

Salem Remembers Timeline 1500 - 1849

Before the 1500s | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

The place we know today as Oregon, was the home of numerous tribes of indigenous people prior to European exploration and settlement.



Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (1499-1543)

1542-43 | Oregon's Spanish Heritage

Spanish exploration begins on the Oregon and California coastline by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo. In the late 1700s, the Spanish were interested in expanding their empire into the Pacific Northwest.

1774 | Oregon's Spanish Heritage

Captain Juan Perez sails to the Northwest Coast for Spain.

1775-1780 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

The first smallpox outbreak among Oregon's indigenous people.

1778 | Captain James Cook

Captain James Cook makes landfall at Cape Foulweather and discovers the fur wealth of the Northwest Coast.

1788 | Oregon's Black Heritage

Markus Lopus, traveling on Captain Robert Gray's ship "Lady Washington", is considered the first Black man to visit Oregon.

Late 1700s | Oregon's Pacific Islander Heritage

As part of the fur trade, Pacific Islanders (Kanakas) were hired as crew members for ships stopping for provisions in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), then traveling to the Pacific Northwest.

1801-1802 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

The second smallpox outbreak among Oregon's indigenous people.



York (1770-1831) during a Native American gathering.

1804-1806 | The Lewis & Clark Expedition

A expedition of explorers, lead by Meriweather Lewis and William Clark, left St. Louis, Missouri with 43 men, including York, an enslaved Black man owned by Clark. The Lewis & Clark Expedition explored and documented the West during their travels to the Pacific Ocean. They wintered over in Knife River, 1,600 miles from St. Louis, and continued their journey in April 1805, led by Sacagawea, of the Mandan Tribe. She was accompanied by her husband Toussaint Charbonneau and infant son Jean Baptiste. The Expedition journeyed through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean where they wintered over at Fort Clatsop before returning East in 1806.

1809 | Oregon's Blind Heritage

Louis Braille (1809-1852), the inventor of reading system for the blind, is born in France.

1811 | Pacific Fur Company

John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company establishes Fort Astoria.

1819 | Oregon's Spanish Heritage

The Adams-Onís Treaty cedes Spain's discovery rights north of 42 degrees to the United States. This treaty set the southern border of the Oregon Territory at 42 degrees, where it remains today.

1824, March 11 | U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Office of Indian Affairs is established. Today, the Bureau of Indian Affairs' mission *"is to enhance the quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes and Alaska Natives."* LB

1825 | Fort Vancouver

Hudson Bay Company workmen build Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River



Kalapuya Man

1830s | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

North of Salem, the "French Prairie" is the ancestral lands of the Kalapuya. This area was later settled by French-Indian fur trappers who established the towns of Buttesville, Champoeg, Gervais, St. Louis and St. Paul.

1830-1834 | Malaria Outbreak in Oregon

In 1830, there were reports of an outbreak of what was called "fever and ague" which meant heat and shakes. While malaria was not used to name the disease at the time, researchers and historians have come to an agreement that malaria was most likely the disease which caused an outbreak of illness. The *Anopheles maculipennis* mosquito is responsible for carrying strains of malaria, which could be found along the Columbia River in the 1830's.

Prior to 1834, the native population in the Columbia and Willamette Valley area was put at an estimated 13,940, a number which had already been significantly reduced by the prior years of epidemics. By the year 1845, the population had gone down to an estimated 1,175, a loss of nearly 90% of Oregon's Columbia River Tribal population. AJ

1830, May 28 | U.S. Indian Removal Act

Signed into law by President Andrew Jackson, this Act authorized Jackson to “grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders.” The act states the “. . . President of the United States to cause so much of any territory belonging to the United States, west of the river Mississippi, not included in any state or organized territory, and to which the Indian title has been extinguished, as he may judge necessary, to be divided into a suitable number of districts. . .”

The act further states that “such lands shall revert to the United States, if the Indians become extinct, or abandon the same.” Congress also provided a \$500,000 dollar appropriation to allow this action to take place. KL

1832 | U.S. Black Codes or Black Laws

These restrictive laws limited Black people’s right to own property, conduct business, buy and lease land and move freely through public spaces. The black codes allowed the South to require ‘blacks’ to sign labor contracts annually, and if they didn’t, those individuals could be arrested, fined, and then forced into unpaid labor. Two states were involved in creating the first of the black codes, Mississippi and South Carolina. Mississippi required “. . . blacks to have written evidence of employment for the coming year . . .” and “. . .if they left before the end of the contract, they would be forced to forfeit earlier wages and were subject to arrest”. The primary purpose of the codes was to restrict labor. KL

1833 | Slavery Abolished in the British Empire.



The Willamette Mission 1834-1841

1834 | The Willamette Mission

The Willamette Mission was established at Mission Bottom, north of Salem, with Jason Lee as superintendent. "The mission became a beachhead for the first political and economic organized activities by Americans in the Oregon Country . . ." This was the first organized religion (Methodist) enterprise in Oregon. Initially the Mission was established to convert Kalapuyans of the Willamette Valley to Christianity, but was largely unsuccessful and closed in 1841.

1834, June 30 | The U.S. Indian Act

This Act regulated trade and communication with Indian tribes, to preserve peace on the frontiers. LB People were required to get a license to trade with the tribes and to the type of trading that could take place. "Foreigners" were unable to trade unless they had a "military passport" along with approval from the President of the United States. They were not allowed to communicate with tribal members, and any communication could result in a fine of \$2,000 during the 1830s. A \$1,000 fine could be levied for exciting any tribal nation to war against the United States. KL

1840 | First Sawmill and Grist Mill in Salem

Jason Lee built a sawmill mill and a grist mill on Mill Creek, which today is near the intersection of High and Liberty Streets.

