

*** Date: January 30, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Laura Brewer ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions –21st reunion, 1893, p. 170 ***

*** Comments: There is one point in this document where the phrase “presnme” is used instead of “presume.” ***

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

Waiilatpu, Jan. 30th, 1844.

Beloved Sister: – I received your kind letter and the accompanying book, a short time since and enjoyed to hear that the blessings of our kind Heavenly Father are still resting upon you and yours. May they still be continued and your precious lives be preserved long for the poor heathen’s sake.

I will do as you desire and forward the memoir of Mrs. Smith to Mrs. Eells, as I shall have a good opportunity by my husband when he goes to attend upon Mrs. Walker, the last of next month.

After I arrived at Walla Walla last fall, I spent a week there, and during the time I wrote several letters and sent back by the express. Since that time I have not been able to write to any one. I was not well when I left W. W., yet I thought I could endure to ride here in one day in a wagon, but it proved too much for me. We were in the evening late before we could reach home, as they had to go slow on my account, and I took cold. For six weeks after, I scarcely left my room, and most of the time was confined to my bed

more or less; – could take no care of my family, or but little. Indeed, I was in a much more miserable state than I was last winter while with you. About the twentieth of Dec. I was taken very suddenly with the inflammation of the bowels, and for a few days my life was despaired of. But the Lord in His infinite mercy directed and blessed means for my restoration in answer to prayer.

Since that time I have gradually gained my usual strength so that I am able to see to my domestic concerns more than I have any time since my return. I have not suffered from the disease I took medicine for last summer, but a new and more precarious one has discovered itself, since my return, yet of long standing. It consists of an organic affection of the main artery below the heart, a beating tumour which is liable to burst and extinguish life at any moment. There is no remedy for it, so I never expect to enjoy better health than I do at present; never do I expect to continue long on the earth.

You expressed an assurance that I enjoyed the presence of my Saviour in my affliction. It has, indeed, been so for the most of the time. I feel that His mercies are very great to me and that I can say with the Apostle, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” So long as it pleases Him to spare my life, I should like to live for my family and the poor Indians’ sake. Notwithstanding I felt such a dread to return to this place of moral darkness, after enjoying so much of civilized life and Christian privileges, yet now I am here, I am happy and love my work and situation and desire to live long to see the cause of Christ advanced in this dark land. Indeed, I think I never enjoyed the privilege of being a missionary better than this winter, although I cannot do but little if any more than instruct my family and pray for and sustain the hands of my dear husband in his labours.

My family consists of six children and a Frenchman that came from the mountains and stops with us without invitation. Mary Ann, however, is with Mrs. Littlejohn now. Two English girls, Ann and Emma Hobson, one 13 and the other 7, of the party stopped with us; husband engaged to take them in the first part of the journey, but when they arrived here they went directly to W. Walla, being persuaded not to stay by some of the party on account of the Indians. When I arrived at W. W. they saw me and made themselves known to me and expressed a desire to come home with me. The girls were so urgent to stop that I could not well refuse them, and their father was obliged to give them up. I felt unwilling to increase my family at that time, but now have no reason to regret it, as they do the greater part of my work and go to school besides. I should like to keep on and tell you how I found things when I reached home; but this sheet is full; I will, however, take another and direct it to Sister Perkins, and as it is but the continuation of this, I presume she will allow you the privilege of reading it. I sympathize with you and Mrs. M. in the affliction of a broken breast. Please remember me to her if with you.

We send you a bunch of twine and desire to exchange it for some shoe thread if you are willing and can spare it.

I often think and dream of you and the scenes of the past. Neither do I forget you in my weak supplications at a throne of grace and the people for whom you labour; but especially at the seasons of our mothers' meetings do I feel a meeting of hearts around the mercy seat clearer and sweeter to me than all this earth can afford.

Kind regards to your dear husband, and please give many kisses to the sweet babes for me.

Your sister,

N. Whitman.

Mrs. L. L. Brewer,

Wascopum.

*** End of the original document from January 30, 1844 ***

*** Date: January 31, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Elvira Perkins ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 173 ***

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

Wailatpu, Jan. 31st, 1844.

