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THE STRUGGLE FOR OREGON DURING THE 19th CENTURY'S LATE 30s AND EARLY 40s¹

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Abstract. *Introduction.* Oregon in the early 19th century was a sparsely populated territory, but it had a favorable geographical position on the Pacific coast. It was a strategically important region, which, thanks to the Columbia River, provided a connection with the interior of the United States and the Pacific Ocean. Spain, Great Britain, and the USA fought for the right to possess this territory. In historiography the struggle for Oregon has received insufficient coverage in a number of aspects. *Methods and materials.* The methodology used in writing the article is based on the achievements of modern historical science. The study is based on sources obtained from domestic and foreign repositories. Domestic and foreign historiographies are involved. Classical methods of historical analysis, including prosopography and document correspondence, were used to process sources and literature. At the same time, when studying the literature and processing the entire complex of received materials, systematic and comparative approaches were involved. The study itself contains aspects of an interdisciplinary approach. *Analysis.* The article deals with the circumstances of the rivalry for Oregon from the turn of the 1830s to the 1840s. It may be viewed in the context of relations between the United States and Great Britain in regards to British North America. In order to gain a stronger foothold in Oregon, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), in addition to the fur trade, engaged in a wider commerce through agriculture. The strengthening of this activity takes place simultaneously with the development of ties with the Russian-American Company (RAC). The circumstances of the preparation and implementation of this commercial activity between 1838 and 1842 are studied. The first full-scale American naval circumnavigation expedition was commanded by Captain Charles Wilkes (1798–1877). *Results.* It was in Oregon that the confrontation between the United States and England over the possession of new colonies intensified. Russia, which had colonial possessions in Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, pursued a pragmatic policy due to the wars of independence during the 1810s and 1820s. In Latin America, the formerly numerous and vast Spanish colonies became independent states. The formation of Mexico generally called into question any Spanish claim to the Northwest of America. This article continues a series of publications by the authors, which analyze the struggle of the leading European colonial powers for Oregon and the US West Coast. *The Author's contribution* is the following: A. Yu. Petrov is in charge of finding new archival materials on the problem in the Russian State Navy Archives (RGA VMF) in Saint Petersburg, investigating all available literature on the subject, developing methods and providing a conclusion, and finding new facts on Russia's involvement in the struggle for colonies in the Pacific Northwest. L. M. Troitskaia has been searching for all materials on the expedition of Ch. Wilkes concerning the interactions between nations in the North Pacific Ocean.

Key words: Oregon, colonies, British North America, Hudson's Bay Company, Russian-American Company, Pacific Ocean, America, California, expeditions, Charles Wilkes.

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БОРЬБА ЗА ОРЕГОН НА РУБЕЖЕ 30–40-х гг. XIX ВЕКА¹

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Аннотация. *Введение.* Орегон в начале XIX в. был слабозаселенной территорией, но имевшей выгодное географическое положение на тихоокеанском побережье. Это был стратегически важный регион, который благодаря реке Колумбия имел связь с внутренними территориями США и обеспечивал выход к Тихому океану. За право обладания этой территорией боролись Испания, Великобритания и США. В историографии борьба за Орегон получила в ряде аспектов недостаточное освещение. *Методы и материалы.* Методология, применяемая при написании статьи, опирается на достижения современной исторической науки. В исследовании использованы архивные документы из центральных и региональных архивов. Привлечена отечественная и зарубежная историография. Для обработки источников и литературы использованы классические методы исторического анализа, в том числе просопографии. При изучении литературы и обработки всего комплекса полученных материалов привлекался системный и компаративистский подходы. В статье присутствуют аспекты междисциплинарного подхода. *Анализ.* В статье рассматриваются обстоятельства соперничества за Орегон на рубеже 30–40-х гг. XIX века. Его следует рассматривать в широком контексте складывавшейся международной обстановки в целом и отношений между США и Великобританией в частности, и прежде всего вокруг Британской Северной Америки. Для того чтобы прочнее закрепиться в Орегоне, Компания Гудзонова залива (КГЗ) помимо торговли пушниной занялась более широкой коммерцией за счет сельского хозяйства. Усиление этой деятельности проходит одновременно с развитием связей с Российско-Американской компанией (РАК). Изучаются обстоятельства подготовки и осуществления в 1838–1842 гг. первой полномасштабной американской военно-морской кругосветной экспедиции под командованием капитана Чарльза Уилкса (1798–1877). *Результаты.* Именно в Орегоне активизировалось противостояние между США и Англией за обладание новыми колониями. Россия, имевшая колониальные владения на Аляске, Алеутских островах, проводила прагматическую политику. Благодаря войнам за независимость 1810–1820-х гг. в Латинской Америке бывшие многочисленные обширные испанские колонии стали самостоятельными государствами. Образование Мексики вообще поставило под сомнения притязания Испании на Северо-Запад Америки. Статья продолжает серию публикаций авторов, в которых анализируется борьба ведущих европейских колониальных держав за Орегон и западное побережье США. *Вклад авторов:* А.Ю. Петров занимался поиском новых архивных материалов по проблеме в Российском государственном архиве Военно-морского флота (РГА ВМФ) в Санкт-Петербурге, изучал всю имеющуюся литературу по теме статьи, разработал методику и подготовил заключение, установил новые факты участия России в борьбе за колонии на Тихоокеанском северо-западе. Л.М. Троицкая просматривала все материалы по экспедиции Ч. Уилкса, изучала вопросы взаимодействия между странами в северной части Тихого океана.

