THE CONTRIBUTION OF MARCUS WHITMAN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1800-1850

by

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TO CAROL,

patient wife

fine typist

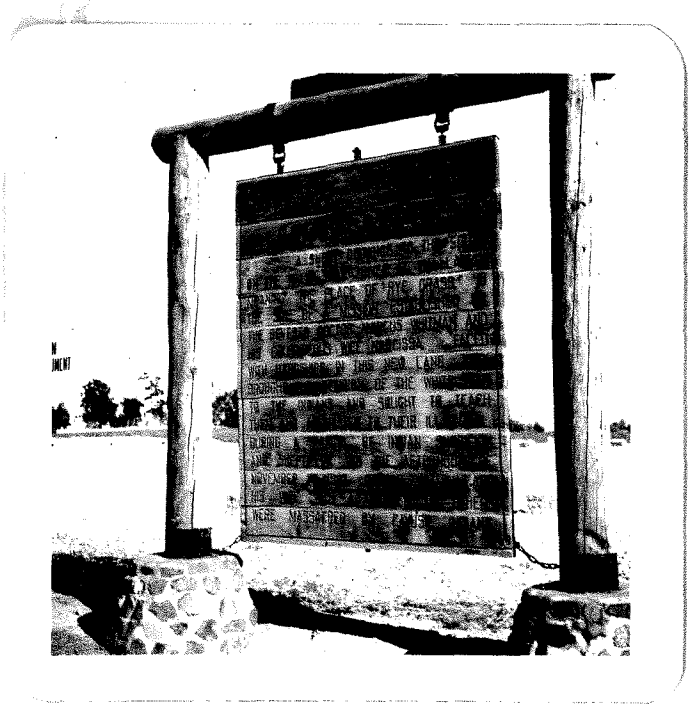
and continuing inspiration

without whose devoted efforts

this thesis

would have been impossible.

Picture taken by Dr. R. J. Black
at Whitman National Monument,
Washington, June, 1956.



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THE CONTRIBUTION OF MARCUS WHITMAN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1800-1850

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

1. The Problem Stated and Explained

It will be the concern of this thesis to discover what Marcus Whitman, an early Presbyterian missionary doctor, contributed to the development and extension of Presbyterian mission work in the Pacific northwest, laboring among both the Indians and American settlers of that region. Special attention will be given to the problem of finding out just what made this man "tick," his basic theology or philosophy of life and motives for service, as observable in his writings and the witness of those who knew him.

2. The Problem Delimited

The scope of this study will be restricted to the chronological period extending from 1800-1850, as this covers the entire life of Marcus Whitman. Only such references will be made to information of earlier or later date as is felt will throw light upon the problem at hand. In the interests of clarity, no reference will be made to denominations other than the Presbyterians, except those

such as the Methodists and Catholics which have a direct bearing upon the subject for investigation. It is assumed that the work of Marcus Whitman for the Presbyterian Church, also greatly benefited the mission work of other denominations. But no attempt will be made to demonstrate this, the entire matter being too broad for the purposes of this study.

3. The Problem Justified

It appears that very few people except those conversant with Presbyterian Church history or those who have been actual residents of the Pacific northwest, have ever heard of Marcus Whitman. Walt Whitman, yes, but Marcus Whitman is a stranger. It is quite disconcerting to the writer to discover how many good Christian people in the seminary classroom and elsewhere, have no knowledge whatsoever of this man who did so much to establish the Christian mission in the Pacific northwest, and to bring the gospel of Christ to men in darkness. It is especially sobering to note the number of Presbyterian students who have no knowledge of this man who is a part of their great Christian heritage.

It is the firm hope that in the writing of this thesis it can be made sufficiently clear that Marcus Whitman more than simply a great historical figure, was a truly dedicated man of God, a fact which some historians seem desirous of forgetting. An attempt will be made to discover what he contributed to the development and extension of the church and the cause of Christ in early America. For to such men

and women as Marcus Whitman, the present-day church of Jesus Christ owes a great and unpayable debt for lives of sacrifice and hardship lived to the glory of almighty God.

B. The Sources for the Study

The primary sources most relevant to the study at hand are hopelessly incarcerated either in Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, or in the University of Oregon. The originals of the Whitman letters, diaries, and like matter are beyond access.

Therefore, the primary materials available are books containing reproductions of these letters and diaries, and those written about the general concern of this thesis or the related historical period. These will be used to the fullest extent possible.

C. The Method of Procedure

The method of procedure will follow along historical-biographical lines. Beginning with an investigation of the conditions and forces which influenced or had a bearing upon the character and work of Whitman, such as history and family, a study will then be made of those people who labored with him in the Oregon Mission. The concluding chapter will

deal with the actual contribution of his life-work, ecclesiastical and political, and will include a brief examination of the controversy which has arisen in recent years, whether or not Whitman actually saved the Oregon territory for the United States when Great Britain was also laying claim to it.

D. Explanations

1. "Presbyterian"

It will immediately be noted that there is no modification of the term "Presbyterian" in the title of this thesis. The reason for this is evident but ought to be stated nevertheless, for it was not until the Civil War, that the unfortunate nomenclature of "Presbyterian Church U.S.A." and "Presybterian Church U.S." came into use. At the time in our nation's history covered in this study, the church was still united.

2. Relation of Presbyterian Church to American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions represented the cooperative efforts of three major denominations, the Congregational, the Presbyterian, and the Dutch Reformed Church. Though Whitman was a Presbyterian he went to Oregon under the jurisdiction of this interdenominational board. And since the Board had the official sanction of the Presbyterian Church, whatever Whitman may have done while in

its employ will be considered as contributing directly to the mission work of the Presbyterian Church.

In this connection it ought to be mentioned that the word, "mission," will be used when describing one of the individual mission stations. The word, "Mission," will refer to the entire group of mission stations and their occupants, the total missionary effort of the American Board missionaries in Oregon.

CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON MARCUS WHITMAN AND THEIR RESULTS

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FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON MARCUS WHITMAN AND THEIR RESULTS

A. Introduction

No historical figure can be studied adequately without taking into account the environment in which he lived and the times of which he was a part. Therefore it will be the chief concern of this chapter to study the major influences which affected the character and mission of Marcus Whitman.

Such factors as world and national history during the period of Whitman's life will be investigated, for full cognizance must be taken of those events in Europe and England which were then taking place in order to appreciate their effect upon American history and American missions. The developing history of the rapidly expanding United States must also be examined because it is inseparably related to the growth of westward migration and to the consequent development of Christian work among the American Indians.

The contribution of his family and his wife to the formation and growth of character and religious life in this frontier missionary will be noted and an analysis of his religious life and Christian character will then be made.

This will then lay the foundation for the remaining portion of the thesis. Succeeding chapters will be devoted to those who labored with Whitman in the cause of Christ, and to the actual contribution of Whitman to the development of Presbyterian missions among the Indians.

B. The Influence of History

1. World History

a. Political

In the year 1792 the common people of France rose up in arms against Louis XVI and Maria Antoinette, overthrew the national government, and set up a constitution of liberty. In so doing the free people of France borrowed much from the newly-formed American republic and the bold spirits of the American Revolution.[1] About this same time a war began between England and France which was to last with only brief interludes until the year 1815. American sympathies were with France, the American people remembering the part France had played in the American Revolution.[2] This feeling was intensified when the British began stopping American ships bound for French ports and, on the high seas, carrying off British-born sailors to fight for England in the war against France.

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1. Charles A. Beard, The History of the American People, pp. 212-213.
2. Ibid.

It was only through the tireless efforts of Washington and Hamilton that a second war with England was averted. The resulting Jay Treaty of neutrality with Britain was no more popular with many United States citizens than was the impressment of American seamen. But war had been avoided.

The years from 1794-1815 were important ones, not only on the continent, but for the United States as well. These years of fighting between England and France saw first one side gain the advantage and then the other. But before long there could be no doubt of the ultimate outcome. In 1794 Lord Howe defeated the French fleet. The next two years saw Napoleon gain victories over Holland and Austria, only to be defeated again, at the battle of the Nile against Lord Nelson. The year 1803 was a significant one, for with the renewal of hostilities between France and England, Napoleon came to see the impossibility of any longer hold - ing his possessions in the Mississippi River area of the United States.[1] This vast area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains had originally belonged to Spain, until she had signed a secret treaty with Napoleon in 1800 giving him the entire territory. Napoleon with his con- quering army was about to invade New Orleans and consolidate his gains, when the renewed warfare of 1803 made him see the impossibility of this. And so the United States was prov-

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1. Beard, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

identially spared from a French invasion[1] of that territory which was soon to become a part of the United States, a territory which would play such an important role in the opening of the west.

b. Economic

The end of the 18th century witnessed another revolution, a bloodless one. The industrial revolution which swept across England and the United States ushered in an era of mechanical inventions and power-driven machinery. For the next twenty-five years the development of factories progressed, and there was great expansion and development in international trade, accompanied by the rapid growth of seaport cities. It brought to the United States a new prosperity, but also new problems, as the tremendous increase in the production of cotton necessitated the acquisition of labor in great quantities. The answer -- more slaves.[2] The development of the reaper by Cyrus McCormick in 1834 greatly aided the farmer in his work just as Eli Whitney's cotton gin had revolutionized the processing of cotton in 1793. The new developments in transportation stemmed from Fulton's steamboat of 1807, and with the developing railroads of the 1820's,[3] the way was opened wider

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1. Beard, op. cit., p. 222.
2. Ibid., pp. 312-317.
3. Ibid., p. 327.

for an increasing population mobility and advancing immigration.

2. United States History

Though much of the history of our nation is linked with that of other nations, there are certain events which, for the purpose of this thesis, are better treated as isolated happenings in the main stream of world history, their bearing being more directly upon the United States than any other country.

a. The Louisiana Purchase

When Thomas Jefferson sent James Monroe to Paris with the orders to buy West Florida and New Orleans for two million dollars, he returned with the entire Louisiana territory which Napoleon had given him for the sum of fifteen million dollars, over seven times what Jefferson had intended to pay.[1] A great hue and cry immediately went up in this country from the camp of Jefferson's political enemies. Jefferson himself was uncertain about the entire matter, not wanting to add to the national debt. But public opinion in the west and south seemed to favor the purchase, so he signed the treaty and the Senate promptly endorsed his action. Thus in December, 1803, the United States acquired an area which practically doubled the existing size of the

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1. Beard, op. cit., p. 224.

