

[ CHAPTER FIFTEEN ]

THE FIFTH YEAR OF  
THE OREGON MISSION  
1840-1841

**D**ifficulties and discouragements multiplied for the Whitmans during their fifth year's residence at Waiilatpu. Many of the personality conflicts and differences of opinion regarding mission policies, which had disturbed the life of the Oregon Mission during the previous two years, continued. Now a new danger arose. Some of the natives, both Cayuses and Nez Perces, no longer enchanted by having missionaries in their midst, began to make unreasonable demands on their benefactors and even to threaten their lives. Like the low thunder of an approaching storm, these were the warnings of more serious trouble to come.

In response to the repeated pleas for additional workers made by both Whitman and Spalding, including their fantastic request for 220 made in their letter of April 21, 1838, the American Board commissioned two couples for the Oregon Mission in 1840, the Rev. and Mrs. John Davis Paris and Mr. and Mrs. William H. Rice. They sailed from New York in November of that year. Greene in his letter of November 4, 1840, to Whitman suggested that Paris be assigned to Waiilatpu, "as a preacher is so much needed at your station."<sup>1</sup> However, the two couples never arrived in Oregon. When E. O. Hall returned with his family to Honolulu in the fall of 1840, he gave such a discouraging account of the sad state of affairs in the Oregon Mission that when the reenforcement reached the Islands in May 1841, they were detained there.

The failure of the two couples to continue their voyage to Oregon was called by Whitman "a great evil to this mission." In his letter of November 11, 1841, to Greene, Whitman said: "Our situation called only the more imperiously for them to come on... We are in no way unprepared for a reenforcement as we have no secret burnings among us... Nothing could have been more important than for them to come on." No doubt Smith who, as will be mentioned later, arrived in the Islands in the spring of 1841 confirmed Hall's pessimistic report. No further effort was made by the Board to reenforce its Oregon Mission, to Whitman's intense disappointment.

### CRITICAL LETTERS AGAINST SPALDING

Several letters critical of Spalding were sent to the American Board in 1840 by Smith, Gray, Rogers, and Hall which had a direct bearing upon the reasons why Whitman went East in the fall of 1842. As one reviews the sequence of events which called forth the letters of criticism, it is well to remember that Spalding never wrote a single letter of complaint against any of his associates until after the Mission meeting of June 1841, when he learned for the first time of the letters which had been sent to Greene about him. Spalding then wrote his defense, but he was handicapped in not knowing exactly the nature of the charges which had been made against him. One must read Spalding's diary to get his side of the controversy.

The sequence of these unhappy events for 1840 began in January when Whitman was called to Lapwai to consult with Spalding, Gray, Hall, and Rogers about the printing of a Nez Perce school book.<sup>2</sup> On January 29, Spalding wrote in his diary: "Very unpleasant & unprofitable talk last night between Messrs. Gray, Whitman, Rogers & Hall on one side & myself on the other." Smith happened to be in Kamiah at the time or he would surely have been among Spalding's critics. According to Spalding, the charges against him were "unfounded." Some of the criticisms were petty. The most serious charge focused on his attempts to settle the Indians. "What the brethren heard was true," he wrote, "& a doctrine which I have always preached, but so far from being a conspiracy against the Mission, I consider it the life of the Mission. I will meet them on this subject before a reasonable world. God in mercy give me grace & wisdom to do my duty regardless of all slanders that grow out of jealousy."

Although Whitman was present at this time, there is no evidence that he joined with the other three men in criticizing Spalding's endeavors to settle the Indians. He and Spalding thought alike on that subject. Possibly Whitman brought up some personal matters. The confrontation made Spalding very unhappy. He felt that he was standing alone.

#### GRAY RECOMMENDS SPALDING'S DISMISSAL

On March 5, 1840, the Grays left Lapwai for Kamiah where they spent about a week with the Smiths. Gray and Smith had not been on speaking terms at times when crossing the country in 1838; now, however, they became very chummy as they shared their common grievances against Spalding. On March 20, after his return to Lapwai, Gray wrote a twelvepage letter to Greene filled with complaints against Spalding. He indirectly suggested that Spalding be recalled: "The [Prudential] committee may yet feel to recall some members of this Mission or to send an agent to enquire into the state of affairs. One or the other I would hope might be done soon." Gray said that it was hopeless to expect the members of the Mission to reach an agreement on Mission policies, and asked: "Do you advise me under such circumstances to remain longer a member of this Mission?"

On April 15, Gray wrote another twelve-page letter to Greene in which he stated: "Let Dr. Whitman and Mr. Spalding or Mr. Lee order as many hundred ploughs, etc., etc., as they please. If they are engaged in teaching the Indians the value of their souls, I am confident they would not think so much about ploughs and mill irons, etc."<sup>3</sup> Here is evidence that Gray and Smith were united in their opposition to the policy that Whitman and Spalding were following in trying to settle the Indians. A third letter from Gray to Greene, dated October 14, 1840, further criticized Spalding. Hall had joined the chorus of disapproval by writing to Greene on March 16, 1840.

#### SMITH ALSO RECOMMENDS DISMISSAL OF SPALDING

Spalding's most bitter critic was Asa B. Smith. In his lonely situation at Kamiah, Smith had ample time to brood over his misfortunes and write long letters to Greene. During 1840 he wrote seven such letters, dated February 6 and 25, August 5 and 31, September 3 and 28, and October 21.<sup>4</sup> On page after page, Smith went into details regarding what

he considered to be the mistakes of Spalding. Smith was the keenest observer of Indian customs of any of the Oregon Mission. Hence his letters contain much valuable information about the customs, traditions, language, and number of the Nez Percés. On the other hand, he was very critical of the natives, calling them avaricious and selfrighteous. In his letter of September 28, he wrote: "...no doubt is left in my mind as to their motives in desiring missionaries. The principal motive evidently is the temporal benefit which may be derived from them." In all fairness to Smith, we should remember that he and his wife were living under conditions more primitive than those of any other family in the Mission and that Sarah was a victim of a chronic illness which was gradually becoming worse. Under such conditions, it was easy for Smith to be pessimistic.

The climax of Smith's embittered feelings is to be found in his letter of October 21, 1840, when he recommended to Greene that "the mission had better be given up to the Methodists & *Mr. Spalding advised to return home*." He made the same recommendation regarding Gray: "...it would be better that *he should return home* rather than go to another field."<sup>5</sup> As will be seen, the arrival of these letters of criticism caused the Prudential Committee of the American Board to issue its drastic order of February 1842 which dismissed Spalding, Gray, and Smith, and which called for the closing of the work at Waiilatpu and Lapwai. The arrival of this order at Waiilatpu in September 1842 caused Whitman to leave on October 3 for Boston. Of this more later.

## FIRST WAGONS OVER THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

**B**efore the Oregon Trail could be opened for covered wagons from the Missouri frontier to the Columbia River, three great obstacles had to be surmounted. It had to be demonstrated that (a) women could cross the Rockies; (b) that wagons could cross the Snake River desert of what is now southern Idaho; (c) and that wagons could be taken over the Blue Mountains of what is now eastern Oregon.

The successful crossing of the Rockies by Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding in July 1836 opened the mountain gateway to Old Oregon. Whitman's stubborn insistence in taking Spalding's wagon, reduced to a cart, as far west as Fort Boise, had opened the Oregon Trail to that point. There remained until 1840 the unconquered and formidable barrier of the Blue Mountains.

Among those who crossed the plains and the Rockies in 1840 with the last caravan of the American Fur Company to go to the Rendezvous was the first non-missionary family to make the overland journey to Old Oregon. They were Joel P. Walker, his wife, a sister, three sons, and two daughters.<sup>6</sup> Also traveling with this caravan were the three independent missionary couples previously mentioned. When Walker and the missionary party arrived at Fort Hall, Walker had one wagon and the missionaries had two. Walker sold his wagon at Fort Hall to Caleb Wilkins, a mountain man, and continued his westward journey, with his family, on horseback. When they arrived at Waiilatpu, the Whitmans were away, attending the Mission meeting at Lapwai. This is probably the reason why no reference to the Joel P. Walker family has been found in the extant Whitman correspondence. After spending the winter of 1840–41 in the Willamette Valley, the Walkers migrated to California in the fall of 1841<sup>7</sup> where Joel was later to play a prominent role in political affairs.<sup>8</sup>

As has been mentioned, the three missionary couples met Robert Newell at the Rendezvous who traveled with them to Fort Hall. There Newell traded some fresh horses for the two wagons which the missionaries had managed to take that far west. Newell had with him his Indian wife and their three sons, the youngest of whom had been born on April 17, 1840, and who was named Marcus Whitman.<sup>9</sup> Newell sold one of the wagons he had obtained from the missionaries to Francis Ermatinger, who was then in charge of Fort Hall. Ermatinger, wishing to have this wagon taken to the Columbia River, hired another mountain man, William Craig, as the driver. Craig and Newell had married Nez Perce women who were sisters. With Craig was his friend, John Larison (or Larrison).

Still another mountain man to join the party was Joe Meek, who had met the Whitmans and the Spaldings at the 1836 Rendezvous. Meek's first wife, a Nez Perce woman, had deserted him after giving birth to a daughter whom he had named Helen Mar after Lady Helen Mar, the heroine of Jane Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs*. Meek took another Nez Perce woman for his wife. Realizing that their trapping days were over, these five mountain men—Newell, Wilkins, Craig, Larison, and Meek—headed for the Oregon country west of the Blue Mountains to begin life anew. The men, with their three wagons, left Fort Hall on September 27.<sup>10</sup> They were several weeks behind the Joel P. Walker

party, who had pushed on ahead. "In a few days," wrote Newell in his diary, "we began to realize the difficult task before us, and found that the continual crashing of the sage under our wagons, which was in many places higher than the mules back, was no joke and seeing our animals begin to fail, we began to light up—and finally threw away our wagon beds and were quite sorry we had undertaken the job."<sup>11</sup> The men, however, persisted and succeeded in taking the bare chassis of the three wagons over the Blue Mountains. The party arrived at Waiilatpu sometime during the first week of November. Thus the Oregon Trail had been fully traversed by wheeled vehicles, although three years had to pass before other wagons were taken over the same mountains.

