

*** Date: March 1, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipients: Mr. Edward Prentiss

Ms. Jane Prentiss ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 143 ***

*** Comments: There is one point where the word “is” is used instead of “it.” It is not known if this typo was made by Mrs. Whitman or by the transcribers of the “Transactions.” ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Waiilatpu, March 1st, 1842.

My Dear Jane and Edward: – I was busy all the forenoon in preparing my husband for his departure. He left about two o'clock P. M. to go on a professional visit to Brother Walker's, and I am once more left alone in this house with no other company than my two little half-breed girls, Mary Ann Bridger and Helen Mar Meek. Since he left I have copied a letter of one sheet and a half for him to Brother Spalding and written a short one to Sister S., besides, which kept me until nearly dark, although I wrote with all my might, for we had detained an Indian who was going that way, to take them, and before I could get them completed he began to be quite impatient. I, however, pacified him by giving him something to eat to beguile his time, and when he left gave him a good piece of bread to eat on the way. The Indians do us many favours in this way, and get as many from us in return, for they are always glad of something from us to eat on the way.

Since I got my letters off I regulated my house some, got my own and little girl's supper and some toast and tea for a sick man who has been here a few days, from Walla Walla to be doctored; attended family worship and put my little girls to bed, and have set me down to write a letter to Jane and Edward, my dear brother and sister that I left at home in Angelica more than six years ago. Since or just as I seated myself to write, Brother Gray came in to get some medicine for the sick man. He is in Packet's lodge a few steps away from the door, and he is the man who attends to my wants, such as milking, getting water, wood, etc. He is a half-breed from the east side of the mountains and was brought up at Harmony mission, but came to the mountains about eight years ago and has since become a Catholic. Brother Gray has built him a new house and it is quite a piece from us. Thus lonely situated, what would be the enjoyment to me if E. and J. would come in and enjoy my solitude with me. Surely solitude would quickly vanish, as it almost appears to, even while I am writing. Jane, I wish you were here to sleep with me, I am such a timid creature about sleeping alone that sometimes I suffer considerably, especially since my health has been not very good. It, however, gives me the opportunity for the exercise of greater trust and confidence in my heavenly protector in whose hands I am always safe and happy when I feel myself there. 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. G. so kindly furnished me. I do not know what I could do without them; so much writing as we have to do, both in our own language and the Nez Perces; and, besides, we have no way to feast our minds with knowledge necessary for health and spirituality without reading, and here the strength of the eyes are taxed again.

Out of compassion to my eyes and exhausted frame, dear ones, I must bid you good-night. You may hear from me tomorrow, perhaps, if I am not interrupted with company.

2^d – After attending to the duties of the morning, and as I was nearly done hearing my children read, two native women came in bringing a miserable looking child, a boy between three and four years old, and wished me to take him. He is nearly naked, and they said his mother had thrown him away and gone off with another Indian. His father is a Spaniard and is in the mountains. It has been living with its grandmother the winter past, who is an old and adulterous woman and has no compassion for it. Its mother has several others by different white men, and one by an Indian, who are treated miserably and scarcely subsist. My feelings were greatly excited for the poor child and felt a great disposition to take him. Soon after the old grandmother came in and said she would take him to Walla Walla and dispose of him, there and accordingly took him away. Some of the women who were in, compassionated his case and followed after her and would not let her take him away, and returned with him again this eve to see what I would do about him. I told her I could not tell because my husband was gone. What I fear most is that after I have kept him awhile some of his relatives will come and take him away and my labour will be lost or worse than lost. I, however, told them they might take him away and bring him again in the morning, and in the meantime I would think about it. The care of such a child is very great at first – dirty, covered with body and head lice and starved – his clothing is a piece of a skin dress that does not half cover his nakedness, and a small bit of skin over his shoulders.

Helen was in the same condition when I took her, and it was a long and tedious task to change her habits, young as she was, but little more than two years old. She was so stubborn and fretful and wanted to cry all the time if she could not have her own way. We have so subdued her that now she is a comfort to us, although she requires tight reins constantly.

Mary Ann is of a mild disposition and easily governed and makes but little trouble. She came here last August. Helen has been here nearly a year and a half. The Lord has taken our own dear child away so that we may care for the poor outcasts of the country and suffering children. We confine them altogether to English and do not allow them to speak a word of Nez Perces.

Read a portion of the Scriptures to the women who were in today, and talked awhile with them. Baked bread and crackers today and made two rag babies for my little girls. I keep them in the house most of the time to keep them away from the natives, and find it difficult to employ their time when I wish to be engaged with the women. They have a great disposition to take a piece of board or a stick and carry it around on their backs, if I would let them, for a baby, so I thought I would make them something that would change their taste a little. You wonder, I suppose, what looking objects Narcissa would make. No matter how they look, so long as it is a piece of cloth rolled up with eyes, nose and mouth marked on it with a pen, it answers every purpose. They caress them and carry them about the room at a great rate, and are as happy as need be. So much for my children.

I have not told you that we have a cooking stove, sent us from the Board, which is a great comfort to us this winter, and enables me to do my work with comparative ease, now that I have no domestic help.

We have had but very little snow and cold this winter in this valley. The thermometer has not been lower than 20° below freezing; but in every direction from us there has been an unusual quantity of snow, and it still remains. Husband expects to find snow beyond the Snake river, which he would cross today if he has been prospered, and may perhaps be obliged to make snow shoes to travel with. Last night was a very windy night, and the same today, but it is still now. Brother Walker is situated directly north of us, so that it is not likely that the snow will decrease any in going. It is uncertain when he will return if prospered and not hindered with the snow. He expects to be gone only four weeks. May the Lord preserve and return him in safety and in His own time, and keep me from anxiety concerning him. Goodnight, J. and E.