United States.[1] Many easterners considered this the foolhardy purchase of an uninhabitable wilderness. But in 1903, just one hundred years later, this land was completely settled and valued at at least seven billion dollars or five hundred times the original purchase price.[2]

b. Relations with England

The causes leading up to the War of 1812 between England and the United States were several. As a result of the war between France and England, England blockaded French ports and the French blockaded the British. As the United States traded heavily with both countries, this was a serious situation indeed. Many in the United States wanted the international trade continued and favored a war with either or both countries. But Thomas Jefferson, the man of peace, had another solution, the Embargo Act of 1807. He hoped this act would bring both England and France to terms by prohibiting all American merchant ships from leaving port. The act failed of its intended end, and served only to cripple American commerce and to encourage smuggling until its repeal in 1809.[3]

Not only did the British blockade with the resulting American Embargo act cause bad feelings between the United States and England, but the high handed impressing of

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1. Beard, op. cit.,p. 225; Including the present states of Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and large portions of Louisiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming.
2. Ibid., p. 225.
3. Ibid., pp. 234-236.

American seamen by British ships on the high seas was an outrageous violation of human rights, and heightened the growing feeling against the British in this country.

The United States was not in favor of war with France because she had not enforced her blockade due to lack of warships. Nor had she impressed American seamen. Further, it was claimed that the British had been inciting the American Indians to attack the pioneer settlers. James Madison who had become president was opposed to war as Jefferson had been, but seeing his party was in favor of it, he signed a declaration of war against Great Britain, June 18, 1812. So in the year that Napoleon Bonaparte was retreating from his empty victory over burning Moscow, a retreat which almost completely annihilated the entire French army,[1] in this year England and the United States once again took up arms against each other, commencing hostilities which were not to cease until the Treaty of Ghent in 1814.

c. Monroe Doctrine

But peace with England was not the assurance of peace with other nations. From South America came rumblings of unrest and revolution. During the time of the Napoleonic wars, 1810-1825, the Spanish colonies in South America began to assert their independence from Spain, thus emulating the action of the American colonies in 1776.[2]

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1. E.S. Creasy, The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World, p. 281.
2. Beard, op. cit., pp. 243-246.

The Holy Alliance, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, met to discuss this rebellious action in South America. But because of British support of the rebellions for trade reasons, and because of the Monroe Doctrine warning against European interference in American affairs, neither Russia nor any other country intervened in North or South America. Thus Russia's claims to the Pacific Northwest were never enforced.

d. Beginning of Westward Migration

Having looked at the general historical situation in the United States and abroad, attention may now be turned to those events in our country's history having to do more directly with the development and expansion of the west. Perhaps the foremost in point of time and importance, is the actual beginning of westward emigration from the eastern states. The main reasons for this population shift have been explained by Frederick Jackson Turner:

> "It appears then that the universal disposition of Americans to emigrate to the western wilderness, in order to enlarge their dominion over inanimate nature is the actual result of an expansive power which is inherent in them, and which by continually agitating all classes of society is constantly throwing a large portion of the whole population on the extreme confines of the state, in order to gain space for its development. Hardly is a new state or territory formed before the same principle manifests itself again and gives rise to a further emigration; and so is it destined to go on until a physical barrier must finally obstruct its progress."[1]

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1. The Frontier in American History, p. 7.

Crowding in the existing states gives an incentive for moving west, and when this new area is populated in turn, a further movement is felt necessary.

This westward expansion has been characterized by four general periods: (1) forest-trail and old road period from late colonial times down to the end of the 18th century; (2) the flatboat period, from the end of the American Revolution onward about fifty years; (3) the steamboat period, 1810-1870; (4) and the age of the railroads beginning around 1835.[1] It is to be noted that these last two periods were important in that they furnished many emigrants to the Pacific northwest during the time of Marcus Whitman and his work there. The improved roads, developing steamboats, canals, and railroads, all made the process of westward migration much easier.[2]

These thousands of men and women who came across the Appalachians and eventually reached the Pacific ocean, found life in the wilderness exceedingly lonely. Neighbors were few and far between. When there was a death in the family, a rude coffin would be constructed of boards, and without any funeral service save a prayer, the body would be buried in a clearing where a watch for preying wolves might be kept.[3]

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1. Beard, op. cit., pp. 250-251.
2. Colin B. Goodykoontz, Home Missions on the American Frontier, p. 168.
3. Beard, op. cit., p. 262; A pathetic incident in the life of Abraham Lincoln, was the death of his mother on the Indiana frontier in 1818. Several months passed before a minister could be found to conduct a simple service over her grave.

One of the most notable events in this history of western expansion, was the great Mormon migration led by Brigham Young, which reached the barren alkali wastes of the Salt Lake region in Utah, in 1848. These five thousand spiritual migrants soon had transformed this desert into a flowering paradise through their great industry and the extensive use of irrigation.[1]

Since the general trend of westward migration has been observed, it will next be in order to take a somewhat closer look at the actual settling of the northwest territory. This will begin with the exploration of Lewis and Clark. Their expedition will be used as the starting point in the direct consideration of northwest history. No attempt will be made to trace the history of the Oregon country back farther than the Lewis and Clark expedition, because for the purpose of this study those men represent the first organized exploration of the vast Louisiana Purchase, an exploration that was soon to send wave upon wave of emigrants surging westward, a movement which would bring with it Marcus Whitman.

3. History of the Northwest

a. Lewis and Clark

Shortly after the purchase of the Louisiana Territory, Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis, his thirty-year-old private

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1. S.A. Morison, and H.S. Commager, The Growth of the American Republic, p. 470.

secretary and former western soldier, together with William Clark an experienced frontiersman and youngest brother of George Rogers Clark, to explore and map this new territory. Beginning from St. Louis in May of 1804, they went up the Missouri River, across the Dakotas to the Rocky Mountains, and from there floated down the Columbia River to the Pacific in November, 1805. They returned to St. Louis by September of 1806 having covered over eight thousand miles in a little over two years.[1] The entire expedition nearly perished in crossing the Rockies, floundering through heavy snow drifts, and being reduced to eating crawfish and prairie wolf for food, at times going without any food at all.[2]

When the annals of the expedition were published, the people of the east were stirred by the rich promise which the western lands apparently held for farming and colonization.[3] The expedition was the first to cross the North American continent by land and had paved the way for the resulting migrations that were soon to come.[4]

b. Zebulon Pike

The same year, 1804, that Lewis and Clark went west, Lieutenant Zebulon Pike and a party went up the Mississippi

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1. Beard, op. cit., p. 227-228.
2. Charles M. Wilson, Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark, pp. 156-157.
3. Beard, op. cit., p. 228.
4. Wilson, op. cit., p. 22.

River almost to its source. They returned exploring in the southwest part of Colorado to the foot of the mountain which now bears his name.

So through the efforts of two exploring parties, Lewis and Clark, and Pike, the west and northwest were mapped more accurately than ever before.[1] The people in the eastern states were becoming more and more aware of the opportunities for trade and colonization.

c. Historical Situation and Conditions in the Northwest

1) Geographical Boundaries

At the time the Whitmans established their mission work in Oregon in 1836, the boundaries of the territory enclosed a vast area of over seven hundred thousand square miles.[2] The southern boundary extended along the forty-second parallel from the Pacific to about twenty miles northeast of the present Rawlins, Wyoming. The eastern boundary went north along the continental divide to a point on the Arctic Ocean about one hundred miles west of the mouth of the Mackenzie River. The western extremity of the territory was determined by Russian Alaska and the Pacific Ocean.[3]

2) Population Distribution

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1. Beard, op. cit., p. 229.
2. Miles Cannon, Waiilatpu, Its Rise and Fall, p. 39.
3. Ibid.

In this entire area there were not more than twenty-five Americans[1] and probably no more than fifty whites of all nations.[2] At the same time the Indian population was about one hundred thousand.[3]

d. Problems of Settlement

1) Influence of Hudson's Bay Company

Until the official boundary between the United States and Canada was established, the Oregon country was held in common by settlers of both England and the United States. But to all practical purposes, the Hudson's Bay Company controlled the country and did its best to keep it in its primitive wild state.[4] The officers of the company, though dwellers in the wilderness, were men of refinement and education, fluent in both French and English, as well as the Indian dialect.[5] They received all missionaries graciously regardless of their theological persuasion.

Around the middle of the nineteenth century the power and influence of the company began to decline, and by 1856 almost all forts south of the newly-made Canadian boundary

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1. Cannon, op cit., p. 39. There is some disagreement about this figure, another author placing the figure at 50 Americans; cf. William A. Mowry, Marcus Whitman and the Early Days of Oregon, p. 98.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 56; gives the breakdown as 10 Prot. missionaries, 2 R.C. missionaries, 2 doctors, 6 laymen, 13 American women, 20 settlers, and 10 children, 5 born in Oregon Territory.
3. Mowry, loc. cit.
4. Mary Gay Humphreys, Missionary Explorers Among the American Indians, p. 160.
5. Cannon, op. cit., p. 40.

were deserted. This was caused by the rush of American settlers following the gold craze of 1849, and a marked drop in the demand for furs, due to the appearance of silk nap.[1]

2) Living Conditions

Travel in these times was largely by horseback or river boat in the east, by horse or on foot in the west. The houses of the settlers were of the rudest nature. They consisted of an earth floor, and a roof made of pine boughs or sod. Thin cloth was used instead of glass for windows.[2] Mail came through about once or twice every year on its long trip west. Indians were a constant problem. Not only did they have to be subdued or pacified, but they must then be provided for and their lands secured against speculators and land-grabbing frontiersmen.[3]

3) Oregon Country in Dispute

There was much contention along the Pacific coast as to the territorial rights of Britain and the United States.

a) British Claims

The Hudson's Bay Company had been chartered in 1670 by Charles II and had had a great influence in favor of British claims in western Canada since that time. In 1791-1795

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 39.
2. Mowry, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
3. Morison, op. cit., p. 11.