Regarding the reception extended to him and his associates at Waiilatpu, Newell wrote: "In a rather rough and reduced state we arrived at Dr. Whitman's station in the Walla Walla Valley, where we were met by that hospitable man and kindly made welcome and feasted accordingly. On hearing me regret that I had undertaken to bring the wagons, the Doctor said: 'O you will never regret it. You have broken the ice, and when others see that wagons have passed, they too will pass, and in a few years the valley will be full of people.'"

In all probability one of the wagons was left at Waiilatpu, as Whitman in a letter to Walker dated May 8, 1841, made reference to a "wagon or cart" being at his mission. This is the first discovered mention of a wheeled vehicle being at Waiilatpu. The inventory of the property at Waiilatpu at the time of the massacre listed four wagons. Evidently Whitman had been able to obtain wagons from the immigrants who streamed by his station in great numbers in 1843 and following years. One of the wagons brought by the Newell party was evidently left at Fort Walla Walla and the third was taken down the Columbia River to the Willamette Valley.

While at Waiilatpu, Meek persuaded the Whitmans to take his two-year-old daughter, Helen Mar, into their home to be reared and educated. Narcissa later in a letter to her sister Jane wrote that the child's body was dirty and covered with lice, and that she was half-starved. She found the child fretful, stubborn, and difficult to control [Letter 105]. Narcissa had kept the clothes that Alice Clarissa had worn and now used them. To a certain degree, the little half-breed girl filled the void in the hearts of Marcus and Narcissa, who could never forget their own little

girl who had been drowned a little more than a year before.

Craig and Larison did not go with the other three mountain men to the Willamette Valley but instead went to Lapwai, probably because their wives hailed from that area. Craig's wife was a daughter of the principal chief of Lapwai Valley, Thunder Strikes or Thunder Eyes, whom Spalding had renamed James. On November 20, 1840, Spalding noted in his diary that the two men intended to spend the winter at Lapwai and added: "I have seen enough of Mountain men." Craig later settled on Lapwai Creek about eight miles up from the Clearwater mission. He is usually given the credit of being the first non-missionary settler in what is now Idaho. He was unsympathetic towards Spalding and his work and would cause him much trouble over several years.

### FIRST TROUBLE WITH THE INDIANS

The history of the Oregon Mission of the American Board can be divided roughly into two periods. The first extended from the founding of the Mission in the fall of 1836 to the fall of 1840 when the last of the complaining letters about Spalding was sent to the American Board. These years were marred by dissensions within the Mission which resulted in the Board's drastic order of February 1842 to which reference has been made.

The second period began in the fall of 1840 with the first evidence of hostility to the missionaries on the part of the natives. There seems to be a direct relationship during these years, 1840-1847, between the steadily increasing number of Oregon immigrants and the growing restlessness of the Indians. The first Oregon immigrant family arrived in 1840; a few more came in 1841; still more in 1842; and then in 1843 the first great wagon train crawled over the Blue Mountains bringing about a thousand people. Each year after that the numbers increased, and the Indians became fearful that the white man was engulfing their land, even though none of the immigrants up to 1847 had settled in the upper Columbia River Valley.

The Whitman station, as an outpost on the Oregon Trail, became the focal point of conflict between the red man and the white; between the old life and the new which was being so suddenly thrust upon the natives. The time came when the Cayuses felt that Dr. Whitman was more interested in helping the white man than in helping them. It should be emphasized,

however, that had there been no Oregon Mission of the American Board, the changes for the natives would have been just as inevitable. The overflow of white population from the States was a terrible evil for the Oregon Indians which they could not resist. Partly because of the strategic location of the Whitman station, the Whitmans became the object of growing hostility on the part of a small band within the Cayuse nation.

### TROUBLE WITH THE NEZ PERCES AT LAPWAI

The first indication of opposition from the Indians came in October 1840, first against Spalding at Lapwai and then against Smith at Kamiah. Spalding's difficulties arose out of two causes. The first had to do with trading, as he explained in a letter to Greene dated September 22, 1840: "Most of our perplexities with the natives, I believe arise from our trading in Indian goods. Our powder measure is not as large as that at Walla Walla... We do not give as much for this thing or that thing..." Spalding was unhappy about the necessity of using ammunition, knives, and blankets as payment to the Indians for any services they might render or in payment for horses purchased, but there was no alternative.

A more serious point of friction was the fact that some of the Indians whom he was encouraging to cultivate the soil—Old Joseph and Timothy, for example—had moved from their respective localities and had begun to farm small acreages in the Lapwai Valley. The Nez Perces and the Cayuses had developed no sense of individual ownership of specific lands at the time the missionaries settled among them; however, tribal bands did claim exclusive possession of certain general areas and resented the intrusion of other members of the same tribe. Joseph and Timothy no doubt moved to Lapwai in order to be near Spalding and, perhaps, to take advantage of farming implements which he freely loaned. Old James, however, whose band claimed the valley, resented this. Smith wrote: "Old James is trying to drive away Joseph & Timothy & all who do not belong there."<sup>12</sup>

One of the tactics used by Old James to harass Spalding was to send two of the young men of his band to disrupt the school that Mrs. Spalding was teaching. According to Spalding's diary, two young painted Indians appeared at the school on October 9. Mrs. Spalding requested them to go away. "They came the nearer," wrote Spalding, "& glanced their hellish looks directly at her. She moved to another part of the room..."

They then commenced their savage talk." Eliza called her husband who in turn sent for Old James as the two young men were from his lodge. James refused to call off the men. Among those who protested the outrage was Timothy and another Nez Perce, the Eagle. Spalding was heart-sick over the incident as it portended further trouble from James.

### TROUBLE WITH THE NEZ PERCES AT KAMIAH

Four days after the disturbance at the Lapwai school, a more serious confrontation took place at Kamiah between Smith and a few dissident Nez Percés. Again ownership of the land being cultivated was the sore point. Smith wrote in his diary for October 18, 1840: "This has been a day of serious trial in respect to the Indians. We have, in the most absolute terms & in the most insolent manner, been ordered by the two principal men of this place to leave the station... They demanded pay for the land. I refused to say anything about it, telling them that the land was given a year ago & they had promised to say no more about it... They pretended that when they gave me the land, they expected that I would give them goods & food, but I had not done it &c... They then ordered me in the most absolute terms to leave on the morrow... I at length told them I would go, but could not get ready so soon. I must have time to get ready." Smith sent a faithful Indian in the dark of the night to Spalding with an urgent plea for him and Whitman to come immediately.

The willingness of Smith to leave caught his antagonists by surprise. When the Nez Perce community at Kamiah learned what had happened, the majority rallied to the defense of their missionaries. Smith does not mention names, except referring to one called Meoway (or Meiway) who boasted of the fact that sometime previous he had "tied Mr. Pambrun & made him a slave."<sup>13</sup> Perhaps Lawyer and Ellis were among those who came to Smith's defense the next day. Smith described an angry confrontation which took place in his house between the two troublemakers and some of the principal men of the tribe. "Much passion was manifested on both sides," wrote Smith to Greene on October 21, "and it seemed to me that our house was filled with demons from the bottomless pit rather than human beings."<sup>14</sup> After several hours of angry debate, the Indians left the Smith home. Sarah was terrified at what had taken place. Asa was both angry and frightened, but secretly may have welcomed the incident as giving them a valid reason for leaving the field.

Spalding received word of the disturbance on Wednesday, October 14, and at once sent a messenger to inform Whitman. Spalding left on the 15<sup>th</sup> for Kamiah taking several Indians with him, including Joseph. They made the sixty-mile trip in one day. Spalding found Smith extremely discouraged. The Indians were quiet when Spalding arrived. On October 15, he wrote in his diary: "See a proposal coming first from Mr. Walker to Doct Whitman to sell out the Mission to the Methodists. My mind is thrown into confusion." Here was a report, which turned out to be a baseless rumor, which Smith eagerly grasped as being possibly one way out of his situation. On the 17<sup>th</sup>, Spalding wrote: "The Indians confess their faults & wish Mr. S. to remain, but it seems his mind is made up & he will go." Spalding remained at Kamiah over Sunday, the 18<sup>th</sup>, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> started back to Lapwai. He had proceeded but a few miles before he met Whitman with a number of pack animals which would be needed if it were decided to evacuate the Smiths. Spalding returned to Kamiah with Whitman.

Evidently Smith had written such an alarming report of his troubles to Spalding and Whitman that, when Whitman read it, he left as soon as possible for Kamiah fully expecting that it would be necessary to bring out the Smiths. We are not told just when Whitman left Waiilatpu, possibly on October 18, which was a Sunday. The urgency of the call was such that Whitman must have traveled on Sunday if he arrived at Kamiah, 180 miles from Waiilatpu, on the 21<sup>st</sup>. On October 30, Narcissa, in a letter to her sister Harriet, wrote: "Your brother [in-law] is not at home... Think of him traveling alone [in] this cold weather. The first [day] after he left his warm home the wind blew very hard and cold—he with but two blankets, sleeping on the ground alone; and since, it has rained almost every day, and sometimes snowed a little." Although Narcissa here made two references to her husband traveling alone, she probably meant that no other white man was with him. Since Whitman took a string of pack animals with him, he would have needed some Indian assistants. No comments have been found in any of Whitman's letters regarding his travel experiences when making such long trips on horseback. Did he take a small tent with him? What about his food? Did he cook one or more hot meals each day while on the trail? On this long ride to Kamiah in stormy weather, did he have to sleep each night in wet blankets? Nothing is said of such details.

Smith was still determined to leave Kamiah when Whitman arrived. The question arose as to when. Whitman favored an immediate withdrawal and reminded Smith that he had brought pack animals for that purpose. Sarah, however, was too ill to ride horseback. She would have to be taken down the Clearwater River in a canoe and, since no canoe was available, Spalding recommended that they wait until spring. Possibly those among the Kamiah Indians who wanted to keep the Smiths in their midst deliberately refused to make a canoe available. A favorable factor in the situation was the friendly attitude of the majority of the natives who urged the Smiths to remain. Perhaps it was Whitman who suggested that one of the independent missionary couples then at Waiilatpu, the Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Clark, be sent to Kamiah to give the Smiths companionship and assistance during the coming winter. The Smiths were agreeable to this suggestion as were the Clarks, who left for Kamiah shortly after Whitman returned to his home. In one of the rare instances when Asa Smith had something good to say of others, he wrote in his letter of February 22, 1841, to Greene: "(The Clarks) have been a great comfort to us in our lonely situation."

