Chapter 14

The Name 'Shasta'

This section contains entries for some of the more important scholarly contributions pertaining to the origins of the name "Shasta." This section also contains a selection of primary documents, from the 1830s and 1840s, which serve to illustrate the wide variety of past uses of "Shasta" as a name for various mountains, rivers, and peoples. Taken as a whole, the entries in this section have been grouped together to draw attention to the fact that there is a bewildering number of possible sources to the name "Shasta."

Evidence points to the conclusion that Peter Skene Ogden was in 1826 and 1827 the first Euro-American to use the Native American tribe name "Shasta" as a name for an Indian tribe, a mountain, and a river. Ogden did not spell the name as it is spelled today, but spelled it in several variations as "Sastise," "Castice," "Sistise," "Sarti," and "Sasty." Ogden's 1826-27 journal, which unfortunately exists only as a clerk's transcribed copy with transcription errors, contains descriptions which indicate that the mountain he named was present Mt. McLoughlin in southern Oregon and not present Mt. Shasta. See Jeff LaLande's 1987 First Over the Siskiyou for a detailed commentary on Ogden's 1826-1827 journal. Note that Ogden's manuscript maps from 1826-27 were catalogued in the Hudson's Bay Archives, but have never been located by scholars. Ogden's manuscript maps may someday clarify the location of his 1827 Mt. "Sastise" and "Sasty" River.

Several pieces of evidence outlined in this section of the bibliography point to the conclusion that present Mt. Shasta was named through a transposition of the name "Shasta" from Mt. McLoughlin to present Mt. Shasta. In all probability the official transposition was effected through the published reports and maps resulting from the 1838-1842 Wilkes Expedition. The 1841 Wilkes-Emmons overland expedition, an important side venture of the Wilkes Expedition, seems to have been directly responsible for the mistaken transposition of the name. The first printed maps to transpose the name appeared in 1844. A few of the entries in this section, see for example the entry for the Mitchell map of 1846, show how the transposition of the name became widely and permanently established. Although Peter Skene Ogden's journal from 1826-1827 and the Wilkes-Emmons overland expedition journals of 1841 are important documents in the history of the naming of Mt. Shasta, it must be kept in mind that there are dozens of other important early books, articles and manuscripts which use "Shasta" in some spelling or another and which indirectly suggest alternative origins of the name. The "Shatasla" tribe mentioned by Alexander Henry in 1814, the "Tchastal" Russian name described by Harry Wells in 1881, the "Chastacosta" tribal name described by Swanton, and so on, are all important names which fit into the overall picture of the history of the Mt. Shasta region. The entries in this section demonstrate the complexity of the story behind the name "Shasta."

One of the more surprising findings is that the modern spelling of the name "Shasta," beginning with an "S–" and ending with an "–a," does not appear in any publication or manuscript until the year 1850, when the California State Legislature adopted the spelling of "Shasta" for the County of Shasta. See the entry under Madison Walthall, 1850, for the first such spelling. It appears that the spelling of "Shasta" was adopted as a spelling for present Mt. Shasta at the same time that the spelling was adopted for the County. Between 1844 and 1850 the spellings of "Shasty," "Shasté," and "Sasty" were by far the most prevalent spellings for present Mt. Shasta, although many other spellings were also used, such as "Tsashtl," "Shastl," etc.

As indicated above, this section of the bibliography contains entries representative of the vast array of published and unpublished documents which directly or indirectly pertain to the history of the name "Shasta." Consult Sections 1 through 14 of this bibliography for many other works which pertain to the origins of the name "Shasta."
The [MS number] indicates the Mount Shasta Special Collection accession numbers used by the College of the Siskiyou Library.

[MS1047]. [California Star]. [Shasty, use of the name]. In: California Star. Sept, 12, 1847. Reprinted in Boggs 1942, p. 14. Article dated 'Sept., 12, 1847. Sacramento Valley.' Article states: "...building a fort at the extreme northern end of the Sacramento Valley. This will protect that part of the country from the Shasty, and other hostile tribes of Indians, and be the means of settling that remote part of the country rapidly."

Note that this serves as an example of the various spellings of the name "Shast," "Sasty," "Shaste," etc, in use before 1850. Apparently none of the pre-1850 spellings in any published or unpublished material used the "Shasta" spelling, even for the mountain, until "Shasta" was adopted as a spelling for "Shasta County" by the California State Legislature in February of 1850. 14. The Name 'Shasta.' [MS1047].

[MS1165]. Douglas, James 1803-1877. Letter to the Governor and Committee, Oct., 1838. In: Rich, E. E. 1904. The Letters of John McLoughlin: From Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee. First Series, 1825-38. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941. pp. 236-268. Introduction by William K. Lamb (1904). Significant letter because it contains one of the first uses of the spelling "SastŽ:" up to this time the spellings of "Shasty" and "Sasty" were more common. The ending "-Ž" was used extensively in the 1840s and early 1850s. Douglas mentions two incidents with the "SastŽ" or "Sasty" Indians. Since this letter was transcribed by a clerk, Douglas's actual spellings are unknown.

In one case he writes: "Eighteen or twenty Americans and Indian tribes were attacked on the route by the SastŽ Tribe, who repulsed them with loss, after a sharp engagement, and arrived here empty handed, and have since remained quietly upon their farms." (p. 242).

In the other case he writes: "The journey of the Southern party of Trappers from the banks of the Columbia to the Buonaventura Valley, where they arrived on the 15th November 1837 was greatly protracted by the weak and reduced state of their horses. The natives, upon the route, were uniformly peaceable, and the warlike Chief of the powerful Sasty Tribe, evinced his desire of peace, by sending an escort of his people, to protect the Party while travelling through his Country. This wise precaution held the predatory disposition of the Sasty's completely in check, and prevented the numberless causes of mutual exasperation, which had been, on other occasions, productive of the worst evils." (p. 252). James Douglas of Fort Vancouver became a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1840. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1165].


Note that the author cites A. L. Kroeber as the source of name of the chief "Sasta," but Kroeber used the name of "Sasti" (see Kroeber 1953). The author considers the "Shasty Forks" to have been the "junction of Little Shasta and Shasta River." More recently historians have come to consider the "Sasty River" to have been the Rogue River (see LaLande 1987).

For the name Siskiyou the author discusses the "council ground" theory (see Wells 1881), the "Six Cailloux" theory of six stones, and the "bob-tailed horse" theory concerning A. R. McLeod (see Gibbs 1863). Note that a different but important "Siskiyou" story by Wells is not discussed (see Wells History of Oregon 1889).