3^d. – Dear Jane, this has been washing day, and I have cleaned house some; had a native woman to help me that does the hardest part. I am unable to do my heavy work and have been for two years past.

This evening an Indian has been in who has been away all winter. I have been reading to him the fifth chapter of Matthew. Every word of it seemed to sink deep into his heart; and O may it prove a savour of life to his soul. He thinks he is a Christian, but we fear to the contrary. His mind is somewhat waked up about his living with two wives. I would not ease him any, but urged him to do his duty. Others are feeling upon the subject, particularly the women; and why should they not feel? – they are the sufferers.

The little boy was brought to me again this morning and I could not shut my heart against him. I washed him, oiled and bound up his wounds, and dressed him and cleaned his head of lice. Before he came his hair was cut close to his head and a strip as wide as your finger was shaved from ear to ear, and also from his forehead to his neck, crossing the other at right angles. This the boys had done to make him look ridiculous. He had a burn on his foot where they said he had been pushed into the fire for the purpose of gratifying their malicious feelings, and because he was friendless. He feels, however, as if he had gotten into a strange place, and has tried to run away once or twice. He will soon get accustomed, I think, and be happy, if I can keep him away from the native children. So much about the boy Marshall. I can write no more tonight.

4th. – There has been almost constant high wind ever since husband left and increasingly cold. Feel considerably anxious concerning him, lest the deep snow and cold may make his journey a severe one. At the best it is very wearing to nature to travel in this country. He never has been obliged to encounter so much snow before, and I do not know how it will affect him. He is a courageous man, and it is well that he is so to be a physician in this country. Common obstacles never affect him; he goes ahead when duty calls. Jane and Edward, you know but little about your brother Marcus, and all I can tell you about him at this time is that he is a bundle of thoughts.

Met this afternoon for a female prayer meeting; only two of us – Sister Gray and myself – yet they are precious seasons to us, especially when Jesus meets with us, as He often does. I am blessed with a lovely sister and an excellent associate in Sister Gray, and I trust that I am in some measure thankful, for I have found by experience that it is not good to be alone in our cares and labours.

9th. – Last evening received a letter from Sister Walker dated Feb 21st, in which she expresses some fears lest husband should not arrive in season on account of the deep snow. The probability is that he has had as much as one day on snow shoes if not more. We are having our winter now, both of cold and snow. During the last twenty-four hours there has been quite a heavy fall of snow in the valley, and it is doubtless doubled in the mountains.

Last eve I spent at Bro. Gray's, after the monthly concert. We opened some boxes that have just arrived from the Board to the mission, containing carding, spinning and weaving apparatus, clothing and books. Our goods often get wet in coming up the river, and we are often obliged to open, dry and repack again. We have abundant evidence that our Christian friends in the States have not forgotten us, by the donations we receive from time to time. My work last eve was such cold and damp work that it gave me many rheumatic pains all night, and besides it took us so long that I feel unable to write much more tonight. There is still another evening's work of the same kind, which must be done as soon as tomorrow. We take the eve because Bro. G. has so much labour during the day, and then our children are all in bed. Goodnight, Jane.

9th. – While I was thinking about preparing to retire to rest last eve, Bro. Gray came in to see if I could go over and see and aid in the arrangement of the other boxes. I finally mustered courage to go, because they were anxious to have it out of the way. Found it an easier job than was expected, because there was but one that needed drying.

Attended maternal meeting this afternoon. Sister G. and I make all the effort our time and means will permit to edify and instruct ourselves in our responsible maternal duties. Read this p. m. the report of the New York City Association for 1840, and what a

feast it was to us! It is a comforting thought to us in a desert land to know that we are so kindly remembered by sister Associations in our beloved land. But the constant watch and care and anxiety of a missionary mother cannot be known by them except by experience. Sister G. has two of her own and I have three half-breeds. I believe I feel all the care and watchfulness over them that I should if they were my own. I am sure they are a double tax upon my patience and perseverance, particularly Helen; she wants to rule every one she sees. She keeps me on guard continually lest she should get the upper hand of me. The little boy appears to be of a pretty good disposition, and I think will be easy to govern. He proves to be younger than I first thought he was; he is not yet three years old – probably he is the same age Helen was when she came here. His old grandmother has been in to see him today, but appears to have no disposition to take him. She wanted I should give her something to eat every now and then, because I had got the child to live with me and take care of, also old clothes and shoes. So it is with them; the moment you do them a favour you place yourself under lasting obligations to them and must continue to give to keep their love strong towards you. I make such bungling work of writing this eve I believe I will stop, for I can scarcely keep my head up and eyes open. So good night, J., for you do not come to sleep with me, and I must content myself with Mary Ann.

11th. – Dear Jane, I am sick tonight and in much pain – have been scarcely able to crawl about all day. The thought comes into my mind, how good to be relieved of care and to feel the blessing of a sympathizing hand administering to the necessities of a sick and suffering body, and whose presence would greatly dispel the gloom that creeps over the mind in spite of efforts to the contrary. But I must not repine or murmur at the

dealings of my Heavenly Father with me, for he sees it necessary thus to afflict me that His own blessed image may be perfected in me. O, what a sinful, ungrateful creature I am – proud and disobedient. I wonder and admire the long-suffering patience of God with me, and long to be free from sin so that I shall grieve Him no more. But there is rest in heaven to the weary and wayworn traveler, and how blessed that we may “hope to the end for the grace that shall be given unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” Pray for us, J. and E., for we need your prayers daily. Goodnight.