George Vancouver, a British sea-captain, explored and mapped the west coast from San Diego, California to Cook's Inlet, Alaska.[1] On the basis of actual inhabitants in the territory north of the Columbia River around 1844, the British really were justified in their claims. For living near Fort Vancouver and Puget Sound there were over seven hundred British colonists and only six American citizens.[2]

b) American Claims

The United States was naturally trying to establish her right to possession of the Oregon territory to protect her colonists and settlers. At the same time that Vancouver was exploring the coast, Robert Gray of Boston sailed around South America and along the Pacific coast. In 1792 he discovered a great river to which he gave the name of Columbia.[3] The United States also based her claims upon the exploration of the Louisiana Purchase by Lewis and Clark, and upon the settlement of the Oregon territory as opposed to the fur-trading of the British, which did not concentrate upon bringing in the influences of civilization.[4]

c) Differences Resolved

The occupation agreement of 1818 agreed to by both

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1. Beard, op. cit., p. 231.
2. Morison, op. cit., p. 469.
3. Beard, loc.,cit.
4. William Barrows, Oregon, The Struggle for Possession, pp. 213-219.

England and the United States stated that all territory north of forty-two degrees, then the boundary of California, would be open to citizens of either country, though no one was to be allowed to own property nor to establish a government. The door was now open for trappers, traders, missionaries and promoters of both countries. This fact was forcibly brought home to the American people by Congressman Floyd of Virginia who spoke out strongly for an American fort to be erected at the mouth of the Columbia River.[1]

By a careful historical survey Bancroft summarizes and analyzes the claims of both nations, and comes to the conclusion that neither country had a justified claim to sole ownership.[2] The Americans had good claims to the territory, nevertheless, and wisely decided not to force the issue. In 1846 another treaty was drawn up between the United States and England, and when it was ratified by both countries, the long-disputed territory south of the forty-ninth parallel to the Columbia River and south, became a part of the United States.[3] Oregon came into the union as a slaveless territory in 1848, and eleven years later became a state.[4]

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1. A. B. Hulbert and D.P. Hulbert, Marcus Whitman Crusader, Vol. 1, pp. 1-2.
2. Hubert H. Bancroft, The Works of Hubert H. Bancroft, Vol. 28, pp. 316-333.
3. Ibid., p. 414.
4. Morison, op. cit., p. 533.

4. History of United States Christian Missions

The development of Christian missions on the American frontier paralleled to a large extent the growth of the nation as a whole. The concept of "manifest destiny" played a large part in the motives of the early missionaries to the American Indians.[1] Shared by clergy and layity alike, it maintained that it was God's will for the United States to occupy all or the best parts of North America. This was a decided bit of evidence for the religious triumph of Protestantism over the influence of the Catholic Church in America.[2] Ridiculous as this idea may appear to some it was a powerful motive for the western missionaries who felt they were directly linked to the divine plan of God as they carried out His will.

a. Development of Missions in the East

1) Formation of Missionary Societies

The characteristic feature of home missions[3] as the nineteenth century began was the formation of many voluntary missionary societies on the state and local level.[4] From 1798-1820 home missionary work was supervised in this manner. The integration of missionary administration on

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1. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 271.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 272, footnote, makes the distinction that "home" missions refered to white settlers, while "foreign" missions indicated work among the Indians.
4. Ibid., p. 115.

the state level marked a great high point in missions because it did away with much overlapping and inefficient administration in local church groups.[1]

Following the close of the war of 1812, thinking on a national scale was in the air, and this feeling extended into the religious life of the country as well, with the formation of several national societies.[2] In home missions this consolidation tended not only to do away with the needless duplication of function on the state and local level, but also provided a better base on which to meet the growing problems of the west, and afforded much better publicity for the entire mission work.

a) Presbyterian Board of Missions

The churches which became the greatest in numbers and in influence were those which followed the western migration, ministering to the needs both religious and cultural of the pioneers. That the Presbyterian Church did this is shown by the fact that in the migration of the late 1700's Presbyterian churches and pastors were to be found the farthest west of any denomination.[3] The Presbyterian Board of Missions was formed in 1816 and appears to have concerned itself more with home missions, leaving foreign missions to the

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1. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 116.
2. Ibid., p. 172.
3. W.W. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, Vol. 2, The Presbyterians, 1783-1840, p. 23.

larger interdenominational bodies.[1]

b) American Home Missionary Society

The American Home Missionary Society founded in 1826, was termed by some, "the most important single home missionary agency among Protestants in the United States before the Civil War."[2] The Society proved to be a productive experiment in interdenominational cooperation. The work of the organization was carried on mainly in western New York, Ohio, southern Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Kentucky, the "out west" of the day.[3]

2) Religious Climate in the East

During the 1830's revivalistic religion and denominational rivalries were sweeping the eastern countryside. Under the Edwards-like emotionalism of Charles G. Finney, a renewed interest in religion was being felt all over the country. The lower-class migrants from the south were strong individualists and liked their religion in "violent revivalistic doses."[4] "When I hear a man preach I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees," said Abraham Lincoln.[5]

The Congregationalists of New England and the New York

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1. E.H. Gillett, History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Vol. 2, p. 216.
2. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 173.
3. Ibid., p. 188.
4. Morison, op. cit., p. 170.
5. Ibid.

Presbyterians, however, believed that quieter conversions following much searching of the heart were generally more lasting, and felt that missionaries should be sent west to bring about these better religious practices.[1]

b. Development of Missions in the West

The beginning and extension of mission work west of the Mississippi River can be traced in five periods, from 1834-1839.[2]

1) Influence of the Hudson's Bay Company

As has been mentioned previously,[3] the Hudson's Bay Company was quite favorably inclined toward missionaries of all denominations. Part of this friendliness was no doubt due to a stipulation of the company charter which stated that the company was to give aid and all possible encouragement to the missionaries.[4] It was the practice of the company to fly their flag every Sunday, the day coming to be known among the Indians as "the flag day."[5]

2) Influence of Trappers and Explorers

Lewis and Clark in 1804-1806 told the Indians that the

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1. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 171.
2. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 534: His listing of the periods is as follows: 1834-Methodists, 1836-Presbyterians, 1837-2nd wave of Methodists, 1838-2nd wave of Presbyterians, 1839-Catholics.
3. Ante, p. 14.
4. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 550.
5. Myron Eells, Marcus Whitman, Pathfinder and Patriot, p. 25.

white man's power came from his God, and from adhering to Bible reading and Sabbath observance of the Christian religion. From other explorers the Indians received information about the white man's religion. One trapper spent hours in prayer and reading the Bible.[1]

3) Work of the Methodist Missionaries

Methodist missionary work among the Indians of the Pacific northwest antedated that of the Presbyterians by two years. The Methodists organized the Oregon Methodist Mission, and in 1834 sent the Reverend Jason Lee, his nephew, Daniel Lee, and a Mr. Cyrus Shepard, to set up the mission in the Willamette Valley about sixty miles from Vancouver. They shipped their supplies by boat and journeyed to Oregon overland.[2]

The character of Jason Lee is well spoken of by Mr. Wilbur Fisk, the man chiefly responsible for the founding of the Methodist Oregon Mission. When he was asked who best was fitted to carry on the work of the mission, he replied, "I know of but <u>one</u> in the world, every way calculated for such an undertaking."[3] Oliver Nixon sees a close resemblance with the character of Marcus Whitman, when he says of Lee, "No other man among the pioneers can be so

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1. Eells, op. cit., p. 25.
2. Don O. Shelton, Heroes of the Cross in America, pp. 139-140; Morison, op. cit., p. 467.
3. Wade Crawford Barclay, History of Methodist Missions, Part One, Early American Methodism 1769-1844, Vol. 2, p. 203.

nearly classed with Whitman for untiring energy in courting immigration."[1]

Lee reported rather unfavorable conditions existing as far as the climate for missionary work was concerned. There was none of the reported eagerness on the part of the Indians to learn of the white man's God, and in some instances a decided hostility expressed against the missionaries. The Flathead tribe of Indians had been decimated by a tribal war with the Blackfeet and many other tribes were small and widely scattered. There was also the continual opposition of many traders to the work of the church.[2] So it was to the Methodist missionaries that credit must be given for first carrying on mission work among the western Indians, and for giving a picture of the existing conditions on the field.

4) Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Missionary Work on the Northwest Coast

a) Bancroft's Opinion

The opinion of H.H. Bancroft regarding the effectiveness of the early missionary work in the northwest must be considered not only because of his position as a leading historian of our Pacific coast, but also because his opinion is such a sharp contrast to that which is usually expressed.

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1. Shelton, op. cit., pp. 139-140.
2. Barclay, op. cit., p. 207.

He termed the missionary work a complete failure for three main reasons: (1) because the missionaries were attempting to do the impossible;[1] (2) because the missionaries were too preoccupied with obtaining land and cultivating it, subjecting the Indians to virtual serfdom; (3) because of the bad example set by the white settlers in their immorality and drunkeness, nullifying the influence of the missionaries.[2] As far as Bancroft was concerned the efforts of the missionaries were futile, but history has proved otherwise.

b) Influence of the Missionaries Upon Immigration

The Lees who went to Oregon in 1834 under the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Whitman party sent out in 1836, by the Congregational-Presbyterian American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, were both a powerful influence

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1. Bancroft, op. cit., pp. 549-550; Bancroft says, "Speaking generally, all missionary effort is a failure. Such history pronounces to be its fate. Missionary effort seeks to lift the savage mind from the darkness of its own religion, which God and nature have given it as the best for it, and to fix it on the abstract principles of civilized belief which it cannot comprehend. It seeks to improve the moral and material conditions of the savage when its very touch is death. The greatest boon Christianity can confer upon the heathen is to let them alone. They are not ready yet to cultivate the soil or learn to read, or to change their nature or their religion. These ends the Almighty accomplishes in His own good time implanting into the clearer light as they are able to receive it." (but may we not plant and water?)
2. Ibid.

in attracting American settlers to Oregon.[1] And Bancroft, even though negating the effectiveness of the religious work of the missionaries, admits that the missionaries helped establish a foothold in the wilderness for the coming settlers.[2]

But perhaps the most important work of the early missionaries in the United States was not done in the Methodist Mission nor in the religious evangelism of the eastern seaboard, but in the establishing of certain churches. For both Marcus Whitman and H.H. Spalding, his compatriot, came from churches which had been established by home missionaries, and were thus directly influenced by the missions to which they later gave themselves so unreservedly.[3] And so in the ever-narrowing circles of world and American history, it is discerned how directly Marcus Whitman and the work of which he was so soon to become a part were influenced, as will be seen, for the great good of the missionary effort.