### SHOULD THEY SELL OUT TO THE METHODISTS?

Although evidence is lacking as to the exact sequence of events which led up to Smith's proposal that the Oregon Mission of the American Board be turned over to the Methodists, it is probable that this is the story of what happened. When Smith heard of the arrival of the *Lausanne* at Fort Vancouver in June 1840 with the Methodist reinforcement of about fifty men, women, and children, he grasped at the idea of turning the American Board's work in Old Oregon over to the Methodists. They had a surplus of missionaries. Moreover, comparatively speaking, there were only a few natives in the lower Columbia country. He reasoned that the Methodists, under those circumstances, would welcome the opportunity to enlarge their field of endeavor. Indeed, he came to the point of being willing to turn over the American Board's work with or without compensation.

Possibly feeling confident that both Whitman and Spalding would object to the idea, Smith may have broached his plan in a letter to Walker, who then wrote to Whitman. On October 15, 1840, just two days after his confrontation with the two dissident Nez Percés at Kamiah, Smith

wrote to Greene suggesting that the Board's work in Oregon be turned over to the Methodists. On that same day, Whitman wrote to Greene and, after reviewing the events of the preceding months and after giving a financial report, wrote: "Mr. Walker writes that he has written you in favour of the Board withdrawing this Mission on account of so many [i.e., Methodist missionaries] coming in among & around us. I feel to say, No: Do not withdraw it. We have not done what we could, & ought to do. It could not be withdrawing the mission, so to speak; but abandoning the cause of the Indians. Rather let us be *reenforced* to enable us to act most efficiently."

As has been stated, when Spalding arrived at Kamiah on October 15 and learned of Smith's proposal, he was shocked. After Whitman arrived, the three men seriously debated the idea. Although Whitman had written to Greene on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month rejecting the proposal, he began to wonder whether this might not be a good idea when faced with Smith's despondency and determination to leave. Spalding remained unalterably opposed and said that he would remain at his station even if the American Board abandoned its work and turned it over to the Methodists. The lowest ebb tide in the history of the Oregon Mission of the American Board was reached there at Kamiah when Smith, Whitman, and Spalding debated the proposal to turn their work over to the Methodists. There is no indication that the Methodists ever knew of such a possibility.

After Spalding had returned to Lapwai, he wrote to Walker asking for an explanation of his recommendation to Whitman. Walker replied that he and Eells had no thought of selling out to the Methodists and that the Doct must have misunderstood."<sup>15</sup> Mary Walker wrote in her diary on October 28: "We are astonished and somewhat indignant to think they should think of such a thing."<sup>16</sup> The whole incident reflected Smith's despondency. He was looking for what he thought would be an honorable escape from his miserable situation.

On his return trip from Kamiah, Whitman spent the night of October 24 at Lapwai. While there he received a letter from Jason Lee which brought the news that Dr. Elijah White, who had served for three years as the physician in the Methodist Mission, had been dismissed and was to return to the States on the *Lausanne*. Lee expressed his fears that after White had arrived in the States, he would do "all he can to injure them [i.e., the Methodist Mission]." <sup>17</sup> After White returned to the

States, he was successful in obtaining from the United States Government an appointment to be the first Indian Agent to Old Oregon. He returned to Oregon in 1842.

### “SPALDING HAS A DISEASE IN HIS HEAD”

An incident occurred during Whitman's visit with Smith at Kamiah which led W. I. Marshall in his *Acquisition of Oregon* to claim that “Dr. Whitman speaking as a physician as early as September [sic] 1840, had declared that Spalding was suffering from a disease of the head which was liable to make him insane.”<sup>18</sup> This needs correction. Marshall based his opinion on a passage in Smith's letter to Greene written at Kamiah on October 21, 1840, following Spalding's departure for Lapwai but while Whitman was still there. Smith wrote: “From what I have seen & know of him [i.e., Spalding], I greatly fear that the man will become deranged should any heavy calamity befall him... The above remarks I have just read to Doct. W. & he concurs in what I have written & says moreover that *Mr. Spalding has a disease in his head* which may result in derangement especially if excited by external circumstances.”<sup>19</sup> This comment attributed to Whitman cannot be taken as a professional diagnosis. Whitman was not a co-signer of the letter. Smith's opinion regarding Spalding's mental condition should be read in the light of Smith's own emotional attitude.

Although Whitman was offended by Spalding's occasional references to the latter's broken romance with Narcissa, he never joined Smith, Gray, Rogers, and Hall in writing letters of criticism about Spalding to the Board. In fact, it appears that Whitman was unaware that such letters had been sent; in his letter of October 15, 1840, to Greene, he said: “Mr. Gray has lately informed me that letters have been sent by him & others, setting forth difficulties that have existed in this mission. It was never my intention to trouble you with them.”

### WHITMAN'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL TO ABANDON THEIR MISSION

After his return to Waiilatpu, Whitman on October 29 wrote a letter of about two thousand words to Greene in which he reported on his trip to Kamiah. He began by saying: “Last evening I arrived home from my trip to Mr. Smith's aid. I left my hired man<sup>20</sup> to make a canoe for them to come down by water in case he still finds it necessary to leave

this fall. If he does not leave this fall, he thinks he shall in the spring. Mrs. Smith is indeed very lonely. I think they both suffer much from this cause. I regret that Mr. Smith should have been so anxious to go where he is, as he so easily falls into loneliness & despondency. The Indians, it is true, are very anxious to obtain property, but I do not think we shall be in danger of violence from them.”

Regarding the proposal to sell out to the Methodists, Whitman tried to be objective by presenting both sides of the question. In favor of selling, he mentioned Walker’s supposed recommendation, the “want of harmony” within the Mission, and finally, Smith’s determination to leave. Regarding the latter possibility, Whitman wrote: “In such [an] event, Mr. Gray would leave & also Mr. Rogers and only Mr. Spalding & myself would be left in the Nez Perce language. While all this would be going on, a bad influence would be exerted, & it would not be well for Mr. S. & myself to be left alone under such circumstances.”

In arguing against selling, Whitman mentioned such facts as: “An unusual interest & attention has been given to instruction at this station this fall... More people are brought to hear instruction in this Mission than in most of the Missions of the Board... Will it not be abandoning the Indians & in that way western America to the Catholics?” Even should the Methodists be interested in taking over the work, Whitman pointed out that there was certain to be a long interval during which the new missionaries would have to learn the language. As for the missionaries of the American Board, Whitman argued: “The language is acquired; we are on the ground.” In conclusion, he wrote: “My feelings are to live & labour for this people... If you sell the Mission, you will be at liberty to send me to any field where I may be needed as Physician, but not as here to fill the place of a Minister, a thing I have [tried] in vain to avoid.”

According to a penned notation on the back of Whitman’s letter, now on file in the Board’s archives, Greene received it on October 2, 1841. On that same day a number of other letters arrived from Oregon, including three long letters from Smith filled with complaints about Spalding. Whitman’s letter and the others were laid before the members of the Prudential Committee which met in Boston in February 1842. The Board took no action about turning their work in Oregon over to the Methodists, but did order other changes.

Shortly after writing to Greene on October 29, Whitman heard from Walker, who disavowed any idea of selling out to the Methodists. Walker stated that both he and Eells were opposed to the idea. With this report, all discussions about abandoning the Mission ceased. Whitman, Spalding, Walker, and Eells were determined to carry on even if Smith, Gray, and Rogers left.

## THE FALL OF 1840

Whitman was spared trouble with the natives in the vicinity of Waiilatpu during the fall of 1840 and the following winter. In a letter to Greene dated March 28, 1841, he wrote: "The Old Chief Cut Lip died last winter, which has removed a very troublesome cause." In all probability this Cut Lip was none other than Umtippe, to whom reference has already been made. Possibly also this was the Cut Lip whom George Simpson mentioned as being in league with an interpreter at Fort Walla Walla whom Simpson called a villain.<sup>21</sup> After the death of Cut Lip, or Umtippe, Tilhoukaikt became the head chief of the Waiilatpu band and, as will be told, in turn caused Whitman much trouble.

A few weeks after the arrival of the three independent missionary couples at Waiilatpu in August 1840, Narcissa was taken ill with "inflammation of the kidneys." In her letter to her mother of October 9, she said that she "was brought very low." Whitman, in his letter to Greene of October 15, wrote: "Mrs. Whitman has been sick for nearly two months having first an attack of the kidneys, from which she is not perfectly recovered." Here is the first reference in Whitman's correspondence to Narcissa's ill health. Such references became more frequent in their later letters.

Narcissa was also afflicted with poor eyesight. As early as September 30, 1839, she mentioned this in one of her letters. On March 1, 1842, she wrote again: "My eyes are much weaker than when I left home and no wonder, I have so much use for them. I am at times obliged to use the spectacles Brother J[onas] G[alusha] so kindly furnished me." In those days, long before the development of modern ophthalmology, spectacles were little more than variations of magnifying lenses.

Marcus had his share of ill health during the fall of 1840 as he stated in his letter of March 28, 1841, to Greene: "Soon after I wrote you last fall, I became sick from overdoing in going to Mr. Smith's & from hard labour, after I came home upon the mill race & preparing

for winter. After being recovered a little, I went to Walla Walla at the call of Mr. Pambrun to see one of his men that was sick. While there the water rose very high & in returning, I fell into one of the streams by the stumbling of my horse in crossing & got very wet. Mrs. W. being with me & some Indians at the same time being there in passing [and] having a fire, I was enabled to take off my wet clothes & wrap myself in blankets & so far dry them as to come home by substituting a blanket for my coat." The exposure had its aftereffects which, as Whitman wrote, "held me to my bed for three weeks."

Fortunately, Whitman had been able to harvest his crops before being taken ill. He reported to Greene: "My crops were good having two hundred & fifty bushels of wheat, one hundred & thirty of corn, peas not known, & a good supply of potatoes<sup>i</sup> [Letter 80]. Because the faithful Hawaiian, Joseph Maki, had died on August 8, and because the Grays did not move to Waiilatpu until September, Whitman was short of help. He welcomed the assistance the three men of the second party of independent missionaries were able to give. Griffin, who had arrived at Waiilatpu with his wife early in July 1840 after making a futile attempt to establish a mission on the Snake River, was surly and uncooperative. Whitman on October 15 wrote about him: "He did not employ himself a day."