Beloved Sister: – My story was so long that I could not put it all on one sheet, so I told Sister Brewer I would take another and direct it to you, for I presume you would allow her the perusal. Before I begin, however, I will speak of the interest of this day to us as mothers, it being the last Wednesday of the month, and according to our constitution we have agreed to observe it as a day of fasting and prayer on our own account and our children's. It did not occur to me last winter while I was with you. It is a change that has been recently made in our constitution. It is a pleasing thought to feel that on this day our hearts centre at one point, namely, the Mercy Seat, with all our interesting charges in our arms as the mothers of old were agreed in bringing their children to the Saviour while on the earth. Although we are so widely separated in person, yet we meet there and feel that our hearts are one for our object is one, and a dear one, too, to every mother's heart. O when shall we be permitted to see these heathen mothers as anxious and enjoy as much comfort in bringing their children to the Saviour in such meetings as is their privilege to? Perhaps you may live to see it, but I have no reason to think I shall. I have written to Sister B. the particulars concerning my health

which I must refer you. I must begin my story, or I shall not be able to finish it even on this sheet.

When I arrived home, I found Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn occupying my bedroom. She was sick, having been confined a few days before I came. The room east of the kitchen, Mr. East and family occupied – four children, all small. Mr. Looney, with a family of six children and one young man by the name of Smith, were in the Indian room. My two boys, Perrin Whitman and David, slept up-stairs. Alex., the Frenchman, in the kitchen, and Mary Ann and Helen in the trundle-bed in the room with Mr. Littlejohn. The dining room alone remained for me, husband and my two English girls; all of these were fed from our table except Mr. Looney's family, and our scanty fare consisted of potatoes and corn meal, with a little milk occasionally, and cakes from the burnt wheat. This was a great change for me from the well furnished tables of Waskopum and Willamette.

Thus it continued for four weeks with the exception of the slaying of a lean hog as often as required. Besides those fed at our table, there were three families in Mr. Gray's house that were supplied with provisions by us; one a widow woman with three children, whose husband was drowned in crossing the Snake river, and another with four, and an aged couple. These constitute the foreign inhabitants of Waiilatpu.

In about five weeks after my return, Mr. L. and family removed into a room prepared for them over the cellar, Mr. Looney to the Prince's house up the river, and Mr. East to Mr. Spalding's, taking with them one of the daughters of Mrs. Evers, the widow, to live with Mrs. S. During all this period and for some time after I was too sick to make any effort at arranging my house, or to have the care of my family, and the confusion and

noise distressed me exceedingly, for every child about the house, my own with the rest, were as wild and uncontrollable as so many wild animals.

As soon as Mrs. L. recovered her health and got settled, she opened a school for the children of the white inhabitants which numbers fifteen scholars. Now our children are quite tame and manageable and we feel that they are all enjoying a great privilege. How many times I have thought of Henry and Ellen and wished they could enjoy the same. For about a month past my health has so much improved that I have had strength to set some part of my house in order by degrees and to relieve my husband in his care of the family in a good measure. He never expects me to be anything more than an invalid, consequently my labours will be circumscribed.

I hope your dear husband will favour us with his presence at our expected meeting, accompanied by Mr. Lee.

In all things I desire to be submissive to the will of my Saviour, although at times I have felt that it was trying to be taken away in the midst of my days and without accomplishing more for Christ. The Lord's time is the best for us if we can always feel it to be so, which I desire to do.

Do pray for your unworthy sister,

N. Whitman.

Mrs. Elvira Perkins,

Waskopum.

*** End of the original document from January 31, 1844 ***

*** Date: April 12, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Honorable Stephen Prentiss ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 56 ***

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

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

Waiilatpu, Oregon Territory,

April 12th, 1844.

My Beloved Father: – I was coming up the Columbia river from the Willamette and Vancouver with Rev. Jason Lee when your welcomed letter reached me. My husband had each of the stations of the Mission to visit before he could come after me. Mr. Lee brought me on my way home as far as The Dalles, to Mr Perkins, one of their stations, where I spent the winter of my husband’s absence. I remained there a few days, and my long absent doctor came for me. It was a joyful and happy meeting and caused our hearts to overflow with love and gratitude to the Author of all our mercies, for permitting us to see each other’s faces again in the flesh. We came home immediately after a short visit with friends there. My health, which had been quite poor some of the time of his absence, was somewhat improved, but the voyage up the river, or rather the exposure of rain, cold and fatigue, and also the journey from Walla Walla here, proved