12th. – I would that I could describe to you what I have felt and passed through since writing the above. Before I could get to bed last night I was seized with such severe pains in my stomach and bowels that it was with difficulty that I could straighten myself. I succeeded in crawling about until I got something to produce perspiration, thinking it might proceed from a cold, and went to bed. About two o’clock in the morning Sister Gray sent for me, for she was sick and needed my assistance. When I was waked I was in a profuse perspiration. What to do I did not know. Neither of them knew that I was sick the day before. I at last concluded that I would make the effort to go, casting myself for preservation on the mercy of God. Mr. Cook, the man who came after me, made a large fire for me in my room, and I was enabled to dress and dry myself without getting cold, the weather having moderated some from what it was a few days ago. I bundled myself pretty well and went with Mr. C.’s assistance, for I felt but very little better able to walk than I did the evening before, yet not in so much pain. When I arrived the babe was born, and Bro. Gray was washing it. In the meantime, after they were informed how I was, they sent me word not to come if I was not able. I took the babe and dressed it, and have been there all day with my children, although I have not

been able to sit up all day. Both mother and babe are comfortable tonight, and I have come home to spend the night and Sabbath, leaving Mr. G. with the care of them tomorrow. They have a good Hawaiian woman, which is a great mercy.

Sab. Eve., 13th – Was kept awake last night by the headache considerably, and it has continued most of the day. Bro. G.'s house is very open, and the change from ours affects me unfavourably generally. Notwithstanding feeble health, this Sabbath has been a precious day to me. A quiet resting upon God is every thing, both in sickness and in health. My heart cries, O, for sanctifying grace that I may not become hardened under affliction.

14th – I have this day entered upon my thirty-fifth year, and had my dear Alice C. been alive she would have been five years old, for this was her birthday as well as mine. Precious trust! she was taken away from the evil to come. I would not have it otherwise now. All things are for the best, although we may not see it at the time. Spent the day with Sister G., although not able to do much. Have been taking medicine and feel some better this eve, and hope to be better still tomorrow.

15th – Have been with Sister Gray all day. There is so much there and all around us to call forth feelings of sympathy and care, that I have been so excited all day as not to scarcely realize my own state of health until I retire from it, and then I find myself completely exhausted. Thus it is that the missionary is so soon worn out, and his health fails and he is obliged to leave the field. He constantly sees work enough for his utmost time and strength, and much, very much that must remain undone for the want of hands to do it. We feel a merciful and timely relief in the association of Bro. and Sister Gray in our labours at this station. Had we continued much longer without help we should have

been obliged, both of us without doubt, to have retired from the field as invalids. Yet still there is just as much as we can all possibly do, and more, too, for every year brings increased labours and demands upon us, and doubtless will continue to if there is much emigration to this country.

Edward, if you are thinking to become a missionary, you would do well to write a sermon on the word PATIENCE every day. Study well its meaning; hold fast on to patience and never let go, thinking all the time that you will have more need of her by and by than ever you can have while you remain at home. But I must stop before I exhaust myself, and gain strength for the duties of the morrow by rest.

21st – It will be three weeks tomorrow since dear husband left, and I am feeling tonight almost impatient for his return. It has been stormy and cold every day since he left. Indeed, we have had our winter in this month, and now the rivers are so high that it is almost impossible to cross them without swimming. I feel that the Lord has mercifully and tenderly sustained and kept me from anxious feelings about him thus far during his absence. Doubtless he has suffered much, but the Lord will preserve, I hope, and return him again to me, filled with a lively sense of His goodness to us continually. The Indians feel his absence very much, especially Sabbaths. They are here so short a time they do not like to have him gone.

Today I have had the care of Sister G.'s two children and my three, which has been a hard day's work for me. I am more and more pleased with my little boy every day. He is so mild and quiet, and so happy in his new situation that I have not had the least regret that I took him in. He is learning to talk English extremely well – much faster than my two girls did. The second Sabbath he went about the room saying, "I must not

work, I must not work,” and also part of a line of a hymn he had heard us sing, “Lord teach a little child to pray,” – all that he could say was “a child to pray, a child to pray.” He is learning to sing, also; he seems to have a natural voice, and learns quick. I think husband will have no objections to keeping him when he sees what a promising boy he is.

Sister Gray is recovering very fast; she came out into the kitchen yesterday to supper, and today she has dressed her babe, which is but ten days old. She took the advantage of me and dressed it before I could get over there this morning. She was going about her own room before it was a week old. Perhaps you will think we do as the natives do when we are among natives. She certainly is very well, and we ought to be very thankful, and I trust we are. We all see so much to do that it is difficult to keep still when it is possible to stir. So goodnight, J. and E., for my sheet is full.

26th – Husband arrived today about noon, to the joy of all the inhabitants of Waiilatpu. Mr. Eells came with him. His journey was prosperous beyond our most sanguine expectations, for the day that he would have been obliged to take snow shoes was so cold that by taking the morning very early they went on the top of the snow and arrived there in safety the Saturday after he left here. Sister Walker has a son born on the 16th, four days after the birth of Sister Gray’s. They call him Marcus Whitman. So it is, dear J. and E., that the Lord cares for and preserves us; and it seemed more than ever as if He sustained me from anxiety and gave me a spirit of prayer for him, and answered prayer in his safe return with improved health; and O, may the lives which He does so mercifully preserve, be devoted more entirely to His service.

Bro. Eells came for his boxes and will return next week. We are cheered with an occasional visit from one and another, which is a source of comfort to us in our pilgrimage here.

This sheet is full, and if you have to trouble to read it, say so, and I will not do so again.