C. The Influence of Whitman's Family

1. His Parents

a. Their Character and Ancestry

Marcus Whitman's parents were strong and rugged New

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1. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 273.
2. Bancroft, op. cit., p. 390.
3. Clifford M. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 28.

Englanders. As an infant Marcus lived with them in a log house on the rough frontier where his father was a tanner.[1] His father died when Marcus was only eight years old.

It is an interesting fact of history that Marcus Whitman and Abraham Lincoln were related,[2] a missionary martyr and a president who died for what he believed, both from the same family line.

b. Effect of Early Life Upon Whitman's Character

1) Environment

At an early age Marcus Whitman was being prepared for the rigors which life held for him. The rough and ready life of the frontier in which he grew up developed his strength and resourcefulness. And the responsibility which became his following his father's death helped produce that strength of character which would stand him in such good stead in the years ahead.[3]

2) Religious Training

He was given religious training by his parents and following the death of his father, his spiritual guide and

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1. Eells, op. cit., p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 21; Samuel Lincoln settled in Salem, Mass. in 1637. John Whitman of Weymouth, Mass., ca. 1638, was the founder of the Whitman family. His oldest child, Sarah, married Abraham Jones of Hingham, Mass. in 1683. They had seven children, one, Sarah Whitman Jones, marrying Mordecai Lincoln. This marriage was blessed with four children, one, Mordecai being the great-great grandfather of our president.
3. Shelton, op. cit., p. 136.

counselor was his paternal grandfather.[1] From his birth in Rushville, New York in 1802 until his conversion at the age of seventeen when he joined the Presbyterian Church of Wheeler, New York, his religious training was the best possible.[2]

2. His Brothers

Not too much is known about why Marcus Whitman did not enter the ministry as he desired, but his brothers seem to be a controversial quantity in the matter. Marcus Whitman's heart was set upon being a minister, but his brothers, fearing he would become a charity scholar for lack of funds persuaded him against his will to give up the idea. He then entered a course of study preparing for a career in medicine.[3] Creegan does not mention the influence of Whitman's brothers upon his decision, but speaks of physical ills which apparently influenced him in favor of the medical profession.[4] Whitman spent four years in medical practice and several in business with his brothers before he began to consider the possibilities and opportunities of mission service in his thirtieth year.

3. His Wife, Narcissa

No attempt will be made at this particular point to estimate the influence Narcissa Whitman had upon her hus-

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1. Shelton, op. cit., p. 136; Charles C. Creegan, Great Missionaries of the Church, pp. 343-344.
2. Ibid.
3. Eells, op. cit., p. 23.
4. Creegan, op. cit., p. 344; Shelton, op. cit., p. 137.

band, except to call attention to the fact that all minister's wives have a very decided influence upon the life and work of the men they marry.[1] This is perhaps true to an even greater extent as it relates to the work and life of the missionary, as we shall see in the next chapter. That Narcissa Whitman did influence her husband can be little doubted. Suffice to say at this point that her deep spiritual life was a constant undergirding and uplifting force in the life of her husband.[2]

D. Results: A Character

Having observed the varying influences playing upon the life and times of Marcus Whitman, it is next in order to catch a glimpse of the great Christian character which emerged.

1. Religious Life

For the purposes of this study it has been found helpful to divide the study of Marcus Whitman's religious life into two broad areas: his early religious life up to the year of his marriage in 1836 and his subsequent trip to Oregon,

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1. H.R. Black, The Minister's Family and Its Influence in the Community, pp. 1-16.
2. Eells, op. cit., p. 129. She wrote on his long mid-winter ride east, "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 trust in Him for safety... Night and day shall my prayer ascend to Him in your behalf."

and his mature religious life from this point on through the remainder of his life.

a. Early Religious Life

This has been partially seen in Marcus Whitman's early religious training,[1] and no repetition at this point will be attempted. With a great desire for adventure and discovery coupled with strong religious convictions, Whitman earnestly desired to engage in missionary work.[2] He therefore wrote to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1834, stating this desire:

> "I regard the missionary cause as based on the atonement and the commands and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ to his ambassadors and church; and that it involves the holiness and happiness of all that may be reclaimed from sin. I am willing to go to any field of usefulness at the direction of the American Board."[3]

And so in his early life are to be noted those basic beliefs in the essentials of the Christian faith, and a desire to serve Him who is the basis for this faith.

b. Mature Religious Life

1) Trust in God

Whitman's mature religious life is characterized by a deep trust in God which permeated all his work. This is

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1. Ante, pp. 26-27.
2. Eells, op. cit., p. 23.
3. Ibid.

to be noted in an early letter to his fiancée, Narcissa Prentiss, while traveling toward Oregon shortly before their marriage:

> "I have a strong desire for that field of labor...I feel my unfitness for the work; but I know in whom I have trusted, and with whom are the fountains of wisdom. O, that I may always look to this source for wisdom and grace... How can Christians ever become indifferent in their Master's service? You need not be anxious especially for your health or safety, but for your usefulness to the cause of missions and to the souls of our benighted fellow men."[1]

And when Narcissa's father expressed a prophetic fear that the Indians would kill him, he replied that God would take care of him because his life was in His hands.[2]

This is further shown when he was preparing to leave his mission in 1842 for his famous mid-winter ride to Washington. In addressing his fellow workers he told them that God helping him he would soon be in Washington.[3] He soon was. When hopelessly lost in a howling blizzard on the continental divide that had even confounded his Indian guide, Marcus Whitman knelt in the piling drifts, commended his wife, his guide, and himself to God in prayer, and prepared to die. Just then his guide noticed the ear of one of the mules was twitching, and it seemed anxious to be off. Giving

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1. Shelton, op. cit., p. 142.
2. Ibid., p. 167.
3. Ibid., p. 155.

the animal its head they staggered through the storm and were soon huddled around the smouldering embers of their morning campfire.[1]

2) Devotional Life

Whitman, the man of faith and prayer, has already been seen, and it will be helpful to observe whence came this inner strength and sustaining power.

On his long trip east he was regular in his morning and evening devotions reading the Bible intently.[2] It appears that this inner strength came then, from his close fellowship with his Master, and a day by day dependence upon Him.

2. Character Traits

From the available evidence it may be concluded that Marcus Whitman was a man of strong character possessing the requisite qualities needed for the hardy life of a frontier missionary. It is also to be noted how the religious element is inseparably intertwined with the other elements of his nature.

As a young doctor he was considered, "bold, sturdy, companionable...fond of adventure, and at the same time fervently religious."[3] He had a "singularly pleasant and

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., pp. 169-170.
2. Shelton, op. cit., p. 136.
3. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 123.

winning manner."[1] He appeared light-hearted and happy, even jovial, to his niece when he visited her mother in 1843, talking ceaselessly of his soul-saving work among the Indians.[2]

His amiable disposition was completely incapable of harboring a grudge, no matter how serious the provocation. There was no hate nor envy in him and a personal slight only caused him to pity the offender.

His generous nature is revealed in his dealings with those who had met with misfortune. A frontiersman arrived at the Whitman mission of Waiilatpu more dead than alive, and being nursed back to health by Dr. Whitman, practically eating him out of house and home in the process, figured that he owed the doctor about five hundred dollars for his stay. Preparing to go on his way he inquired what he could do to repay the debt he owed Dr. Whitman. The good doctor not only cancelled the debt on the spot, but gave the man a new horse to wish him on his way.[3] Exhibiting much the same kindness, he adopted seven orphaned children from an immigrant train, accepting no money from them for their support, and even giving to the boys some of his livestock that they might begin their own herds.[4]

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1. Shelton, op. cit., p. 167.
2. Ibid.
3. Eells, op. cit., pp. 139-141; Cannon, op. cit., p. 6.
4. Ibid.

He was never overly particular about either his taste or his dress, a fact which led Gray to draw the conclusion that Whitman was a hard man for some fastidious people to get along with.[1] Out of long experience on the trail, he could accommodate himself to the existing conditions around him with the greatest equanimity. He often drank water from a stream in his cupped hand and ate food from the tip of his hunting knife when conditions dictated.[2]

His uncomplaining fortitude carried him over the solitary trails of the plains in scorching heat and freezing winter. Sometimes in the dead of winter he would be called to attend patients over two hundred miles away. He went without a murmur. Without money and with no hope of reward he traveled wherever he was needed in Indian hut or civilized abode.[3]

The fine disregard for danger which Whitman entertained, caused him to be criticized by some as being foolhardy and needlessly endangering the lives of others, particularly when he ignored several warnings about the impending Indian massacre.[4]

Dr. Whitman was given to speaking his mind freely, if at times a bit hastily. He was capable of a huge amount of work. In fact he was always so busy that he didn't have

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 5.

time to parley in the approved Indian fashion. His answers were either, "yes," or "no," and this seeming abruptness may have helped to alienate the Indians against him in later life.[1]

Whitman's physical stamina and endurance are well worth noting, for in them lies the way to much of his success. While engaged in medical studies as a young man, he became the victim of a chronic pain in his side which remained with him throughout his life. But because of his abounding energy and determination this "thorn in the flesh" failed to deter him.[2] Though thoroughly exhausted with the weariness and fatigue engendered by the walking which was necessary to bring the first wagon over the Rocky Mountains, he kept on. Even a severe attack of rheumatism which kept him in bed, could not detain him for long.[3] His "untiring energy of character" enabled him to do those herculean accomplishments which he performed.[4]

Marcus Whitman was a living exponent of the gospel which he taught. His pacifistic nature was dramatically demonstrated in an argument which he contracted with an Indian over payment for the use of land. The Indian took hold of Whitman's ear and pulled it vigorously, at the same

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1. T.D. Allen, Doctor In Buckskin, p. 276.
2. Eells, op. cit., p. 23.
3. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 160.

time beating him on the chest. When he had done this, Dr. Whitman calmly turned the other ear and the Indian grabbed it. This went on for some time until the Indian, tired of this, snatched Whitman's hat from his head and threw it into the mud. Calmly and deliberately the good doctor retrieved his headpiece and replaced it, dripping with water, upon his head. Three times this happened, the Indian finally striding off in frustrated rage.[1]

But one must be careful when noting this great strength of character, not to miss the more tender side of this man who loved a wife. In a beautiful tribute from her diary, Narcissa says of her husband:

> "I have such a good place to shelter -- under my husband's wings. He is so excellent. I love to confide n[sic] his judgment and act under him. He is just like a mother in telling me of my failings. He does it in such a way that I like to have him for it gives me a chance to improve."[2]

Allowing for all due wifely prejudice, this is still quite a tribute to the gentle and loving nature of this man among men.