injurious to me. I was so unwell when I reached home that I could scarcely get about the house for several weeks. I continued to decline, or, rather, had two attacks of remittent fever until the last of December, when I was taken with a very severe attack of inflammation of the bowels and bloating which threatened almost immediate death. The second night of the attack, we almost despaired of my living. From the first, I was taken with excruciating pain and spitting bilious fluid from the stomach, and could keep nothing down, nor effect a motion of the bowels sufficient to afford a permanent relief; a clyster of salts was introduced into the bowels with a long tube and stomach pump the second night, and followed by a portion of the same medicine in the morning, which soon gave signs of relief. The cathartic operated favorably and thoroughly, and I recovered almost immediately so as to be able to sit up and be about the room. Previous to this, and almost as soon as husband returned and inquired into my case, he discovered a beating tumor near the umbilicus and fears it is an aneurism of the main aorta below the heart. If what he fears is true, he says there is no probability or possibility of a cure, or of my ever enjoying anything more than a comfortable degree of health, and I am liable at any moment to a sudden death. While I was at Vancouver, I placed myself under Doctor Barclay's care, a surgeon of the H. B. Company's. He discovered that I had an enlargement of the right ovary and gave me iodine to remove it. I was very much improved by his kind attentions for that complaint, and had it not been for the other difficulty of the aorta which was not at that time discovered by Doctor Barclay, although it existed, I might have recovered my health. But the medicine I took for the cure of one tumor was an injury to the other, and for three months after my husband's return, my situation was a source of deepest anxiety to him and he greatly feared that he was about

to be bereaved. But the Lord dealt in infinite loving kindness to us both, and in answer to prayer, raised me up again. Yes, beloved parents, while I was in that precarious state, and almost without hope that I should survive many hours, dear brother Littlejohn, who is now with us, prayed for me with the full assurance that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord heard and answered.

I am now much more comfortable than at that time husband expected I ever could be. I am able to take the whole care of my family and aid in doing the most difficult part of the work, or that that I cannot get done by others. During the first three months after my return to the station, husband was confined with the care of me and was obliged to have the whole care of the family upon his mind at the same time with his other duties. Our family was large and at the time I arrived, there were two large families of the emigrants in our house besides Mr. Littlejohn's, and our own consisted of six children and two hired men. We have written about our half breed children, those we had before the doctor left; in addition to those is Perrin, our nephew, and two English girls of the emigrating party of last year. One of them is thirteen and the other six; they are motherless; they have both required much training, but I hope to realize much benefit from them if I should succeed in keeping them.

This paper is so rough that it makes my writing look very miserable and I fear father and mother will scarcely be able to read it. I should take common-sized letter paper did I not wish to write more than one sheet. Last fall I did not write a single letter home. I was not able to, and feared I should never have the privilege again. Writing injures me very much, and unless I feel more than usually well I find it exceedingly

difficult to attempt it, especially as I am situated; having just as much labor and care as a weak person ought to have, and much more that needs to be done.

My beloved parents need not be surprised should they hear of my death soon. Ever since the fall of 1840, the sickness I had at that time, I have been declining. Every spring I revive and feel quite well, and feel as if I should regain my health again, but every fall and winter I am very miserable. I may live several years yet, with care and favoring myself, but I do not expect it. My dear parents must wish to know how my mind stands affected in view of death. I can sincerely say that "I would not live always." Yet so long as I can be permitted to live and be a benefit to the living and the cause of Christ, I desire to. At times I long to be at rest, to be free from sin and its defilements and be made complete in the righteousness of our dear Saviour. Earth and the things of this world in themselves considered have no charms for me. I can resign them all for a place in the presence of Jesus. I feel that I am a miserably poor sinner, and unworthy of a name or a place among the "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty." Yet I hope and trust alone in the merits of him who is infinitely worthy, for salvation from all sin and unrighteousness. He is my all, and I desire to be His entirely.

Last winter I felt in some considerable degree what is one of the missionary's greatest trials, to be sick and nigh unto death, and to die away from father, mother, brothers and sisters, and sympathizing friends. It is, indeed, no small trial for flesh and blood to endure, but thanks to God, His cheering presence can more than supply the absence of all these. Do my dear parents cease not to pray for your afflicted daughter that I may be prepared; ready, watching and waiting for the summons to depart and be with Christ "which is far better." For His sake and the missionary cause, I could live long and

toil and labor through many a wearisome day and night to aid in accomplishing His great work. But as He directs, so I desire to follow, and to say, "The will of the Lord be done."

I have something to say concerning the manner in which I spent my time last summer while the doctor was gone. I forget when was the last time I wrote you. I think, however, it was last spring. I came from Mr. Perkins in April and visited the station and went to Walla Walla in May to avail myself of the opportunity of a passage in the brigade boats the first of June. We reached Vancouver in five days, remained there until the middle of July and then went to the Willamette Falls, where I spent three weeks very pleasantly in the families of Mr. Abernethy and Mr. Walters of the Methodist Mission. In August, the Company's ship was about leaving in which Mr. and Mrs. Lee of Waskopum was about to depart in her; also Dr. Babcock and wife and Mr. and Mrs. Frost, all Methodist missionaries. I went down to the mouth of the Columbia river to see them depart and to get a view of the Pacific ocean. I enjoyed the voyage down and my visit there very much. The scenery of the ocean and the bar was new to me. I also had a visit with the families of the Mission at the Clatsop station. Mr. and Mrs. Parrish, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond, Mr. and Mrs. Judson and family, and Mrs. Olley [Olney?] had come down for the benefit of Mrs. Judson's health. Mr. Leslie and Mr. Jason Lee were there also. I spent a day or two on board ship with Mrs. Lee, in whose society I enjoyed so much satisfaction while at Waskopum. Visited the celebrated Astoria, now Fort George, and the day the ship sailed went round Clatsop Point to the station and spent nearly a week there and enjoyed some precious religious privileges with the brethren and sisters there and returned with Mr. J. Lee and Mr. Leslie to the Willamette Falls, and immediately proceeded up the river to the upper Mission and visited the families of Rev.