Ключевые слова: Орегон, колонии, Британская Северная Америка, Компания Гудзонова залива, Российско-Американская компания, Тихий океан, Америка, Калифорния, экспедиции, Чарльз Уилкс.

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Introduction. The history of the west coast of North America, and specifically Oregon, is an important part of the region's past, linking the Pacific coast to the interior of the United States and Canada, as well as to nearby countries, primarily Japan and China. The relevance of studying the Pacific coast is increasing due to the development of the Asia-Pacific region (APR). For more than two centuries, statesmen and historians of the United States and other countries have repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Northwest of the North American continent in USA history. For example, the French researcher R. Rémond noted that "the great national epic of the United States arose, comparable to the imperial period of France or the formation of a colonial empire for the British. <...> It was the United States that came out on top among the colonizing peoples, populating vast territories with a huge number of its population" [45, pp. 62-63].

Methods and materials. The authors used a wide range of sources. We used the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (materials of correspondence between the Main Board of the Russian-American Company and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on Russian interests in the North Pacific Ocean), the RGA VMF (documents of Russian naval officers on California and Oregon), the State Archive of the Perm Territory (financial and economic documents of the Russian-American company), and other archives. We used published documents taken from fundamental collections of documents in Russian and English, among which it is worthwhile to highlight the third and fourth volumes of the series "Russian Studies in the Pacific Ocean in the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries." Press materials were used. To one degree or another, the issues concerning the colonization of Oregon, which were considered in the historiography of the second half of the 19th century, are the works of H. Bancroft (the first detailed study of the US West Coast) and P.A. Tikhmenev (the Russian colonization of the Northern Pacific). The facets of the history of Oregon were most thoroughly studied already in the 20th and early 21st centuries. These are the works of N.N. Bolkhovitinov (when studying the history of Fort Ross), M.S. Alperovich (an aspect of Spanish-Russian relations in the New World),

J.R. Gibson (Canada) (an aspect of the problem of food supply in the colonization of Oregon), and B. Dmytryshyn (USA) (publication of documents on the colonization of the North Pacific), which are of special value [1-5; 7; 16; 17; 19; 20; 36; 40; 46; 51]. Articles were used in the *North American Review*, *Salt River Journal*, *The Canadian Historical Review*, etc., which dealt with expeditions to explore Oregon.

Among the latest works of Russian historians, one can single out the publication of I.I. Kurilla, "Zaokeanskie partnery: Amerika i Rossiia v 1830-1850-e gody" [26], which touches upon the aspect of interaction between the USA and Russia, including the West of America. The previous study of the same author entitled "'Voiti v krug velikikh derzhav...': Daniel Uebster i vneshniia politika SShA v seredine XIX veka" [25] analyzes Daniel Webster's views and his role in American diplomacy in the mid-19th century from many aspects, among them westward expansion to Texas and Oregon. K.V. Minyar-Beloruhev, in his book "Reformy i ekspansii v politike SShA (konec 1830-h – seredina 1840-h godov)" [34], comprehensively studies American society during the turbulent period from the late 1830s to the mid-1840s, when the young nation faced two challenges: industrial and territorial. In his book "Na puti k amerikanskoj inperii: SShA vo vtoroi polovine 30-kh – 40-e gody XIX veka" [33], the author studies in detail different aspects of American domestic social and economic development and notes the Manifest Destiny factor in American expansion to the West, etc.

Analysis. The struggle for Oregon became an integral part of the colonial struggle between the European powers and the United States for the Northwest Coast of America, in which the main actors were Great Britain, the United States, and Russia, and secondarily Mexico and Texas.

According to the international legal norms of the 18th century, a documented discovery was important for assigning territories to a certain state. This right was subjected to revision during the Nootka crisis, as also happened in 1812, when a Russian settlement appeared in California, and the ownership of this territory was approved by an agreement with the indigenous peoples [37]. In 1818, negotiations between the United States and Great Britain were completed by the signing of the convention, in which the borderline from

the Northwest to the Rocky Mountains was only partially agreed upon because the vast territory between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, called Oregon, remained partially explored.