Your sister,

N. Whitman.

*** End of the original document from March 1, 1842 ***

*** Date: July 22, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipient: Mrs. H. B. Brewer ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 154 ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Wailatpu, July 22nd, 1842.

My Dear Mrs. Brewer: – I find the perusal of the Memoirs of Mrs. Smith so deeply interesting to myself, that I desire to ask the privilege of sending it, with your permission, to the different sisters of this mission, as one or two of them have begged the reading of it. It is most too precious a morsel to be enjoyed alone in this desert land. As I am unable to write to Sister Perkins this opportunity, I will just say I forward by this conveyance a few numbers of the *New York Observer*, containing several pieces from Dr. Humphries' pen on Education, which she requested in her last letter to me. We value them much and desire to preserve them.

I am happy to hear of your prosperity in the addition to your family of a little daughter. May she live long to cheer and bless you with her sweet smiles.

Hoping for the pleasure of receiving a letter from you, I am, dear sister, yours in Christian love.

Narcissa Whitman.

Mrs. H. B. Brewer,

Wascofum.

*** End of the original document from July 22, 1842 ***

*** Date: August 23, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipient: Mrs. Allen

Reverend Allen ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 162 ***

*** Comments: The editor of the “Transactions” said that part of this document was missing. He or she put in a note at the relevant point near the end of the document (Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 165). ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Waiilatpu, August 23, 1842.

Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Allen, Cuba, My Dear Christian Friends: – I have this morning been thinking deeply upon our situation and wants as a mission, the spiritual condition of the native population, and the interests of the country at large as it respects the prosperity of the cause of Christ on the one hand and the extension of the powers and dominion of Romanism on the other. The thought occurred to me, I will sit down and write to this dear brother and sister, and solicit an interest in their prayers and those of their beloved charge for us; it may be it will give such a spring to the work that angels will strike their harps anew, and a song of praise be put into the mouths of many who are now in the broad road to ruin. Think, if you please, of the solitary missionary labouring and toiling, without a single Aaron or Hur to stay up his hands! What slow progress must he make, if any at all, where the preaching and praying are all to be done by the same individual!

Perhaps you will say, and justly, too, that we do pray for you continually. My dear friends, let me entreat you to offer up special prayer in our behalf, for we need it more than I can express. In the first place, we need more missionaries, and those of us who are now on the ground need your prayers eminently, not as those who have already attained unto perfect men and women in Christ, but as greatly in want of an enlargement in every Christian grace, if not an entire renovation of soul to God.

The Kayuses, Nez Perces, Spokans, and all the adjacent tribes need your prayers, for they are a dark-minded, wandering people, having hearts, but understand not the truth. I will give you the language of one of them in a talk made three Sabbaths ago. After listening to an exposition of the truth contained in Proverbs, 5th chapter, he said: "Your instruction is good; the wise and discreet appreciate it; for the masses of us, we hear it, but it falls powerless upon our hearts, and we remain the same still." I felt it deeply as a reproof for our unbelief, and want of faithful, earnest prayer in their behalf. The present is the harvest time with them. We know not how soon ardent spirits will be introduced into the country to distract and impede our work. Settlers are beginning to come around us, and their influence will not be the most congenial, as they are mostly men living with native women, who have for many years been wandering in the deep recesses of the mountains, indulging themselves in every species of vice and wickedness until, as one of them frankly confessed to me a short time since, they were wickeder than the Indians around them. Perhaps most of them have received the elements of a Christian education in their childhood years, and some have Christian parents. These, also, are eminently a subject for your prayers.

Romanism stalks abroad on our right hand and on our left, and with daring effrontery boasts that she is to prevail and possess the land. I ask, must it be so? Does it not remain for the people of God in this and Christian lands to say whether it shall be so or not? "Is not the Lord on our side?" "If He is for us, who can be against us." The zeal and energy of her priests are without a parallel, and many, both white men and Indians, wander after the beasts. Two are in the country below us, and two far above in the mountains. One of the latter is to return this fall to Canada, the States and the eastern world for a large reinforcement. How true – "while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares." Had a pious, devoted minister, a man of talent, come into the country when we did and established himself at Vancouver, to human appearance the moral aspect of this country would not be the same as it is now; at least, we think Papacy would not have gained such a footing. But the past cannot now be retrieved. It remains for us to redeem the time; to stand in our lines and fight manfully the battles of the Lord.

We send our imploring cry to you and ask, who will come to our help and who, remaining, will sustain us in the work by the mighty power of prayer? Without it, our work will be in vain, and perhaps worse than in vain.

We have a concert of prayer on Tuesday evenings, called the Oregon Concert, in which the members of this mission and our Methodist brethren and sisters in the lower country unite to pray for the success of the cause of Christ in Oregon.

It may be interesting to you to know something of what has been done since we came here. The missionaries in this field, as all Indian missions, have not only the spiritual wants of the people to attend to, but are obliged to provide for their own sustenance and comfort by cultivating land, building houses, mills, etc., and school

houses, etc., for the people. These greatly divide his mind from his more appropriate mission work, and fill it with distracting cares, causing him to mourn and be filled with grief that so little is accomplished for the soul, the immortal part of man. Yet we have the satisfaction to feel that good has been and is done to them through this channel, and as well as the more direct way of instruction.

The Kayuses, almost to a man, have their little farms now in every direction in this valley, and are adding to it as their means and experience increases.

[Remainder of this letter missing. – Sec'y]

*** End of the original document from August 23, 1842 ***

*** Date: September 29, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipients: Mr. Edward Prentiss

Ms. Jane Prentiss ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 165***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Waiilatpu, Sept. 29th, 1842.

