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# The Early History of Crook County

## A fight for territory and fur trade



This location was once teeming with beaver and other fur-bearing animals that attracted the fur brigade. Peter Skene Ogden, Canadian fur brigade leader of the Hudson's Bay Company, passed this way in the winter of 1824-25 on a fur trapping expedition. He followed the Crooked River from its confluence with the Deschutes River to the headwaters, then east to the Snake River region.

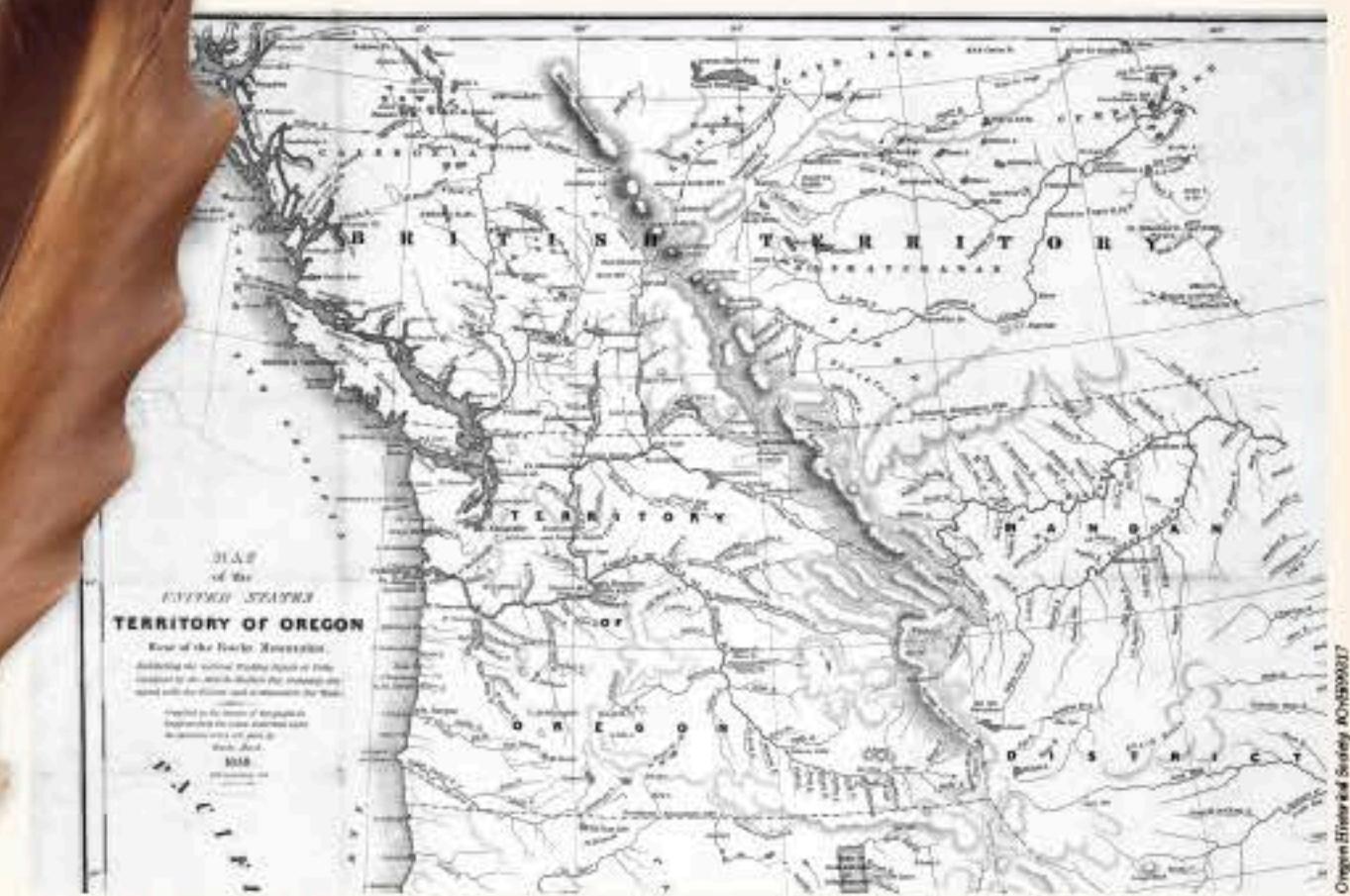
Early travelers' accounts describe an austere environment and the vital importance of the Crooked River as the lifeblood of a harsh terrain. The first EuroAmerican settlers arriving in the 1860s settled in the floodplains, where the river's annual flooding replenished the soil and naturally irrigated the area's native grasses.



Peter Ogden helped us learn a lot about Oregon geography from his experience as chief trader in charge of the six consecutive Snake Country Brigades that operated out of Fort Vancouver between 1824 and 1830.



Fur brigades began so that furs gathered in winter could be brought to markets to be exchanged for European trade goods. The brigades evolved from small convoys of canoes from native villages to traders meeting trappers in their home territory with forts or posts being built along the way.



The Oregon Territory was in disputed ownership between the United States and Great Britain. Ogden's mission from the Hudson's Bay Company was to completely eradicate the beaver and other fur-bearing animals to discourage American trappers from entering the region.



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