

WASHINGTON

U.S. - BRITISH JOINT OCCUPANCY

1818 - 1846

During the early 1800s both British and American fur traders operated in the region. In 1810 the Canadian North West Co. established Spokane House near present day Spokane for the purpose of trading with the Indians. In 1811 a company sent by John Jacob Astor of New York set up an American fur trading post at Astoria as well as Fort Okanogan, the first United States settlement in what is now the State of Washington.

Following the War of 1812, which forced American traders out of the area, Britain and the United States could not agree on a boundary line to separate their territories west of the Rocky Mountains. In 1818 they signed a treaty permitting citizens of both countries to trade and settle in this region, which was called the "Oregon Country". This arrangement held until June 1846 when pressure from a heavy influx of American settlers forced Britain to sign a treaty which set the boundary line at the 49th parallel, Washington's northern border.

Because there were no established United States east - west mail routes across the Rocky Mountains during the period of joint occupancy, both outgoing and incoming mail to the "Oregon Country" was carried by one of three routes: via the Hudson's Bay Co.'s transCanada express; by ship around Cape Horn; overland by the occasional party going to or from Missouri.

"Fort Vancouver" dateline on Jan. 16, 1833 letters from American explorer Andrew Wyeth, endorsed "favor of the Hon. Hudsons Bay Co." addresses to Massachusetts. These traveled by Hudson's Bay Company canoe brigade to Montreal and were mailed there on August 13. Letters datelined Fort Colville April 22, 1837 and Feb. 1, 1839 addressed to London are known. These traveled by Hudson's Bay Company canoe brigade to York Factory on Hudson's Bay and then by ship to England.

"Fort Vancouver Oregon Territory Dec. 18th, 1836 [i.e. 1835]" dateline on letter of ornithologist John Kirk Townsend, addressed to Philadelphia. After a journey of almost eight months the Hudson's Bay express deposited the letter in the Montreal post office where it received a MONTREAL/ L.C. Aug. 13, 1836 postmark and forwarded to the U.S.

"Fort Vancouver" dateline on June 9, 1841 letter sent by the Hudson's Bay Company barque "Wave" to Honolulu, then by American brig "Joseph Peabody" to Mazatlan, Mexico, then overland across Mexico to Vera Cruz where it was postmarked on October 30, 1841. From Vera Cruz the letter went by monthly packet to New York where it entered the U.S. mail and was rated 20 3/4, the ship rate to Salem, Massachusetts. Mexican postage was prepaid, either by Hudson's Bay Company arrangement with Parrott, the U.S. Consul in Mazatlan, or by the forwarder firm of Scarborough & Co.

"Tshimakain Near Fort Colville Oregon Mission 9th Feb. 1846" dateline on letter addressed to Mass. Carried by Hudson's Bay Co. boats north up the Columbia River to their encampment opposite Athabasca Pass, transported by pack horses across the Rocky Mountains to Ft. Edmonton and then by canoe east to Lachine Canada (just below Montreal). Received LACHINE/ L.C. Oct. 27, 1846 postmark and forwarded to the U.S.

Ships to Hawaii made monthly calls to the coast of Oregon,

and the Oregon Methodist Episcopal Mission owned or chartered its own ship, the "Lausanne", which not only carried missionaries from New York (around Cape Horn) to the "Oregon Country", but provided a means of communication between the missionary communities of Oregon and Hawaii. Indeed, the maritime connection offered by the Oregon coast enabled early residents of Oregon and Washington the chance to correspond with friends living anywhere in the world.

"Tshimakain Mission near Fort Colville Oregon country Jan. 20th 1840" dateline on missionary letter addressed to the Missionary Rooms in Boston. After more than a year in transit the letter was deposited in the New York post office, received a Feb. 5, 1841 NEW-YORK postmark, forwarded to Boston and then to Port Natal South Africa.

AS OREGON TERRITORY

August 14, 1848 - March 1, 1853

The records of the earliest post offices in Washington are included in the Oregon records. The first two post offices in what is now Washington were established January 8, 1850, one at Nesqually (name changed to Olympia, August 28, 1850) and the other at Vancouver (name changed to Columbia City, December 12, 1850). Other Washington post offices established in and operating under the jurisdiction of Oregon Territory were Cascades (Nov. 5, 1851), Cathlamet (Aug. 8, 1851), Chinook (Oct. 19, 1852), Monticello (Nov. 28, 1850), Oak Point (Feb. 18, 1851), Pacific City (Dec. 26, 1850), Port Townsend (Sept. 28, 1852), Seattle (Oct. 12, 1852), Steilacoom (July 6, 1852) and Washougal (Aug. 6, 1852).