In 1821, US Congressman John Floyd introduced a bill establishing a military presence on the Columbia River in Oregon. President James Monroe, in his December 1823 State of the Union address, emphasized the importance of defending United States interests in the Western territories. Over the next decade, continued negotiations with Britain over delimitation and growing congressional concern about British hegemony in the Pacific Northwest helped to comprehensively explore the territory stretching from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Columbia River. At the same time, the domestic political events in Great Britain and the United States influenced the main events and their further developments that filled the history of the Northwest Coast and Oregon as the 1830s progressed into the 1840s.

In 1828, the formation of the US Democratic Party was proclaimed. At its origins was General A. Jackson, who became the President of the United States. He was also one of the heroes of the Anglo-American War (1812–1815), called the War of 1812. The era of so-called “Jacksonian democracy” began. Protectionist tariffs and the activities against the Second National Bank of the United States led to heated political discussions. By the middle of the decade, the final formation of a new national party system – Democrats and Whigs – took place. The latter expressed mainly the interests of the commercial and financial circles of the Northeast, the industrial entrepreneurs, along with the planters and farmers associated with them. Unlike the Democrats, the Whigs and their supporters strove for peaceful relations with Great Britain, which were determined by their trade and economic interests at home and abroad.

The new president was forced to reckon with this. In his message to the US Congress on December 8, 1829, Jackson stated that relations with England should develop peacefully. But it should be remembered that he participated in the First Seminole War in Florida (1816–1818) and found himself at the center of an international scandal that sharply aggravated Anglo-American relations. The Americans captured A. Arbuthnot

and R.C. Ambrister, who were considered British “foreign emissaries,” accusing them of inciting the Indians against the US authorities. Arbuthnot and Ambrister were executed on Jackson’s orders [39, pp. 289-308].

As an adherent of the ideas of Jefferson, Jackson sought to expand, but unlike Jefferson, Jackson was characterized by a tougher approach towards the indigenous peoples of America. The consequence of this policy was the destruction of many Indian tribes and the forced resettlement of the surviving natives across the Mississippi River, resulting in the so-called “Trail of Tears.” The British, who were trying to gain a foothold on the west coast of America, pursued a softer policy towards the natives compared with the representatives of the United States and often used them for their own purposes.

In the early 1830s in the UK, the government faced complex domestic political problems related to the struggle in the country around parliamentary reform. In 1832, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, with broad popular support, defeated the landed aristocracy in Parliament. Social contradictions escalated. Relations between Protestants and Catholics remained difficult. The British Parliament closely followed the development of the revolutionary and national liberation movements in Europe and paid great attention to the “Eastern Question.” Through difficult negotiations, it was possible to reach an advantageous agreement with France, called “cordial.” In 1834–1836, England offered to mediate in settling the long-standing American-French dispute over compensation for losses during the Napoleonic Wars. But in the late 1830s and early 1840s, relations with France again experienced a certain cooling due to the desire of the UK to expand colonial possessions in Asia and the Pacific. Great Britain “opened” China to its merchants by force of arms, having won the Anglo-Chinese war, or the so-called first “Opium War” (1840–1842). As part of British imperial policy, the Royal Navy was ordered to visit the American Northwest. In particular, the South American squadron, which was based in Rio de Janeiro, gradually began to be used outside the South Atlantic. In 1833, it consisted of 11 ships. The western base of the squadron was established on the Pacific coast of South America in Valparaiso. The American historian B.M. Gough

noted that on September 16, 1834, squadron commander Sir Graham Eden Hamond expressed his wish to sail further to the north to Russian colonies in Alaska [18, p. 33]. Thus, Great Britain sought to monitor the situation in this vast, remote region as far as possible, “entering” there from the side of the sea and not only by land, which would have been through the Hudson’s Bay Company’s (HBC) holdings.

U.S. President A. Jackson wanted to obtain reliable information about the real state of affairs in Oregon, which, according to the Anglo-American agreements, was still jointly owned in the 1830s. In November 1835, Jackson ordered Secretary of State J. Forsyth to send U.S. Navy Lieutenant and diplomat W.A. Slacum (1799–1839) there. In 1835–1836, Slacum had served as a special agent in Mexico. After going through California and the Sandwich Islands, Slacum arrived on the *Loriot* ship in Oregon on December 22, 1836, and left the region on February 10, 1837. He was ordered to visit via the river to get acquainted with nature, the economic opportunities of the region, local Indian tribes, and any information useful to the US government. Columbia already had rare white settlements. Of course, he visited the trading posts and the Hudson’s Bay Company farm and met with Fort Vancouver’s leaders, John McLoughlin and James Douglas. He also met with a Quebec-born Methodist Episcopal Church missionary, Jason Lee, in the Willamette River Valley village. Lee arrived in Oregon in 1834 via the Rocky Mountains with a group of his followers and trappers, led by American merchant Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth. On March 26, 1837, W.A. Slacum gave J. Forsyth a detailed account of the results of his trip. He noted the good reception given to him by the Hudson’s Bay Company leaders and drew attention to the beginning of the development of agriculture, both by this company and by American white settlers. In general, W.A. Slacum came to the disappointing conclusion for the United States that Oregon was completely dominated by the Hudson’s Bay Company, which tried to conserve natural resources and very strictly regulated the hunting of beavers in northern Oregon. He concluded that Oregon, if it persisted as such in the future, would most likely go to the UK. At the same time, the Hudson’s Bay Company strongly encouraged the Indians and