The uninvited presence of the five independent missionary couples at Waiilatpu for a short time in the fall of 1840 was an embarrassment for Whitman. "I do not know how to get along with the Free Missionaries," he wrote to Greene. "I do not wish to be a supplier for them & yet I do not see how I can refuse them some grain... It is evident they have no funds to buy of the Company. I dare not oppose them. I dare not sell to them. To give them I am not able, and I cannot let them suffer" [Letter 80]. The most helpful of these independent missionaries was Munger who was hired by Whitman because of his skill as a carpenter. Munger's work made the erection of the main mission house possible during 1840-41.

The Griffins remained at Waiilatpu until sometime after October 15, 1840, and then left for the Willamette Valley where Griffin took up farming on the Tualatin Plains.<sup>22</sup> The Grays remained at Waiilatpu while waiting for spring, when they expected to open their new station at Shimnap. When Whitman first made application for an appointment

under the American Board in 1834, he was rejected because of ill health. He then stated that he had suffered pain in his left side from time to time ever since 1830. This condition had seemingly cleared up at the time of his appointment in 1835. The old trouble seemed to have returned during the fall of 1840 and following winter. Writing to Mary Walker on January 19, 1841, Mary Gray said: "Doct. W. has been very sick this winter with his side complaint, [but] is now so as to be about some."<sup>23</sup> The Grays were able to take over some of the responsibilities at Waiilatpu which under normal conditions would have fallen on Whitman's shoulders. Mary taught the Indian school during the winter of 1840-41. Whitman described the attendance as being poor, largely because so few Indians were in the vicinity during those months [Letter 83b].

### CAYUSES FIND CHRISTIAN STANDARDS DIFFICULT

The Cayuses found the high ethical standards and the Calvinistic doctrines which the Whitmans practiced and preached difficult to accept. It should be remembered that Whitman was not an ordained minister, and had not received training in theology. He taught what he had learned as a youth in the home of relatives and friends in Massachusetts; in the church and school at Plainfield; and in his activities as a layman in the churches at Rushville and Wheeler, New York. His teachings reflected the Calvinistic theology and Puritanical background of his youth. Narcissa's early experiences were much the same as those of her husband.

Narcissa analyzed the problem they faced in a letter dated October 10, 1840, to her father. She explained that the Cayuses were unhappy because "husband tells them that none of them are Christians; that they are all of them in the broad road to destruction, and that worshipping will not save them." In other words, Whitman was telling the natives that it was not enough to observe the outward forms of Christian worship; that there had to be a change of heart. Narcissa's account continues: "They try to persuade him not to talk such bad talk to them, as they say, but talk good talk, or tell some story... Some threaten to whip him and to destroy our crops, and for a long time their cattle were turned into our potato field every night to see if they could not compel him to change his course of instruction to them." According to Narcissa, her husband was not intimidated by the threats of some of the Cayuses and, for the time being, life remained peaceful at Waiilatpu.

Students of Indian life have pointed out that primitive Indians were hedonists, responding to pleasure and pain. They were also pantheistic in their outlook, therefore not overly concerned about contradictions in Oreligious tenets.<sup>24</sup> Such a background, psychologically speaking, made it extremely difficult for the Protestant missionaries to reshape Indian thinking and conduct to make them conform to Calvinist doctrines and puritanical standards.

## THE SECOND FLOUR MILL

The biggest accomplishment made at Waiilatpu during the fall of 1840 was the digging of a millrace and the erection of a gristmill.<sup>25</sup> The millrace tapped Doan Creek, a tributary of Mill Creek, and was about one-third of a mile long and five feet deep in places. Of necessity, the ditch was dug by hand labor. In January 1839, the Nez Perces had voluntarily dug a millrace for Spalding which was longer, deeper, and wider than that at Waiilatpu, because they realized that a mill would be of great benefit to them. The Cayuses, on the other hand, were less cooperative; they refused to work on the ditch unless paid. Of this Whitman wrote: "I cannot give them much powder, as I am so near the Fort. *Tobacco I will not sell* & shirts were not to be had to any extent; so that my labor has had to be either white men or Hawaiians in general"<sup>26</sup> [Letter 80]. No doubt several of the independent missionaries assisted.

On December 7, Whitman wrote to Walker: "Mr. Gray is very busy in building the mill & seems happy. We have finished the race but we may still lower the head of it a few inches. We go for pine for the frame floor & shaft tomorrow. I will not say when it will run but I trust in a reasonable time." The millstones, two feet in diameter, had been sent to Oregon by sea by Greene to replace the first mill with its iron burrs of only four or five inches diameter. Farnham had called the first mill "a crazy thing." In all probability the first mill had been powered by a water wheel set directly in the river. The second mill had an under-shot wheel about three feet in diameter set in the millrace. A wooden drive shaft extended up through the platform to turn the stones. Later Whitman installed a small threshing machine to utilize the same power. In his letter to Greene dated March 28, 1841, Whitman wrote: "The power is most complete, ample & safe, being altogether by a race & not requiring any dam... It will grind from one to one & a half bushels in

an hour." A milldam with the resultant millpond made a larger mill possible about three years later.

### MUNGER INSANE

During the winter of 1840–41, Asahel Munger became insane. Of this Whitman wrote to Greene on March 28, 1841: "Mr. Munger, who has been with us for some time, has become a monomaniac & must be sent home with his family. He has become an unsafe man to remain about the Mission as he holds himself as the representative of the church & often has revelations. He has in mind to cut off the A.B.C.F.M. Mission from all rights to missionate [sic] among the heathen & only allows me to stay in the mission house for a time when he is to take it in some way from me. As he is not connected with any one in the country & having been employed by me & the mission, we must send him home even if it is at the expense of the Board. If he goes by land, it will not cost much, if any thing to the Board."

As Munger's condition worsened, the Whitmans were in a quandary, not knowing what to do. He had to be sent to the States, but how could that be accomplished? Robert Newell and Joe Meek had informed Whitman that the Rocky Mountain fur trade was over. There would be no more caravans of the American Fur Company to the Rendezvous, and there would be no more Rendezvous. Ermatinger of the Hudson's Bay Company, with whom Whitman had discussed his problem, said he knew of a man who was planning to make the overland journey to the Missouri frontier in the summer of 1841; he thought that this man could be hired to take the Mungers with him [Letter 87a]. Whitman grasped at this possibility and obligated the Board to cover the costs involved. Ermatinger agreed to escort the Mungers with their year-old baby to Fort Hall, where he hoped he could turn them over to this unnamed man who would escort them on to the States.

Ermatinger, with the Mungers, left for Fort Hall sometime in the spring of 1841 but, to the dismay of the Whitmans, returned with them in the following August. For some reason, Ermatinger had been unable to make contact with the man he thought was going to the States, and, therefore, had no choice but to return the Mungers to Waiilatpu. We have only our imagination to suggest the anguish Mrs. Munger must have endured with an insane husband and her baby on their long horseback

journey twice across the desert wastes along the Snake River. She left no diary or letters to tell of her difficulties and experiences. Narcissa later wrote that Munger was rational enough to be glad to return to Waiilatpu, but “his poor wife did it very reluctantly” [Letter 104].

Somewhere along the way, either at Fort Hall or possibly at the recently established Fort Bridger, Ermatinger met his old friend, Jim Bridger. Bridger persuaded Ermatinger to take with him his five-year-old half-breed daughter, Mary Ann, to Waiilatpu for the Whitmans to rear and educate. Perhaps Bridger had heard of the Whitmans taking Helen Mar Meek into their home. Narcissa never had an opportunity to object to this new responsibility so suddenly thrust upon her, but she seemed to have accepted it in good spirit. Mary Ann was about a year older than Helen Mar. In a letter to her sister Jane, Narcissa wrote: “Mary Ann is of a mild disposition and easily governed and makes but little trouble” [Letter 105]. Indeed with two little half-breed girls in her home, Narcissa found some compensation for the loss she still felt because of the death of Alice Clarissa. “The Lord has taken our own dear child away,” she wrote to Jane, “so that we may care for the poor outcasts of the country and suffering children.”

The return of the Mungers to Waiilatpu made the Whitmans realize that the Oregon Trail leading east of Waiilatpu was now almost exclusively a one-way road. Traffic was westbound except for a few venture-some men who dared to go through hostile Indian country with little or no protection. Americans in Old Oregon were marooned except for the long and more expensive voyage around Cape Horn.

Sometime during the first part of September 1841, the two independent missionary couples, the Alvin Smiths and the Littlejohns, left for the Willamette Valley. They took the Munger family with them and turned them over to the care of Jason Lee. During the week before Christmas, the deranged Munger committed suicide. Of this Narcissa wrote: “He—after driving two nails in his left hand—drew out a bed of hot coals and burnt it to a crisp, and died four days later” [Letter 105]. In a letter to Mary Walker dated January 24, 1842, Narcissa commented: “What a mercy that we have been spared such a scene as that must have been.” As will be noted later, the Littlejohns returned to Waiilatpu in the fall of 1843 when Mr. Littlejohn entered Whitman’s employ.<sup>27</sup>

## SPRING 1841

On January 11, 1841, fire destroyed the Eells home at Tshimakain at a time when the thermometer stood at  $8\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  below zero. For several weeks, the Eellses had to live with the Walkers. Early in March, Walker traveled to Waiilatpu where he was able to persuade Gray to return with him and assist in the erection of a new cabin for the Eellses. Gray went reluctantly, as he was eager to begin work at his proposed new station at Shimnap. He remained at Tshimakain for about a month.

In spite of the action taken at the 1840 Annual Meeting approving Gray's move, the sentiment within the Mission had by the spring of 1841 gradually reversed itself. Whitman explained to Greene in his letter of March 28, 1841, that the Mission would be overextending itself to open another station. Moreover, if Gray moved to Shimnap, he would be working in a different language and, of all the members of the Mission, he was the slowest in mastering an Indian tongue. Whitman argued that all of the cultivation should be done at Waiilatpu and that even the blacksmith shop, the printing press, and the mills should be centered there. He then could supply the material needs of the other stations, thus giving the ministers more time for their specialized duties. There is evidence that by the late spring of 1841, Gray had come to realize that it would be unwise for him to move to Shimnap. Final action by the Mission, however, was delayed until the Annual Meeting to be held the following May.