The author presents some observations on McLeod's 1828 [1830] disaster east of Mt. Shasta. He suggests that the place of the loss of the bob-tailed and other horses was "Near North Fork of McLoud River (McLeod) at a place formerly known as Battle's Milk Ranch." The author also states that "To this day the Cree Indians are a race whose livelihood is earned principally thru trapping. Since many Indians and breeds were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company it is not at all unreasonable to presume that members of that tribe were with McLeod's party." 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS786].

the location of the "Chasta Valley" and "Chasta river" as described in his 1837 diary of a cattle drive (see Edwards Diary ... in Watson 1932). Edwards's description in this 1842 book of the "Chasty" valley and the Umpqua valley seems to indicate that his 1842 Chasty valley is one and the same as today's Rogue River valley. He states: "And here we are to examine by far the most interesting portion of the Territory. This division includes the valleys of the Cowalitz, Chasty, Umpqua, and far-famed Wallamette." Note that the "Chasty" valley is within the limits of the Territory.

He also says: "The Chasty valley lies on Chassy river, and is near the line between the United States and Mexico; it is a country of pleasing and varied scenery, and sufficiently extensive for, say two counties. It is, however, too remote from navigation to invite settlement for years to come: the nearest ports being the Columbia and San Francisco."

He further says that: "The Umpqua valley lies between the Chasty on the south, and the Willamette on the north, and is separated from each by a transverse range of mountains. This valley is much more extensive than either of the former, and in point of soil and scenery, is not inferior to any portion of the Territory—but like the Chasty, it is remote from navigation, the Columbia being the nearest port" (p. 10).

Edwards's earlier diary of 1837 almost without a doubt recorded that the "Chasta Valley" was one and the same as the present-day Shasta Valley. In 1842, Edwards may have changed his place-names of 1837 to correspond to the Hudson's Bay Company's convention of naming the present-day Rogue River Valley as the "Shasty Valley." Note that by 1842 Edwards changed the spelling from "Chasta" to "Chasty," which perhaps corresponds to the Hudson's Bay Company convention of spelling the name as "Shasty." 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS332].

[MS567]. Greenhow, Robert 1800-1854. The History of Oregon and California and the Other Territories on the North-West Coast of North America: Accompanied by a Geographical View and Map of those Countries, and a Number of Documents as Proofs and Illustrations of the History. Boston, Mass.: Charles C. Little, 1845. p. 25. Second Edition, 'Revised, Corrected, and Enlarged.' First edition of this title in 1844; in 1840 Greenhow published the true first edition under the titled Memoir, Historical and Political on the North west Coast of North America... Robert Greenhow was "Translator and Librarian to the Department of State of the United States; Author of a Memoir, Historical and Political, on the North-west Coast of North America, published in 1840, by Direction of the Senate of the United States" (p. i). A 42 page portion of this book was published in 1845 as The Geography of Oregon and California...

The 1840 and 1844 editions of this book were the result of a major research effort organized to justify the United States' claims to exclusive ownership of the Oregon Territory. The books were funded by the government. Greenhow had access to the most complete archives and resources then available. As seen in the text and accompanying map (see Greenhow "Map" 1845), present-day Mt. Shasta was labeled as "Mt. Jackson," and present-day Mt. McLoughlin was labeled as "Mt. Shasty." These conventions of nomenclature were probably in accord with all prior printed maps and texts (with the exception of the Wilkes maps of 1844) and had Charles Wilkes's men in 1841 not mistakenly labeled present-day Mt. Shasta as "Mt. Shaste" instead of Mt. Pitt or Pit Mountain, the Greenhow standard of "Mt. Jackson" would undoubtedly have remained the official standard.

Note that Greenhow carefully states the appropriate latitudes to avoid confusion: "'Mt. Shasty, near the 43rd; and Mount Jackson, a stupendous pinnacle, in the latitude of 41 degrees 40 minutes, which has been also called Mount Pitt by the British traders" (p. 25). 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS567].

[MS958]. Hale, Horatio Emmons 1817-1896. United States Exploring Expedition. During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842. Vol. 6. Ethnography and Philology. Ridgewood, N. J.: The Gregg Press, 1968. Reprint of the 1846 edition published by Lea and Blanchard. Horatio Hale was the official philologist of the U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-1842. Although he was not a member of the Wilkes-Emmons overland expedition from Oregon to California in 1841, Hale did request that Indian equivalents for a standard vocabulary of approximately 100 English words be gathered from all tribes encountered on the overland expedition. On Oct. 2, 1841, overland expedition member J. D. Dana took down the vocabulary of the "Saste" Indians at the northwestern foot of Mt. Shasta; see chart, row 10 (on pp. 568-629). Examples of Shasta words: Elk=Hat'ja; Salmon=kit'ri; mountain=go; to love=yakëtni (see also Dana Manuscript notebook... 1841).

Note that this Dana vocabulary became the basis of Hale's "Saste" family of languages, though the vocabulary was perhaps not accurately representative of all the languages of Hale's "Shaste Country" of southern Oregon. Hale was the first person to describe the Shasta language family; had Dana taken down a vocabulary in the "Shaste Country" of the Umpqua and Rogue River as described on Hale's accompanying map and in some of the Wilkes-Emmons overland journals, then the name Shasta might be today applied to a different tribe (see Powell "Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico" in Holder 1971).

Contains a chapter entitled "The Languages of Northwestern America" (pp. 533-650) which includes miscellaneous vocabularies collected by Dana from the upper Sacramento and Sacramento valley Indians (pp. 630-634). A "Synopsis"
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"Mount Shasta" ("Sastise") of Peter Ogden" (p. 69).

Amongst other things, LaLande's new interpretation moves Ogden's point of crossing over the Siskiyou from the headwaters of the Little Applegate River to a point coinciding with present day Siskiyou Summit. Of major interest to Mt. Shasta's history is LaLande's opinion that Ogden did not name present-day Mt. Shasta as "Mt. Sastise," but instead actually named present-day Mt. McLoughlin as "Mt. Sastise." LaLande's well-documented interpretation forces a complete re-evaluation of the history of the naming of present-day Mt. Shasta. (For earlier discussions of the naming problem see Merriam "Source of the Name Shasta" 1926, Stewart Discovery and Exploration of Mt. Shasta 1929, and Gudde California Place Names 3rd ed. )

Note that LaLande quotes from Ogden's journal the following: "Del. '26'[25]: One [mountain] in particular high above all others, pointed and covered with Snow - and from its height must be at a considerable distance from us" (p. 15). LaLande feels that this must be a reference to today's Mount Shasta. If true, then at least Peter Skene Ogden was indeed

[MS175]. LaLande, Jeff. First Over the Siskiyou: Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Journey Through the Oregon-California Borderlands. [Portland, Ore.]: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1987. Contains the first known use of the name "Shasta," albeit the spelling was not the same as today. Ogden's 1826-1827 journal uses "Sastise" (p. 15), "Castice" (p. 60), "Sistise" (p. 67), and "Sasty" (p. 82) as names for both a mountain and a river. After extensive retracing of the route as outlined in Ogden's journal, LaLande concludes that "Thus, today's Mount McLoughlin was the original "Mount Shasta" ("Sastise") of Peter Ogden" (p. 69).