My Dear Jane and Edward: – I sit down to write you, but in great haste. My beloved husband has about concluded to start next Monday to go to the United States, the dear land of our birth; but I remain behind. I could not undertake the journey, if it was considered best for me to accompany him, that is to travel as he expects to. He hopes to reach the borders in less than three months, if the Lord prospers his way. It is a dreadful journey, especially at this season of the year; and as much as I want to see you all, I cannot think of ever crossing the mountains again – my present health will not admit of it. I would go by water, if a way was ever open; but I have no reason to think I ever shall.

If you are still in Quincy you may not see him until his return, as his business requires great haste. He wishes to reach Boston as early as possible so as to make arrangements to return next summer, if prospered. The interests of the missionary cause in this country calls him home.

Now, dear Jane, are you going to come and join me in my labours? Is dear Edward so far advanced as not to need your aid any more? Do you think you would be

contented to come and spend the remainder of your life on mission ground? If so, make your mind known to husband and he will make arrangements for you at Boston to come. Count the cost well before you undertake it. It is a dreadful journey to cross the mountains, and becoming more and more dangerous every year; but if any mission families come, you will find no difficulty in placing yourself under their protection. Bring nothing with you but what you need for the way, and a Sunday suit, a Bible and some devotional book for your food by the way. Send the remainder by ship. When E. has well finished his education, I hope he will come, also, for there will be work enough here to do by that time. At any rate, if you do not come, spend, if you please, all the time you can in writing me until he comes back, for he wishes to return next summer. Now do not disappoint me, for I have not heard a word from either of you since March, 1840. I have written you much since that time, but it may not have reached you.

I shall be left alone at this station for a season, until Mr. Gray can send some one up from below to take the charge; and he has left the mission and goes to engage in a public school. I hope to have Mr. Rogers or Mr. Littlejohn to winter here – the latter wishes to return to the States in the spring.

Now, dear J. and E., adieu. I hope you will see husband long enough to have a good visit with him. I hope he will call as he goes along. If he has time, he will, but his business requires haste, if he returns next spring.

Please give much love to Mr. and Mrs. Beardsley; tell her I shall never cease to remember and love her, and ardently hope they will both write me. I should like to hear of the different members of her family with whom I used to be acquainted.

Gladly would I write more if I could, but must write a line to other friends. Pray for me and mine while we are separated from each other.

Much love from myself to you both.

Affectionately your sister,

N. Whitman.

P. S. I have forgotten to speak of husband's company in travel. He is Mr. A. L. Lovejoy, a lawyer who came up from the States this summer, and now is willing and anxious to return for the good he may do in returning. He will probably come back again. He is not a Christian, but appears to be an intelligent, interesting man. N. W.

Mr. Edward W. Prentiss,

Mission Institute,

Quincy, Illinois.

Favour of Dr. Whitman.

Care of Rev. Wm. Beardsley.

*** End of the original document from September 29, 1842 ***

*** Date: September 30, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipient: Her family ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 167 ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Waiilatpu, Sept. 30th, 1842.

My Beloved Parents, Brothers and Sisters: – You will be surprised if this letter reaches you to learn that the bearer is my dear husband, and that you will, after a few days, have the pleasure of seeing him. May you have a joyful meeting. He goes upon important business as connected with the missionary cause, the cause of Christ in this land, which I will leave for him to explain when you see him, because I have not time to enlarge. He has but yesterday fully made up his mind to go, and he wishes to start Monday, and this is Friday. I shall be left quite alone at this station for a season as Mr. G. and family leave for the Wallamette to engage in a public school, and is dismissed from this mission. I hope to have Mr. Rogers and wife to come and winter here, or Mr. Littlejohn, perhaps both, and next summer I intend going below and spending some time in visiting for the benefit of my health, that is to relieve myself from care so that I shall have an opportunity to recruit. Now, dear mother will wonder why I could not come with him. My health, the season of the year, the speed with which he expects to travel, and the danger of the way, are reasons which make it impossible for me to accompany him. As much as I do desire to see my beloved friends once more, yet I cheerfully consent to

remain behind, that the object of his almost immediate presence in the land of our birth might, if possible, be accomplished. He wishes to cross the mountains during this month, I mean October, and reach St. Louis about the first of Dec., if he is not detained by the cold, or hostile Indians. O may the Lord preserve him through the dangers of the way. He has for a companion Mr. Lovejoy, a respectable, intelligent man and a lawyer, but not a Christian, who expects to accompany him all the way to Boston, as his friends are in that region, and perhaps to Washington. This is a comfort to me, and that he is not to go alone, or with some illiterate mountain man, as we at first expected he would be obliged to. He goes with the advice and entire confidence of his brethren in the mission, and who value him not only as an associate, but as their physician; and feel, as much as I do, that they know not how to spare him; but the interest of the cause demands the sacrifice on our part; and could you know all the circumstances in the case you would see more clearly how much our hearts are identified in the salvation of the Indians and the interests of the cause generally in this country.

I cannot write but little, as I wish to give several of my friends at least a line or two to encourage them to remember me when he returns. He hopes to come back next summer, and I do hope each one of my brethren and sisters will tell me their own story on paper themselves, for husband will have so much business on his mind to attend to that he will not remember half you say to him. And will not dear father and mother write me with their own hand long letters? It will be, indeed, such a compensation for our separation, and I trust I shall feel a sufficient reward for permitting him to leave me behind and to make his visit alone to you. Forgive me, dear mother, if he is the sole theme of this letter; I can write about nothing else at this time. He is inexpressibly dear

to me. Once when Mr. Lee left his wife and she died in his absence, I thought I never could consent to be left so, but since the death of our beloved A. Clarissa, the sundering of that strong and tender tie has, I trust, loosened my affections to earthly objects, or in other words divided my heart by removing that tender object of a mother's love to my heavenly home, thus admonishing me to hold my affections more in subserviency to His blessed will for objects of earth, however strong the ties may be, and increased my attachments above. It seems we have another object added to increase our attachments to the home, which our Saviour has gone to prepare for us.

