

### Lesson 3: Covet: Arrival of the Americans Student Instructions and Graphic Organizers

*Make a copy of this document.*

**Essential Question:** *How did the American settlers’ perspective on land impact the Nisqually People?*

**Criteria:** Be able to:

- Select evidence of the reasons American settlers came to the Washington Territory and the hardships they may have endured.
- Connect and explain why American settlers felt they earned or had a right to land promised by the government.
- Speculate from evidence the attitudes/perspectives (point of view) of American Settlers toward Nisqually Natives and their use of land.

**Vocabulary:** Explain the similarities and differences between immigrants and emigrants. How does this relate to American Settlers?

Term:	Definition:	Meaning Relates
Immigrant		
Emigrant		

**Reading: *Arrival of the Americans* Article:**

1. Pre-read the questions in the chart.
2. Read the *Arrival of the Americans* article to locate the best evidence to support your responses to the questions.
3. Respond to the following questions:

Questions:	Responses:
Why did American emigrants come to Oregon/Washington Territory?	
Why did they believe they earned the right to the land promised by the government?	
How did their perspective about land differ from that of the Nisqually People?	

How could those differing perspectives lead to conflict?	
--	--

**Primary Sources:** American Perspectives:

A person's perspective is based on their attitude towards a topic or subject. In writing, this is called **tone**. It is achieved from the author's word choice.

1) Review the use of tone from these resources:

- [Mood and Tone](#) (video)
- Here is a list of positive and negative attitudes: [List of Attitudes](#)
- Though not a complete list, here is a link to many words that convey tone: [155 Words To Describe An Author's Tone - Writers Write](#)

2) Make a copy of each settler's account.

3) Read the document and circle the words that create tone.

4) Place those words in this graphic organizer.

5) List each settler account's tone (attitudes) in the space provided in this graphic organizer.

6) Then, describe the Settlers' overall opinion about Indian People and the Use of Land.

Ezra Meeker	List words that convey Tone:	List the Tone (Attitude(s) of the Authors:

Describe the settler's overall perspective (opinion: What did the settlers think or believe?) about Nisqually People and how land should be used:
---

--

James and Charlotte McAllister	List words that convey Tone:	List the Tone (Attitude(s) of the Authors:
--------------------------------	------------------------------	--

Describe the settler's overall perspective (opinion: What did the settlers think or believe?) about Nisqually People and how land should be used:
---

B.F. "Frank" Shaw	List words that convey Tone:	List the Tone (Attitude(s) of the Authors:
-------------------	------------------------------	--

Compare how and why they differ in point of view from one another regarding land and Nisqually People.

Describe the settler's overall perspective (opinion: What did the settlers think or believe?) about Nisqually People and how land should be used:

**Essential Question:** In at least one paragraph and using what you learned, respond using evidence to the following question: *How did the American settlers' perspective on land impact Nisqually People?*

## Arrival of the Americans By Abbi Wonacott

In 1843, the first organized wagon train of 1000 Americans left Independence, Missouri, to travel over 3,000 miles to get to land claims in the Oregon Territory (Idaho, Washington, and Oregon at the time). From 1843 to 1869, over 500,000 settlers made the harsh journey through



rivers, prairies, deserts, and thick forests that could last over six months. Since England jointly occupied Oregon Territory, getting more Americans in the territory would strengthen America's claim to the area and push the English out.

To encourage Americans (whom the Native Americans called "Bostons") to move west, The U.S. Congress

created the Oregon Provisional Government in 1843. It allowed American male settlers to claim 320 acres of land and 320 acres for their wives. They had to improve that land within one year to gain ownership.

On the Oregon Trail, Americans traveled from 11-15 miles daily, mostly on foot. They endured disease, injury, abandonment, drowning, separation from family members, and death. The emigrants toiled through rain, wind, lightning, flood, steep terrain, and a seemingly endless trail to the Northwest. They felt entitled to the land even before arriving on it.

In 1844, the first wagon train turned north into present-day Washington instead of south towards Oregon City. After traveling in the Columbia River, Americans canoed up the Cowlitz River to Cowlitz Landing to start their journey north by the rough overland roads used by the Hudson's Bay Company and populated what is now western Washington State. Soon after, the destination was Fort Nisqually or the village of Olympia.

The 1844 wagon train included Irish-born American Michael T. Simmons, African American George Bush, and their families, who established Tumwater (Chinook jargon word for a waterfall). It was the first U.S. settlement north of the Columbia near Tumwater Falls in 1845. James and Charlotte McAllister were in the same wagon train and settled with their children George, America, Martha, John, and James in Pierce County.

In a few short years, more Americans than British gave the US Government a greater claim to the territory. Rather than go to war over the boundary line, Britain ceded claims to the Pacific Northwest by signing the Treaty of Oregon on June 15, 1846, making it thoroughly American. In October of 1846, Edmund Sylvester and Levi Smith stake a claim on the future site of Olympia.

