

June 15, 1846, Oregon was in a legal sense in the joint occupancy of the citizens and subjects of the two countries, and during this period of joint occupancy the Hudson's Bay Company and its co-adjutant, the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, established numerous trading posts and forts and were active and untiring in endeavoring to monopolize all trade with the Indian tribes and to maintain in that part of the territory north of the Columbia river exclusive control in the hope that it might be held permanently as British soil. The agents and factors of the Hudson's Bay Company were usually gracious and accommodating to American travelers and emigrants arriving at their establishments; nevertheless they were adroit and zealous in their efforts to carry out the policy of their master to prevent Americans from gaining any foothold north of the Columbia river, although by the terms of the conventions of 1818 and 1827 equal privileges in the whole and every part of the territory claimed by both countries west of the Rocky mountains, and in the waters and harbors thereof, was guaranteed alike to American citizens and British subjects. The government of Great Britain had granted to this company the exclusive right to trade with the Indians and obtain furs and skins within the limits of a vast extent in British America, including all the territory west of the Rocky mountains, and to maintain that valuable monopoly over as much territory as it could possibly cover the energies of this company were exerted to the utmost. The United States government claimed as the proper boundary an extension eastward of the line agreed upon by a treaty between the United States and Russia, and afterward confirmed by a treaty between Russia and Great Britain as the southern boundary of the southeast part of Russian-America, now called Alaska, that being the line of 54 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, but in several attempts made previous to the treaty of 1846 to settle the dispute, had offered to compromise by extending the line between Canada and the United States territory east of the Rocky mountains westward to the Pacific ocean, this line being the forty-ninth parallel. This extremely generous offer was always rejected and was met by a counter proposition that the Columbia river from the intersection of its most northeast branch with the forty-ninth parallel to the ocean should be the boundary, and that the river should be always free and open to the people of both countries; and that the United States should have a detached piece of country fronting the Pacific ocean and the Strait of Juan de Fuca and