Mr. Hinds, Mr. Beers and others, and also Mr. and Mrs. Gray, my old associates. While there a camp meeting was held near by, which I attended and a precious season it was to my soul. To witness again the anxious tear and hear the deep-felt inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" as I once used to, filled me with joy inexpressible. It continued four days and resulted in the conversion of almost all the impenitent on the ground. From this precious season, after a week or two, we came to the Falls where a protracted meeting was held. While that was in progress, the news came that my husband was on his return with a hundred and forty wagons containing an immense party of emigrants, and that probably he was now at Waiilatpu. This was cheering news, as I had just heard from the Islands through Mr. Hall that, in recent news from the States to the Islands down as late as April, 1843, no mention was made of his arrival. This had given me much anxiety, but it was not long before the other intelligence came. The last week in September, I left the Falls for Vancouver and The Dalles in company with Mr. J. Lee, the Superintendent of that Mission, and turned my back upon many dear friends in Christ with whom I was permitted to form an acquaintance and a Christian attachment never to be forgotten.

Having been so long secluded, I was well prepared to enjoy society and I may well say that some of the moments spent there with Christian friends were among the happiest in my life. We made a short stay at Vancouver and then proceeded on our way up the river. Passing the Cascades and making the portage, we had continual rain, and before we reached the Dalles, I took cold to my great injury, as it afterwards proved. Between the Cascades and The Dalles, I received father's letter with several others from friends, also sisters Jane, C. and H.; I am greatly obliged to them for writing. Mr. Lee waited at The Dalles until the doctor came. It was pleasing to see the pioneers of the two

Missions meet and hold counsel together. Soon we parted and I turned my face with my husband towards this dark spot, and dark, indeed, it seemed to be to me when compared with the scenes, social and religious which I had so recently been enjoying with so much zest.

When we parted with Mr. Lee, we little thought that our first news from him would be, that he had set his face toward his native land. But it was, indeed, so. He has gone again and I should rejoice if dear father and mother would see him. He has shown me great kindness during my lonely state, and may the Lord reward him for it. He has been deeply afflicted in his domestic relations. He has buried two excellent wives, and a little son. A little daughter of his last wife, still survives to comfort and cheer him in his loneliness. She has gone with him to the States; and so has Rev. Mr. Hinds and his wife. As they are from the region of Allegheny county, I hope father will see them.

It must appear singular to friends at home to hear of the return of so many missionaries from Oregon. So it seems to us; but we have not the discouragements which our friends of that Mission have. The Indians of the Willamette and the coast are diminishing rapidly; but they have another work put into their hands. Settlers are coming into the country like a flood and every one of these need the gospel preached to them as much as the heathen. That Society have been and are doing a great deal of good in the lower country. Mr. Clark and Mr. Griffin, ministers of our denomination, are settled near on the Tualatin plains and are doing much good in the way of schools and preaching. I did not visit them, although greatly urged to; on account of my health I could not ride there, as it was some distance from the river.

I was greatly disappointed in not seeing Jane when the doctor returned. I fancied he would bring her, and so he would have done had a family been coming with whom it would have been prudent for her to come. I still hope some day to see her here. But I know not how. This I do know, that no one of my friends at home know of how much comfort she would be to me if she was here.

Sister Littlejohn is a great comfort to me. She acted the part of a sister to me during my sickness, but I do not always expect to keep her. Mr. Littlejohn is in poor health and unable to labor. His mind suffers greatly from dejection and melancholy, and he longs to go back to the States again.

Mr. and Mrs. Spalding and two children have been deeply afflicted the past summer, just before the doctor's return, with sickness, especially Mrs. S. She lay for several days expecting every moment would be her last, and no physician near. Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn was there at that time, and as soon as possible Mr. Geiger, who was at this station, was sent for, also Mr. Walker, to preach her funeral sermon – expecting she would die before he reached there. Her husband and children were sick at the same time and all must have perished had it not been that Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn were providentially there, having a short time before returned from Mr. Walker's. God in mercy spared them all and restored them back to health again. But Mrs. S. is feeble, and like myself, we feel cannot be expected to live long.