Then, the U.S. Government passed The Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850. The act allotted 320 acres to each man that lived on and improved the land within four years. If he had a wife, she was assigned 320 acres and held a legal title in her name.



American settlers viewed Washington as a wilderness to tame, conquer, and cultivate. They acquired land tracts with boundaries marked out on maps to protect their claim to their land. They assumed that since Native Americans did not farm the same way they did, the land was not being used. The settlers became

alarmed when Native Americans would cross through “their” land. Some became defensive and built fences marking the boundaries of the land they owned.

Once settlers got their land grants, they started clearing all the trees and other natural plant life creating large sections of empty, open ground. Then, they would break up the soil with a domesticated animal like an ox to drag a plow and rip up the earth in rows. The farmers then planted a single crop, such as corn, wheat, or barley. They bent nature to man’s will and dominated the landscape as they had learned from their ancestors.

The American settlers selected the name "Columbia" for the new territory. Still, in a stroke of irony, the United States Congress voted to change the name to "Washington" to avoid confusion with the District of Columbia. Congress created the Washington Territory out of the northwestern section of the Oregon Territory on March 2, 1853.

The rapid growth of so many Americans alarmed Native Americans. In the fall of

1853, the first emigrant wagon train, led by James Longmire, created an additional route to Washington by crossing at Naches Pass through the Cascade Mountains. All the while, the American Government kept on giving land. The problem: it was not theirs to give. There was no agreement or compensation to Native Americans. To solve the problem, former Army officer Issacc Stevens became the 1st territorial governor. His mission: was to pass treaties and gain “legal” claims to the whole territory to move Native Americans out of the way.

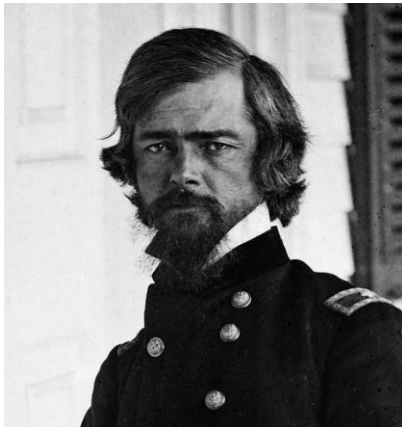


Excerpts from the book *Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound: The Tragedy of Leschi ...*  
By Ezra Meeker, 1905.

Ezra Meeker was an early settler in Puget Sound. His “mansion” still rests in Puyallup, Wa.

The Indians, as a class, from the earliest settlements down to the time of making the treaties in 1854-5, evinced not only a willingness that the white men should come and enjoy the land with them, but were pleased to have them do so. Here and there a murder had been committed by vicious individuals of tribes, but no concerted action hostile to the peaceable occupation of the country by the white race...

The Nisqually tribe embodied both classes, the former predominating and spreading their language, habits and customs far and wide on Puget Sound, the first even in one isolated settlement on the upper reaches of the Snohomish River. The Nisqually tongue was the most widely spoken language covering the Sound region, and to that fact may be attributed the importance of the tribe as compared to their number.



Governor Isaac Stevens. (2022, November 2). In *Wikipedia*.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac\\_Stevens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Stevens)

The tribal relation engendered hospitality; so, also, did a life of leisure, and particularly so where the bond of union is not governed by a strong will, the tribe separated into small bands, and a central authority was absent, or at best but shadowy, or entirely nominal. This hospitable habit extended to strangers as well as to kinfolk, and to the pioneer as well as Indians...

As evidence of this friendly spirit, we have the testimony of many that Leschi met the small immigration of 1845 part way between the Columbia River and the Sound with horses loaded with food...

One of these new incoming settlers, James McAllister, who had selected a location in the Nisqually bottom where the Nisqually tribe in part lived, took a donation claim of a mile square of the choicest land, covering a long stretch of the Medicine Creek, that gave the name to the first treaty made, the first negotiated with the Indians north of the Columbia River.

The McAllisters were upright, honest and industrious people, and treated their Indian neighbors justly, and were in turn respected by them and were kindly helped in times of need during the earlier period of their settlement among them. From a personal experience among this class of Indians, at a little later date, I can readily believe the story told by the McAllisters of the numerous acts of kindness shown them by the Nisqually tribe, and particularly Leschi, who, as we shall see by abundant testimony, had a character for liberality and benevolence far beyond the average of his race, and in fact, considering his means, of the white race.

## **JAMES MCALLISTER**

[Once the McAllisters reached the Puget Sound, they met Leschi of the Nisqually Indian People.] Leschi told them they were welcome to make their homes on any of their tribe's property, which included most of the Puget Sound area. After trying a couple of other places, they finally discovered the Nisqually Valley, and took out a claim there at the junction of Skonadaub and Squaquid creeks (later Medicine and McAllister). The farm was on part of the Indian Council Grounds, but was gladly relinquished by them. This place was about 15 miles from where they had been living.