The author has reinterpreted the route of travel of Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Siskiyou mountains fur trade explorations. In his introduction the author explains that: "The question of Peter Skene Ogden's actual 1826-27 route has been the subject of debate ever since an edition of his journal was first published in 1910. This version, edited by T. C. Elliott and based on a heavily abridged copy of Ogden's journal made by Agnes C. Laut during her 1905 visit to the Company's Beaver House archives in London, took many liberties with the journal's original wording. Consequently, it is unusable as a primary historical source.....The situation was partially remedied with the Hudson's Bay Record Society's 1961 publication of the 1826-27 Snake Country Journal, a complete, verbatim edition that preserved both Ogden's unique spellings and his exasperating lack of punctuation. However, the editors of the 1961 version included a new interpretation of the brigade's northern California-southwestern Oregon itinerary that, based on a critical reexamination of Ogden's journal, appears also to be wrong" (p. xxvii).
the first person to make a written record of Mount Shasta, even though Ogden named a different mountain as "Sastise."

LaLande's book is a major contribution to the history of the often perplexing story of the naming of Mount Shasta. The Rogue River was the original "Sasty" River, and Mount McLoughlin was the original "Mt. Sastise." The author uses photographs and maps to illustrate the Siskiyou portion of Peter Skene Ogden's trip of 1826-1827. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS173].


LaLande states that 'Ogden's 'Sastise River' was the Rogue River of today, named by him on February 14, the day the brigade first reached its banks. By the same token, Ogden's 'Mount Sastise' (misspelled 'Sistise' in the surviving copy of his journal) was not the same mountain that has been called 'Mount Shasta' for the past century-and-a-half" (p. 124). LaLande postulates that perhaps it was Alexander McLeod in 1829 who first transferred the name, in the form of "Chaste Mount," to present-day Mount Shasta.

LaLande credits C. Hart Merriam's article "Source of the name Shasta" (see Merriam 1926) as being one of the first published recognitions that Ogden actually named present-day Mt. McLoughlin, and not present-day Mt. Shasta, as Mt. Sastise.

Note that the accompanying map on p. 126 is misplaced as a portion of Capt. Hood's 1838 map; it should be labeled as a portion of Arrowsmith's 1834 map. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS173].

Maloney, Alice Bay. Shasta was Shatasla in 1814. In: California Historical Society Quarterly. Sept., 1945. Vol. 24. No. 3. pp. 229-234. The article begins with a discussion of Peter Skene Ogden's 1827 naming of the "Sasty Forks" and "Mt. Sastise." The article is extensively footnoted, though Maloney was not aware at the time of the near certainty that Ogden named present-day Mt. McLoughlin, and not present-day Mt. Shasta, as 'Mount Sastise" (see LaLande 1987).

After a description of the fur trade network which began in 1811 in Oregon, the author states that in 1814 Alexander Henry traveled by canoe up the Willamette River to a post near the present-day town of Newburg [about 25 miles southwest of Portland]. At this place he or his men [from the text it is not clear who met these Indians] met three Indians who represented themselves as being of the "Walla Walla, Shatasla and Halthwypum (Cayuse) nations; they were very civil and wished traders to winter among them where they say beaver are numerous" (p. 232). From this single statement Maloney concludes that "In 1814, Shasta was Shatasla" (p. 233).

Henry is also quoted about making arrangements for some American trappers to go to the "Spanish River" which Maloney feels is the Sacramento River (p. 232).

Maloney states Peter Skene Ogden in his 1827 journal mentions parties of hunters in the Klamath region prior to his own original visit. She writes "January 18, 1827, while encamped on Lower Klamath Lake he wrote 'I am wretched! No beaver! The country trapped by Mr. Ross three years since'" (p. 233).

Note that there are other possible sources to the name "Shatasla." For example in 1827 a Belgian world atlas depicted on the southern Oregon coast a "Sheastukla" tribe. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS369].

McLeod, Alexander Roderick 1782 1840. [letter to John McLoughlin dated Feb. 21, 1830 adding comments to his own prior Feb. 15, 1830 report about the ill-fated 1829-1830 fur trade expedition to California]. In: Nunis, Doyle Blackman Jr. 1924. The Hudson's Bay Company's First Fur Brigade to the Sacramento Valley: Alexander McLeod's 1829 Hunt. Fair Oaks, Calif.: The Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 1968. p.16. Original letter is in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, D.4/123, fos. 65-65d. In this Feb. 21, 1830 letter McLeod further explains the circumstances in late 1829 which led him to go north to winter in the northern California mountains. McLeod explains that the Sacramento Valley seemed impracticable for several reasons, and that "these considerations induced me to decide in favor of Chasti Valley. the lower part of the Clametti River and the head Waters of Sarti River (the latter place never was hunted) to employ the party during Winter..." (p. 16).

Note that McLeod's spelling of "Chasti" is interesting. In his report of Feb. 15, 1830 McLeod spelled the name as "Chaste." It is often supposed this "Chaste" is a French word meaning "pure" and pronounced with a silent final "-e" (see Miller 1903). But since McLeod has here written "Chasti" it seems more likely that both his "Chaste" and his "Chasti" were pronounced like "chastee." Note that John McLoughlin wrote in late 1830 of McLeod having just visited the "Sasti Vally" (see McLoughlin "Letter dated Oct. 11, 1830," in Nunis 1968, p. 19). Also note that in 1827 Peter Skene Ogden wrote of the "Sasty" River (see Lalande 1987) and by 1834 the name of "Shasty" had appeared on at least one English
map (see Lalande "Arrowsmith Map..." 1987). Other writers used many variations, such as "Tchasty" in 1841 (see Peale "diary of 1841" in Poesch 1961). Over time "ShastŽ" became another standard spelling of the name (see Gibbs 'George Gibbs' Journal ...", in Heizer 1972).

Although the endings of "-i," "-y," and "-Ž" are not pronounced identically, there is enough similarity in their pronunciation to suppose that McLeod, if indeed the printed version is true to the original letter, by spelling the name "Chasti," indirectly gives evidence that his earlier spelling of "Chaste" was intended to have been pronounced with an "-ee" ending (i.e. "chastee") and might better have been spelled "ChastŽ" or "Chasti." If true, then McLeod's "Chaste" was not necessarily a French word meaning "pure." The name "Chaste" would join a list of other similar early spellings, "Sasty," "Sasti," "Chasti," "Tchasty," "ShastŽ," "Shasty," etc, in having a sounded final vowel.