### NARCISSA SEEKS FORGIVENESS

When Walker left for Tshimakain with Gray in March 1841, he carried a letter from Narcissa to Mary. It seems that Narcissa had been going through a period of intensive self-examination. "For two or three days," she wrote, "my distress was very great." Moved by a deep feeling of self-humiliation, she poured out her confession. No one ever condemned her as strongly as she in this letter condemned herself. "Perhaps never in my whole life," she wrote, "have I been led to see so distinctly the hidden iniquity & secret evils of my heart. Of all persons, I see myself as the most unfit for the place I occupy on heathen ground. I wonder that I was ever permitted to come... I see now as I *never* have before wherein I have been a grief to his [God's] children by indulging in unholy passions & exhibiting so little of the meek, lowly & quiet spirit of our blessed Saviour. I have been blind to my own faults & have

not known what manner of spirit I was of. Proud & self confident have I been. I do not wonder that brother Spalding, if he saw this trait in my character, felt that he could not come into this field if I did. Neither is it strange that the other members of the Mission should feel that they could not live with us" [Letter 85].

After a full and frank confession, Narcissa begged the forgiveness of the Walkers and the Eellses. Mary made no comment in her diary on her reactions when she read the letter, but a few days after Gray had started back to Waiilatpu, she added this note to her diary: "Would give much to know how & what to do & whether it is I more than others who err. I know that I am a wicked wretch & fear my associates are no better."<sup>28</sup> The mutual exchange of confessions and the willingness to forgive did much to establish the good relationship which thereafter existed between the Whitmans and their associates in Tshimakain.

### AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The introduction of agriculture among the Cayuses brought problems. The growing crops had to be protected from grazing animals. This meant that the fields and gardens had to be fenced or constantly guarded. The Indians would have to settle down in farming communities, abandoning their age-old customs of wandering from place to place in search of food. Another problem which arose among the natives grew out of an increasing appreciation of proprietary rights to the land that was being cultivated. In his letter to Greene of October 29, 1840, Whitman wrote: "I do not think the Indians can be collected together as to make a settlement in any one place on account of difficulties that will arise among themselves." The reasons for this discouraging view were the failure of the Indians to build fences and the conflicting claims of pretended owners to the plots being cultivated.

When the time came for planting in the spring of 1841, Whitman became more encouraged as he found the Indians clamoring for plows. In 1838 Whitman had written to his brother Augustus asking for fifty plows and three hundred hoes. Augustus was authorized to draw upon some of Dr. Whitman's personal funds to the extent of \$200.00 to pay for such items. This request stirred the people of Rushville to send twenty-five plows, for on May 24, 1841, Marcus wrote to his brother to acknowledge the arrival of the plows at Fort Vancouver.<sup>29</sup> He also stated

that the Board had sent ten. "The Indians are not backward in using them," he wrote. "I help them make collars & harness of good quality & they have plenty of horses" [Letter 89]. The harness had to be made of the hides of such animals as deer, buffalo, and horses, laboriously sewed by hand with awls.

### THE SMITHS AND ROGERS LEAVE THE MISSION

After the alarming confrontation with the two belligerent Nez Percés at Kamiah in the fall of 1840, Smith determined to leave the field as soon as possible. Harvey Clark, who with his wife had spent the winter of 1840–41 with the Smiths, told Whitman that Smith had given up all further study of the Nez Perce language and was instead "taking up a course of study in order to prepare himself for preaching in the States" [Letter 86]. The Clarks left Kamiah in early March and returned to Waiilatpu. Smith with his wife, still an invalid, made preparations to follow. He notified Spalding that he would leave Kamiah on April 12.

In the meantime, Eliza Spalding had been taken ill. Spalding wrote in his diary on March 25, 1841: "Last evening my dear wife was attacked with a severe hemorrhage, which soon reduced her to almost a corpse." Henry did what he could to stop the flow of blood and sent an urgent message to Dr. Whitman asking for advice. Eliza's weakness continued through the first part of April. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of that month, Spalding wrote again: "My dear wife has considerable fever & appears worse." As with job of old, his troubles multiplied as the following diary entries indicate: "[April] 16. Little Henry quite sick last night... 17. Mr. Rogers very sick last night, up with him till late." With three sick people on his hands, Spalding sent an urgent message to Whitman to come at once.

Whitman arrived at Lapwai on Wednesday, April 21, shortly after Asa and Sarah Smith had landed from the canoe which had brought them down the river from Kamiah. Spalding noted in his diary for that day: "Mrs. S. is not able to sit up much; but I am fully persuaded that this is not the principle reason of Mr. Smith's leaving the Mission. He says he will go home in disgrace before he will remain longer in the Indian country. He considers the Indian race doomed to destruction." Smith's letter to Greene, written from Fort Walla Walla on April 29, gives a pathetic picture of his wife's illness and of the intolerable conditions under which they had lived at Kamiah. When the Smith went down

the Columbia River, Sarah was still unable to walk; when portages had to be made, she had to be carried in a hammock slung from a pole carried by two Indians.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Spalding was probably correct when he wrote that more than the illness of Mrs. Smith was involved in her husband's determination to leave. Even if Sarah had enjoyed robust health, Asa would surely have left about that time since he had become thoroughly disillusioned regarding the prospect of doing anything worthwhile as a missionary among the Nez Percés.

Rogers, sick and likewise discouraged, listened to what Smith had to say to Whitman and Spalding, and confessed that he felt much the same. As early as February 27, 1841, Rogers had written to Greene about his intention to leave the Mission. He then stated: "I will simply say that Mr. Spalding is felt by me to be the principal cause of my course."<sup>31</sup>

Not wishing to see the Smiths make the balance of the river trip to Fort Walla Walla alone, and also realizing that Rogers was not in condition to ride overland to Waiilatpu, Whitman decided to accompany the three down the river in a canoe. The four left Lapwai on April 22 the Smiths in one canoe with one or more Indian boatmen, Whitman and Rogers in another. Gray, with a pack train carrying Smith's belongings and with Whitman's horses, went overland. After a brief stay at Fort Walla Walla, where the Clarks joined them, the two couples continued their travels down the river. They arrived at Fort Vancouver on May 17. There Mrs. Smith came under the care of the Company's physician, Dr. Forbes Barclay. In none of the letters of Whitman or Smith do we find any mention that Dr. Whitman was ever consulted regarding Mrs. Smith's affliction. Since Asa had studied some medicine before leaving for Old Oregon, it may be that he felt himself as well qualified to prescribe for his wife as Dr. Whitman. The Clarks settled in the Willamette Valley where he became active in church and educational work.<sup>32</sup>

The Smiths were obliged to tarry at Fort Vancouver until the latter part of December before being able to get passage on a ship bound for Honolulu. While waiting in the Islands for a ship to take them to the States, Sarah's health so improved that they decided to remain for a time. Asa accepted an assignment under the Hawaiian Mission of the American Board to Waialua on the island of Oahu. After being in the Islands for three years, the Smiths sailed from Honolulu on October 15, 1845, on a ship destined around the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>33</sup>

Asa Smith's greatest contribution to the Nez Perce work during his two and a half years with the Oregon Mission was along linguistic lines. At the time he left Kamiah, Smith had a greater knowledge of the Nez Perce language than any of his colleagues. He had compiled both a dictionary and a grammar, copies of which are now in the archives of the American Board in Boston.<sup>34</sup>

### CORNELIUS ROGERS AND MARIA PAMBRUN BECOME ENGAGED

An unexpected development took place following the return of Rogers to Waiilatpu: he became engaged to Maria, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Pierre Pambrun. In a letter that Whitman wrote to Walker on April 29, shortly after his return to Waiilatpu, he reported that Rogers had suffered a relapse and was then so ill that he was in danger of dying. Whitman's fears proved to be unfounded, for Rogers recovered and was soon well enough to ride to Fort Walla Walla. Since Rogers was not assigned to any particular station, he had been free to travel hither and yon as he pleased. No doubt he had been a frequent visitor at Fort Walla Walla.

It is not known just when he began to notice the teenage Maria and think of her as a wife. Nor is it known whether Pambrun was the one who took the initiative in encouraging the betrothal. We do know that Pambrun was delighted when Rogers asked for the hand of his daughter for he rewrote his will in order to make a generous provision for his future son-in-law. Of this Narcissa wrote: "It was his [i.e., Pambrun's] subject of conversation by day and by night while he was alive, and in his will he appropriated more to her on his account, than to his other children, besides giving him [i.e., Rogers] much of his personal property, and willing him over a hundred pounds sterling" [Letter 96]. The Whitmans felt that Maria was not worthy of Rogers, as she was an uneducated half-breed and knew very little English. Moreover, she was a Catholic. It is not known whether Pambrun told Rogers of the provisions made in his will but in all likelihood he did.

On May 11 when Pambrun and Rogers were riding together, Pambrun was guiding his horse by a rope looped Indian fashion around the animal's lower jaw. Somehow the horse managed to eject the rope and then began to run and buck. Pambrun was thrown repeatedly against the horn of the saddle and finally to the ground. He was so injured in the groin that

he was unable to walk and had to be carried to his quarters. Dr. Whitman was summoned at once and upon his arrival discovered that Pambrun's internal injuries were extremely serious [Letter 87d]. Pambrun suffered intense pain for four days. He begged Whitman to give him some medicine which would put him out of his misery, anything to make him die quickly. This Whitman refused to do.

Pambrun died on the 15<sup>th</sup>, leaving his wife with seven children.<sup>35</sup> Shortly afterwards Mrs. Pambrun with her children left for Fort Vancouver. Pambrun's body was taken to Fort Vancouver for burial. When Rogers left Fort Walla Walla, he also left the Oregon Mission. Since he had never been an officially appointed missionary of the American Board, his departure did not incur the same censure from his associates as was the case with Smith. But Rogers' engagement to marry Maria Pambrun did bring criticism. Spalding, when he heard the news on June 7, wrote in his diary: "I am grieved... Is it possible? What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world & lose his own soul?" After hearing more details, Spalding wrote the next day: "He is to receive considerable property, which is probably the inducement. He leaves the Mission under painful circumstances."

Narcissa, in her letter of October 1, 1841, to her sister Jane, gives further information: "We have since learned that she [i.e., Maria] refused to marry Mr. Rogers, and he has returned the property willed to him. We think he has no reason to regret it on his own account. But the consequence of it all has been, it has taken Brother R. out of our mission, and he has gone to settle on the Willamette." In September 1841, Rogers married Miss Satira Leslie, a daughter of one of the Methodist missionaries. Since Rogers was able to speak the Nez Perce language, his services were soon in demand by the U.S. Government to go with official parties visiting the Nez Perce country. Rogers lost his life in a tragic accident on February 1, 1843, when he, his wife, and several others were swept over Willamette Falls in a boat. Maria married Dr. Forbes Barclay of Fort Vancouver in 1842.

