

NORTHWESTERN HISTORY SYLLABUS

[The aim of this department is to furnish outlines that will aid those who wish to study the subject systematically. It is expected that its greatest use will be as a guide for members of women's clubs, literary societies, and classes in colleges or high schools. It will be a form of university extension without the theses and examinations necessary for the earning of credits toward a degree.]

XVII. Creation of Washington Counties

1. By Provisional Government of Oregon.
 - a. Vancouver District, June 27, 1844.
 - i. From Columbia River to 54° 40'.
 - ii. From Pacific Ocean to Rocky Mountains.
 - b. Lewis County, December 21, 1845.
 - i. From Cowlitz River to Pacific Ocean.
 - ii. From Columbia River to 54° 40'.
 - iii. Name in honor of Capt. Meriwether Lewis.
 - c. Vancouver County, December 22, 1845.
 - i. Balance of area north of Columbia River after the creation of Lewis County.
 - ii. From Cowlitz River to Rocky Mountains.
2. By Territorial Government of Oregon.
 - a. Clarke County.
 - i. In legislative session of 1850-1851.
 - ii. Change of name only.
 - iii. Area same as Vancouver County.
 - iv. New name in honor of Capt. William Clark.
 - b. Pacific County, February 4, 1851.
 - i. Cut out of Lewis County.
 - ii. Named for the Pacific Ocean.
 - c. Thurston County, January 12, 1852.
 - i. Cut out of Lewis County.
 - ii. Named in honor of Samuel R. Thurston, Oregon's first delegate to Congress.

- d. Jefferson County, December 22, 1852.
 - i. Named in honor of Thomas Jefferson.
 - e. Pierce County, December 22, 1852.
 - i. Named in honor of Franklin Pierce, then President-elect.
 - f. King County, December 22, 1852.
 - i. Named in honor of William R. King, then Vice-President-elect.
 - g. Island County, January 6, 1853.
 - i. So named because it comprised Whidby and Camano Islands.
3. By Territorial Government of Washington.
- a. Whatcom County, March 9, 1854.
 - i. Name of Indian origin.
 - b. Skamania County, March 9, 1854.
 - i. Cut out of Clarke County.
 - ii. Name of Indian origin.
 - c. Mason County, March 13, 1854.
 - i. First given Indian name Sawamish.
 - ii. Changed to honor Charles H. Mason, first Territorial Secretary of Washington.
 - d. Chehalis County, April 4, 1854.
 - i. Name, said by Myron Eells to mean "Sand," was name of tribe of Indians, sometimes spelled Chi-ke-lis.
 - e. Cowlitz County, April 21, 1854.
 - i. Name of Indian origin.
 - f. Wahkiakum County, April 25, 1854.
 - i. Name of Indian origin.
 - g. Walla Walla County, April 25, 1854.
 - i. Lewis and Clark in 1905 called the Indians there "Wolla Wollah."
 - ii. Name is Nez Perce word having reference to water.
 - iii. Myron Eells says it means "running water."
 - iv. E. S. Curtis says it means "little river."
 - h. Clallam County, April 26, 1854.
 - i. In original law spelled "Clalm."
 - ii. Myron Eells says the Indian word means "strong people."

- i. Kitsap County. January 16, 1857.
 - i. First called Slaughter County in honor of Lieut. W. A. Slaughter, U. S. A., killed in the Indian war.
 - ii. Changed by vote of the people to Kitsap County in honor of an Indian chief.
 - iii. Myron Eells says word means "brave."
- j. Spokane County, January 29, 1858.
 - i. Indian name has some reference to the sun.
 - ii. One definition is "child of the sun."
- k. Klickitat County, December 20, 1859.
 - i. E. S. Curtis says original Indian word means "beyond (the mountains)."
- l. Snohomish County, January 14, 1861.
 - i. Myron Eells says among the Snohomish Indians the word has reference to a style of union among them.
- m. Stevens County, January 27, 1862.
 - i. Named in honor of Isaac I. Stevens, first governor of Washington Territory.
 - ii. Creation of Idaho Territory in 1863 made it necessary to readjust bounds of Stevens and Spokane Counties.
 - iii. Needed readjustments made by law of January 9, 1864.
- n. Yakima County, January 21, 1865.
 - i. Name of Indian origin.
- o. Whitman County, November 29, 1871.
 - i. Named in honor of the missionary, Dr. Marcus Whitman.
- p. San Juan County, October 31, 1875.
 - i. Named for the principal island in the archipelago of which the county is composed.
- q. Columbia County, November 11, 1875.
 - i. Named for the river.
 - ii. The name originally derived from Christopher Columbus.
- r. Garfield County, November 29, 1881.
 - i. Named in honor of President James A. Garfield.
- s. Asotin County, October 27, 1883.
 - i. The Indian word means "eel creek."
- t. Lincoln County, November 24, 1883.
 - i. Named in honor of Abraham Lincoln.

