

Lithograph, American Village

By Henry J. Warre & Thomas Miles Richardson, Jr.

This hand-colored lithograph print is based on a watercolor and pencil sketch by Henry J. Warre. It was one of a series of prints included in Warre's *Sketches in North America and the Oregon Territory*, printed in London, England in 1848.

In early May 1845, Lieutenant Henry J. Warre and Lieutenant Merwin Vavasour, officers in the British army, departed from Montreal in Lower Canada with a Hudson's Bay Company overland brigade. The officers' final destination was the Oregon Country far to the west. Their mission was to conduct covert surveillance of the region for the British government. Traveling as civilians, Warre and Vavasour were charged with producing a comprehensive report on the possibilities for a British military defense of the Oregon Country in the event of war with the United States. The Warre and Vavasour mission came at a time of heightened tensions over territorial rights in the Pacific Northwest.

After an arduous overland trek, Warre and Vavasour reached Fort Vancouver on the Lower Columbia in mid-August, 1845. The British officers spent the next six months exploring the Oregon Country. Throughout these travels Lieutenant Warre completed numerous landscape sketches of the region. This sketch depicts the American settlement at Willamette Falls — present-day Oregon City — in the mid 1840s, which was located in the traditional territory of the Clackamas Indians, an Upper Chinookan group. The lithograph print is actually an embellishment of Warre's sketch. The original artwork features several vaguely defined individuals in the foreground. In contrast, the English lithographer's work depicts two Natives resembling Eastern or Plains Indians. The landscape as sketched by Warre overlooks the presence of the local Indians and their impact on the landscape. Willamette Falls was an ancient fishing site for the various Upper Chinookan groups who inhabited the lower Willamette Valley, such as the local Clackamas Indians. In the early settlement period, the Willamette Falls area featured local Native lodges as well as fishing platforms used during the seasonal salmon runs. The village of *wálamt* — the origin of the word "Willamette" — was located on the west side of the river opposite the American settlement.

Further Reading: Robbins William G. *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story, 1800-1940*. Seattle, Wash., 1997.

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