### DR. WHITMAN TO DR. BRYANT

When Whitman returned to Waiilatpu following the death of Pierre Pambrun, he took with him some boxes of goods which had been sent by sea first to Fort Vancouver and then taken up the Columbia to Fort

Walla Walla. These boxes contained supplies and gifts from friends and relatives in Rushville. On May 24 Whitman wrote to his brother Augustus acknowledging receipt of the goods and reporting that the plows which had been sent were still at Fort Vancouver. These plows had been ordered in the spring of 1838. It took three years to secure their delivery.

In one of the boxes, Whitman found some writing paper which had been sent by Dr. and Mrs. Ira Bryant. The gift brought back memories of the days during 1823–25 when he was beginning his medical studies while riding with Dr. Bryant. Thus inspired, Whitman also wrote to the Bryants on that same May 24. He did not know that Dr. Bryant had died sometime in 1840. Whitman began his letter by writing: “For the first time I sit down to write you. I do not see as you will be likely to write me first. You do not know how it seems at this distance to be so much in the dark about old friends... We are cheered by every token of respect. But although the Doctor sent considerable paper, we did not find any which he had written on for us.”

In a friendly letter, Whitman gave his former mentor and his wife a quick review of life at Waiilatpu. He commented on the country, the climate, and his activities. “My medical duties call me much from home,” he wrote, “as I have to go one hundred & eighty miles to the remotest station.” He mentioned the death of Pierre Pambrun, but, strange to say, said nothing of any medical services rendered to the natives. Regarding his own health, he wrote: “In order to get established I have laboured most excessively but I am now so far broken that I cannot expect to accomplish much more manual labor.” Here is a reference to the ill health he had suffered during the preceding winter.

He told of the buildings which then stood at Waiilatpu: “In a summary way, let me say we have a good convenient new house. That the old one yet stands & is occupied for a dwelling generally for two families & besides a house for company, that is [for] people who want to stay a while or for passers is nearly finished.” The “house for company” was being built by Gray who started it during the winter of 1840–41. This was located about 400 feet east of the main mission house. It measured 32 x 40 feet; was a story and a half high; and was built, like the other two houses, of adobe bricks. Because of its pretentious size, it was first known as the mansion house, and then later as the emigrant house.

Whitman then told Dr. Bryant that: "Cultivation will require the aid of irrigation in order to make a business of it even in this valley." Here is the first mention of irrigation in the Whitman letters. Perhaps the digging of a millrace suggested the possibility of irrigation for his garden. On January 24, 1842, Gray in a letter to Walker drew an outline of the premises at Waiilatpu which showed several irrigation ditches. [See illustration in this volume.] Gray said that the ditches were "4 feet in width, 2 ft deep," and claimed that they had been dug by Indian labor.<sup>36</sup> Because the summers in the Walla Walla area are often dry, Whitman believed that the upper Columbia country was better suited for raising cattle and sheep than it was for farming. Spalding held the same views. Neither ever dreamt that the region would become one of the best wheat raising areas in the nation.

Regarding the future prospects of the natives, Whitman wrote: "It will not be easy to settle the Indians in this region for it will require the recourse & enterprise of White men to develop its resources by means of saw mills in the mountains to furnish timber for fences as well as buildings."<sup>37</sup> Here is the first indication in Whitman's letters of his growing conviction that the Indians could never compete with the white men in occupying the land. Sawmills were needed to produce lumber for fences to protect growing crops, to build granaries for storage of grain, and for houses. The natives had not the resources, the knowledge, or the skills needed for such improvements. Even though Whitman became increasingly convinced that the white man would eventually occupy the country, he never ceased doing what he could to help the Indians make an adjustment to a new way of life which was being forced upon them.

Whitman showed his political interest in this letter to Dr. Bryant by writing: "All forget to tell me who is President or Governor. There seems to be a great fear of saying something that another has said." In the closing paragraph of this letter, he wrote: "I have just heard that Harrison is President." William Henry Harrison was inaugurated on March 4, 1841, but died a month later and was succeeded by the Vice President, John Tyler. Several months had to elapse before Whitman learned of this. Whitman also referred in this letter to Dr. Bryant of the expected arrival in the Columbia River of the United States Exploring Expedition under the command of Lieut. Charles Wilkes. Actually the

squadron had arrived at Fort Vancouver about a month before Whitman wrote, but communications were so slow in the Oregon country that he did not hear of it until sometime later.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Wilkes Expedition was the first government party to visit Old Oregon after that of Lieut. William A. Slacum in January 1837. The arrival of the Expedition undoubtedly aroused speculation in Whitman's mind about the future of the Pacific Northwest. What bearing, if any, would such an inspection trip have upon the settlement of the boundary issue with Great Britain? Undoubtedly Whitman knew of the Joint Occupation Treaty of 1818 and that no further official agreement had been reached between the United States and Great Britain regarding the location of the Oregon boundary. Whitman closed his letter to Bryant by writing: "We are all in the dark as to the situation of the U.S. Government about this Country."

Although Whitman was seemingly unaware of the growing concern in official government circles over the boundary question, some important developments were taking place. On February 7, 1838, Senator Lewis F. Linn of Missouri introduced a bill which called for the establishment of U.S. jurisdiction over the Oregon country lying north of the 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel (i.e., where the California-Oregon border is now located), west of the Rockies, and without specifying where the northern boundary was to be drawn. That was exactly the question—where was the northern boundary to be located? Linn's bill also called for the United States to occupy the territory with a military force. The bill failed to pass the Senate.

On December 11, 1838, after receiving the petition carried East that year by Jason Lee, Senator Linn introduced a second bill calling for the occupation of Old Oregon. This bill, like its predecessor, called for the occupation of the Oregon Territory and the protection of United States citizens residing there. In January 1839, Lee's memorial was presented to the Senate and ordered printed.<sup>38</sup> The Senate delayed taking action in favor of Linn's bill because at that time the United States was trying to negotiate a settlement with Great Britain on several other disputes, including the Maine boundary. On the following December 18, Senator Linn again brought up the Oregon question. A series of resolutions was

referred to a select committee which, on March 31, 1840, made a report in which the claims of the United States were again asserted. Bancroft stated that: "The chief feature in these resolutions was a provision for granting to each white male inhabitant over eighteen years of age one thousand acres of land."<sup>39</sup> Such a promised bonanza whetted the appetites of thousands of wouldbe emigrants who were beginning to look with covetous eyes on the Oregon country. In due time Whitman was to hear of these developments. Actually, the United States could not make such land grants as long as the joint Occupation Treaty with England remained in effect. Such unilateral action would have been illegal.

### ANNUAL MEETING OF 1841

**D**uring late April and early May, 1841, when convalescing in the Whitman home, Rogers poured out to Whitman a long list of complaints against Spalding. Even before Rogers had made known his intention to many Maria Pambrun, he had resolved to leave the Mission because of the "ill treatment" he claimed to have received from Spalding.<sup>40</sup> Gray, who was also living at Waiilatpu when Rogers was there, corroborated much that the sick and despondent Rogers had to tell. After listening to the complaints, Whitman became thoroughly discouraged. Smith had already left the Mission, and now Rogers was planning to do likewise. Writing to Walker on May 8, Whitman said: "I have told Mr. Eells my utter despair of ever cooperating with Mr. Spalding. If you knew as much about this as I do, you would feel as much discouraged, I think, as I am."

The 1841 Annual Meeting of the Oregon Mission was scheduled to begin at Waiilatpu on June 9. Walker, not being in good health at the time, decided to make the trip to Waiilatpu by boat from Fort Colville to Fort Walla Walla. He would then ride out to the Whitman mission. When Walker arrived at Walla Walla, he heard so much news that he wrote two letters to his wife, the first dated May 15.<sup>41</sup> He told of the departure of the Smiths, the death of Pambrun, and the engagement of Rogers and Maria. He learned that Pambrun had willed \$1,200.00 to Maria, in addition to the sum given to Rogers, on condition that she marry Rogers. Walker was amazed at these developments and in a burst of sentiment, unusual to his taciturn nature, wrote: "After all, I had rather have my Mary as I took her than Miss Maria with her twelve

hundred dollars or more. But every one to his own fancy. It would, I think, take much love to hide all her Indian habits.”

Whitman rode to Fort Walla Walla on May 31 to get Walker, and the two rode out to Waiilatpu the next day. On the four-hour ride, Whitman shared with Walker all that he had heard from Rogers and Gray in criticism of Spalding. Eells arrived on June 7, and the Spaldings came the next day with their two little children—Eliza, three and a half, and Henry, one and a half. Mrs. Spalding’s presence was unexpected but Walker noted in his diary that it was an “omen for good.”

The business meetings began on Wednesday, June 9, as scheduled, with Walker serving as moderator and Eells, secretary. The financial report was first considered. Because of the irregular intervals of time that elapsed between the time a bill was incurred at Fort Vancouver and payment made by the American Board in Boston, it is impossible to compile accurate figures to show the actual annual cost of the Oregon Mission. The best available figures are to be found in the annual reports of the Treasurer of the Board which were published at the close of each fiscal year which came on August 31. According to these reports [see Appendix 2], the Board paid \$4,886.14 for the support of its Oregon Mission in 1840 and \$3,783.07 in 1841. This meant that the average cost for each of the thirteen adults in 1841 was less than \$300.00. These figures do not include the value of gifts sent to Oregon by the Hawaiian Mission; the supplies, especially clothing, sent in missionary barrels; or special gifts such as the plows donated by Whitman or by his relatives and friends in Rushville. To a remarkable degree, the Oregon Mission had become almost self-supporting.

