

Annual Address Before the Washington Pioneers

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BY JUDGE C. H. HANFORD

Less than sixty years ago the title to and sovereignty over all the territory then called Oregon and now comprising the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and that part of Montana west of the summit of the Rocky mountains and British Columbia, was a subject of contention between the governments of the United States and Great Britain. The first negotiations for the settlement of the boundary between British America and the territory of the United States west of the Rocky mountains having resulted in failure, it was provided by the third article of the convention of October 20, 1818, between Great Britain and the United States as follows:

and Wyoming

"It is agreed that any country that may be claimed by either party on the northwest coast of America, westward of the Stony mountains, shall, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, be free and open for the term of ten years from the date of the signature of the present convention to the vessels, citizens and subjects of the two powers; it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either of the two high contracting parties may have to any part of the said country, nor shall it be taken to affect the claims of any other power or state to any part of the said country; the only object of the high contracting parties, in that respect, being to prevent disputes and differences amongst themselves."

Other attempts to settle definitely and finally the disputed boundary were made in 1824 and 1826 and in 1827, and were unsuccessful. In the latter year the agreement of 1818 was renewed for an indefinite period, except that it was provided that either government might annul the agreement after October 20, 1828, upon giving twelve months' notice to the other contracting party. Under this agreement, until the treaty of