I have just heard of the death of Sister M. A. Judson, but know nothing of the particulars, but hope to this fall by ship. I long to know more about it. I hope Brother J. is supported.

I hope you will have a long visit with your son and brother, and a profitable one, and be cheered by it, and may he be preserved to return again. I can write no more. Adieu, my beloved parents, brothers and sisters. May the rich blessings of heaven rest upon us all, and we be so happy as to meet in heaven.

Affectionately yours,

N. Whitman.

P. S. – I hear that Sister H. is a mother. I hope she and her husband will write me, also sister Clarissa and her husband, and J. G. I have written to that brother, but have received none from him. I would write to brother J. G. if I had time. He and all others must receive my dear husband as my living epistle to them and write me by him. N. W.

Hon. Stephen Prentiss,

Angelica, Allegany Co.,

New York.

Favour of Dr. Whitman.

*** End of the original document from September 30, 1842 ***

*** Date: October 4, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipient: Dr. Marcus Whitman ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 19th reunion, 1891, p. 162 ***

*** Comments: There is one point in this letter where the word “though” is used instead of “thought.” There is another point where “your” is used instead of “you.” It is not known if these typos were made by Mrs. Whitman or by the transcriber for the “Transactions.” In addition, there is a reference to a “Monsieur Bayette.” This probably should have been Mr. Payette. ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Wieletpoo, Oct. 4th, 1842.

My Dear Husband: – The line you sent me to-day by Aps did me great good. I though I was cheerful and happy before it came; but on the perusal of it I found that it increased my happiness four-fold. I believe the Lord will preserve me from being anxious about you and I was glad to hear you say with so much confidence that you trusted in Him for safety. He will protect you I firmly believe. Night and day shall my prayer ascend to Him in your behalf and the cause in which you have sacrificed the endearments of home, at the risk of your life, to see advancing, more to the honor and glory of God. Mr. G. and family did not leave until this morn; they spent the night here, which was a great relief to me. I am sorry we forgot your pencil, comb and journal. Aps brought back Mr. Lovejoy’s – said you left it in camp. He told me quite a story about the

Prince stopping you, and so did Ipnantatawiksa. Prince came in very pleasant this afternoon – said he wanted John to go up and help him to-morrow.

5th. In arranging the cupboard to-day, I found that you had not taken the compass as you designed to. I fear you will suffer for the want of it; wish I could send it to you with the other things you have forgotten. I intended to have spoken to you about purchasing one or two pair of spectacles. Perhaps you will think of it. Mr. G. and family had some trouble in getting to Walla Walla yesterday. The cart broke. Hannah had an ague fit and one of the children – Helen – is recovering; she has appeared quite well to-day. I feel in much better health than when you left. You will see by this that I do not neglect the tree you have given me to cultivate. Where are you to-night, precious husband? I hope you have been prosperous to-day and are sleeping sweetly. Good night, my loved one.

7th. *My Dear Husband:* – I got dreadfully frightened last night. About midnight I was awakened by some one trying to open my bedroom door. At first I did not know what to understand by it. I raised my head and listened awhile and then lay down again. Soon the latch was raised and the door opened a little. I sprang from the bed in a moment and closed the door again, but the ruffian pushed and pushed and tried to unlatch it, but could not succeed; finally he gained upon me until he opened the door again and as I suppose disengaged his blanket (at the same time I calling John) and ran as for his life. The east dining room door was open. I thought it was locked, but it appears that it was not. I fastened the door, lit a candle and went to bed trembling and cold, but could not rest until I had called John to bring his bed and sleep in the kitchen. It was in such a time that I found he was too far off. Had the ruffian persisted I do not know what I should

have done. I did not think of the war club, but I thought of the poker. Thanks be to our Heavenly Father. He mercifully “delivered me from the hand of a savage man.” Mungo arrived in the night some time and came in to see me this noon. I told him about the Indian coming into my room – the first I spoke of it to any one. Soon after he went to Walla Walla and left his wife with me. I did not think to write by him. He returned this eve, bringing letters from Mr. McKinlay and Mr. Gray, who it seems is not off yet, urging me to remove immediately to Walla Walla. Mungo told them of my fright last night; it alarmed them very much. Mr. McK. and wife were coming up here to-morrow and she was going to stay some time with me, but he says he will not do it now, but insists upon my removing there immediately. He has told Mungo to stay until he comes on Monday and to-morrow he sends back the wagon for me to be ready to go on Tuesday. I shall go if I am able. They appear so anxious about me; doubtless it is not safe for me to remain alone any longer. In talking to Mr. McKay and Feathercap about it, I told them I should leave and go below – I could not stay and be treated so. I told them I came near beating him with the war club; they said it would have been good if I had done so and laid him flat so that they all might see who he was. Some think there will be no further danger. I think it safer for me to go now, as our friends are so anxious about me, and Mr. and Mrs. McK. so kindly offer to prepare a room to make me comfortable, and Mrs. G. says, “Bring a small stove with you.” Mungo appears quite humble – says he is sorry for his bad conduct and wants I should teach his wife to write or rather have her work for me. He came near having a fight with the one that had the first claim upon her. In the first place the Indian stole one of his horses. M. went and took it back again. He was then met by him and others armed with bows and arrows. M. resorted to his pistol, but

Charles told him not to shoot him. They settled it by his requesting some present and M. paying him a shirt. Messrs. W. and E. did not marry them, but sent him to you for your direction. M. gave for his wife 4 horses, 1 gun, 1 coat, vest, pantaloons, leggings, 2 shirts and 100 loads of ammunition and a blanket. The poor girl had everything taken from her but the dress she had on. Ask Deborah how she would like beginning in the world in that style. For my part I should prefer the winter just past rather than just begun for such a beginning.