Only routine items of business were considered on Thursday. On Friday tension arose when Whitman repeated some of the charges that Rogers had made against Spalding. Spalding wrote in his diary: “I was particularly grieved by being accused by Mr. Rogers through Dr. Whitman of using my knowledge of the Nez Perce language to the disadvantage of the Mission... I think that this charge is entirely without foundation.” Once Whitman began to criticize Spalding, he continued by dredging up from the past several incidents including, as Spalding wrote, “one or two small things which occurred in the States & were long since settled.” From this we can infer that what Spalding had said about not trusting Mrs. Whitman’s judgment had again come up for discussion. Spalding

felt that most of the charges made against him “were entirely untrue & have their origin either in Indian reports, misunderstandings, or jealousy.” Walker that night wrote in his diary: “Spent most of the day in conversation. It came so sharp that I was compelled to leave. It is enough to make one sick to see what is the state of things in the mission.”<sup>42</sup>

On Saturday, June 12, the action of the previous Annual Meeting giving Gray permission to open a station at Shimnap was reconsidered. With the departure of the Smiths and the announced intention of Rogers to do likewise, even Gray had come to realize that such a move was inadvisable. So the proposal which had agitated the Mission for so many months was dropped. Gray agreed to remain at Wailatpu where a number of projects called for his services including completing the building of the third house, digging more irrigation ditches, erecting a blacksmith shop, and also the building of a sawmill in the Blue Mountains.

At this June 1841 meeting, Spalding learned for the first time that Hall, Gray, Smith, and Rogers had all written to the Board severely criticizing him. He was astounded! “The Lord in great mercy look upon these men,” he wrote in his diary, “& forgive their sins & sustain his unworthy servant... under these accumulating trials.” Spalding listed Whitman as being one who had also written letters of criticism, but an examination of Whitman’s correspondence with the Board shows that his comments were mild. Be it said to Spalding’s credit that he never wrote letters complaining about his associates until after he had learned what the others had done.

No business was transacted on Saturday afternoon. Whitman and Spalding took advantage of the day to meet in private to talk out their differences. Subdued and contrite by what he had learned, Spalding wrote in his diary on Sunday, the 13<sup>th</sup>: “Had a familiar talk with Doct. & Mrs. Whitman, confessed that I had said a great many things which I ought not to have said & asked her pardon.” Although Narcissa had been willing to beg forgiveness from the Walkers, she showed no spirit of contrition in dealing with Spalding. Spalding noted in his diary: “Was astonished at self-rightousness manifested by our bro. & sis.”

Some good came out of this frank exchange of feelings as is indicated in Whitman’s letter to Greene of July 13, about a month after the Annual Meeting had closed. He wrote: “We never had a meeting which promised so much harmony among the members of the Mission as this. We had a

most plain talk with Mr. Spalding which resulted in his acknowledging himself to have been in the wrong in the leading causes of complaint & that he had been very jealous... I will not be too sanguine of the future but this much I can say, he has pledged himself that he will not be as jealous & that he will cooperate with the Mission & most especially with Mrs. Whitman and myself."

On Sunday, the Mission family, now reduced to ten, and the Littlejohns observed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Even though some bitter feelings had existed, this solemn service, so rarely held in their wilderness isolation, induced a deeper feeling of fellowship. Three small children were presented for baptism; Leverett, the month-old son of the Littlejohns; Caroline, the eight-month-old daughter of the Grays; and Helen Mar Meek, the three-year-old half-breed girl living with the Whitmans.<sup>43</sup> The administration of baptism would normally have been Spalding's prerogative as he was pastor of the Mission church, but, under the circumstances, he asked Eells to officiate.

The business meetings closed on Monday noon, and those who lived at a distance started back to their respective stations. Whitman and Gray rode with Walker and Eells for about five miles. After reviewing the events of the previous five days, the four men felt that the outlook for the future was hopeful. Walker wrote that day in his diary: "At the end, we had reason to say, it was good to be there."

Evidence indicates, however, that all members of the Mission were apprehensive of what the Board might do in response to the letters of criticism about Spalding which had been sent to it. They knew that ordinarily it would take two years for a letter from Old Oregon to reach Boston and for a reply to be received. Greene's answer, therefore, could be expected sometime in the fall of 1842. If only there had been some means of rapid communication, the Board could have been informed of the changed situation in the Oregon Mission following the departure of the Smiths and Rogers and after the Whitmans and Spaldings had settled their differences. Instead, a long year of suspense stretched before them. What action would the Board take?

## SOME EVENTS OF THE SUMMER OF 1841

Much to the joy of the Whitmans, Archibald McKinlay, a Presbyterian from the Highlands of Scotland, succeeded Pambrun at Fort Walla Walla during the summer of 1841. In June 1840, McKinlay had married Sarah Julia, daughter of Peter Skene Ogden, a prominent Hudson's Bay official. It had been the custom of Pambrun to buy off the trouble-makers among the natives in order to keep peace [Letter 97]. McKinlay refused to follow such a policy. This removed pressure from the Indians on Whitman, who was financially unable to be constantly giving presents in order to keep their goodwill. Once Narcissa wrote: "From the commencement of this station until the present time, it has constantly been a point with one or more of them to be urging for property to be given to keep them in subjection... It is difficult for them to feel but that we are rich and getting richer by the houses we dwell in and the clothes we wear and hang out to dry after washing from week to week, and the grain we consume in our families" [Letter 97]. Even the family wash drying in the sun awakened envy in the hearts of the natives. Any kind of cloth was expensive to them, and behold what the white people had in abundance!

Asa Smith's letters are sprinkled with references to the cupidity of the natives. The following quotations are typical: "We find here an extremely selfish people, who most of them doubtless follow us more for the loaves and the fishes, then for any spiritual benefit." "They seem to wish to make the stations their trading posts & the most they want of us is to supply their temporal wants." "The temporal favors [we bestow] are not appreciated & only serve to increase the pride & insolence of the Indians." "No doubt is left in my mind as to their motives in desiring missionaries. The principal motive evidently is the temporal benefit which may be derived from them."<sup>44</sup> Even Spalding, usually more charitable regarding this very natural desire of the Indians to secure property, later wrote to Greene, October 17, 1845: "Another cause of excitement is their land. They are told by the enemies of the mission, that people in the civilized world purchase their land & water privileges. This touches a chord that vibrates through every part of the Indian's soul—that insatiable desire for property."<sup>45</sup>

McKinlay's refusal to give presents to the Cayuse chiefs, although applauded by the Whitmans, added to the growing resentment of the

Indians against the white man. Here was another cause of the growing unrest among the Cayuses.

Pambrun's friendship with the Roman Catholic priests had also given the Whitmans concern. In his letter to his brother Augustus, Whitman on May 24, 1841, wrote: "There is likely to be a strong Catholic division here for one thing. It has been fostered more or less by our late neighbor, Mr. Pambrun." Pambrun was friendly with a Cayuse chief, Tautau or Young Chief,<sup>46</sup> who lived on the Umatilla River, about twentyfive miles south of Waiilatpu. Pambrun built a house for Young Chief in the fall of 1840. The site has been located on the north bank of the Umatilla River opposite Thornhollow, a small town about twenty miles east of present-day Pendleton, Oregon.<sup>47</sup> As will be noted, this act of kindness by Pambrun was used by the Catholic priests in the fall of 1847 to gain a foothold among the Cayuse Indians living not far from the Whitman station.

During the latter part of July 1841, Marcus and Narcissa rode to Tshimakain, arriving there on the 21<sup>st</sup>. On July 27, Myra Eells gave birth to her first child, a son, whom they named Edwin. The Whitmans remained at Tshimakain for almost four weeks. Walker, in his diary, tells of an excursion that he and the doctor made to Spokane Falls, now in the heart of the city of Spokane, Washington. Walker wrote on the 14<sup>th</sup>: "The Dr. has been as full of Geology as if he had eaten half dozen great volumes on this subject." Evidently the entertainment of guests in their limited living quarters was difficult for the Walkers, for Elkanah wrote in his diary on August 16 when the Whitmans left: "I must say I did not regret to see them depart."

On August 9<sup>th</sup>, while still at Tshimakain, Whitman wrote to his brother Samuel and discussed a number of items of human interest.

"I am no more of an Abolitionist than I was for years before I left home," he wrote. "I do not feel as much attachment to Illinois as I did & I think it is the last State I would live in on account of its heavy debt & taxes... Tell mother we are eating cheese of Mrs. Whitman's make; that milk & butter are most abundant with us & so will cheese be if we choose to make it. Calves rennet is a scarce article for we value a calf the same as an old cow or ox for it costs nothing to raise them." Rennet was a necessary ingredient for the making of cheese. The missionaries discovered that rennet secured from the stomach of a deer was nearly as effective as that from the calf of an American cow.

## DRAYTON OF THE WILKES EXPEDITION VISITS WAILATPU

During the first part of July 1841, before the Whitmans left for Tshimakain, Joseph Drayton, a member of the Wilkes Exploring Expedition visited the Whitmans at Wailatpu. He was the second person to have his impressions of the Whitmans and of their work published, the first being Thomas J. Farnham. Drayton's report was included in the official *Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition*.<sup>48</sup>

The origin of the Exploring Expedition goes back to the report which Lieut. William A. Slacum submitted to Congress on December 18, 1837. On February 13, 1838, the Senate asked the Secretary of War to submit all the information he had regarding "Oregon" and to have a map made of the territory. Within eight months after Slacum's return, the Navy Department sent a squadron of five vessels under the command of Lieut. Charles Wilkes to explore the Pacific Ocean from the Antarctic to the Oregon coast. The Expedition was gone for about four years.

Lieut. Wilkes with four ships of his squadron arrived in the Columbia River in April 1841. Several exploring parties were then sent into the interior, including one led by Drayton, who was deputized to visit Wailatpu. Drayton was given a cordial welcome by the Whitmans and the Grays. In his report, Drayton said: "There are two houses, each of one story, built of adobes, with mud roofs, to insure a cooler habitation in summer. There are also a small saw-mill and some grist-mills at the place moved by water." Here is the first mention of Whitman having a sawmill. It may be that Whitman had attached a saw of some kind to his waterwheel. Later, as will be indicated, he erected a larger and more efficient sawmill about twenty miles to the east of Wailatpu in the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

Drayton's account continues: "All the premises look very comfortable. They have a fine kitchen garden, in which they grow all the vegetables raised in the United States, and several kinds of fine melons. The wheat, some of which stood seven feet high, was in full head, and nearly ripe; Indian corn was in tassel, and some of it measured nine feet in height. They will reap this year about three hundred bushels of wheat, with a quantity of corn and potatoes. The soil in the vicinity of the small streams, is a rich black loam, and very deep." The amazing height of the wheat and corn as reported by Drayton was due, no doubt, to the richness of the virgin soil.