- u. Kittitas County, November 24, 1883.
 - i. The Indian word means "gray gravel bank."
 - v. Franklin County, November 28, 1883.
 - i. Named in honor of Benjamin Franklin.
 - w. Adams County, November 28, 1883.
 - i. Named in honor of John Adams.
 - y. Skagit County, November 28, 1883.
 - i. Name of Indian origin.
 - z. Okanogan County, February 2, 1888.
 - i. The Indian words means "rendezvous."
 - ii. The name was variously spelled by the early explorers.
4. By State Government of Washington.
- a. Ferry County, February 21, 1899.
 - i. Named in honor of Elisha P. Ferry, first governor of the State of Washington.
 - ii. First name suggested was "Eureka."
 - b. Chelan County, March 13, 1899.
 - i. Named for the large lake.
 - ii. First name suggested was "Wenatchee."
 - c. Benton County, March 8, 1905.
 - i. Named in honor of Thomas H. Benton.
 - d. Grant County, February 24, 1909.
 - i. Named in honor of Gen. U. S. Grant.
 - e. Pend Oreille County, March 1, 1911.
 - i. Name is French, meaning "ear bobs."
 - ii. Name had been given to a tribe of Indians.
 - f. Grays Harbor County.
 - i. County so named enacted February 27, 1907.
 - ii. Supreme Court annulled the law November 4, 1907.
 - iii. Legislature of 1913 changed the name of Chehalis County to Grays Harbor County.
5. Summary.
- a. Counties were created as follows
 - i. By Provisional Government of Oregon 2
 - ii. By Territorial Government of Oregon 6

iii. By Territorial Government of Washington	26
iv. By State Government of Washington	5
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Total	39
b. Counties were named as follows:	
i. For Indian chiefs or tribes	18
ii. For men of national fame	13
iii. For men of local fame	4
iv. For geographical features	4
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Total	39

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—From the nature of the case the original laws creating the counties would be the prime sources. They are not as widely accessible as one would think, as collections of the Territorial laws have been difficult to make. The other books cited are more easily obtained.

BANCROFT, HUBERT HOWE. *Works of*, Volumes XXIX, XXX and XXXI. These comprise the history of Oregon in two volumes, of Washington, Idaho and Montana in one volume. The indexes will guide the reader to the counties as studied.

CURTIS, EDWARD S. *The North American Indian*. The monumental work in twenty volumes and twenty portfolios, now half completed, is to cost \$3,500 a set. It will not be very generally accessible. Those fortunate enough to have it within reach will find in Volume VII, page 36, a reference to the name Klickitat. The same volume throws light on other names as well.

EELLS, MYRON. In *American Anthropologist* for January, 1892. This prolific writer has here an important article on the origin and meaning of many of the Indian names in Washington.

GROVER, LAFAYETTE. *Oregon Archives*. This is one of the prime sources of Northwestern history. It is not very satisfactory to the present study, however, as there appears under date of June 27, 1844, page 52, this entry: "The bill to amend several acts for the organization of counties, was considered and adopted." That seems to be the only record of the creation of Vancouver District so far as the "Archives" reveal it. The index is inadequate and each item must be traced by date.

MEANY, EDMOND S. *History of the State of Washington*. Consult Chapter XVI and Appendix I for consideration of the counties.

OREGON, LAWS OF. Where these are available for the dates involved they will give first hand information. The "General Laws of Oregon," compiled by Matthew P. Deady, is accessible but not applicable to this study as the laws creating counties are not included. The volumes needed are the session laws.

SMITH, CHARLES W. The Naming of Counties in the State of Washington. The Associate Librarian of the University of Washington has made a useful study of this subject. It appeared first in *The Magazine of History*, Volume X, pages 9 to 16 and 78 to 85 (1909) and was reprinted as a Bulletin of the University of Washington, *University Studies*, Number 6, October, 1913. In one form or the other, it ought to be available.

WASHINGTON, LAWS OF. The session laws of the Territory and State should be consulted where available for the text of the laws creating counties since March 2, 1853, when Congress created the Territory of Washington.