My good woman did not go away as we expected when you paid her. She came in sick on Wednesday; I gave her some pills and this morning she came again and has washed for me. Pitiitosh's wife came also and I set her to work as I had enough to do before the day was gone. Feathercap's wife came in and set herself to work. She has done so before, since you left. Cleaned out the cellar and helped arrange the things brought from the other house. John ground for them to-day – our Indians.

Sat. eve, 8th – I do not feel as sad and lonely this eve as I always have formerly done when you have been away. The tree you had given me to cultivate no doubt has a good effect upon me. You could not have selected one so useful to me. I see plainly that it will not fail to test my affection for my dear husband in the end. I hope you do not have a sad moment about me. Where are you to-night, my love, preparing to spend the holy Sabbath. My heart has met thine at the mercy seat and I trust blessings are in store for you on the morrow, both for body and mind. Methinks you have taken leave of Monsieur Bayette and gone a comfortable day beyond. The Indians say more Americans are coming – perhaps I shall hear from you again. Again let me say, be not anxious for me – for the sympathies of all are excited for me the moment they hear you have gone. I

shall be well taken care of and no doubt shall have more letters to answer than I am able to write. Received one to-day from Mr. Spalding expressing the kindest sympathy and concern, both for you and myself, and desire for the success of your undertaking. He is coming here next week; says Mr. Eells will be here at the same time. It is the Lord sustains me; I know it must be that or I should not feel as happy about you as I do, and I trust you feel no less his supporting hand than I do. O, may we continue to feel it until we are brought together again rejoicing in his goodness.

The Indians have been so engaged in singing their hunting songs for several days past that but few have come around the house until to-day. The bride has attracted them, I suppose. How will you feel, dear husband, when you seat yourself in Sister Julia's house, or with our mothers, and not see the windows filled with Indians, and the doors also; will you not feel lost? I can scarcely imagine how you will feel. Could it consistently with duty have been so I should rejoice to be a partaker with you of the feelings necessarily produced by a visit to those dear firesides – but I am happy in remaining, while you are permitted the prospect – and I hope for the reality of seeing those beloved objects once more.

Sabbath eve, 9th – My dear husband would like to know what kind of a Sabbath we have had here, for I know his heart is with the people. Ellice, who brought me Mr. Spalding's letter, was their minister today. This afternoon I had a Bible class in English with him, John and Mungo, besides the time I spent with the children. He read and appeared to understand very well. He thinks he loves the Saviour. I urged the duty of secret prayer in addition to his family worship, and showed him the passage in Matthew. He said he would in future attend to the duty daily. He told me yesterday that if he had

been here he would have gone with you to the States. Although I am alone as to associates and my husband is gone, yet I have not been lonely to-day. The presence of the Saviour fills every vacancy. My little children appear thoughtful and solemn. Helen said, "Will father come home to-day?" when the people were assembling for worship. She is quite well now.

12th. – *My Dear Husband*: – I am now at Walla Walla – came here yesterday; was too unwell to undertake the journey, but could not refuse, as Mr. McKinlay had come on purpose to take me. He came in the wagon and brought the trundlebed and I laid down most all the way. To-day I have been scarcely able to get off the bed; feel a little better tonight, so I thought I must write a little to you, although it must be but a little, for the want of strength. The Indians did not like my leaving very well – seemed to regret the cause. I felt strongly to prefer to stay there if it could be considered prudent, but the care and anxiety was wearing upon me too much. Good night, beloved husband.

Friday eve, 14th. – *My Dear Husband*: – Your letter written last Saturday, the 8th, was handed me this afternoon by Raymond. I rejoice to hear of your prosperity so far, and hope by this time you are near Fort Hall.

17th. – I undertook to write to you last Friday, but was too sick to do it and had to give it up. Took a powder of quinine and calomel that night – the next day and yesterday could scarcely go or lie in bed. I suffered much for the conveniences of our dear home; think I received serious injury in sleeping on damp made blankets for a bed, for I have been sick ever since I have been here. I anticipated being not as comfortable here as at home, and could I have been left a week longer I should have preferred it, for I did not think I should be further molested, but Mr. McKinlay would not leave me there any

longer. Mr. and Mrs. McKinlay are very kind, but they know not how to make one as easy and comfortable as Mr. Pambrun used to. It has been warmer for two days past and the stove is now up, so that I am pretty comfortable situated now.

But why should I say so much about myself? My dear husband does not give me such an example. Indeed, I wish to hear so much about your own and my other self, and hear so little when you do write, that I probably am more particular than I otherwise would be in speaking of myself.

Mr. McDonald arrived yesterday from Vancouver. The ship "Victoria" is not in. He says Mr. Ermatinger has become a Catholic. He wrote you and sent me a box of raisins.

Letters arrived today from Messrs. W. and Eells. They have no idea that you are at Fort Hall, as you probably are at this time. They wish an "invoice of property taken by Mr. G." but he has left none. I shall write him that they wish it.

Mr. Walker has written you. His closing remark is, "Be assured that whether you go or stay, you and Mrs. W. will have our prayers and best wishes for your peace and usefulness. May the Lord direct us all." The letters came to Wioletpoo and the mule was sent, but the bearers returned without coming here, and of course no opportunity of sending them the intelligence of your departure.