1840s-1850s | Oregon's Irish Heritage

Many people of Irish descent secured land claims in Oregon. They were drawn to the Willamette Valley, from California and the eastern United States, because of the rich farm land and Catholic Church in St. Paul, Oregon.

Before 1842 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

Prior to the founding of Salem Oregon in 1842, this land belonged to the Kalapuya tribe. The Kalapuya tribe consisted of nineteen tribes in three distinct areas of Oregon: north, south and central. It is unknown how big the population of the Kalapuya tribe was at their peak, however, estimates put it at about 15,000, but it is known that with repeated exposure to diseases the population quickly declined. By 1849, the population had dropped to around 600. AJ



The original Oregon Institute Building in 1842.

1842 | Establishing Willamette University

The Oregon Institute is established in Salem, Oregon and in 1853 becomes the Willamette University.

1843 | Wolf Meetings in Oregon

The “Wolf Meetings” are held in the northern Willamette Valley which led to the establishment of a Provincial Government. Oregonians submit a petition to the Senate seeking U.S. jurisdiction.

1843, July 5 | Oregon’s Tribal Heritage

The Territorial Legislative Committee made this statement on July 5, 1843 about the treatment of natives in the Oregon territory. “The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards the Indians. Their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars, authorized by the representatives of the people; but laws, founded in Justice and humanity, shall from time to time, be made, for preventing injustice being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them”
LB

1843, July 5 | Oregon’s Black Heritage

In his Oregon Encyclopedia article on Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon, Greg Nokes notes: *“Oregon’s small white population had voted on July 5, 1843, to prohibit slavery by incorporating into Oregon’s 1843 Organic laws a provision of the 1787 Northwest Ordinance: “There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” The law was amended, however, on June 26, 1844, by the provisional government’s new legislative council, headed by Missouri immigrant Peter Burnett. As amended, the law prohibited slavery, gave slaveholders a time limit to “remove” their slaves “out of the country,” and free slaves if their owners, refused to remove them.”*

1845 | City of Portland Named

The City of Portland is named by a coin toss between Amos Lovejoy, who favored “Boston” and Francis Pettygrove who preferred “Portland.”



The April 30, 1846 edition of the *Oregon Spectator*.

1846 | Oregon Spectator Newspaper

First Oregon newspaper, the *Oregon Spectator*, is published in Oregon City, Oregon.

1846 | Early Divorce

Mary Ann Smith is the first woman in Oregon to obtain a divorce.

1846 | Oregon’s Tribal Heritage

The first census was taken at the Grand Ronde Reservation, where the remaining members of the Kalapuya Tribe had been relocated. There were only 344 people, including men, women and children. AJ

1846, June 15 | U.S. Treaty of Oregon

The United States and Great Britain signed the *Treaty of Oregon*, ending 28 years of joint occupancy of the Pacific Northwest.

1847 | Measles Outbreak in Oregon

Joseph Henry Brown recalled his encounter with what is believed to have been the Kalapuyans during the measles outbreak: “In the year 1847 the measles [sic] followed the immigration over the plains. The Indians contracted it. It was just as fatal to them as the smallpox . . . In the lower part of Salem there was an Indian encampment containing 300 or 400 persons. The measles broke out among them and swept away at least one-half of the Indian population of the Willamette Valley.” The exact number of deaths from the measles outbreak will never be known, however estimates put the number for groups in the Willamette Valley at about 50%. AJ

1848 | U.S. Organic Act

The Organic Act creates the Oregon Territory.

1848 | U.S. Boundary Treaty

The Boundary Treaty terminated joint occupation of the Oregon Country by Britain and U.S.

1848 | Mexican-American War

United States won the war with Mexico and received California along with much of what is now the Southwestern United States.

1848 | Oregon Tribal Heritage

In 1842, an Indian subagency for the "country West of the Rocky mountains" was established and located in Oregon City in the Willamette Valley. The Oregon Superintendency was established in 1848, when the Oregon Territory was organized. Two years later the Donation Land Claim Act opened Oregon to increased settlement.

The Superintendency had jurisdiction over the entire area west of the Rocky Mountains and north of the 42nd parallel. The territorial governor, Joseph Lane, acted as the *ex officio* superintendent until 1850, when a separate official was appointed. In 1851, the Superintendency headquarters was moved from Oregon City to Milwaukie, Oregon. Later moves included: 1853 to Dayton; 1856 to Oregon City; 1857 to Salem; 1859 to Portland; and in 1861 back to Salem. When Washington Territory was established in 1853, a separate Superintendency was established there with jurisdiction over the area north of the Columbia River and the 46th parallel.

1849, September 21 | Oregon's Black Heritage

In his Oregon Encyclopedia article on Black Exclusion Laws in Oregon, Greg Nokes notes: *"This law specified that 'it shall not be lawful for any negro or mulatto to enter into, or reside' in Oregon, with exceptions made for those who were already in the territory. The law targeted African American seamen who might be tempted to jump ship. The preamble to the law addressed a concern that African Americans might 'intermix with Indians, instilling in their minds feelings of hostility toward the white race.'*" The law was rescinded in 1854.

1849 | Oregon's Tribal Heritage

Gold is discovered near Gold Hill, Oregon. The impact on Tribal members in Southern Oregon was a significant factor in the Rogue River Wars

1849 | Oregon's Jewish Heritage

Jewish immigration to Oregon was fueled by the Gold Rush to establish merchant networks. Many were European immigrants to the United States and lived in Eastern cities with family and business ties to New York or San Francisco. Anti-semitism was rare before the 20th Century because Jewish immigrants

were considered white pioneers due to their European origins, speaking English and their American experience. By 1860 1/3 of 146 merchants in Portland were Jewish.