Drayton reported that at the time of his visit there were only fourteen Indians, including men, women, and children, in the vicinity of the mission station. Whitman told Drayton that he had 124 natives on his school roll, but due to the wandering habits of the tribe, the average daily attendance was about twenty-five. Whitman explained that the band living in the vicinity of Waiilatpu would return during the latter part of July from the Grande Ronde Valley. Then after three or four months, they would “move off to the north and east to hunt buffalo.” After their return from the buffalo hunt, they would remain another short time at Waiilatpu and then would be off again. It was this wandering, seminomadic habit, which made both schoolwork and religious instruction so extremely difficult for the missionaries. Horatio Hale, the philologist of the Wilkes Expedition who did not visit Waiilatpu, reported that the Cayuses were a small tribe, “not numbering five hundred souls.”<sup>49</sup> From other evidence, it is safe to say that Hale’s estimate was much too high.

Drayton had been told that the Cayuses were quarrelsome and at times turbulent. Yet he observed that: “These missionaries live quite comfortably, and seem contented; they are, however, not free from apprehension of Indian depredations. Dr. Whitman, being an unusually large and athletic man, is held in much respect by the Indians, and they have made use of his services as a physician, which does not seem to carry with it so much danger here, as among the tribes in the lower country, or further north.” Possibly Whitman gave Drayton a too optimistic picture of the lack of danger involved in practicing the white man’s medicine among this primitive people. We shall see that this was a factor in bringing on the Whitman massacre.

In the course of his inspection of the mission grounds, Drayton saw the irrigation ditches which were being dug. Whitman told of how some of the Indians, noticing how his gardens and fields had flourished after being irrigated, “desired to take some of the water from his trenches instead of making new ones of their own.” Very naturally Whitman objected and told them to dig their own ditches. This they did, but tapped the creek above the outlet for Whitman’s ditch and then dammed up the opening Whitman needed. “This,” reported Drayton, “had wellnigh produced much difficulty; but finally they were made to understand that there was enough water for both; and they now use it with as much success

as the missionaries." W. D. Breckenridge, the horticulturist of the Wilkes Expedition, met Whitman at Fort Walla Walla on July 2, 1841, and wrote in his journal: "Dr. Whitman came down to pay us a visit; found him a very intelligent man."<sup>50</sup>

Farnham's and Drayton's descriptions of the Whitman station have much in common. Both observers had high praise for what the Whitmans and their associates had been able to accomplish.

## IN SUMMARY

The fifth year of the Oregon Mission of the American Board marked the half-way point in its history. It was a year when a gradual transition was taking place from troubles within the Mission to increasing difficulties from without. Ever since the arrival of the 1838 reenforcement, the Mission had been agitated with personality difficulties and dissensions over Mission policies. With the departure of the Smiths and Rogers, the tensions eased somewhat, but, as will be seen, continued to some extent as long as Gray remained. On the other hand, we find during this year the beginnings of harassments and even hostility on the part of the natives. These were to increase during the following years.

A number of significant events took place during this year, 1840-41, which were portents of things to come. The first emigrant family passed the Whitman station on horseback in the fall of 1840. The first wagons, having been taken over the Blue Mountains, arrived a year later. The presence of the Wilkes Expedition's exploring parties in the interior of Old Oregon was evidence of an awakened interest on the part of the United States government. No one appreciated more than did the Whitmans the strategic importance of Waiilatpu. Sitting astride the Oregon Trail, it was the first outpost of American civilization west of the Blue Mountains. Great events were before the Whitmans in the years immediately before them.

But, a great question haunted their minds. What action would the American Board take in response to the many letters it had received which described the turmoil within the Mission? A year would have to pass before the answer came.

CHAPTER 15 FOOTNOTES

- 1 Hulbert. *O.P.*, VII:207.
- 2 Douglas McMurtrie, *The American Inventory of Idaho Imprints, 1839–1890*, lists five copies of this primer as being extant.
- 3 Original letter in Coll. A. See also Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon*, II: 105.
- 4 Copies of these letters, containing about 35,000 words, are in Drury, *Spalding and Smith*.
- 5 Italics are the author's.
- 6 Bancroft, *Oregon*, I:249. Walker's Reminiscences appeared as Vol. 17, *Early California Travels*, Glen Dawson, Los Angeles, 1951. Joel P. Walker was a brother of Joseph Reddeford Walker, leader of Capt. Bonneville's 1833 brigade to California.
- 7 The Walker family traveled overland from Oregon to California with the ship's company of the *U.S. Peacock* which had been wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia River on July 18, 1841. The *Peacock* was with the U.S. Exploring Squadron under command of Lieut. Charles Wilkes.
- 8 In 1878, when Walker was living at Sonoma, California, and eighty-one years old, he dictated his reminiscences. Original ms., Coll. B. Walker was a member of the California Constitutional Convention which met at Monterey in 1849.
- 9 Reared as a half-breed in a frontier community, Whitman's namesakes, Marcus W. Newell, was often in trouble, once serving a term in the penitentiary for theft. He is reported to have been killed as a young man by the vigilantes. See article by Francis Haines on Robert Newell, *Idaho Yesterdays*, Spring 1965.
- 10 Johanson (ed.), Robert Newell's Memoranda, p. 23, gives two dates for Newell's departure August 5 and Sept. 27. The latter date is evidently the correct one.
- 11 *T.O.P.A.*, 1877, p. 22.
- 12 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 193, from letter to Walker, Oct. 12, 1840. The whole subject of the Indian's concept of land ownership at this time is rather vague and needs further study.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 194. Smith, on page 197, identifies Meoway as Atpashwakaiket. This incident of the Indians attacking Pambrun is mentioned in Allen's *Ten Years in Oregon*, p. 175. Josephy, *The Nez Perce Indians*, p. 211, identifies Meoway with Looking Glass, whose son, also called Looking Glass, was a leader in the Nez Perce uprising of 1877.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 302, from Spalding's diary for Nov. 2, 1840.
- 16 Drury, *F.W.W.*, II:198.
- 17 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 302.
- 18 *Op. cit.*, II:169. Marshall was in error as to the month when Smith wrote to Greene. It was October not September.
- 19 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 203. Italics are the author's.
- 20 Probably a reference to Jack, the Hawaiian, whom Whitman had sent to Kamiah early in Oct. 1840. See Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, p. 299.
- 21 Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, p. 137.

- 22 Being a person of strong opinions and fanatical prejudices, Griffin was often involved in controversies in church, community, and political circles. In the spring of 1849, Griffin ran for Congress on an "anti-monopoly and anti-Jesuit" platform but fell far short of being elected. See George N. Belknap, *McMurtrie's Oregon Imprints, a Supplement*, Eugene, Oregon, 1950, p. 10.
- 23 Original letter in Coll. Y.
- 24 Josephy, *The Nez Percés*, pp. 24 ff., gives a good account of primitive Nez Perce religion.
- 25 Garth, *P.N.Q.*, XXXIX (1948):131: "This mill was of the 'tub' mill type. Such mills had a horizontal wheel set as low as possible to obtain the maximum fall from a low head of water. The wheel was less than 8 feet in diameter, and from its center a wooden drive shaft extended up through the floor of the milling platform to drive the stones."
- 26 Words in italics were underlined by Whitman. His strong temperance views evidently extended to the use of tobacco. Although Whitman here indicated that he was unable to use Indian labor, Gray in a letter to Walker dated Jan. 24, 1842 (Coll. Y.) stated that some Indians had been hired.
- 27 A son, Leverett, was born to the Littlejohns at Waiilatpu in May 1841.
- 28 Drury, *F.W.W.*, II:210; entry for April 11, 1841.
- 29 The record is not clear regarding who actually paid for these plows. Did all or part of the cost come out of Whitman's private funds, or were the plows paid for by the people of Rushville? We do not know.
- 30 Smith to Greene, June 2, 1841. Coll. A.
- 31 Original in Coll. A.
- 32 Clark organized the First Presbyterian Church at Willamette Falls (now Oregon City) on May 25, 1844, with three charter members, one of whom was the mountain man, Osborne Russell. See Chapter Nine, fn. 13. This church became the First Congregational Church of Oregon City in 1849; is reported to be the oldest Protestant church for white people with a continuous existence on the Pacific Slope of what is now the United States.
- 33 See Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, pp. 220 ff., for a brief summary of the experiences of the Smiths after they left Old Oregon. Both lie buried in the cemetery of the Congregational Church of Buckland, Mass., of which Smith was pastor from 1848 to 1859.
- 34 Horatio Hale, *Ethnography and Philology*, first published in 1846, was reprinted Ridgewood, N.J., 1968. This contains a summary of Smith's Nez Perce grammar, pp. 542-61. Hale, who was the philologist for the Wilkes Expedition, met Smith at Astoria shortly before the Smiths sailed for Honolulu and, no doubt, secured his material from Smith at that time.
- 35 Pambrun was fifty-four years old when he died. He had been in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company for twenty-six years. See fn. 29, Chapter Ten.
- 36 Original letter in Coll. Y.
- 37 Hulbert, *O.P.*, VII: 223.
- 38 Bancroft, *Oregon*, I:372.
- 39 *Ibid.*

- 40 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, pp. 314-5.
- 41 Originals in Coll. Wn.
- 42 Drury, *Walker*, p. 158.
- 43 The names of these children baptized by Eells were not entered in the record book of the Mission church, but Spalding did list their names in his diary.
- 44 Drury, *Spalding and Smith*, pp. 98, 151, 175, & 184.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 338.
- 46 See Chapter Ten, section "Three Cayuse Chiefs."
- 47 Identification of the location of Young Chief's house was made through the kindness of Sister M. Florita, formerly of St. Andrews Mission, Pendleton, Ore. She wrote to me on March 3, 1971: "It is on the hill in Thornhollow. John Shoeship's home is now on part of the property where Young Chief lived." See trail map used as an illustration in this volume.
- 48 Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition*, 5 vols., Philadelphia, 1845. Drayton's report of Wailatpu is in Vol. IV: Chap. 11.
- 49 Hale, *Ethnography and Philology*, p. 214. See ante, fn. 84.
- 50 W. D. Breckennidge, *The Breckenridge Journal for the Oregon Country*, O. B. Sperlin (ed.), reprint from W.H.Q., 1930-31, Univ. of Wash. Press, Seattle, 1931.