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Map of the Oregon Districts and the Adjacent Country . . . 1845

Stock#: 44416pb
Map Maker: Wyld
Date: 1845
Place: London
Color: Hand Colored
Condition:
Size: 20.5 x 29.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Definitive British Mapping of the Oregon Question -- Second State, Significantly Revised & Improved.

Rare separately issued map of "The Oregon Districts and Adjoining Country," first published in 1843. The present example is the revised and updated second state of the map, dated April 10th, 1845, with significant improvements in the Willamette Valley and elsewhere.

Wyld's map of the Oregon Territory is a fascinating historical and cartographic artifact. Prepared in London by James Wyld, it provides a unique geographical look at the region, being the only large format map of Oregon Territory prepared by the British in the critical final years before the question of ownership of what Wyld referred to as the Oregon Districts would finally be resolved by treaty in 1846. The map incorporates a significant amount of British and American information, including both the most well-known sources such as Lewis & Clark, the Hudson Bay Company and others, as well as more obscure details, such as John Colter's route through Wyoming in 1807.

While the American maps of the region, including Burr's map of Oregon Territory (1833 and after), the Washington Hood Map (1838) and Wilkes Map (1841) would also stamp a uniquely American imprint on the cartographic content of the region, the British were independently developing their own cartographic vision. Beginning with the manuscript maps of David Thompson in 1808 and Peter Skene Ogden, the British were actively exploring and mapping the region, primarily under the auspices of the Hudson Bay Company and North West Company. In 1834, John Arrowsmith's map of British North America would



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provide the best available information derived from these manuscript sources and other printed sources. Similarly the French vision of the Western US by Duflot du Mofras reflected a combination of European and American sources for the mapping of the area impacted by the so-called Oregon Question.

As the British and American tensions over control of the region increased, Wyld, always the Cartographic opportunist, seized upon the geopolitical intrigue as an opportunity to re-issue a section of his 6 sheet map of North America. First issued in 1820 by Faden and in 1823 by Wyld and later actively re-engraved and updated until the mid-1870s, Wyld not only published the complete 6 (and later 7) sheets as a set, but periodically adapted sections of his map for other special purposes, including maps that focused solely on the California Gold Rush, the United States and Mexico in varying sizes and configurations, all drawn from his constantly updated 6 sheet map of North America.

While all of Wyld's North America and variant maps are rare on the market, this map of the Oregon Distrticts is clearly the rarest, with no published appearances of the map on the market in standard references since the 1940s.

The Oregon Question

Wyld published this map at the height of the so-called Oregon Question. Over the course of approximately 50 years beginning in the last decades of the 18th Century, the Americans, Russians, Spanish and British each conducted explorations into the region, with an eye toward colonization and for the purpose of bolstering Ancient Title claims based upon discovery and/or occupation. From 1818 onward, the British and Americans each occupied the region under an agreement of Joint Occupation, while Diplomats from each country tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a boundary treaty. While the parties had agreed to the 49th Parallel as the division between the United States and Canada for the lands east of the Rocky Mountains, no fixed agreement could be reached for the stretch to the west.

Following the Adams Onis Treaty of 1819, which resulted in Spain's relinquishing their claims to the region and the fading interests of the Russians, it was left to the inertia of the two competing English language powers. The Americans had the benefit of proximity, with an increasing number of missionaries and settlers traveling overland to the region, while the British Fur Trading interests, as consolidated in the Hudson's Bay Company following its merger with the North West Company in 1821, pressed their possessory claims from north of the Columbia River, with the HBC establishing its headquarters in Vancouver, Washington.

The issue built to crescendo in America in 1844. With the annexation of Texas, the focal point of American



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expansionism turned to Oregon. While the expression Fifty-Four Forty or Fight would not be coined until the election of 1846, aggressive expansion in the Columbia Basin became a centerpiece of American Politics. The British also stepped up their efforts to secure a maximum foothold in the region. In the 1830s and 1840s, a regular British Naval presence accompanied the HBC presence.

By 1845 and 1846, the British and American interests nearly resulted in War. At least 5 British Naval Vessels were operating in the North Pacific and the British went so far as to formulate a war plan. However, diplomacy won out, as the British commercial interests in the region were increasingly trumped by the importance of maintaining a trade partnership with the United States. The Oregon Treaty was ratified in June 1846, whereby the 49th Parallel became the primary boundary between the regions, with the British retaining all of Vancouver Island. While the treaty resolved the longstanding dispute, a final boundary between the two nations would remain at some level of modest controversy until 1871, when the San Juan Islands were awarded to the Americans in an arbitration headed by Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany.

Wyld's Map of the Oregon Districts

Wyld's map is of the utmost rarity. In its present configuration, it was apparently unknown to Wheat and the map did not appear in the Streeter Sale, although both were certainly familiar with the larger 6-sheet map of North America.

Based upon a close study of this example and the example of the 1843 edition which we previously handled (see link below), the following is a list of the observed differences, broken down regionally:

Southwestern Oregon

- The Willamette Valley is completely blank in the 1843 edition. In the 1845, the topographical features are added with remarkable detail, much of which relates to the settlement of the Valley by pioneers of the Oregon Trail, who began to arrive in 1843.
- Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson are added.
- Fremonts or South Pass' added on 110 parallel at bottom
- Fort Boise is named on 'Lewis's R. South Fork' west of Shallett Lake.
- The Clamet (Klamath) River and tributaries are significantly revised, with the southern tributary now called Too-too-tiu-na or Klamet River.
- Little Klamet Lake is added
- Raft River is named, south west of Fort Hall
- Multnomah Falls is added.
- Cowlitz settlement to the north and Mount Coffin
- Fort Vancouver looks to have been moved slightly to allow 'Cascade' to be inserted.



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Alta California

- 'Ogdens' river added in 'Utah'
- Mount Shasta named.
- Smith's River now named to the east of the Bay of Trinidad
- Pitt's River and a source lake are added.

British Columbia

- The Tacoute River mouth being moved further south.
- Ft. Langley has been moved slightly north.
- Several new rivers are added east of Ft. Thompson.

We note several references to Wyld's Oregon Districts map in early catalogues of Americana Booksellers indicating that the map was separately issued, with a single copy located by OCLC in the collection of the University of British Columbia Library and 3 recorded examples of a later edition of April 10, 1845 (British Library, University of Alberta & Yale).

In 1941, Eberstadt offered a separate example of the map with the date of 1845 in Catalog 119, #211, with the following description:

An interesting production issued at the height of the Oregon boundary controversy. The British claim all the region southward to the Columbia River, and label the coastline north of Vancouver Island: "Discovered by Drake in 1758" [1578].

20" x 28", mounted and folding into 12mo, original cloth case

In 1946, Goodspeed (Catalog 405, #519) offered an 1843 example, described as follows:

Fine copy. Not in Phillips. Smith 4482.

Contains two inserts: "Map to Shew the Communications from the N. W. Coast of America to China &



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Australia" and "British Possessions in America."

about 22 1/2" x 31", backed sectionally on linen and folded to 8vo, in cloth case

We have been unable to locate any examples of this map bound into an atlas and it seems to have been primarily intended to be separately issued, as virtually all surviving examples are dissected, laid on linen and issued with a slip case.

A visually striking example of one of the rarest maps of Oregon Territory and the only map of Oregon Territory published in London for the British market.

Detailed Condition:

Minor fold split at the bottom of one fold.