In summarizing the nature and character of Marcus Whitman, H.H. Bancroft, though perhaps a bit prejudiced in his opinion of the missionaries and their work,[3] gives a fitting

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1. Eells, op. cit., pp. 253-254; Jeanette Eaton, Narcissa Whitman, Pioneer of Oregon, p. 206.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 14.
3. Ante, p. 24.

tribute to this pathfinder of the northwest:

> "I do not know which to admire most, his coolness or his courage. His nerves were of steel; his patience was excelled only by his absolute fearlessness; in the mighty calm of his nature he was a Caesar for Christ."[1]

E. Summary

Marcus Whitman was, in a large measure, a man of his times. With the exploration of the Louisiana Territory by Lewis and Clark and their penetration of the Oregon Country, Marcus Whitman seems to have captured much of their spirit and the vision which could see a noble work for God waiting to be done. Aware of both the problems of frontier life and the very real opportunities, he seems to have caught their vision of a land of promise for those willing to venture forth.

A Caesar for Christ, a man influenced by the times in which he lived and the country of which he was a part, a servant of Christ challenged by the great need among the American Indians of the northwest and accepting gladly, supported and upheld by the faith and strength of character instilled within him by God-fearing parents confirmed through personal encounters with the living God. Such were

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 53. Cannon is quoting Bancroft.

the formative influences bearing upon the man. Such was the man that was Marcus Whitman.

Before any investigation into the actual life-work of Whitman is attempted, it will be necessary to study those people who were closest to him and to his mission; his wife, and those who labored with them in the Oregon mission. This will be the burden of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

CO-LABORERS AND COMPATRIOTS OF MARCUS WHITMAN

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CO-LABORERS AND COMPATRIOTS OF MARCUS WHITMAN

A. Introduction

Though many people might be cited as contributing to the success and usefulness of Marcus Whitman in the Oregon Mission, it is the obvious opinion of the majority of authors consulted that the actual number of his chief co-workers was very limited. The consensus seems to indicate that most important were his wife, Narcissa, Mr. and Mrs. Henry H. Spalding, Elkanah and Mary Walker, and, in a somewhat different sense, Samuel Parker.

The center of activity for the work of the Oregon Mission was the Whitman station at Waiilatpu, "the place where the rye grass grows," about twenty-five miles above Fort Walla Walla on the Walla Walla River. This station was strategically located with respect to the Cayuse Indians, a tribe numbering about two hundred.[1] Because of the part played by Narcissa Whitman in the work of this station, her right to a place among her husband's leading associates is hard to dispute.

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 38.

Mr. and Mrs. H.H. Spalding traveled west with the Whitmans on their journey to the Oregon country, and, in setting up their own mission station at Lapwai some one hundred miles distant from the Whitmans,[1] became the Mission's outpost among the Nez Perce Indians.

Mr. and Mrs. Elkanah Walker came somewhat later and established a station among the Spokane Indians about thirty miles to the north at Tshimakain.[2]

These, then, were the three main outposts of the Oregon Mission. The work of these various leaders will be taken up in detail on the following pages. The contribution of Samuel Parker, Whitman's traveling companion on his western trip, will be discussed as well, not only because of his importance to the later work of the Mission, but also because in point of time his work comes first, and prepares the way for the entire missionary effort to follow.

In trying to understand the work of Marcus Whitman in the Oregon country, we must first understand the work of his compatriots and their relation to his work. This will be the concern of that which follows.

B. Samuel Parker

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1. Drury, op. cit., p. 112.
2. Shelton, op. cit., p. 150; Inspection of Drury's map, "Old Oregon In Whitman's Day," Appendix of this thesis, in the light of the above figures reveals that the map is not drawn to scale, the distance to Lapwai appearing much shorter than that to Tshimakain.

1. Character and Background

For the purposes of this study, the first glimpse of Samuel Parker comes in 1834, when he was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at West Groton, N.Y. and instructor in Ithaca Academy.[1] The same year he offered his services to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, thus becoming the first person to offer himself to the Board as a candidate for Oregon mission work.[2]

His first marriage in 1812 was a tragic one, his bride dying shortly thereafter from the ravages of tuberculosis.[3] In 1815 he married Miss Jerusha Lord, who bore him three children. She did not accompany him on his later travels to the Oregon country, being separated from her husband for over two years while he journeyed west.

Parker's intense interest in missions is easily accounted for when one considers his classmates of earlier years at Andover Seminary. In his graduating class of 1806 were such men as Samuel Newell, Samuel Nott, and Adoniram Judson, men who exercised no little influence upon Parker's developing missionary consciousness.[4] Then, too, Parker's great grandfather came of strong Puritan stock, and Samuel must have absorbed a great deal of concern for the spiritual

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 14.
2. Creegan, op. cit., p. 343.
3. Eells, op. cit., p. 315.
4. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 93.

welfare of others as his young character was being molded in the days of early youth.

His God-centered character is further seen in the deep gratefulness which he had in his heart for God's many mercies, reminiscent of a season of thankfulness set apart by his Puritan forebearers in Plymouth Colony.[1] His complete dedication to the will of God may be observed, and was one of the leading factors which enabled him to endure the hardship and privation of the western journey.[2]

2. Work

Parker's motives for missionary service are seen to be deeply rooted in the very fabric of the Christian gospel. He saw the necessity for evangelizing and civilizing the Oregon Indians as did few others of his day, a work which would have to be carried out with all possible dispatch to prevent the very extinction of the Indians themselves.[3]

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 95; In Parker's personal diary he recounts having to make camp one night on the trail thus: "...had some coarse Indian bread and some ham for supper--had taken no dinner. Felt patient, and when I got into my blankets on the wet ground, was comfortable and felt thankful to God for his goodness to us." Hardy souls, these!
2. Ibid.; As he speaks of the prospect of being the only white people in an Indian country, "...what awaited us we knew not. I think I have in some measure counted the cost and come life or death, I thought I could say, 'thy will, O God, be done.' "
3. Ibid., p. 87; Parker makes an analysis of the inroads of eastern civilization upon the Indian as follows: "...the Indians must soon become civilized, and for this christianized, or become extinct. Their game...more

Following his appointment by the American Board, two men were chosen to accompany him. Setting out for St. Louis in May 5, 1834, they arrived too late to fall in with the American Fur Company train which would have given them the needed protection for the trip.[1] Not to be daunted in their chosen work, his two friends engaged in missionary work among the Omaha Indians while Parker himself returned to New York to stir up more missionary interest there. It was while he was thus occupied that he met Dr. Marcus Whitman in Wheeler, New York, a man who was also much interested in missionary work among the Indians of the northwest. A.B. Hulbert makes the very interesting observation that if Parker had not missed the Fur Company's train in St. Louis, Dr. Whitman might never have made his acquaintance, and might never have gone to Oregon at all.[2]

Parker and Whitman set out for Oregon in the summer of 1835 with another group of the American Fur Company. This particular company was bound for Green River, Wyoming, but Whitman and Parker soon saw they would need more equip-

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> scarce, their habits through the influence [of] white men more vitiated--whiskey more extensively circulated with its concomitant evils...Christians are forty years behind the men of the world...How many of the professed followers of Christ believe, sensibly believe, there is anything of binding obligation in the last command of our Saviour--'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature'?"

1. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 14.
2. Ibid.

ment and people to penetrate all the way to Oregon. It was decided that Parker would push on ahead by himself to mark out suitable mission sites in the Oregon country while Whitman returned to New York to enlist the aid of more missionaries to aid them in their work.[1]

This was the last that Whitman ever saw of Saumel Parker, for when Parker reached Oregon, after a thorough exploration of the country he returned to the east by water, traveling around Cape Horn, and arrived home May, 18, 1837.[2] Parker never returned to Oregon but published a book of his travels which stimulated much interest in the Oregon region.[3]

Thus it may be seen that the contribution of Samuel Parker to the missionary work of Marcus Whitman was twofold: serving as traveling companion on Whitman's first trip into the west, but more important still, laying the groundwork for the missionary effort to follow, as he mapped the most suitable places for the actual location of the mission stations. Though not actually connected with the work of the various mission stations themselves, Samuel Parker did much to assure their future effectiveness.

This, then, was Samuel Parker. It will be the next concern of this study to get a glimpse of one who was

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1. Creegan, op. cit., pp. 344-345.
2. Eells, op. cit., p. 315.
3. Ibid., pp. 315-316.

closest to Marcus Whitman in his actual labors among the Indians, and closest also to his heart, his wife, Narcissa.

C. Narcissa Whitman

1. Character

Narcissa Prentiss was baptized July 17, 1808 at the age of four months. Eleven years later she was converted while attending a large revival in Prattsburg, New York. It is significant that about this same time, June, 1819, a young lad by the name of Marcus Whitman was undergoing a similar experience in Plainfield, Massachusetts.[1] Five years later at age sixteen Narcissa had a second religious experience, after which she dedicated herself to the work of Christian missions. This must have been a deep and soul-stirring event for her, because she mentions the exact date it occurred, Monday, January 1, 1824.[2]

Narcissa inherited many of her mother's characteristics, her "queenly deportment," and gift for conversation,[3] but differed from her in one significant respect. Narcissa Prentiss had a sparkling sense of humor.[4] Lack of laughter

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1. Drury, Marcus Whitman, M.D. Pioneer and Martyr, pp. 78-79.
2. Ibid.
3. Shelton, op. cit., p. 142; Cannon, op. cit., p. 17.
4. Drury, op. cit., p. 76; Her mother is described thus: "...quite tall, and fleshy, and queenly in her deportment...intelligent, gifted in conversation...never excited, always master of the occasion whatever occurred."

was considered a mark of Christian piety, especially on Sunday. But Narcissa's nature seems to have been such that laughter was her natural expression of an inward happiness. Vivacious and popular, Narcissa was always at the center of youthful activities, having many happy gatherings in her home.[1] Of a good family, she was reared in the comforts and privileges of society, and emerged a refined and dignified woman, though able to adapt to any particular situation. One author seems to think that this home background made her tempermentally unsuited for work among the Indians, declaring that they considered Mrs. Whitman haughty and could not get close to her.[2] This supposed chasm between Narcissa and the Indians is also attributed to her firmness in matters of right and wrong.[3] Though neither she nor any of the other missionaries of the Oregon Mission did anything to temper their Calvinistic concepts of righteousness, this fact is not to be taken as any indication that their relations with the Indians were impaired as a result. The two authors mentioned above, were the only ones who appeared to hold this view about Narcissa.