The location of the "Chasti Valley" as mentioned in McLeod's letter is not known, and several interpretations are possible based upon the available evidence. McLeod's mention of the "Sarti" River may be a misspelling of "Sasti," though it is curious that P. S. Ogden's 1827 transcribed journal also mentions the "Sarti" River (see Lalande 1987). 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS654].

Merriam, Clinton Hart 1855-1942. Source of the Name Shasta. In: Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences, Nov. 18, 1926. Vol. 16. No. 19. pp. 522-524. Very important article. Merriam was perhaps the first person to point out that Peter Skene Ogden in 1827 was referring to present-day Mt. McLoughlin (and not to present-day Mt. Shasta) when naming "Mt. Sastise" (p. 523). Merriam also points out "That the upper part of the Rogue River is the Sastise or Sasty River of Ogden is obvious not only from Ogden's own account of his movements, [but also] from the maps of Arrowsmith (1832 and 1834), Wilkes (1841) and Gallatin (1848)" (pp. 523-524). Merriam concludes that "It is one of the tragedies of geographic nomenclature that these names, by reason of a break in the continuity of local knowledge of the region, have been transferred to features remote from those upon which they were originally bestowed. Still, it is something to be thankful for--from the standpoint of anthropology--that both the great mountain and the river to which the name was transferred are still within or bordering on the territory of the Shaste tribe" (p. 524).

Merriam's article also mentions that Michel Laframboise gave a Dr. Gairdner a list of tribes which included the "Clamet" and "Sasty" tribes, the latter tribe located "On a river of the same name to the West of No. 30." Merriam says No. 30 was the "Clamet," but the list itself if locatable might offer clues to Laframboise's geographical ideas. C. Hart Merriam, in addition to being a noted ethnologist, had been a respected wildlife biologist who led in 1898 the first major U. S. Biological Survey of Mount Shasta. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS294].

Mitchell, Samuel Augustus 1792-1868. New Map of Texas, Oregon, and California [map]. In: Mitchell, Samuel Augustus 1792-1868. Texas, Oregon, and California. Oakland, Calif.: Biobooks, 1948. 1948 foreword by Joseph A. Sullivan. Original map published in Philadelphia in 1846. The "New Map of Texas, Oregon, and California" was issued with Mitchell's 1846 guidebook to the west. On the map "Mt. Shaste" is shown as the name of present-day Mt. Shasta and the present-day Rogue River is named as "Shaste" river. Since the first map ever to show the name of Mt. Shasta in any spelling as a name for present-day Mt. Shasta was the Wilkes map of 1844, and since Wilkes also left the name "Shaste" for the Rogue River, it is assumed that Mitchell used Wilkes as a source of place-names. "Mount Shaste" is mentioned in Mitchell's text only as "a high peak" (p. 27).

In the back of his guidebook, Mitchell states the influence of Wilkes. Mitchell writes: "New Map of Texas, Oregon, and California. This Map represents that part of North America which extends from lat. 26° to lat. 56° N., and from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. It includes the State of Texas, Oregon as claimed by the United States, and the whole of Upper California, together with the adjoining regions of the State and territory of Iowa, the Missouri Territory, the Indian Territory, and a considerable portion of Mexico and Old California, and some part of British America. It embraces the most recent published information extant, including that derived from Nicollt's Map of the Country between the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers; Map of Oregon, by Capt. Wilkes, U.S.N. [emphasis added]; Map of the explorations in Oregon, California, etc, by Capt. Fremont, U.S.A; the Congressional and other Maps of Texas; the latest Maps of Mexico, etc. The Emigrant Route to Oregon, via the South Pass, and the Trader's route to Santa FŽ, are distinctly traced, and all the Counties in Texas are shown on the Map (p. 45).

The mention of Wilkes's map by Mitchell is very important for it leads to the conclusion that Mitchell helped perpetuate Wilkes's changing of the name of present-day Mt. Shasta from "Pit Mountain" to "Mt. Shaste." Note that in 1827 Ogden named present-day Mt. McLoughlin as Mount "Sastise," and that by 1834 English maps had appeared which used the name "Mt. Shasty" for present-day Mt. McLoughlin. Even the best American map of the late 1830s, known as the 1838 Hood map, showed present-day Mt. McLoughlin as "Mt. Shasty" (see Hood 1838).

Mitchell's map, using Wilkes's name change, was a map used by hundreds if not thousands of emigrants to Oregon and California. Had Mitchell's highly popular map not adopted the name "Mt. Shaste" for present-day Mt. Shasta, then it is possible that more knowledgeable map-makers might not have adopted the change in names. If Wilkes and then
Mitchell had not made the change, then present-day Mt. McLoughlin might still be named as "Mt. Shasty" and present-day Mt. Shasta might still be called "Pit Mountain."

The thesis here is that Wilkes assigned the name of Shasta to the wrong mountain. Mitchell picked up and perpetuated the mistake. After Mitchell, the next great map of the Oregon territory was FrŽmont's 1848 map. FrŽmont probably knew that there was some problem, because the notebook maps of FrŽmont's topographer (Charles Preuss) show the "Sasty" as Mt. McLoughlin and the 'Pit' as present-day Mt. Shasta (see Preuss manuscript notebooks...1843). FrŽmont and Preuss in 1848 would have had to contradict the widely disseminated maps of Wilkes and Mitchell. Instead of contradicting Wilkes and Mitchell, FrŽmont chose to adopt the Wilkes and Mitchell names (though Preuss's 1848 map spells Shasta as "Mount Tsashlt" and FrŽmont's writings always spelled it "Shastl")

By shifting the name of Shasta down one mountain (from present-day Mt. McLoughlin to present-day Mt. Shasta) Wilkes in 1844, Mitchell in 1846, and FrŽmont in 1848, taken together, established a new standard. However, note that Wilkes, Mitchell, and FrŽmont all retained on their maps the use of the name "Shaste" for present-day Rogue River, a standard that fell from use after the gold rush. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS528].

[MS1119]. Powell, John Wesley 1834-1902. Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico. In: Franz Boas: Introduction to Handbook of American Indian Languages, and J. W. Powell: Indian Linguistic Families of America North of Mexico. Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1971. pp. 81-218. Reprint of two separately published works. J. W. Powell's 'Indian Linguistic Families...' was first published in: Seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology,. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891, pp. 1-142. Contains a list, with sources, of nine different spellings of the Indian tribal language family name of "Sastean Family"(also spelled by Powell as "Shastean") as used prior to 1877 by various ethnographers (pp. 181-182). Several ethnographers used different spellings even within a single published work, and it is not clear from the list whether the individual name signifies the tribe or the language. Includes the spellings: "Saste" (by Hale 1846, Gallatin 1848, Berghaus 1851, Physi. Atlas map 17 1852, Buschmann 1859), "Shasty" (Hale 1846; Buschmann 1859), "Shasties" (Hale 1846, Berghaus 1851, Physi. Atlas map 17 1852); "Shasti" (Latham 1850, 1854, 1856, 1860, 1862); "ShastŽ" (Gibbs 1853); "Sasti" (Gallatin 1853); "Shasta" (Powell 1877, Gatschet 1877, Bancroft 1882); "Shas-t'ka" (Powers 1877); "Shastecases" (unattributed and no date [see Powers 1874]).