Since my return to the station, Mrs. S. has written me very kindly, showing that her feelings have undergone a change during her sickness, while in the near view of death and expecting every moment to enter the dark valley. This is a great consolation to us, and we hope and believe they both feel different towards us from what they did, and

surely they have great reason to, from husband's account of his visit to the rooms in Boston.

I desire never to pass through such scenes of trial as I have done, and God grant that I may never be called to. We both have spent a happy winter in each other's society. Having those unhappy difficulties removed makes a change in our every day feelings. We are happier in each other and happier in God and in our work than we could have been while laboring under those exciting difficulties – yea! soul-destroying difficulties, I may well say.

For more than a year past I have enjoyed an unwonted quiet resting upon God my Redeemer, especially during my husband's absence. Truly my Saviour was with me in those trying hours, and sustained me far beyond what I deserve. A calm, peaceful sense of His abiding presence was what I almost daily realized. Being free from any distracting cares of my family and the station, I had nothing else to do but rest myself in my Saviour's arms; and it would be well for me now if I were to do the same, instead of attempting to shoulder my cares, as I often do – to cast them on Him who has said "Cast thy burdens upon the Lord and He will sustain thee." I know this, and believe it, too, for I have sometimes realized it. But to have the constant habit of doing so is what I would gladly obtain and I know I may with diligence and prayerful watching thereunto.

I see I have almost exceeded my limits, and must think of closing. Father's letters are choice gems to me, and I hope he will continue to write as long as I live. O! that dear mother would put some of her thoughts on paper for the consolation of my heart. She does not know what joy it would give me. I am a thousand times thankful for all the

favors I receive from home, and shall write to all as many and as much as my weak state will admit.

Love to all, in which husband unites. I am sorry he did not have time to make a longer visit after going so far. Farewell, dear father and mother, and if I never write again till we meet in heaven,

Your ever affectionate daughter,

Narcissa Whitman.

Hon. Stephen Prentiss,

Cuba, Allegheny Co.,

N. Y., U. S. A.

*** End of the original document from April 12, 1844 ***

*** Date: April 24, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Laura Brewer ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 175 ***

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

Wailatpu, April 24, 1844.

Dear Sister Brewer: – I hear that you are alone and I thought I would write a little to comfort, or at least to assure you that I have not forgotten you or yours, although I am unable to write as much as I would like to. Your letter, together with the accompanying ones, came in a good time when they did us much good, and I have wanted very much to reply to them earlier, but have felt too unwell most of the time, or had so much care I could not find time when I was able. You have had the trouble of entertaining our winter visitors, and longer, too, I fear, than you knew how. I sympathize with you and hope provisions have not been as short with you as us, but fear they have been more so. We were greatly in hopes that we should have one of your number to visit with us this spring, but it seems Mr. and Mrs. P. and family have gone below. I hear nothing from Sister Abernethy nor any of them below; I desire to very much. I wish you could visit us this summer – will you not try? It would be so refreshing. Do come – all of you. How I do desire to enjoy another refreshing season of divine worship and social privileges, such as I used to last summer. But I do not know as I may ever in this world.

Our Indians have been very much excited this spring, but are now quiet. The influx of emigration is not a going to let us live in as much quiet, as it regards the people, as we have done.

I must close. This is a miserable letter and not worth reading; I have written in such haste. But this one thing be assured, I still love and think of you with increased interest, and if we meet no more in this world, it gives me joy to think we may meet in Heaven and there, being washed white in the blood of the Lamb, Praise Him continually.

Affectionately yours,

N. Whitman.

Mrs. L. L. Brewer,

Waskopum.

*** End of the original document from April 24, 1844 ***

*** Date: May 18, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Lydia Porter ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 176 ***

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

Waiilatpu, Oregon Territory,

May 18th, 1844.