Grandfather had to stay on the new place while he cleared the land and prepared to build living quarters for them. Grandmother did not like this arrangement in which she had to be alone so much of the time with several small children, and she kept after him to find a place for them to live. Grandfather laughingly told her he had seen two hollow stumps nearby that she could move into. She took him seriously and would not be satisfied until he had promised to put roofs on them and clean them out. This he did, and along with a tent, the family of eight lived very comfortably until a house was prepared for them. The land was cleared and proved to be very fertile; vegetables grew to a wondrous size, potatoes weighing eight to ten pounds were not uncommon, and they could grow three crops of wheat in a summer. They planted an orchard, and with all the wild berries in the woods they soon became quite prosperous.

Grandmother took in three Indian girls to train as servants, as well as a boy, Clifwhalen. She found them quick to learn, willing to work, honest and loyal. So they lived and prospered among the Indians as brothers for many years. Then other white people began moving in who were not friendly with the Indians, but regarded them as savages rather than human beings, and treated them as such. Many incidents happened which made the Indians unhappy and distrustful of the white man. But what finally put the Indians on the warpath involved the daughter of Synatco. She had been married to a white soldier in an Indian ceremony. When he was transferred to another fort, where he could not take a wife, he told her that they were not legally married, and sent her back to her father. The chief, Synatco, was heartbroken. He fell to the ground and crept, refusing to walk upright any more. He howled and howled, which meant he was debased lower than a dog. Her brothers also were outraged, and swore to kill all the white men, except the older settlers who had joined the tribe. Synatco now abdicated in favor of his oldest son, Leschi, and died soon after. Leschi too had been heartbroken by the treatment his sister had received. However, he did not want to declare war against the whites, many of whom were his friends, so he took some of his braves and moved up into the mountains, where they barricaded themselves until the Indians quieted down. But this time the Indians did not quiet down. Many hostiles from the north moved in, and with war paint and much noise, put on many demonstrations and dances.

Knowing the strong friendship between Leschi and my grandfather the white people appealed to him to carry a peace commission to him to sign. They knew if anyone could reach Leschi it was grandfather. He was offered and accepted a commission as First Lieutenant in the



Puget Sound Volunteers, and with a group of other volunteers and Leschi's brother (brother-in-law), Stoki, to guide them, they started off.

Citation:

Cordelia Hawk Putvin "About Indians," *Stories of the Pioneers. True stories from members of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington*. Daughters of the Pioneers, 1986, p. 20-22, <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/wa/state/Abentonmoses.html>

### **Annual Address by Colonel Benjamin Franklin Shaw**

(Note. - Colonel B. F. Shaw came to Oregon in 1844. In 1848 he was in the Cayuse War, his father, Captain William Shaw, of Marion County, commanding a company. In 1853, 1854, and 1855).

The Indian was a wanderer, and had no permanent home. He did not claim the exclusive right to a single acre of land. He had no idea of any rights except the right of "brute force." He was a usurper himself and had driven out some weaker party and had taken his hunting ground by force. The Indians had no laws to govern themselves and knew no law except the law of force. They had no religion of their own; they had no rulers, save that the biggest and loudest-talking, blustering bully was a sort of chief who directed them to some extent by out-talking them and making them afraid of him, or by pretending to be inspired with "Tamanawas" - medicine which gave him the power to cast out evil spirits and to heal the sick; and as he was supposed to cure by his "Tamanawas" he was held responsible for the lives of his patients.

The Indians did not know that he had any right to the soil, as he made no use of it. The only right he did claim was the right to roam over the country in common with everybody else - that was all the use he had for the country. He did not know how to cultivate the soil, and did not wish to know; for when he did learn that the soil would produce grain and vegetables, he would not use it for that purpose, but preferred to roam over it and idle away his time.

Now these are some of the privileges that our friends who take the Indian side of the question accuse us of robbing the Indian out of. We deny that we have robbed him out of anything, save and except his right to roam over thousands of acres of productive land that he made no use of, and have compelled him to abandon his savage life, and live like a civilized man. We have given them permanent homes, and have tried to teach them to cultivate the soil and to become useful citizens; and we do not regret that we have done so.

Citation: The Center For World Indigenous Studies and The Fourth World Documentation Project. All FWDP files may be reproduced for electronic transfer or posting on computer networks and bulletin boards provided that: 1. All text remains unaltered. 2. No profit is made

from such transfer. 3. Full credit is given to the author(s) and the Fourth World Documentation Project. 4. This banner is included in the document if being used as a file on a BBS, FTP site or other file archive. Thank you for your cooperation.

John Burrows Director, Fourth World Documentation Project