All of the above published and unpublished sources are described by Powell in a chronologically arranged bibliographic essay entitled "Literature Relating to the Classification of Indian Languages" (pp. 88-101).

Powell summarizes his "Shastean Family" list by stating: "Derivation: The single tribe upon the language of which Hale based his name was located by him to the southwest of the Lutuami or Klamath tribes. He calls the tribe indifferently Shasties or Shasty, but the form applied by him to the family is Saste, which accordingly is the one taken. Geographic distribution: The former territory of the Sastean family is the region drained by the Klamath River and its tributaries from the western base of the Cascade range to the point where the Klamath flows through the ridge of hills east of Happy Camp, which forms the boundary between the Sastean and Quoratean families. In addition to this region of the Klamath, the Shasta extended over the Siskiyou range northward as far as Ashland, Oregon" (p. 182).

Note that the derivation of the family name "Shastean" was based on the collection of a vocabulary from a group of Indians at the base of Mt. Shasta on Oct. 2, 1841 (see Dana Manuscript Journal...1841). That Hale used this vocabulary as the basis for his language classification complicates the history of the name "Shasta" as applied to the northern California tribe named Shasta today. Hale's map and text, as well as Wilkes's maps, show the Shaste Indian territory range to include much of southern Oregon and show the Rogue River as the Shaste river. Perhaps it would have been better if Hale had named the Umpqua River and Rouge River Indian languages by the name "Shasta," and had named the northern California tribe from which the vocabulary was collected as some other name coined from the vocabulary itself. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1119].


This is an article about the Wintu tribe. Powers describes the dances and ceremonies he observed while staying among the tribe in the early 1870s.

Note that this article was one of a series on Indian tribes by Powers that appeared in the Overland Monthly, and which attracted the attention of J. W. Powell. Powell afterward commissioned Stephen Powers to write the 1877 classic "Tribes of California" for the Bureau of Ethnology. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1090].
Siskiyous. The author says: "Connection in which they have become noted. the Chastacosta see Dorsey "The Gentile System of the Siletz Tribes," in Journal of American Folklore, 1890, Vol. 3, pp. Chastacosta and other tribes probably at the stream called Shista" (p. 461). Note that names pronounced like "Shasta" existed in southwestern Oregon for the Swanton's entry for the (p. 474). He also lists a Takelma tribe village as the "Sestikustun, on the south side of the Rogue River" (p. 469). is kwusta," and "Atchasti" to the names Sastise, Castise, and Sasty as spelled in Ogden's 1826 W‡lamskni, by the Klamath. W‡lamswash, by the Modoc" (p. 58). Note the possible similarity of the names of "Shista Atchasti anŽ’nmei, by the Atfalati Kalapuya. Atchashti ‡mim, another form of the Kalapuya name. Katuku, Applegate rivers. Thus at least some of the Chastacosta tribe lived in the Rogue River valley. In December of 1826 Peter Skene Ogden wrote down the name, entered in the existing manuscript journal. Also interesting referring to the westward tribe of Indians described to him by some Indians of the Klamath region. About a month later Ogden wrote down the name "Sasty." (see LaLande First Over the Siskiyous 1987, for a transcription of Ogden's journal). Swanton states that the name Chastacosta is "From Shista-kwusta, their own name, significance unknown. Also called Atehashi aŋZnamei, by the Atfalati Kalapuya. Atehashi ḥim, another form of the Kalapuya name. Katuku, by the Shasta. Wëlamskni, by the Klamath. Wëlamswash, by the Modoc" (p. 58). Note the possible similarity of the names of "Shista-kwusta," and "Atchasti" to the names Sastise, Castise, and Sasty as spelled in Ogden's 1826-1827 journal. Also interesting is Swanton's entry for the Umpqua tribe, where he writes that "Ci-sta-qwut" is a Chastacosta name for the Umpqua tribe (p. 474). He also lists a Takelma tribe village as the "Sestikustun, on the south side of the Rogue River" (p. 469). Swanton's entry for the Kuitsh tribe states:”Ci-sta-qwut-me tunne, Mishikwutmetunne name, meaning ‘people dwelling on the stream called Shista’" (p. 461). Note that names pronounced like "Shasta" existed in southwestern Oregon for the Chastacosta and other tribes probably at the very time Ogden wrote down the name "Sasty." (For more information about the Chastacosta see Dorsey "The Gentile System of the Siletz Tribes," in Journal of American Folklore, 1890, Vol. 3, pp. 227-237; Hodge 1907, 1910; and Ruby and Brown 1986.) Swanton also makes an interesting entry for the "Cayuse" tribe which could have relevance to the history of the name "Siskiyous." The author says: "Connection in which they have become noted.-The Cayuse were reputed one of the most

Simpson, George 1792-1860. [letter to John McLoughlin Esq., Mar. 1, 1842, mentioning the 'Shasty Mountains']. In: Rich, E. E. 1904. The Letters of John McLoughlin: From Fort Vancouver to the Governor and Committee. Second Series, 1839-44. Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1943. pp. 262-272. Introduction by William K. Lamb (1904-). A letter ordering McLoughlin to stop fur trade south of the "Shasty Mountains." Put another way, with this letter Governor Simpson cuts off Hudson's Bay Company fur trade into California, and in so doing ends the era of fur trade in California. Thus this is a momentous letter. Simpson, governor of all North American operations of the Hudson's Bay Company, writes: "From Mr. Ermatinger's report of the country both on the Sacramento and other rivers falling into the Bay of San Francisco, and that of the Rio Colorado, about Red Bay, it is quite evident that no good can arise from prosecuting the Fur trade or maintaining the trapping parties in those districts of country; and after the operations of the present season are over, instead of sending the Expedition back to California, or forming a trading establishment at Pelican or Trinidad Bay, as was contemplated, or any other part of the coast or interior country, South of the Shasty Mountains, I beg that the Expedition be broken up, unless you can find useful employment for it in the Snake country; in short, the sooner we break off all communication, either directly or indirectly, the better."

Note that the letter mentions the "Shasty Mountains;" this is apparently the first time in the Hudson's Bay Company correspondence that an "-h-" has been added to the word "Sasty" to spell "Shasty" although maps had appeared as early as 1834 spelling the name "Shasty."