their employees, including the so-called “Canadians,” to exterminate these fur-bearing animals (especially the beavers) in southern Oregon, believing that this area would become the possession of the United States. In addition, the diplomatic agent noted the importance to the Hudson’s Bay Company of the Columbia River as a trade and transport artery. W.A. Slacum warned the US federal authorities that in the future, the supply of firearms and military ammunition by the Hudson’s Bay Company to the Indians would be “highly dangerous to our frontier settlements.” Paradoxically, in turn, the RAC constantly accused the so-called “Boston shipmen” of the same dangerous trade with the Indians to the detriment of the Russians. The Hudson’s Bay Company was quite satisfied with the fact that the local Indians had slaves who helped their masters in their economic activities. The company prevented the missionaries from developing pastoralism, such that in February 1837, W.A. Slacum personally helped to accompany missionary Jason Lee on the *Loriot* to the Russian village of Ross in California and to directly purchase cattle there for the Methodist settlement in Oregon. At the same time, it is important to note that RAC, namely the head of Ross, provided assistance and a good reception.

At the end of the 1830s, Anglo-American difficulties in relations escalated in connection with the struggle of settlers in the British North American possessions – in Upper Canada and Lower Canada. This confrontation involved US citizens who lived primarily in the border states, in the Great Lakes region. All this strengthened the anti-English and expansionist sentiments of some Americans. Dangerous incidents arose, unsanctioned by federal and state authorities. Great Britain perceived these incidents and the possible intentions of US citizens as probable future interference in the internal affairs of the British Empire, while the US federal authorities sought to avoid a military Anglo-American clash. At the end of 1837, the British minister in Washington, H.S. Fox, wrote to the Lieutenant Governor of the British province of New Brunswick, Sir J. Harvey: “If the game that has been played towards Texas or anything approaching it were attempted with respect to Canada, the two countries might be driven into a war, in spite of the best intentions on the part of

the supreme government” [10, p. 81]. At the same time, the new US President, M. Van Buren, a follower of Andrew Jackson, confirmed his commitment to friendly Anglo-American relations and believed that the border dispute in the Northeast should be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the parties. In March 1837, the United States recognized the independence of the Republic of Texas from Mexico. This had already been proclaimed on March 2, 1836, as a result of a rebellion by numerous North American settlers who enjoyed the support of the United States authorities. At the end of 1838 and beginning of 1839, due to the unresolved border delimitation in the Northeast between the United States and British North America, the situation in the territory between the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick had sharply escalated. This aggravation is known in history as the “Aroostook War,” which, however, scarcely turned into a real armed clash.

According to the American historian H. Jones, its causes were not only the border dispute that began back in 1783, but more importantly, “it was the result of deep-seated Anglophobia in Maine, which was growing increasingly dependent upon the doctrine of states’ rights” [22, p. 519]. The armed conflict was not approved of by a part of the US elite, for which close trade and financial ties between Great Britain and the USA stood above territorial expansion. Thus, T. Jefferson’s granddaughter Ellen (Eleonora) Wayles Randolph Coolidge, who was then in England, became concerned about possible clashes on the frontier [28, pp. 339-340]. In the spring of 1839, the US federal authorities and the British government succeeded in quelling the passions, since Washington and London had more serious problems to solve, and Lord Palmerson, who was not an admirer of America for economic reasons, did not see the war as a way out. In addition, the public of both countries was hardly interested in the “Aroostook War.” In the early 1840s, governments changed in the United States and England. After the unexpected death on April 4, 1841, of the newly elected President and Whig W.H. Harrison, his place was taken by the advocate of the rights of the states, a supporter of slavery, an opponent of the policy of high tariffs, J. Tyler, on whom the views of the southerner J. Calhoun had a strong influence.

In such an environment, D. Webster, a Whig and Anglophile associated with British commercial and financial circles, chose to remain in the Tyler government as Secretary of State (1841–1843) in order to improve Anglo-American relations [42, p. 18]. E. Everett, a supporter of the Secretary of State, was sent to London. In 1841, R. Peel, who, although a Tory, was at the head of the new British government, was close to the Liberals. The more moderate politician Lord Aberdeen replaced Palmerston as Foreign Secretary, while R. Peel’s supporters (the “Peelites”) advocated the complete abolition of trade restrictions. However, the last obstacles were removed only in the early 1850s.

