands of emigrants made the long, difficult journey across the Oregon Trail to Oregon Country.



LESSON 1 SUMMARY, *continued***America Seeks Its Manifest Destiny**

In the early 1800s, many Americans began to focus on what newspaper editor John O’Sullivan called the nation’s **Manifest Destiny**. This was the idea that it was the mission of the United States to spread freedom by settling the entire continent, all the way to the Pacific Ocean. This included the Oregon Country.

James K. Polk supported this idea. Polk was the Democratic nominee for president in the election of 1844. His campaign slogan, “Fifty-Four Forty or Fight,” referred to the line of latitude Democrats believed should be set as the nation’s northern border in Oregon—a line that stretched along the northernmost lands of the Oregon Country. Polk’s Whig opponent, Henry Clay, did not take a strong position on the Oregon issue. Polk won the election.

As president, Polk was focused on acquiring Oregon. But the British refused to accept a border at 54°40' N latitude. In 1846 the two countries compromised. They set the border at 49° N latitude. This line still serves as the northern border of the United States today.

5. IDENTIFYING POINTS OF VIEW

How do you think Native Americans viewed the idea of Manifest Destiny?