Geographically, the "Shasty Mountains" of Simpson's letter probably meant the present Siskiyou mountains, for it was well known to the Hudson's Bay Company that the mountains south of present Mount Shasta were in California, and Simpson makes it clear that California is to be cut off from fur trade expeditions. Thus it may well be that the "Shasty Mountains" were always the present Siskiyous to the Hudson's Bay Co., and that in 1841 the American Wilkes-Emmons Overland Expedition members were mistaken in naming the mountains between present Mount Shasta and Redding as the "Sasty Mountains" (see Eld manuscript journal 1841, Dana manuscript journal1841).

Simpson's Mar. 1, 1842 letter signals the end of the fur trade into California. It should be noted that on Mar. 7, 1842 Simpson wrote another letter, apparently in response to new pleas from McLoughlin, and qualifying that if the 1842 California trapping turns out well, another expedition might be sent out, but that absolutely no establishment of any kind was to be made in California (p. 286). 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1166].


Of the name "Shasta" the author states "Probably from a chief called Sasti." This reference to a chief called "Sasti" may have come from Kroeber (see Kroeber 1916) and/or Dixon (see Dixon 1907).

Swanton's discussion of the "Chastacosta" tribe is perhaps more historically interesting. The "Chastacosta" were a tribe of southwest Oregon Indians living west of the range of the Oregon branch of the "Shasta" tribe. Swanton names about 30 villages of the Chastacosta tribe. He states that the range of the Chastacosta was "On the lower course of Illinois River, both sides of Rogue River for some distance above its confluence with the Illinois, and on the north bank somewhat farther" (p. 58). However, two of the villages cited by Swanton are defined east of the junction of the Rogue and Applegate rivers. Thus at least some of the Chastacosta tribe lived in the Rogue River valley. In December of 1826 Peter Skene Ogden wrote down the name, entered in the existing manuscript with a "S" and a "C" as: "Sastise (Castice)," referring to the westward tribe of Indians described to him by some Indians of the Klamath region. About a month later Ogden wrote down the name "Sasty" (see LaLande First Over the Siskiyous 1987, for a transcription of Ogden's journal).
warlike tribes of Washington and Oregon. Horses were early bred among them and an Indian pony came to be known to the white settlers as a 'cayuse.' " (p. 455).

Note that Swanton states that the word "Cayuse" was used by white settlers to describe the Indian pony bred by the Cayuse tribe. Members of the Cayuse tribe are known to have come south with Hudson's Bay trappers into California as early as 1832 (see John Work Fur Brigade to the Bonaventura...1832-1833...Alice Bay Maloney, editor., 1945, p. 73). Thus it is tempting to suggest that the word "Siskiyous" may have in some way some direct element of "Cayuse" in its origins, either for the tribe or for the pony (see also Gibbs 1863, for Siskiyous= a bobtailed race horse). 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS692].


Note that there are at least two other sources which indirectly suggest "Shasta" is derived from an Indian word for "three" (see Gibbs "Comparative Vocabulary of Lutami (Clamet)-from Hale, Palaik-from Hale, and Pitt River-recorded by Gibbs, Washington, D.C., 1861-62;" and Sisson "Local Indian Names around Mount Shasta, Cal.,," in Gatschet manuscript Notebooks, 1884). 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1135].

[MS1154]. Walthall, Madison. Report of Mr. Vallejo, on the Derivation and Definition of the Names of the Several Counties of California (Appendix Y). In: Journal of the Senate of the State of California at Their First Session Begun and Held at Puebla de San Jose, on the Fifteenth Day of December, 1849. San Jose, Calif.: J. Winchester, State Printer, 1850. p. 535. Appendix Y dated April 16, 1850. Contains the California State Legislature's official information on the derivation of the name "Shasta:" "Shasta.--Is the name of the tribe residing at the foot of the height or mountain, remarkable as being considerably higher than the range, and encircling the source of the Sacramento river. Upon the subdivision of the State into Counties, Mr. Walthall, member of Assembly of the delegation from the district of Sacramento, proposed this name for the County, and it was adopted by the Legislature. The mountain has likewise been so named" (emphasis added: p. 535).

Note that there does not seem to be any use of the specific spelling "Shasta" prior to 1850, not even for the mountain. The above statement "The mountain has likewise been so named" may indicate not that the mountain was always named "Shasta" but that it is now , by virtue of the Legislature, named "Shasta." Prior to 1850 there is not a single printed source of the spelling "Shasta," though the tribe and two different mountains were frequently spelled from as early as 1826 to as late as 1850 and even later as: "ShastŽ, "Shasty," "Sasty," etc.

A Mr. Madison Walthall, who was the first Tax Collector of the Port of Stockton (see Daily Evening Herald., Apr. 29, 1873 for an obituary of his son) is assumed to be the same Mr. Walthall referred to as the member of the Assembly. Why Mr. Walthall chose the unusual spelling of "Shasta" is not known.

Two earlier reports contained in this volume give additional background on the name "Shasta" and on the name selection process:

"Appendix E. Report of Mr. de la Guerra on Counties and County Boundaries." Jan. 4, 1850 (pp. 411-417?) states: "The committee on Counties and County Boundaries, having to the best of their ability performed the task assigned to them, or rather that portion of the task which relates to the subdivision of the State into Counties, beg leave respectfully to submit herewith the result of their labor, for consideration of the Senate. The time, occupied by your committee in this work, has been unavoidably protracted until now, on account of the circumstances and difficulties by which they were surrounded; such as the total absence of maps sufficiently correct to enable your committee to determine, with requisite accuracy, the courses of rivers, mountains, and other natural landmarks [emphasis added], which they have been compelled to adopt, in most cases, as the limits of the different Counties" (p. 411). The report names the County of "Reading" (p. 417) which was two weeks later changed to "Shasta."

"Appendix F. Additional Report of Mr. de la Guerra on County Boundaries," Jan. 18, 1850 (pp. 420-420) states that: "The names of several Counties as given in the former Report of your committee, have been changed at the insistence of the several Joint Delegations, thus:-- ...Reading has been changed to Shasta." 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS1154].
adopted, spelling and pronouncing it Chasta, time having made the further change of substituting the soft 'sh' for the hard 'ch'" (p. 30).

Note that Wells's explanation has two aspects; the Russian origin, and the Americanization of the pronunciation. The Russian name theory presented by Wells does not take into account that there are no documented instances of any close spellings of the name "Tchastal" earlier than 1848, when Fremont spelled it as "Shastl" in his 1848 Geographical Memoir and "Tsashtl" on the accompanying 1848 map. Perhaps the closest spelling is that of Titian Peale in 1841, who used the name "Tchasty." But the ".I" ending of the Russian word does not seem to be an early spelling, and is in any case not well suggested by the very earliest spellings of "Sastice," "Castice," and "Sasty" spellings of Peter Skene Ogden in 1826-1827.