Her adaptability is further demonstrated, as she is seen talking with the mountain men at Rendezvous, a way

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1. Drury, op. cit., p. 81.
2. Allen, op. cit., pp. 275-277.
3. Cannon, op. cit., p. 17.

station on the Oregon Trail. When the Whitman party stopped there in 1836 many of these rough men had not seen a white woman for years. They appreciated the culture of this woman who conversed with them so freely.[1]

The real strength of Narcissa Whitman's character appears in her spiritual life. Her belief in the power of intercessory prayer was a living and dynamic force which not only sustained her and her husband, but the work of the entire mission. Her letters contain many requests for prayer. Her great concern for the work of the mission is to be noted in this excerpt from a letter to her parents and family at home:

> "If ever we needed your prayers and sympathies, it is at the present time...I cannot say how much we need your prayers, and must beg of you again and again to pray unceasingly for us. If you would have us live and not die, you must pray."[2]

For Narcissa Whitman, prayer was not simply a requirement of the Christian life, but a matter of life and death.

Her genuine humility of spirit as observed in her letters,[3] seems to negate the haughtiness ascribed to her by

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1. Eells, op. cit., p. 36.
2. Hulbert, op. cit., p. 275; dated May 2, 1837.
3. Ibid., pp. 246-247; occasion is taken here to quote from two letters, the first to personal friends in Allegany County N.Y., Mr. & Mrs. Leverett Hull:"I fear you will all get ahead of me in the Christian life unless you call out to me once in a while and let me know where you are, and then I will run faster...Do write me, both of you; counsel, advise, cheer, and encourage us in our lonely way. We need it." And this from a letter to her family

T.D. Allen.[1] Above all seems to stand her "unselfish spirit of Christian devotion," that concern for the spiritual state of the Indians that enabled her to give herself wholly and unreservedly to her task.[2] She had the courage and strength of character which kept her going even in the most trying circumstances, while others around her were falling.[3] This is strikingly illustrated in the incident where irrate Indians had ruined Dr. Whitman's irrigation ditches and crops and had thrown mud in the Doctor's face.[4] Though beset on every side with difficulties and hardships, she could still find cause to be grateful.[5] Her thankful-

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May 2, 1837, a portion of which was obviously intended for other friends as well: "Ye mothers of the maternal associations, let me beg an interest in your prayers, especially for your unworthy sister, now she has become a mother, and for my little one. I feel utterly incompetent for the place, and were it not for the strong arm of the Lord I should sink under the responsibilities resting upon me." Her continuing interest in prayer is to be observed again also. This extended reference is made to show a sample of the evidence uncovered in her diary and personal letters by this writer, evidence which seems in direct contradiction to the opinion of Allen mentioned above.

1. Ante, p. 46.
2. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 33.
3. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 33.
4. Cannon, op. cit., p. 51.
5. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 236-237; In mentioning God's great mercy on their western trip in a letter to Mrs. Parker, "Nothing can equal the purity of the mountain air; and its exhilarating effect on the system; together with the healthful excercise of a horseback ride. Never have I slept more sweetly, than after a day thus spent...I have found so much pleasure mixed with the little suffering and fatigue endured, that the fatigue is entirely forgotten...rejoice with us...in giving thanks to God for His merciful kindness to us in all this journey..." Cf. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 147.

ness to God for his many providences is to be seen time and again in even the gloomiest situation.[1] Miles Cannon notes this spirit of Christian optimism as follows: "Only a streak of sunshine through some rift in the clouds was necessary to fill the soul of this noble woman with that exuberant hope so often exhibited in her temperament."[2] In every way, Narcissa Whitman seems to have been an exceptional woman for her day, and ideally suited to share with her husband in the rigorous duties of frontier missionary life.[3]

2. Work

As an actual worker in the life of the Oregon Mission, Narcissa played a very important part, not only in what she contributed directly, but also by freeing her husband

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol 2, p. 58, regarding the death of her first and only child, "I look above and with unspeakable delight contemplate her as enjoying the full delights of that bright world where her joys are perfect and she does not now, as formerly, need the presence of her much loved parents..." What Christian faith! Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 240-241, letter to Mr. Parker, "The Lord has not let his cause fail. The mission you sought so long is about to be established. The prosperity that has attended our husbands, since they left us...and the reception they have met with from the Indians is surely of the Lord."
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 68.
3. Eells, op. cit., p. 309; B.F. Nichols who stayed at Waiilatpu one winter, describes the mistress of the mission thus: "She seemed endowed with a peculiar magnetism when you were in her presence so that you could not help thinking yourself in the presence of a being much higher than the ordinary run of humanity. I have heard her pray, and she could offer up the finest petition to the Throne of Grace of any person I ever heard in my life. She was always gentle and kind to the Indians...Everyone loved her, because to see her was to love her."

from many routine duties and responsibilities.[1] Miles Cannon feels that in certain respects her work was more influential and effective than that of her husband.[2] Besides being a competent administrator of the domestic affairs of the mission at Waiilatpu, Narcissa Whitman found time to conduct a school for the Indian children, at one time having a class of about fifty students.[3] What Clifford Drury says about the missionary wives in general seems to have special significance with respect to Narcissa Whitman:

> "It is easy to write and talk about the men of the mission and forget the women, who oftentimes suffered more hardships than did their better-known companions. While the men were away on extended trips, the women remained at home with the children in the midst of a wilderness, surrounded by uncivilized Indians. Upon the women rested the chief burden of founding Christian homes while laboring under the most primitive conditions."[4]

It may be seen then that as her husband's closest coworker Narcissa Whitman made a vital contribution to the life and work of the Oregon Mission duplicated by no one else. In efficiently managing the domestic affairs of the Waiilatpu station she freed her husband for more vital

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 160.
2. op. cit., p. 17.
3. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 161.
4. Elkanah and Mary Walker, Pioneers Among the Spokanes, p. 12.

work directly related to the cause of Christ. As a constant spring of spiritual power, her prayers and her trust in the power and mercy of God not only strengthened and encouraged her husband in his exhausting work, but continually lifted the work of the Oregon Mission to the Throne of Grace. A women of great strenth and character, she was a fitting helper for her husband.

D. The Spaldings

This couple is important not only because they were closely associated with the Whitmans in their trip to Oregon, but because of the great work which they accomplished among the Nez Perce Indians at Lapwai, and also because of the unrest and dissension which they later caused among the missionaries.[1]

1. Eliza Spalding

Mrs. Spalding had a rather retiring nature, caused perhaps, by the fact that she was never very strong physically. That she reached Oregon at all was no mean accomplishment, for she came to the verge of death several times on the trip west.[2] Not easily alarmed, she was considered a fearless woman by the Indians. She, like Narcissa Whitman, was

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1. Post, pp. 91-92.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 10.

firm in her opinions, as an entry in Narcissa's diary indicates.[1]

She was an excellent cook and homemaker and vitally concerned with the work of the Lapwai mission. She taught the school because Henry Spalding was usually too busy with other matters relating to the mission. She taught several Indian girls to sew and cook, even taking some of them into her home where they were carefully trained in housework. Her upbringing as a farmer's daughter was an ideal preparation for the work which was hers as a missionary.[2]

2. Henry Harmon Spalding

a. Character

Because of the difficulty which Mr. Spalding later caused within the mission, a study will be made of his character and early life in an effort to find possible explanations for his later behavior.

1) Early Life

Henry Spalding was born out of wedlock in Prattsburg, New York in 1803 though it is believed his father and mother married three years after his birth.[3] Following this official union of his parents they had ten children. At

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 14.
2. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 172.
3. Ibid., pp. 18-19; It is interesting to note that Cannon describes this illegitimacy as Spalding being orphaned early in life, op. cit., p. 8.

fourteen months of age he was "bound out" to another family, a common practice in that day, to be reared.[1] Upon reaching the proper age, he united with the Presbyterian Church in Prattsburg, becoming interested in the cause of missions.

As a youth of sixteen, the insults hurled at him concerning his illegitimacy hurt him deeply. This, together with his lonely struggle to obtain an education, formed a persecution complex which never left him.[2] However degrading his early life must have been to his sensitive soul, it did make him accutely aware of the needs of others in similar situations. In his later ministry in Oregon, his compassion welled up into tears as he baptized an illegitimate child of half-breed parentage.[3]

Some authors, more interested in romance than in facts, have tried to demonstrate a romantic interest between Spalding and Narcissa Prentiss. The facts simply do not support this myth. They both lived in the same town of Prattsburg, Spalding being sixteen when Narcissa was only eleven.[4] But, "there is no definite record of any romantic interest in each other, but an estrangement of friendship necessitated a formal reconciliation in the presence

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1. Drury, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
2. Drury, The Spalding-Lowrie Correspondence, p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Cannon, op. cit., p. 8.

of Judge Prentiss..." before the two of them went to the Oregon country.[1]

Spalding was further embittered by the death of a fiancée before they could be married.[2] His marriage to Miss Eliza Hart of Trenton, New York came several years later.

The early life of Henry Spalding can thus be seen as one that would be anything but favorable to developing an interest in Christian work or missions. But it must be said in all fairness that such an interest did develop in spite of the seeming obstacles, an interest which bore much fruit. Though his association with his fellow-workers in the Oregon Mission was stormy at times, it is plain that there were definite causes for this in his early background. That he was able to do as much as he did for the cause of Christ, seems to be the real miracle of divine grace.