Mrs. Lydia E. Porter, My Dear Sister: – It is impossible for me to describe the many pleasing associations that entwined around my heart as I perused the three tokens of affectionate remembrance received by the hand of my husband, from the friends of my early youth, the dearest friends of my heart, and friends of my Saviour, too. It would have been an indescribable favour to have participated with him in the visit; but this could not have been, short as it was. It is a great satisfaction to me and was to him to have seen your faces again in the flesh. That I shall ever be permitted to visit my dear native Prattsburg again is very uncertain. I do not desire to, so long as my poor inefficient services are needed here, much as I should enjoy the visit. I had rather try to induce my friends to come and see me and seek a home in Oregon. A wide door of usefulness is open here to the philanthropic and benevolent heart. Multitudes are flocking to this land and will continue to in still greater numbers, and for every purpose. And our anxious desire is that the salt of the earth should be found among them, also that this entire country may be seasoned with heavenly influence from above. The powers of

darkness have long held their undivided sway over this land, and we feel that Satan will not quietly yield his dominions to another. He is on the alert with all his hosts, and in as many ways as he has numbers employed to gain the entire victory to keep and drive from the field all who molest or disturb his quiet. Many souls are here for whom Christ died, and multitudes more unconcerned are hastening to this far-distant land to seek their fortune of wordly goods, regardless of their treasure in heaven. But thanks be to the hearer of prayer, many already have found Christ in Oregon, who have long rejected him in a gospel land. Last summer while husband was absent, I had the unspeakable happiness of attending two meetings of days at different places – while on a visit to the Willamette among our Methodist friends. Almost every soul was affected with divine truth and many, we trust, found peace in believing.

I left the station soon after husband's departure and spent the winter with Messrs. Lee, Perkins and Brewer's families, of the Methodist mission. My health was quite poor, indeed I was unable to ride to any of the stations of our mission, and being invited and desirous of visiting them, I availed myself of the opportunity of a passage down the river in the express boats. In April, returned to the station, and in June went to Vancouver and the Willamette on a visit, as there was no female society at the station. I enjoyed my visit much; having been so long from the civilized world, it seemed good to get among Christians once more. I was in the Willamette when husband arrived at this place. He could not come for me as he had to visit Brother Spalding's on an express, as Sister S. was then at the point of death and had been dangerously ill for some time. But she has been mercifully spared to us, and is now enjoying comfortable health. From Mr. S. he returned to the station to make arrangements for imparting provisions to the emigrants,

which took all the station raised the past year, leaving us to obtain our supplies from Brother Spalding. Immediately he was obliged to go a hundred and sixty miles to Brother Eells to attend Sister E. in her expected confinement. Before he returned I was making my way up the river under the protection of Rev. Jason Lee, superintendent of that mission, who was coming up as far as their mission at the Dalls. It was at this place we met after a separation of little more than a year, rejoicing in the mercy of God to us both in sparing our lives and permitting us to see each other again. We came home immediately and re-organized our family which had increased considerably. My health, which before had been very feeble, was most precarious for three months after my return. At one time I was brought very near the gates of death. I am at present by no means perfectly well, but am more comfortable than I then feared I ever should be. I desire to spend the remnant of my day to the glory of God, and to be in constant readiness for my departure, for I feel that it is not far distant.

Truly you and your dear husband have been deeply afflicted in the death of so many members of your beloved families. I feel to sympathize with you and your truly bereaved and aged father. Please present my love and kindest remembrances to him. I could not keep from weeping in hearing my husband's interesting description of him. Surely, what has he to bind him to earth when the most of his beloved family is in heaven. I love to think of them there as my own dear friends, for I hope soon to be with them.

Husband has been writing to Father Hotchkiss concerning this country, what I hope your dear husband will see, and with other friends be prevailed upon to come to this

country and adopt it as your own. Be assured nothing would give us greater pleasure than to see some of our Prattsburg friends here in Oregon.

I sincerely hope you will write me often, for I am anxious to hear more particulars concerning Mrs. Leland's death and her surviving family. You know not how much I enjoyed the reading of the Pastor's Wife which Mr. Malin kindly sent me. I had written her, as also Mrs. O. L. Porter, but have received no answers.

Please remember me affectionately to each member of your family, your Brother V. and P.'s family, and all Christian friends who may inquire. Forget not to write concerning your own dear children and your maternal association, for I desire much to know of its prosperity; also of the cause of Christ generally.

Yours sincerely and affectionately,

Narcissa Whitman.

Mrs. Lydia C. Porter,

Prattsburg,

Steuben County, N. Y.

Favour of W. Gilpin.

*** End of the original document from May 18, 1844 ***

*** Date: May 20, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Clarissa Kinny ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 179 ***

*** Comments: There is one point in this document where the phrase “ogether” is used instead of “together” and the letter “n” is used instead of “in” or some other word. ***

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

Waiilatpu, Oregon Territory.

May 20th 1844.