Note also that as for the "-a" Americanized suffix pronunciation mentioned by Wells, there is no clear evidence to support the theory. It is true that the American Philip Leget Edwards in 1837 used the name "Chasta," and Wells was the first person to print extracts from Edwards 1837 diary. Thus Wells was understandably in a position to assume that the Americans adopted the "-a" spelling (pp. 45-49). But Edward's spelling was unique. In 1842, Edwards published a book which used the "Shasty" spelling, thus perhaps making his 1837 "Chasta" an anomalous spelling. As an aside, note that unlike later reprints of the Edwards diary, Wells's version retained, with one exception, the place-name spellings, i.e., "Chasta," as found in the original 1837 Edwards manuscript now in the California State Library. Later published editions of the Edwards diary changed the spelling of "Chasta" to "Shasta."

The "-a" ending of "Chasta" in the Edwards 1837 diary, and the "-e" ending of Samuel Parker's 1838 "Chast" are both unusual, because as far as can be determined, the Americanization of the pronunciation, i.e., the spelling of "Shasta" or "Chasta" with an "-a" ending, apparently does not appear anywhere again until February 18, 1850, when the California State Legislature adopted the spelling "Shasta" as an official County name. This poses an interesting probability that the County of "Shasta" adopted the "-a" ending even before the "-e" ending appears as a name for the mountain on any map or book. During the 1830s and 1840s there are scores of works which mention two different mountains as "Shasty," "Sasty" "ShastŽ," "Chasty" "Tschastes," "Tshasty," and so on. and California newspapers as late as 1849 still using the ".y" or ".e" ending for "Sasty." But never an ending with an "-a." Not until after the legislature adopted the "-a" ending in 1850, and it is not really clear why they did so, does the new modern spelling appear.

Wells also offers a story of the name "Siskiyou": "Siskiyou County was named after the high range of mountains that rolls the waters of its northern slope into the Rogue River, and those that fall on the south into the rushing Klamath. On the summit of the mountain, just over the divide, in Oregon, there is a beautiful level spot, watered by cool springs, that overlooks the country for miles around. It was here that the powerful Shasta, Rogue River and Klamath tribes used to congregate, smoke their pipes, indulge in dancing and games, and exchange those friendly offices so usual with neighboring tribes living at peace with each other. This place they called Sis-ki-you, or the council ground, the name now borne by one of the largest counties in California" (p. 29).

Note that in 1889 Wells published the History of Oregon, in which he presents a different, though not necessarily incompatible, account of the name Siskiyou: "Siskiyou," he says, is derived from an old white bob-tailed horse stolen from Jean-Baptiste Pairroult (see Wells 1889).

Wells's book has long been the standard history of Siskiyou County, and contains a wealth of clues and facts about the county. Wells reprints, for example, E. Steele's account of visiting "Battle's Milk Ranch," where nearby owner Battle has found a buried hollowed out sixteen-foot-long cedar log, perhaps from the McLeod's 1830 expedition (p. 54). The book contains several pages on the history of Mount Shasta and Black Butte (pp. 30-40) including material on the legends of Mount Shasta (pp. 30-31, p. 51). The book also contains a poem about Mount Shasta by John R. Ridge (p. x); a drawing of Berryvale with Black Butte and Mt. Shasta in the distance (p. 208b); other drawings with Mount Shasta in the distance (p. 32c; p. 36c. p. 180a; p. 184c, p. 185c); p. 188c shows Soda Springs, p. 208e) and biographical material about Joaquin Miller (p. 119, 165) and John Muir (p. 35). Poem 'Mount Shasta' by John R. Ridge appears on p. x. See also Ridge 'Mount Shasta' [poem] in this bibliography. 14. The Name 'Shasta'. [MS29].
confusion about the name of the mountain as "Shaste or Pitt."). Note that several years after the expedition, Wilkes, using the manuscript maps and journals of his men, issued the first printed maps ever to apply the name "Mt. Shasty" in any spelling variation, to present Mt. Shasta. Before the 1841 overland expedition, "Mt. Shasta" was the name of present Mt. McLoughlin. Part of the historical interest in the Wilkes expedition concerns answering the question of how this mis-naming took place.

Note that Wilkes's narrative contains several different uses of the name "Shaste," and reading the narratives is often confusing. The first use of the name "Shaste" is applied to the Rogue River Valley, and Wilkes's published maps also depicted the present Rogue River the "Shaste" River. He also uses the name "Shaste" for present Mt. Shasta and uses the plural form of the "Shaste Range" for the mountainous region south of present Mt. Shasta. Wilkes also uses the term "Shaste mountains" in his letters of route instructions, published in the appendix of Vol. 5, for what could have been meant for the Siskiyous mountains. And he uses the name "Shaste" in one letter for what he understood to be the last mountain in Oregon. All these various uses of the name "Shaste" underscore the potential for the mis-naming of the present Mt. Shasta.

In the Narratives Wilkes places a list of the members of the Emmons overland group: "Lieutenant Emmons, Passed Midshipman Eld, Passed Midshipman Colvocressis, Assistant-Surgeon Whittle, Seaman Doughty, Seaman Sutton, Seaman Waltham, Seaman Merzer, Sergeant Stearns, Corporal Hughes, Private Marsh, Private Smith, T.R. Peale-Naturalist, W. Rich-Botanist, J.D. Dana-Geologist, A.T. Agate-Artist, J.D. Brackenridge-Assistant Botanist, Babtist Guardippiti-Guide, Tibatts, Black, Warfields, Wood, Molair, Inass. Those who joined the party for a safe escort, were Mr. Walker and Family, consisting of his wife, sister, three sons, and two daughters; Burrows, wife, and child; Nichols, with Warfields' wife and child. The whole party numbered thirty-nine, with seventy six animals, forty-four of which were private property" (p. 131).

Note that Wilkes's narrative seems to read as if Wilkes himself was on the overland journey; he was not, and he borrowed heavily from the overland journals of the expedition's personnel while writing his narrative.

The Vol. 5 narrative account of the Mt. Shasta region as compiled by Wilkes from the expedition journals is fascinating reading, and is full of details of the Indians, the weather, and the geography. Wilkes wrote: "On the 22d, they began their route across the Umpqua Mountains....They camped on the plain of the Shaste country, which is divided by the mountains which they had passed, from the Umpqua Valley....On the 24th....They had now reached the country of the Klamet Indians, better known as the Rogues or Rascals....On the 26th, they passed along the banks of the Rogues' river....which brought them to Turner's encampment, where his party was attacked, and most of them murdered....On the 27th they proceeded along the bank of the river....On the 28th, they advanced to the foot of the Boundary Range,....and in the distance was a singular isolated rock...on the parallel of 42 N;...and as soon as the party came in sight of it a dense column of smoke arose, which was thought to be a signal made by the Klamet Indians, to the Shaste tribe, of the approach of our party....On the 29th, they set out to ascend the Boundary Range, which separate Mexico from the United States...As they ascended, they every moment expected to be attacked....The man Tibbats was one of a party of fifteen, which was defeated here by the Indians, some three years before." (p. 231-6).