2) Life as a Missionary

When Marcus Whitman returned from the west in the winter of 1835 to organize his missionary party for the following spring, the American Board suggested that the newly-ordained Reverend Spalding be engaged as the necessary ordained missionary to accompany the expedition.[3]

In a letter of reference to the Board, the Reverend

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 46; cf. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 39.
2. Ibid.
3. Cannon, op. cit., p. 9.

Artemus Bullard praised Spalding for his piety and physical qualities, though he revealed his reservations concerning Spalding's mental makeup and temperament.[1] He has been characterized as having a fiery temper yet capable of great affection.[2]

On the trip west the rigors involved were hard on the entire company, though particularly so on Mr. Spalding. Belying his promise to be reconciled to Narcissa Whitman, he could not conceal his bitterness toward her, nor his jealousy for her husband. The frequent temper tirades to which the entire party was subjected made all concerned deeply regret Spalding's presence.[3]

Despite this apparent shortness of temper with his friends and associates, there runs throughout his letters and private writings a firm belief in the providence of God and obedience to His sovereign will.[4] This seeming contradiction of attitudes has been explained by A.B. Hulbert when he describes Spalding as, "...a man who, high-strung and impressionable, reacted strongly to the events of pioneer missionary life."[5] It is only fair to add that

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 30; This letter mentions Spalding as being "not remarkable for judgment and common sense,"...inclined to denounce or censure those who were not as zealous or ardent as himself.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 19.
4. Drury, The Spalding-Lowrie Correspondence, pp. 12-13,53.
5. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 45.

this particular character grew out of a childhood where he was unwanted even before his birth, and ridiculed because of his parents' sin. In spite of his rather harsh spirit, it will soon be observed that he made a great contribution to the cause of Christ in Oregon, for the Indians loved him:

> "This is the unpleasant side of a man who was thoroughly consecrated to his calling and who did more than any of his contemporaries to lead the Nez Perces, the Spokanes, and the Indians of other tribes nearby into a knowledge of the Gospel. The Indians trusted him ...They saw a better side and loved him."[1]

Though it may be debated as to the degree of effectiveness his work among the Indians had when compared with that of his colleagues, there can be no doubt that Henry H. Spalding did a great deal for the work of the Oregon Mission.

b. Work

Spalding was truly a man of many interests. He was an accomplished preacher, teacher, doctor, farmer, horticulturist, mechanic, printer, lumberman, weaver, miller, carpenter, musician, translator, and author.[2] He also kept such accurate weather reports that they were later included in the report of the Wilkes expedition.[3]

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1. Drury, The Spalding-Lowrie Correspondence, p. 8.
2. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 312.
3. Ibid.

His work among the Nez Perce Indians has been classified into four categories, educational, medical, agricultural, and spiritual.[1] His philosophy of Indian work reveals a practical balance between spiritual concerns and the more practical matter of wresting a living from a hostile wilderness,[2] reflecting a concern shared by all the missionaries.

1) Educational

Spalding evidently set up and administered the schools while his wife did the actual teaching.[3] He was an early exponent of the modern audio-visual method in teaching. His wife, an amateur artist, drew pictures of Bible characters which Spalding then utilized in his teaching. The Indians would tell what they had learned to their friends and families, thus spreading the knowledge of the Bible rapidly.[4] This particular method of teaching was sharply criticized by one of the other missionaries, who

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1. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 171.
2. Drury, Marcus Whitman, M.D. Pioneer and Martyr, opposite p. 217; In Spalding's own words; "While we point them with one hand to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, we believe it to be equally our duty to point with the other to the hoe, as the means of saving their famishing bodies from an untimely grave & [sic] furnishing the means of subsistence to future generations." Letter of April 21, 1838 to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.
3. Ante, p. 52.
4. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 174.

maintained that the Indians were reading into the pictures much more of their own heathen practices and beliefs than those of the Christian gospel. Much error arose which was impossible to correct.[1]

Spalding loved music and early taught the Indians gospel hymns. At first they learned the English words, but soon he had translated them into the native tongue.[2]

The printing press installed at Lapwai produced eight major publications, seven written by Spalding. Schoolbooks and hymnbooks were printed, but the most notable product was the translation of the Gospel of Matthew into Nez Percé, in 1845.[3]

2) Medical

Spalding's medical work was a decidedly minor part of his total activities. Just as Marcus Whitman, the real doctor, had a speaking aquaintance with theology, so Spalding was aware of the rudiments of medicine and hygiene. Isolated as he was, his knowledge of simple remedies such as calomel, enabled him to be of great help to the Indians.[4]

3) Agricultural-Industrial

Quite early in his work Spalding saw the necessity of settling the Indians if they were to be properly instructed and civilized. Though the other missionaries shared his

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1. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 243.
2. Ibid., p. 174.
3. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 114.
4. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, pp. 172-173.

opinions up to a point, the emphasis which he put on this "secular" work caused a great deal of friction with his associates.[1] Spalding succeeded in weaning the nomadic Indians from their wandering ways, and the spring and summer of 1839 found about one hundred Indian families living about the Lapwai mission, engaged in tilling the soil.[2] Plows were unavailable at the time so the demand for hoes was great, four hoes being equal to one horse in trade and later a hoe for a horse.[3] In the dry summer of 1839 Spalding found it necessary to devise an irrigation system to save his garden, the first irrigation in what is now Idaho.[4] To this missionary farmer must be credited another first. Spalding is generally conceded to have introduced the potato into that country, realizing a harvest of two thousand bushels in 1838, five hundred bushels to the acre.[5]

To Henry Spalding must also go the credit for building a flower mill, a sawmill, and a loom at Lapwai, all increasing the usefulness of the mission and the possibilities for teaching the Indians a more civilized life.[6]

4) Spiritual

"Of all the Protestant missionaries to the Pacific

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1. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 167.
2. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 115.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 113.
6. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, pp. 240, 248.

northwest, there was no one more successful in evangelizing the natives than the Rev. Henry Harmon Spalding."[1] Important as his agricultural work was, Spalding saw it in its proper perspective, a means to an end, the spiritual. He and his wife assembled the Indians each morning and evening for prayers, and for corporate worship on Sunday.[2] He was singularly successful with his evangelistic work among the Indians. Even in his later years returning to the Indians after a long absence, he conducted many successful revivals, amply attesting to his spiritual power.[3]

White people were hard-put to work with him. Some accused him of insanity and stubborness. His fiery temper was hidden from no one. Yet his work with the Nez Percé Indians bore great fruit. "...the fact remains that no missionary had such wonderful results among the natives in all of Old Oregon as did H.H. Spalding. History has vindicated him."[4]

E. The Walkers

The members of the Oregon Mission decided in 1837 that

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1. Drury, the Spalding-Lowrie Correspondence, p. 2.
2. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 174.
3. Ibid., pp. 411-412.
4. Ibid.

more help was needed on the field. Accordingly a Mr. Gray was dispatched east and returned a year later with several families, the most notable being Mr. and Mrs. Elkanah Walker. The Walkers established their station at Tshimakain, "the place of springs," March 20, 1839, Mrs. Walker thus becoming the first white woman to establish a home in the vicinity of present-day Spokane.[1]

1. Mary Walker

a. Character

Mary Walker's parents were actively connected with their church and were highly respected in the community of East Baldwin, Maine. Both parents having been school teachers, they were willing to sacrifice much in order that their children might have the proper education.[2]

Mary's mother, like Narcissa Whitman's, was of a strong religious character. Her mother's strong and forceful personality left an indelible impression upon Mary's character.[3] Charles Baker in recommending her to the American Board describes her as follows:

> "...good natural temper...her pious and benevolent soul seems particularly interested in the salvation of the heathen ...Her moral courage is conspicuous from whence has grown out real independence of character..."[4]

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 121.
2. Ibid., p. 37.
3. Ibid., p. 35.
4. Ibid.

She was well educated in History, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Natural History, Botany, Mental Psychology, French, Spanish and some Mathematics.[1] Before her marriage she was a successful school teacher and evidently enjoyed this way of making a living. It is to be noted that her aim in all her teaching was to further the work and the will of the Master.[2]

Her continual soul-searching is demonstrated in her later life in Oregon when she reviewed her life since her conversion nine years before and came to the conclusion that she was not only as vile and wicked in spirit as before, but totally unfit to be the wife of her husband.[3] Needless to say, the simple facts of her life and work among the Indians at Tshimakain completely contradict her harsh remarks about her own spiritual life.

b. Work

Her school teaching of earlier years seems to have stood her in good stead, for her diary records the fact that she was trying to teach the Indians numbers.[4]

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 44.
2. Ibid., p. 40; "...we should not be guided by selfishness, but seek the glory of God in all that we do. I endeavor to serve my employers, not with eye service as a man pleases but faithfully as to God and not to man."
3. Ibid., p. 132.
4. Ibid., p. 127.

Like Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding she seems to have been a loyal and hard-working homemaker,[1] dipping candles, making soap, washing, baking, milking, and caring for little Cyrus.[2] A tireless worker, she occasionally lost patience with those not so constituted. Though she berated herself at times for failing to teach the Indians Christianity, in her quiet and unostentatious way she also served by founding a home at Tshimakain.

2. Elkanah Walker

a. Character

The men in the Walker family were blacksmiths for generations. Some had been Quakers,[3] and it seems that Elkanah inherited many of their sturdy God-fearing traits of character.

His mother died when he was a lad of seventeen, a fact which appears to have had an adverse effect upon his developing character, finding an expression in a morose moodiness evident in later life. In having a rather unhappy adolescence his experience parallels that of Henry Spalding.

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 124; Her diary for May 29, 1839 records that she helped her husband plant the garden and on this particular day arose early and worked two hours in the garden before the rest of the family awoke.
2. Ibid., p. 137.
3. Ibid., p. 27.

Constitutionally he was one of the shyest of all men, and so timid as to fear saying a-men at the end of his prayers. Some of this may be accounted for by his gangling height of six feet four inches, coupled with a lack of adequate educational opportunities.[1] Though his early education was limited, he had the courage to begin preparation for the ministry at the age of twenty-seven.