In 1840–1841, Anglo-American relations became aggravated again because of the so-called case of the British subject Alexander MacLeod, who was arrested on November 12, 1840, in the state of New York on charges of killing an American during a raid under the command of the British colonial authorities. This incident took place on the night of December 29, 1837, when, in order to prevent assistance to Canadian rebels, a detachment of Canadian militia destroyed the US steamer *Caroline* docked at the American bank of the Niagara River. MacLeod was threatened with the death penalty. In the United States, anti-British sentiment has sharply intensified. A dispute arose over the jurisdiction of the court over the alien. D. Webster did everything possible to transfer the decision on the issue to the federal authorities. This caused a strong protest by the Democrats in the US Congress. The trial did take place in New York State. McLeod was acquitted on October 12, 1841. As a result, on August 12, 1842, the US Congress passed a bill governing how the federal court was to consider this kind of international case.

The resulting crisis has once again shown that unresolved, important issues can lead to war between the US and Great Britain. However, despite the contradiction in approaches, the conflict around Canada was resolved peacefully. It seems that the McLeod case played an important role in strengthening the priority of the US federal authorities over the states in the foreign policy sphere as well as the desire of the overseas republic to demonstrate compliance with international (European) law and thus join the ranks of the leading states of the Old World [49, pp. IX-XI].

At the same time, during the suppression of the uprising of Canadian insurgents in 1837–1838 (Rébellions de 1837–1838), the British colonial authorities captured several US citizens who had ended up in British North America and who were helping the American colonists. The Americans were taken to the mother country for trial and sentenced to hard labor under the laws of the British Empire.

During the 1830s – 1840s, in the US Congress as well as among the most diverse segments of the population, there was an increase in expansionist sentiments. Depending on the economic, political, and socio-cultural interests of various social groups, two main directions of expansion were taken. The slave owners were attracted to Texas, Cuba, and parts of South America. Residents of the free states and European immigrants rushed primarily to the Northwest. California, which at that time was part of Mexico, was also in the field of view of US citizens, especially since the RAC had left it in 1841, when the RAC sold the lands and fortress Ross (Fort Ross) to an American of Swiss origin, J.A. Sutter. Soon, information about the sale of Ross reached Russia, where the newspapers noted the importance of the pioneers of Russian America [53]. This sale information adversely affected the RAC share price, thus the Russian government became less prone to back the RAC with more money, seeing as regular reports from the Main Board of the Russian-American Company (MB RAC) about its share prices were sent to the government. In the early 1840s, when RAC shares were in high demand [54–56], the company had hatched plans to intensify its efforts in Oregon and California. Information about these territories was known to Russian pioneers as early as the middle of the 18th century [52]. At the same time, it was believed in Russia that the movement towards Oregon would require additional and significant financial injections into the RAC from the state [24; 44]. In addition, the transfer of additional funds would be done to the detriment of trade from Okhotsk to other Siberian cities [21]. These factors decreased Russian interest in Oregon.

The growing interest of US citizens in the West, in general, and Oregon, in particular, was reinforced by the country's significant success in industry, trade, and transport communications,

especially since, in the late 1830s, Americans were still reeling from the severe economic crisis of 1837, which had also affected Europe. The setting was ripe for many residents of the Midwest and Northeast to hope to get rich in the Far West. In March 1837, the American political economist and supporter of protectionism, Henry Charles Carey, predicted that life in the West would gradually become more comfortable for whites and that in another fifty years, “settlements, canals, and railroads would be extended all the way to the Pacific. Could we remain united for another century? Imagination can scarcely conceive of the prosperity and happiness that this nation (the United States. – *A. P., L. T.*) would attain at that time” [32, p. 84].

Many citizens of the Midwest dreamed of a faster connection between the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean thanks to inland transport routes (chains of internal communication) “by a link across the Rocky Mountains from the head of navigation on the Missouri river, to the head of navigation on the Colombia river.” The benefits to the United States, in general, and especially to the western states from the possession of Oregon in the near future were seen as a strengthening of the integrity of the Union from “the tree of liberty planted by our forefathers, which is to spread its umbrageous branches from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.” Also, “it would be of immense advantage to the United States in times of war to be able to receive from Asia her rich produce without the risk of a six-month’ voyage exposed to the ravages of a belligerent power.” The increase in the population of the West would be rapid as a natural result of the development of its resources. It would “soon cause the *now* (*italics in the text. – A. P., L. T.*) Western States to become the middle of an extensive republic” [38].

From the turn of the 1830s to the 1840s, the issue of Oregon's accession to the United States was repeatedly raised in the US Congress. Missouri Senator Lewis Linn was especially zealous when he proposed to the Senate in December 1839 to pass a resolution that the US government should provide United States settlers in Oregon with military protection. In mid-April of 1840, Linn, along with Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, introduced additional resolutions to build a chain of military forts from the Rocky Mountains to Oregon and establish land for settlers. However,

these resolutions on military measures seemed too controversial and were not considered further.