I have filled this sheet – perhaps I shall another before the express arrives. Mr. Perkins has sent word to have me come down there in the express boats without fail. I have not yet determined what I shall do. Should like to be relieved of the care of David if I could while you are gone, but do not know as I can. I want to see Mr. S. before then, if I conclude to go.

Your affectionate wife,

Narcissa Whitman.

*** End of the original document from October 4, 1842 ***

*** Date: October 22, 1842 ***

*** Author: Mrs. Narcissa Whitman ***

*** Recipient: Dr. Marcus Whitman ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 19th reunion, 1891, p. 167 ***

*** The original document starts below this line ***

Walla Walla, Oct. 22, 1842.

My Dear Husband: – The word is given that the express is arriving and I hasten to write you my farewell for the present, praying earnestly that we may be permitted to meet again and spend many years together in love, serving the Lord and in building up his cause. Your letters, how they have cheered me, especially to see your confidence and trust in the Lord; both for yourself and me in the time of trouble and danger. I have made up my mind not to expect you until late next summer. Indeed, much as I shall and do want to see you, I prefer that you stay just as long as it is necessary to accomplish all your heart's desire respecting the interest of this country, so dear to us both – our home.

And especially do I wish you to stay long enough to visit all our dear relatives and friends, both for yourself and me. Will it not be too true, that while enjoying the society of those loved ones, my husband will wish dear wife was along to make her own visits and give zest to his? I surely have the vanity and the evidence to think so, and am greatly comforted with it.

We have had a false alarm about the express. I am glad they have not come, for I am not ready for them yet. Think I shall go down to Mr. Perkins' if they do not arrive here and pass on the Sabbath.

Mr. Spaulding is here; he came yesterday. He has had considerable trouble with the Indians which prevented his coming last week. Spends the Sabbath here.

Mr. McDonald left yesterday P. M. Have had a very interesting visit with him. He was greatly surprised to hear you were off. Spoke of you with interest – wished very much to see you, and from what I could infer, he intended to open his heart to you relative to his present and future situation. He manifested a great desire to read serious books and goes to-day to Waiilatpu to select from the library for his reading this winter. Notwithstanding his hilarity and glee, he is a man of deep thought and serious feelings. He has a praying sister who does not forget him in her anxiety for the salvation of his soul, and I feel constrained to join mine to hers, and O may the blessings of Abraham's God descend upon him!

He takes six bags of flour from the mill into the Snake country. He brought me a keg of fresh apples from Vancouver, and ever since we have been enjoying ourselves on apple pies. What would you think of having our friends send us some dried fruits from the States? Perhaps it is not warrantable to make the expense for the gratification of the taste.

Mrs. Eells expressed great anxiety for your comfort in the journey, sent you some dried apples to take along with you.

Mr. S. has opened a barrel, directed to you, and divided the contents equally among the four families. He has done it very exact and much to his own satisfaction.

My dear husband, what will you do about seeing Mrs. Munger's relatives while you are in the States? It would be a great kindness to them if you could see them and give them some account of her situation and trials here. It just came to my mind as I, in looking over my file of letters, saw her brother Hoisington's letter to you. I have heard nothing more from her since you left.

I hope you will see Mrs. Mather, if she is still living, and tell her how much I love her and thank her for her good, long letters, and hope she will write many more such.

I forgot – rather I mentioned in my other letter Tanatua's report from the priest. He says he promised to send one up from the States to settle on the Uilla next summer.

The Indians that met you beyond Grande Ronde appeared very happy to say that they had seen you and to hear something of your plans about returning, from yourself. Stik-as really mourns about you, that he did not come and see you before you left. I believe it is a great comfort to them to see me left behind. They tell me they are waiting to see where I go, before they decide where to go for the winter. The little children's eyes brighten when I speak of you and they love to have me do so. They say you are gone a long time and wish to know when you will come again.

Almost three long weeks have passed since we exchanged the parting kiss and many, very many, long weeks are yet to come before we shall be permitted, if ever in this world, to greet each other again. I think of you and feel as if you were in my heart continually. I follow you night and day, and shall through the whole journey, in my imagination and prayers. I as confidently believe and trust in the Lord concerning you, as I learn from your letter that you do, and it affords me unspeakable satisfaction to know that my heart is as your heart in this matter. I do believe we shall be permitted to meet

again. I cannot feel otherwise, and I as confidently believe you will be blest in the object of your visit to the States.

If I go to Vancouver next summer I think I shall come back again so as to be here when you return. Mr. Grant is ordered to come down so that I shall expect to receive a letter from you about the first of January.

By this time I expect you are more than half way to Winter – so the distance widens between us – but I am thankful that it is our bodies only that are separated and that absence and distance cannot make a space between our hearts. “Love is stronger than death.”

Read this letter, my husband, and then give it to my mother – perhaps she would like once more to take a peep into one of the sacred chambers of her daughter’s heart – it may comfort her, seeing she cannot see her face again in the flesh. But my better self I hope she will be permitted to see, and delight her eyes and heart with the sight, to the satisfaction of her soul – and my beloved father, too. O, their precious lives! and may it give a thrill of joy to their hearts before unknown, to think they still have a child, though a poor, weak one, on heathen grounds.

My husband, what can I say more to you tonight? I wish you sweet sleep and a quiet rest under the shadow of Almighty love and to more mercy, and may the calm smile of the Savior’s presence cheer you, and a Sabbath day’s blessing be your portion and that of your companion in travel. So prays

Your ever affectionate wife,

Narcissa W.

*** End of the original document from October 22, 1842 ***