CATHLAMET/O.T.(E)(Feb. 1, 1853;Arc-27x17;PAID; Black) 1,500
(L)(Feb. 17, 1853) 1,400
Columbia City O.T.(E)(April 19, 1851;Ms;Paid 40[ms]; Black) 1,000
(L)(June 23, 1852) 850
Olympia O.T. or Oregon(E)(Sept. 19, 1851;Ms,YD[ms]; Black) 1,000
(L)(Jan. 19, 1852) 850
OLYMPIA/OGN(E)(Feb. 28, 1852;C-32;5;PAID, PAID/3[arc];PAID 6;Black) 750
(L) See Washington Territory --
Vancouver,Or.(Sept. 21, 1850;Ms;Paid 40[ms];Black) . . 2,000

TERRITORIAL

March 2, 1853 - November 10, 1889

POPULATION

1850 - 1,000 1860 - 12,000

Cut from Oregon Territory. Created by Act of Congress March 2, 1853. The Territory was much larger than the State.

1854-55 Additional Post Offices to those listed above: Alki, Chenook, Cowlitz, Grand Mound, Grand Prairie, Highland, Lake River, Pekin, Scales Creek, Tarlitt.

Cascades W.T.(April 5, 1862;Ms;Paid 10[ms];Black) . . . 850
CATHLAMET/O.T.(Arc-27x17;PAID;Black) See Oregon Territory --
CATHLAMET/W.T.(May 9, 1859;Arc-21x11;PAID; Black) 500
Columbia City(E)(Oct. 2, 1854;Ms;Black) 750
(L)(Nov. 6, 1854) 700
Columbia City W.T.(E)(June 28, 1853;Ms;Black) 750

WASHINGTON

Town Postmark	Dates Seen	Size • Color • Value	Town Postmark	Dates Seen	Size • Color • Value
(L)(Dec. 21, 1854)		700			
Same(Dec. 12, 1853;Blue)		750			
Cowlitz W. T.(E)(Dec. 21, 1854;Ms;Black)		1,000			
(L)(June 9, 1860)		750			
FORT COLVILLE/W.T.(Jan. 8, --;C-25;U.S. 10 cts[oval]; Black)		850			
Franklin W.T.(E)(June 9, 1860;Ms;Black)		750			
(L)(July 20, 1862)		650			
Grand Mound W.T.(1850s;Ms;Paid 3[ms];Black)		850			
Lake River W.T.(--;Ms;Paid 10[ms];--)		750			
OAK POINT/W.T.(July 20, 1868;C--;FREE PM frank; Black)		850			
Olympia O.T. or Oregon See Oregon Territory		--			
OLYMPIA/OGN(after March 1, 1853-1858;C-32;Black)		350			
Pacific City(--;Ms;Black)		850			
Port Ludlow W.T.(E)(June 7, 1857;Ms;Black)		750			
(L)(March 26, 1860;Ms;Paid 10c[ms];Black)		650			
Seattle W.T.(Nov. 30, --;Ms;Black)		1,000			
(L)(June 23, 1852)		850			
Steilacoom W.T.(Sept. 1, 1855;Ms;Black)		750			
STEILACOOM CITY/W.T.(1850s;C-37;FREE;Black)		750			
Same(1860s;C-30.5;PAID,PAID/3[C];Black)		750			
Vancouver, Or(Ms) See Oregon Territory		--			
VANCOUVER/W.T.(E)(Dec. 14, 1860;C-33;Black)		500			
(L)(1865;C-33;PAID 3;Black)		350			
Wailepta W.T.(Feb. 17, --;Ms;Black)		750			
WAILEPTA/W.T.(Sept. 11, --;C-24.5;PAID 10;Blue)		750			
WALLA WALLA,W.T.(Jan. 12, --;SL-37x2,MDD below; Black)		1,200			
Whatcom W.T.(May 28, 1858;Ms;Black)		750			

Adhesive stamps were generally employed in Washington Territory in 1853. Town postmarks on covers franked with adhesive stamps are known from the following additional towns: Buckley, Camp Sokaw, Centralia, Cheney (WT), Dayton (WT), Fairhaven, Fort Madison (WT), Fort Simcoe (WT), Fort Spokane, Mount Vernon (WT), New Tacoma (WT), Puyallup (WT), Port Gamble (WT), Port Townsend, Rosalia (WT), Seabeck (WT), Sprague (WT), Tacoma, Tulalip (WT).

STATEHOOD PERIOD

Effective November 11, 1889

Too late for stampless covers.