Note that the reference to 'Tibbats' and fifteen men being attacked some three years earlier, seems to be a reference to the 1837 cattle drive of the Americans Ewing Young and Philip Leget Edwards, of which Tibbetts (Tibbatts/Tibbats') was a participant. This is an important reference, for it corroborates the interpretation of the 1837 Edwards cattle drive diary that Edwards thought the "Chasta" Valley was one and the same as present-day Shasta Valley and that possibly it was Tibbetts who while traveling with the Wilkes-Emmons overland expedition in 1841 helped convinced Emmons to name the wrong mountain as Mt. Shasta (see Edwards "Diary of a Cattle Drive..." in Watson 1932).

Wilkes continues; "At the summit of this range, they got their first view of the Klamet Valley....Mount Shaste, a high snowy peak, of a sugar loaf form, which rose through the distant haze, bore southward, forty-five miles distant...concluded to remain stationary on the 30th....On the 1st of October...the atmosphere again so smoky as to shut out the Shaste Peak from view....On the 2nd, they travelled all day over a rolling prairie...recognized the mountain sheep....at there camp they were visited by a party of Shaste Indians, who were allowed to enter it, and for some time there was a brisk trade for their bows and arrows....They obtained an exhibition of the archery of the Indians....On the third...they entered the forest on the slopes of the Shaste Range....The Shaste Peak is a magnificent sight, rising as it does to a lofty height, its steep sides emerging from the mists which envelope its base, and seem to throw it off to an immense distance....On the 4th, they had fairly entered into the district of pines....They encamped on Destruction river, which runs from this mountain range toward the south....Near the encampment, in a northwest direction, was a mountain ridge shooting up in sharp conical points and needle shaped peaks, having a precipitous front....they reached a small valley bordering on the Destruction river, where they found a chalybeate spring. The water oozes out from the rocks, bubbling up freely, and is highly charged with carbonic acid gas....They continued to follow Destruction river until the 9th, when it was joined by a stream from the northward and eastward....On the 10th they made an early start, and left the mountains" (pp. 230-242).
Wilkes's 1844 Narrative and 1844 Atlas contained maps which were the first printed maps ever to assign the name of Mt. Shasta, in any spelling, to present-day Mt. Shasta. How or why Wilkes put the name of "Mt. Shasty" to present-day Mt. Shasta stems directly from the expedition manuscript journals and manuscript maps of Emmons, Eld, Dana, Brackenridge, and others, all of whom had adopted the name "Shasty" in various spellings, for present Mt. Shasta. Had Wilkes not read these journals, Wilkes might have left Mt. Shasta as the name for present-day Mt. McLoughlin, according to the conventions of the time.

Note that in a letter to another group of explorers led by Captain Ringgold, Wilkes instructs that they should go north from Sutter fort to meet the southward-bound Emmons group. This letter, published as an appendix to Vol. 5, states: "examine the Sacramento and its branches. This you will do by running to its head waters, or as far as it is practicable to pursue the river with a boat, and then bring the survey down from the extreme point arrived at, where your latitude and longitude must be carefully determined. This is believed will be on the head waters, called on the map 'Pitt River.' From this position and others you will get a view of the different mountains, particularly the Shaste Peak, the most southern one in the Territory of Oregon" (pp. 520-521). The map to which Wilkes refers was undoubtedly the 1838 Washington Hood map; at least one copy of this map was in Wilkes's possession, for Wilkes made notes directly onto one copy of the Hood map and sent that map along with a letter dated Port of San Francisco, Oct. 31, 1841, to his superiors shortly after leaving California (see National Archives Publication No. 62-2). Thus Wilkes probably thought that Shaste Peak was the mountain in Oregon which could be seen from high up the Pitt River, and he did not realize that present Mt. Shasta was another mountain closer to Ringgold's route.

Wilkes sent two other letters, also reproduced in the appendix to Vol. 5, dated June 15, and Sept 1, 1841, containing overland route instructions to Emmons. The first letter indicates that in 1841 Wilkes considered the Shaste Mountains to be one and the same as today's Siskiyous. Wilkes says: "The route to be pursued by the party, is up the Willamette Valley in a southerly direction, crossing the Umpqua River and mountains, thence south and west of the Shaste Mountains to latitude 42 N." (p. 517). Note that the actual letter of instructions, now in the collection of Yale University's Beinecke Library, contains an unpublished portion which continues the instructions and says "Thence East to Clamet Lake and as far as the head of Pitt River, thence North to 45¡ Lat and __ by the foot of Mt. Hood into the Willamette settlement...."

Volume 5 also contains the first picture of Mt. Shasta ever published (facing p. 241). The 1844 first edition picture, an engraving made from a nearly identical sepia watercolor by the expedition artist Alfred Agate, has the caption of "Shasty Peak." Subsequent editions of 1845 and later label the picture as "Shaste Peak."

Volume 5, and the Atlas, contain the first published maps ever to show the name of Mt. Shasta ("Shaste Peak"), in any spelling, applied to present-day Mt. Shasta. Previously the name of "Mt. Sastise (Mt. Castise)" had been used by Peter Skene Ogden in 1827 as a name for present-day Mt. McLoughlin (see LaLande 1987). Many maps published between 1830 and 1845 show the name of "Mt. Shasty" for present-day Mt. McLoughlin or for other mountains further north. No published map prior to 1844 uses the name "Mt. Shasty" for present Mt. Shasta. Instead, pre-1844, and many post-1844, maps used variously the names of Mt. Simpson, Pit Mountain, and Mt. Jackson, for present-day Mt. Shasta.

Note that in 1858 Wilkes revised his 1844 map of the Oregon Territory and removed the river name "Shaste" from the river and changed the name to the "Rogue." His 1844 map depicted the Shaste river in Oregon and the Shaste Peak in California. By changing the map in 1858, Wilkes had perhaps become victim of his own mistake, for by 1858 it was far too late to go back and restore the name Shaste to its perhaps rightful place as the name of both present Mt. McLoughlin and present Rogue River. In effect, Wilkes had to rename the river, and not the mountain. Whether Wilkes was aware of his original mis-naming of Mt. Shaste is not known, but there are indications he was later concerned with some aspects of the problem (see Shiveley Letter to Charles Wilkes 1849).