There was a fair argument in the United States that the unresolved border dispute and the preservation, in the extended Anglo-American Convention of 1818, of the provision on equal access to Oregon for US citizens and British subjects would lead to the fact that “the country is rapidly passing, in reality, into British hands” [15, pp. 234-235]. This was expressed in the respective periodical “The North American Review” (1837) in the anonymous review (in reality, it was written by E. Everett) of the two-volume book “Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains” by Washington Irving. The reviewer agreed with the author, who expressed regret over the failure of J.J. Astor’s enterprise, which had been established in the early 19th century on the Pacific coast of the American Northwest, “from a national point of view” [15, p. 235].

Christian missionaries began to play the main role in the process of Americans penetrating Oregon in the 1830s. In the first decades of the 19th century, during the so-called “Second Great Awakening,” many religious sects and communities appeared in the United States. For example, along the southern tributary of the Columbia River in the Willamette River valley, Methodist and Presbyterian missions were organized.

As was mentioned above, prior to 1840, relatively few Americans lived in Oregon. Mainly from the mid-1830s, they migrated there in groups (parties) along the so-called “Oregon Trail,” but in the early 1840s, the flow of migrants intensified, despite the various dangers that lay in wait for them along the way. The maximum estimated number of arrivals in 1845 ranges from 2 to 5 thousand people [16, p. 134]. Of fundamental importance was the fact that gradually, following the sailors, merchants, trappers, whalers, and missionaries, a wave of migrating farmers reached the Pacific Ocean. In order to gain a stronger foothold in Oregon, the HBC, in addition to the fur trade, engaged in wider commerce through agriculture. The strengthening of this activity takes place simultaneously with the migrants’ development of ties with the RAC.

According to General Manager in Russian America, F.P. Wrangel, the British were quite firmly entrenched on the northern bank of the river

Colombia. Thus, when the ship “Catborough” arrived in Novo-Arkhangelsk in 1832, Wrangel explained the reason for the success of the British: HBC charges “...twice and three times as much against the Americans, who never stand long and rush to leave that place and go to another” [13]. Basically, the HBC was charging the Americans a higher price. Of course, it was premature to declare the complete superiority of the British, since two years later Wrangel wrote: “The merchants of the United States did not visit the straits this winter, and the Hudson’s Bay Company remained our only rival in this trade. Fortunately for us, now, the HBC has a shortage of goods... but this shortage will no doubt be eliminated soon” [14]. In 1839, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company was organized. It is significant that on February 6 [January 25, Julian Calendar], 1839, the RAC and the HBC signed an agreement in Hamburg.

Soon, E.F. Kankrin, the Minister of Finance of Russia, got a detailed report on the provisions of this agreement. He noted that the decision to sign it came from Tsar Nicholas I [29]. In the light of the Anglo-American struggle concerning Oregon, it is important to note the 1st article of the document, according to which the RAC, by permission of the government, cedes or leases to the HBC for commerce the coast (except the islands) and interior land, which belonged to the Emperor of Russia, between Cape Spencer at the side of the entrance to Cross Sound and latitude 54°40' for ten years, counting from June 1, 1840. The RAC promised to assist the HBC in carrying out trade in the leased territory for ten years” [30].

In 1840, US Secretary of State J. Forsyth expressed his concern to Russian Minister to the USAA. A. Bodisco and asked for equal conditions for the admission of American and British ships to Russian possessions. Bodisco was soon convinced that the Americans should be allowed to visit the properties of the RAC leased by HBC. In addition, he was inclined to believe that in the event of the liquidation of Fort Ross, the Californian possessions “should have been offered to the American government” [6, pp. 226-227].

Describing the significance of the RAC and HBC agreement, outstanding Russian historian N.N. Bolkhovitinov pointed out that it “had a direct impact not only on the fate of the Ross colony but also allowed the RAC in the early 1840s to refuse

to cooperate in the supply of food products (to Russian settlements. – *A. P., L. T.*) with the ‘Boston shipmen’. In the long term, food supplies through the HBC turned out to be less reliable. And although in the spring of 1849 the contract between the RAC and the HBC was renewed, it no longer contained an obligation to supply food, which was associated with the transfer of Oregon to the possession of the United States (in 1846. – *A. P., L. T.*)” [9, p. 280]. Bolkhovitinov defines the current situation in the American Northwest as follows: “By 1842, both companies practically controlled the entire northwest coast, ousting their American competitors from there. As a result, the Columbia River Department of the Hudson’s Bay Company annually brought in from 8 thousand to 10 thousand dollars of income” [8, p. 41].