My Dear Clarissa: – I am glad you have begun to write me. I hope it will not be the last one I shall receive from you. You cannot do me so much good in any way, except by praying for me, as in writing me all about yourselves and beloved children. I want to see how you look and how you live. I try to be faithful on my part, although I have not so much time as you, and many more correspondents. My husband’s visit was very short, too much so to gain all the information I was in hopes he would bring me. Yet I am glad he has seen you, although I have not had the privilege. It would give me great enjoyment to visit you once more, but I cannot expect it; I am a missionary, and therefore cannot seek after comfort merely, but must be content to stay where I am and do the Lord’s work. Believe me, dear sister, I am most perfectly so. I would not be otherwise situated so long as the Lord wants me here.

You and sister Harriet seem anxious to make me laugh. Perhaps if you could see me you would not desire to. I feel but little disposition to, I can assure you, for I have more around me and within, to make me cry than to make me laugh. In the first place, my health is poor, and I feel as if I was not very far from Eternity. My family cares are numerous. I feel sometimes as if I had almost as many children as mother, although they are not my own. Yet I have the same care of them as if I was their own mother; and the native children are more difficult to manage than our own. Besides these, I have a sluggish heart within that requires constant watching. I desire to be cheerful, because that is a duty; but I find it hard work always to be so, especially when husband was gone. But the Lord supported me, else I could not have been at all.

For two weeks past Mrs. McKinlay has been here. She came to stay during her confinement, as there are no females at the Fort. She boards with Sister Littlejohn, who lives in the east wing of our house over the cellar. This morn we were called about four o'clock and in a short time she was delivered of a fine son. This is her second child born in this house. She had a daughter born two years ago now that died last fall with the croup.

Dear C., do you think we shall ever see you in Oregon? Husband has been writing to father and others, to hold out inducements for our friends to come into this country.

The Indians are roused a good deal at seeing so many emigrants, but they are foolish enough to wish to sell their lands.

Husband tells me that you and mother are in the same house together and that Harriet is close by. I think you must be happy n so many of you being so near together and having father and mother with you.

I wish they would come and live with me. True, they are considerably advanced, and you think too old to cross the Rocky mountains. We wintered an old couple last winter that had followed their children to this country, for the sake of benefiting them in the things of this world. They were considerable older than father and mother. They came in wagons all the way, and was sick, particularly the woman, most all the way. But the past winter she has fleshed and regained her health, better than it had been for years, notwithstanding our living was very plain – good beef, potatoes and cornmeal – no milk nor butter through the winter. We find it very good to dispense with horse beef and have plenty of cow beef in its place.

I do not know as I should be more surprised to see them than to see many that I have seen. True, it would be very fatiguing and distressing to both mind and body, for them both. I cannot say that I desire they should endure so much fatigue and suffering in their old age as they would necessarily to come and see me, unless there was a more ennobling object; but for a young couple just beginning in life, perhaps there is not a place where they would do better. Please tell Harriet that I shall not be able to answer her letter at this mail, as I have my Rushville friends to answer yet. Soon we hope to have a monthly mail to pass back and forth from here to the States, then I hope to receive letters often.

Remember me affectionately to your husband and all the friends there.

Ever your affectionate sister,

N. Whitman.

Mrs. Clarissa P. Kinny,

Cuba, Allegheny Co.,

New York.

Favour of W. Gilpin.

*** End of the original document from May 20, 1844 ***

*** Date: August 5, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Laura Brewer ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 181 ***

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

Waiilatpu, Aug. 5th, 1844.

My Dear Mrs. Brewer: – Tilaukikt is about starting for the Willamette, and I take the opportunity of replying to yours of June 10th, which was thankfully received. We know well how to sympathize with you in having such boys as Eli and Thomas about you, and for the trouble of those families in passing. We are all of us, I suppose, on the eve of another scene as last fall – the passing of emigrants – and as it falls the heavier upon my friends at the Dalls, I hope they have laid in a good stock of strength, patience and every needed grace for the siege. We have had no news from that quarter as yet, but cannot think it will be long before we shall hear.

We hear Mr. and Mrs. Gary are visiting you. Last week we sent an invitation to Mr. G. in a letter to Mr. Perkins, to have him visit us accompanied by Brother P. and any other member of your mission who could conveniently come, and we have been looking for and anxiously desire to see them. Perhaps our letter may not have been received. By the by, we never heard in all of our correspondence from the lower country, that there was a Mrs. Gary until our letters and papers from the Islands arrived. If she is still with

you, please do me the favour to present her our Christian salutations and a hearty welcome to Oregon, our adopted home.

We should be happy to have her visit us at the present time, if convenient. I can imagine myself with you, particularly in your enjoyments, both social and spiritual, and if it would be right, could envy you. Is Brother and Sister Waller there? We have heard that they were coming to the Dalls, but not that they were come. Do write us when you can. It does us good to know that you all are enjoying such privileges, if we must be deprived of them. I think my husband would have made you a visit if he could have known that it was not convenient for any of your number to come to Waiilatpu.

