

north-south water-based transportation system existed and thrived before being artificially truncated by the new border. This is clearly illustrated by the following sequence of pre- and post-1846 maps. On Map 1, the north-south trend of traditional tribal boundaries is apparent, owing to the natural drainage pattern. Map 2 depicts the jointly-occupied Oregon Country in 1830: note the north-south orientation of the Columbia Department's district boundaries along interfluvial mountain barriers (Innis, 1970).

Even after the imposition of the boundary, a map of the late fur trade and mission era (Map 3) clearly depicts the continued importance of the Flathead, Kootenai, Pend d'Oreille, Okanogan and Columbia rivers as transportation arteries. This pattern persisted into the mining booms subsequent to the 1850's (Map 4) when ores from the Cariboo and Kootenai districts sought the path of least resistance to markets via the American side of the line (Fahey, 1965; Easterbrook and Aitken, 1970).

Most conventional regional histories have suggested that it was the creation of an east-west oriented railroad network that finally entrenched the 49th parallel into the economic landscape of western North America. Certainly the entry of British Columbia into Confederation with Canada in 1871 was entirely dependent on the promised construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway--not completed until 1886--to redirect the new province's trade links toward the east rather than south (Ormsby, 1971; Harris and Warkintin, 1977; Lamb, 1977; Barman, 1991).

The completion of the first northern transcontinental on the American side of the border, the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1883, similarly refocused traffic flows south of the border, and not coincidentally, made Spokane the hub of the interior rail network (Lewty, 1987, 1995). This was reinforced a decade later when Canadian-born entrepreneur James J. Hill's Great