In the context of the UK-US struggle concerning Oregon, the British authorities had detailed information not only from continued government research but also from HBC intelligence, which was that the United States, after the Lewis and Clark expedition, due to a lack of funds, equipped only small expeditions led by military and civil engineers to the West [27, p. 268]. Only between 1838 and 1842 did the first full-scale American naval expedition around the world take place under the command of Captain Charles Wilkes (1798–1877).

Wilkes is on a par with such outstanding pioneer explorers of the Pacific Ocean as the French L.C. Freysinot, L.I. Duperrey, and J.S.C. Dumont d’Urville, and the English F.W. Beechey, P. Dillon, and R. Fitzroy [50, p. 247].

The expedition was conceived to conduct scientific research but also pursued commercial, pragmatic, and reconnaissance goals. It was supposed to enhance the international role of the United States, including in the Pacific Northwest, and promote the interests of Americans in this region. Sailors, traders, sealers, and whalers needed accurate navigation charts of the Pacific. The US Secretary of the Navy, James Paulding, also wanted to expand the frontiers of science and knowledge. According to his instructions of August 11, 1838 [35, p. XIX], Wilkes was instructed to explore the islands, currents, and harbors of the Pacific Ocean (especially the islands of Fiji, Samoa, and Hawaii), study the general state of trade in the southern seas, and visit Oregon and California. Wilkes should refrain

from participating in trading operations and not intervene in the feuds of the natives, although he could offer his mediation and, in extreme cases, use force to protect property and people [57, pp. XXV-XXXI].

The US Congress decided to organize the expedition in May 1836, but the forced replacement of the leader and other obstacles delayed its implementation by almost two years. Finally, in March 1838, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes was placed in command of a fleet of six ships and nearly five hundred military and civilian personnel, including nine scholars. The expedition left Hampton Roads, Virginia, on August 18, 1838. Members of the expedition made an extensive exploration of the Southern Hemisphere, traveling about 1.500 miles along the coast of Antarctica (later this region was called “Wilkes Land”). Wilkes claimed that his expedition explored almost 280 islands and collected artifacts. We observe contradictions and a struggle of opinions in Wilkes’ claims, so the information in these opinions may not be accurate. The official papers of I.F. Kruzenshtern confirm this [41].

On April 28, 1841, Wilkes arrived at the Columbia River but failed to explore it due to dangerous waves and strong currents. On May 2, the ships anchored in the harbor of Port Discovery in the beautiful Juan de Fuca Strait, which, unlike the dangerous rocky coast of Oregon (south of Cape Flattery), was recognized as more suitable for navigation [58, pp. 293-305]. According to the observations of Captain Wilkes at the mouth of the Columbia River, navigation was very difficult (most of the mouth is covered by a sandy island and long shallows, including those lying in the middle of the river, constantly changing their forms), and the anchorage at the American settlement of Astoria (Fort George) could only accommodate a limited number of ships. After special hydrographic studies, he warned of the dangers that lay in wait while sailing down the river to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, namely, a strong coastal current, thick morning fogs, and the presence of distant rocks that the ship could sail and crash into [11, p. 84, 331]. The members of the expedition visited the village of Nisqually, where there was a farm for the HBC. The US Navy expedition was warmly received at Fort Vancouver, the HBC residence in the American Northwest.

Captain Wilkes subsequently urged federal officials and compatriots alike that in Oregon, “the ground is ready for the plough, and nature seems as though it were to invite the husbandman to his labors” [58, p. 315]. Such statements corresponded to the spirit of the time. His negative impression of the river navigation was reinforced by the later loss of one of the ships on July 18. Soon, the expedition reached the river valley. Wilkes hoped to establish local government and legal structures similar to those found in the USA. He understood that the local Methodist missionaries saw him as an official envoy from Washington. Under the circumstances, Wilkes advised them “to wait until the government of the United States should throw its mantle over them” [58, p. 353]. The missionaries followed that advice. The captain was pleased with the state of affairs in this Methodist village and was confident in the successful development of Oregon, noting the relative weakness of the local Indian tribes [59, p. 121]. While in Oregon, Captain Wilkes collected various information and partly shared it with Freiman, an employee of the RAC, who, at the invitation of the HBC, visited this territory in 1841 [47, p. 54].

The expedition was divided into two groups. Wilkes went by sea to California, and a land detachment moving in the same direction was led by Lieutenant G.F. Emmons, who was instructed by Wilkes to avoid confrontation with the Indians as much as possible, study the culture and customs of the tribes, and collect all information about the activities of the HBC [59, pp. 514-517]. In August 1841, Lieutenant C. Ringgold and several people from the crew of the ship “Vincennes” visited the village of New Helvetia, founded by J. Sutter, who, in October 1841, met the detachment of Lieutenant Emmons.