I wrote Sister Perkins last week. The Indian leaves this morning, and as I write in haste, you will please excuse the brevity of this note. I should like to hear the result of the late camp meeting.

Love to you all, in which the doctor unites.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

Narcissa Whitman.

*** End of the original document from August 5, 1844 ***

*** Date: October 9, 1844 ***

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

*** Recipient: Mrs. Clarissa Prentiss

Honorable Stephen Prentiss ***

*** Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 66 ***

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

Waiilatpu, Oct. 9th, 1844.

Beloved and Honored Parents: – I have no unanswered letters on hand, either from dear father and mother or any of the family, yet I cannot refrain from writing every stated opportunity. The season has arrived when the emigrants are beginning to pass us on their way to the Willamette. Last season there were such a multitude of starving people passed us that quite drained us of all our provisions, except potatoes. Husband has been endeavoring this summer to cultivate so as to be able to impart without so much distressing ourselves. In addition to this, he has been obliged to build a mill, and to do it principally with his own hands, which has rendered it exceedingly laborious for him. In the meantime, I have endeavored to lighten his burden as much as possible in superintending the ingathering of the garden, etc. During this period, the Indians belonging to this station and the Nez Perces go to Forts Hall and Boise to meet the emigrants for the purpose of trading their wornout cattle for horses. Last week Tuesday, several young men arrived, the first of the party that brought us any definite intelligence

concerning them (having nothing but Indian reports previous), among whom was a youth from Rushville formerly, of the name of Gilbert, one of husband's scholars.

Last Friday a family of eight arrived, including the grandmother, an aged woman, probably as old, or older than my mother. Several such persons have passed, both men and women, and I often think when I gaze upon them, shall I ever be permitted to look upon the face of my dear parents in this land?

25th – When I commenced this letter I intended to write a little every day, so as to give you a picture of our situation at this time. But it has been impossible. Now I must write as briefly as possible and send off my letter, or lose the opportunity. The emigration is late in getting into the country. It is now the last of October and they have just begun to arrive with their wagons. The Blue mountains are covered with snow, and many families, if not half of the party, are back in or beyond the mountains, and what is still worse, destitute of provisions and some of them of clothing. Many are sick, several with children born on the way. One family arrived here night before last, and the next morn a child was born; another is expected in the same condition.

Here we are, one family alone, a way mark, as it were, or center post, about which multitudes will or must gather this winter. And these we must feed and warm to the extent of our powers. Blessed be God that He has given us so abundantly of the fruit of the earth that we may impart to those who are thus famishing. Two preachers with large families are here and wish to stay for the winter, both Methodist. With all this upon our hands, besides our duties and labors for the Indians, can any one think we lack employment or have any time to be idle?

Mr. and Mrs. Littlejohn left us in September and have gone below to settle in the Willamette. We have been looking for associates this fall, but the Board could get none ready, but say, they will send next year. Am I ever to see any of my family among the tide of emigration that is flowing west?

Our mill is finished and grinds well. It is a mill out of doors or without a house; that we must build next year.

We have employed a young man of the party to teach school, so that we hope to have both an English school and one for the natives. My health has been improving remarkably through the summer, and one great means has been daily bathing in the river. I was very miserable one year ago now, and was brought very low and poor; now I am better than I have been for some time, and quite fleshy for me. I weigh one hundred and sixty-seven pounds; much higher than ever before in my life. This will make the girls laugh, I know. Mrs. Spalding's health is better than last year. She expects an increase in her family soon.

This country is destined to be filled, and we desire greatly to have good people come, and ministers and Christians, that it may be saved from being a sink of wickedness and prostitution. We need many houses to accommodate the families that will be obliged to winter here. All the house room that we have to spare is filled already. It is expected that there are more than five hundred souls back in the snow and mountains. Among the number is an orphan family of seven children, the youngest an infant born on the way, whose parents have both died since they left the States. Application has been made for us to take them, as they have not a relative in the company. What we shall do I cannot say;

we cannot see them suffer, if the Lord casts them upon us. He will give us His grace and strength to do our duty to them.

I cannot write any more, I am so thronged and employed that I feel sometimes like being crazy, and my poor husband, if he had a hundred strings tied to him pulling in every direction, could not be any worse off.

Dear parents, do pray earnestly for your children here, for their situation is one of great trial, as well as of responsibility.

Love from us both to you all. I am disappointed in not getting letters from some of the dear ones this fall, but so it must be and I submit.

Your affectionate daughter,

Narcissa.

Hon. Stephen Prentiss,

Cuba, Allegheny Co.,

New York.

*** End of the original document from October 9, 1844 ***