Charles Wilkes highly appreciated the military-strategic importance of San Francisco Bay [59, p. 157]. He called on official Washington to more vigorously protect the lives and property of US citizens who were abroad [59, p. 170]. The captain appears to have sought to convince American public opinion that Mexico would inevitably lose Upper California due to geographic location, overland supply difficulties, and the possible prospect of merging with Oregon into one powerful state that could control the Pacific trade routes from South America, China, the Philippines,

Polynesia, New Holland, New Zealand, and other countries. In addition, it would soon be possible to add connections with Japan [43]. According to Wilkes, the different climatic conditions of these countries in the Pacific region would provide raw materials for a profitable trade in products. Over time, the trade would become huge [59, p. 171]. At the same time, the captain considered that the population would cover a large area in the future [59, pp. 171-172].

The expedition returned to New York Harbor in June 1842. The public’s recognition of the expedition’s accomplishments was slow. Some in the scientific community were not convinced by the evidence collected by the expedition that Antarctica was a continent. Wilkes’ accusations of incompetence and disrespect from several junior officers led to counter-charges against Wilkes. As a result of the military tribunal, Wilkes was reprimanded on charges of unlawful punishment. The US President J. Tyler and later President J. Polk, fearful of derailing negotiations over the northern boundary issue, did not publicly endorse Wilkes’ strong opinion that the United States should control all ports in Puget Sound. Even the publication of Wilkes’ original “Report on the Territory of Oregon” in June 1842 was officially delayed. The scientific, political, and cartographic heritage of the expedition, however, was very significant. Further navigators managed to learn about the difficulties of navigation along the Colombia River and in coastal waters. Being in the territory of Oregon, the expedition members established contacts with Indian tribes, collecting important geographical data from them. Valuable ethnographic data included a collection of almost two hundred artifacts from the region, and an extensive description of the indigenous language was compiled by the expedition’s linguist, Horatio Hale. In the 1840s, the expansion of US trade and economic interests was carried out in different regions of the Pacific Ocean. American historian J.H. Schroeder distinguished various forms of this expansion, namely the “opening” of China and the strengthening of American influence in Hawaii and in the North Pacific in general. According to the figurative expression of Schroeder, “the wealth [of the countries] of the Pacific Ocean is ripe for the American harvest” [48, pp. 82-83].

Complex factors and different contradictions convinced both Great Britain and the United States

to conclude a new Anglo-American treaty. Lord Ashburton (Alexander Baring) arrived in Washington on a special mission to negotiate with D. Webster on a wide range of issues, from the border delimitation in the Northeast and the Oregon problem to the prohibition of the slave trade. Lord Aberdeen, who was British Foreign Secretary in 1841–1846 under Sir Robert Peel (second Peel ministry), recalled that he was quite ready to quarrel with the United States, if necessary [23, p. 18]. On the other hand, at the beginning of March 1842, calling on his mission for steadfastness on the border delimitation in the Northeast, he argued that “we not go to war for a few miles, more or less, of a miserable pine swamp” [12, p. 119].

The administration of US President Tyler unofficially deployed propaganda in Maine, paid for from a special fund that was approved by Congress for secret use in relations with foreign states [31]. On August 9, 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty was signed in Washington. The United States secured 7015 sq. miles out of 12027 sq. miles of disputed territory to the northeast of America. In addition, the United States pledged to participate with England in naval patrols in the Atlantic to intercept the slave trade. An important place in the agreement was occupied by the problem of capturing and extraditing, to the UK or the US, criminals accused of murder, robbery, and some other crimes. For the US, the issue was not just criminals. Southern slaveholders had long pressed the government to take action against the flight of slaves to Canada. The British side strove, as far as possible, to prevent excesses in the future, similar to the events on the Anglo-American border in 1837–1841, and to use the article in the treaty against participants in the national liberation movement.

Results. The problem in Oregon was solved only partially. As the 1830s became the 1840s, Spain still had its claims to the northwest of the Pacific coast. At the same time, Mexico also avoided making any claims to these territories. Russia continued to take a cautious position in relation to the territories south of 54°40' north latitude. The RAC managed to conclude an agreement with the HBC, under which, even in the event of a conflict between the UK and Russia, normal commercial relations could continue. The UK continued its policy of strengthening its positions on the

Northwest coast. At the same time, by the 1840s, the emphasis had shifted to exploiting economic and commercial footholds on the coast by drawing on the resources of the HBC. The most intense rivalry in Oregon was growing between the UK and the USA, who became prime actors in the struggle for Oregon. As for the United States, the westward expansion towards the Pacific coast and the desire to take possession of the vast Northwest region were based on the logic of the development of the nation, its Monroe Doctrine of 1823, and the idea of Manifest Destiny, which was officially proclaimed soon after. Such positions were welcomed by the government and the majority of the United States population.

Under the provisions of the Oregon Treaty of 1846, a continental borderline was agreed upon, which divided the United States and British possessions in North America.

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