He was subject to moody spells as a missionary on the frontier, becoming so cross and hypercritical of family and associates that his wife sometimes despaired of his love.[2] Yet she saw through his harsh façade and declared him to be, "... a good husband, better perhaps than I deserve,..."[3]

Blessed with good health, a hardy constitution, a willingness to endure hardships, great patience in spite of continual discouragement, "Elkanah Walker was admirably fitted for the life he subsequently lived in Old Oregon."[4]

b. Work

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 125.
3. Ibid., p. 74.
4. Ibid., p. 33; Drury quotes Mr. Gray as having a different opinion: "...requiring considerable effort to speak with confidence or decision upon any subject. This might arise from habit, or want of decision of character, or fear of offending. He had no positive traits of mind, yet he was studious and kind as a friend and neighbor; faithful as a Christian, inefficient as a preacher... Not at all adapted to fill the position he undertook--as an Indian missionary in Oregon."

Though not a college graduate, Elkanah led the work that was done in printing a primer for the Spokane Indians, and labored for years to make a translation of the Gospel of Matthew into the Spokane dialect. The translation finally came off the press January 1, 1846.[1] In relation to this project, he and his wife found it necessary to make an alphabet of the Flat-head alphabet, the language of the Spokanes.

In the winter evangelistic meetings were conducted and a school for about one hundred sixty pupils. They decided not to introduce the marriage ceremony into the polygamous tribal society until a respect for the married state had been built up. They encouraged the Indians to support the wives they had, but to take no more.[2]

Though lacking any tangible proof of their success among the Indians, the Walkers stayed on year after year because they felt they were responsible to help the Indians make the adjustment to the civilized life of the white man. The influence of these missionaries for peace was noticeable among the Spokanes long after the Walkers had left the scene.[3]

Perhaps their most outstanding success was discovered years later by Henry Spalding. A young Indian boy helped

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 125.
2. Ibid., p. 129.
3. Ibid., p. 194.

the Walkers in much of their work about 1840. A very intelligent and apt pupil, his schooling was abruptly terminated by a jealous tribal chief. But his Christian training received at the Tshimakain mission was not in vain. Thirty-four years later when Henry Spalding had returned to the area and was baptizing many of the Indians, he reported the presence of one William Three Mountains, a person of great tribal influence. William gave an entire year's wheat crop to help build a school house.[1] Thus had God given the growth to the seed sown by the Walkers years before.

In the work of Elkanah and Mary Walker is to be seen the complete dedication to the will of God, characteristic of the other Oregon missionaries. They had no other motive than to do God's will and to bring glory to His name.[2]

F. Summary

Thus in glimpsing a little of the life and work of the other missionaries in the Oregon Mission, it is now possible to have a better understanding of the actual contribution made by the master of Waiilatpu. The work of Samuel Parker preceded that of any other member of the Oregon

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, pp. 144-145.
2. Ibid., p. 97.

Mission, as he laid the groundwork upon which the missions themselves were later constructed. His exploration of the Oregon territory and his acquaintance with the Indians helped immeasurably the work of the missionaries who followed.

In Narcissa Whitman is to be found that unique combination of a fine, cultured background, linked with a deep and full-flowing spiritual strength which produced a loving and dedicated helper for her husband, as they labored together in the mission on the Walla Walla River.

In Henry Harmon Spalding the Oregon Mission had a man of many talents. Though his temperament caused much later unrest among the members of the Oregon Mission, as educator, farmer, and minister, Henry Spalding did an outstanding piece of work among the Nez Percé Indians of the Clearwater River.

No one can fully measure the far-reaching effects of Elkanah and Mary Walker as they labored among their beloved Indians at Tshimakain. In showing the Indians the advantages of education and the white man's way of life with the Book, they instilled within their charges the Christian principles which came to light so dramatically years later.

This, then, was the work of the missionaries in the outlying stations of the Oregon Mission. The life and work of Marcus Whitman at Waiilatpu was similar in many respects, yet significantly different. Situated on one of the main

travel routes from the east, Whitman had opportunities for a work of a somewhat different nature, as he ministered to native Indians and migrating whites alike. His medical skill, his natural industriousness and energy, and his deep devotion to God, combined to make possible a contribution to the cause of Jesus Christ equalled by few other men. This will be the concern of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTRIBUTION: A LIFE'S WORK

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A. Introduction

What was the contribution of Marcus Whitman to the missionary outreach of the Presbyterian Church? This work was four-fold. As a churchman his work in medicine and education was of major importance. Through demonstration of farming methods he showed the Cayuse Indians the avenue to a better way of life. In his letters to interested people in the east, he gave a glimpse of mission life on the Oregon frontier, expressing the needs of Indians and immigrants alike.

As a master of difficulties, life at the very heart of the Oregon Mission is to be observed, with its typical problems. It is here that the real character of Whitman stands forth in all its strength, as he met and overcame these problems.

In his role as patriot, Marcus Whitman not only took an active part in the direction of western immigration, but through his knowledge of the country cleared up many misconceptions which existed in Washington concerning the nature of the territory.

As the cause of a bitter controversy, Whitman has

rendered an invaluable service in causing certain historical facts to be unearthed and examined anew. In being the direct cause of the much-debated question, "Did or did not Marcus Whitman save Oregon to the United States," he has brought to light much important historical information concerning the political status of Oregon in the early nineteenth century.

It will be the concern at this point to examine the exact nature of this four-fold contribution.

B. Churchman

1. Motives for Work

The settlers and missionaries alike were united in wanting to civilize the Indians, to teach them agriculture and stock-raising to turn them from their war-like ways.[1] This view was shared by Marcus Whitman. He was also motivated by his complete trust in God[2] and his firm belief in the

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 160.
2. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, frontpiece: "To my mind all my work and plans involved Time and Distance and required confidence in the stability of God's purpose to have the uttermost parts of the Earth for His Possession." And on p. 73: "[Even] if we had associates, we could not be protected but by the power of God only. We feel ourselves greatly unfit for the work, but still such as we are we will try to do what we can the Lord strengthening us."

atonement and commands of Christ.[1] Whitman believed that the commands of Christ were directed to him personally. These commands he obeyed.

The event which finally sent Whitman on his way to the west, was the circulation of a story about four Indians who had entered the office of William Clark in St. Louis, seeking the white man's "Book of Heaven." Though largely fictional,[2] this story had an immediate effect upon the mission-conscious people of the east. This pathetic call, coming as it did through the person of Reverend Samuel Parker, struck sparks in the heart of Doctor Whitman who recognized this expressed need of the western Indians as his own personal call from God. The fervor and complete dedication to his task which this aroused in Whitman were to sustain him through all the privation, danger, and suffer-

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1. Ante, p. 29.
2. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 204. This author states that the Indians arrived in St. Louis in 1831, not 1832 as stated in various accounts, that they talked with William Clark of Lewis and Clark, and that both Catholic and Protestant missionaries were notified. Aside from these bare facts, the romanticized story of the Indians' "poor blind people," appears to be highly false. Many of the smaller books of the mission-study-course type mention the story as true, but have obviously not checked their facts.

   The story, or legend as it appears in Humphreys op. cit., pp. 121-122, is as follows, as told by one of the Indians: "I came to you over a trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friend of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with one eye partly opened, for more light for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind to my blind people? I made my way to you with strong

ing to come.[1] Marcus Whitman's purpose in going to Oregon

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> arms, through many enemies and strange lands, that I might carry much back to them. I go back with both arms broken and empty. The two fathers who came with me--the braves of many winters and wars--we leave asleep here by your great water...You took me where you allow your women to dance, as we do not ours, and the Book was not there. You took me where they worship the Great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there. You showed me images of the good spirits and pictures of the good land beyond, but the Book was not among them. I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with burdens of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them, but the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people, after one more snow, in the Council, that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken by our old men, and our young braves. One by one they will rise and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them and no white man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words."
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> According to Humphreys this speech was given by one of four Indians in the office of General Clark, commander of the military post at St. Louis in 1832. The Indians were supposed to have been shown every courtesy and to have been entertained well. As a result of the hospitality and the new way of life, two died. The other two were given a banquet by General Clark, at which this speech was supposed to have been made by one of the remaining Indians.
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> Two aspects of this incident are extremely interesting for the Christian reader. First, that being apocryphal in character, the story must be the creation of some civilized author, probably a person intensely interested in stirring up mission interest, and furthermore, probably a Protestant, as the sly innuendo with respect to worship with "candles," and "images," seems to indicate an expression of the current Catholic prejudice so strong among the Protestant missionaries. Second, it is no less amazing that such a legend could have sprung up and been accepted as fact by so many. The lack of adequate communication facilities of the day probably accounts for this, much information no doubt being passed by word of mouth with little concern for accuracy.

1. Creegan, op. cit., p. 343.

was to serve the Indians. He never deviated from this purpose.[1]

2. Missionary Work Proper

a. Establishment of Settled Mission Station

Though Whitman's establishing of a mission on the Walla Walla River marked the first missionary work of the American Board among the Oregon Indians, actual Christian work among the Oregon Indians had been started over two years before by Jason Lee and the Methodists.[2] Whitman's station, however, was of a more permanent nature because the Methodist missionaries had come without wives, while the members of the Whitman party came with their wives and set up homes, the first in the Pacific northwest.[3] Whitman wanted to Christianize and civilize the Indians, and to this end he planned for a white colony to set a working example of community life, thus encouraging the Indians to leave their war-like pursuits and settle down to a more civilized way of existence.[4]

In three years with no money other than that which was his as a missionary, he fenced and plowed, constructed needed buildings and attended to the many other details necessary to the establishment of a permanent mission station. He

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1. Allen, op. cit., p. 276.
2. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 217.
3. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 62. There was only one other white home on the entire Pacific coast at that time, American consul, Thomas O. Larkin at Monterey, California.
4. Allen, loc. cit.

founded the first Presbyterian Church in the territory of Oregon in 1838. Henry Spalding was named pastor, and Marcus Whitman, ruling elder.[1] The church was governed according to the Congregational plan, but adopted the covenant and confession of faith of the Presbytery of Bath, New York.[2] This church was both international and interracial having a Catholic French-Canadian convert and two Hawaiians from the mission church in Honolulu who were working for Doctor Whitman.[3]

With the coming of the Eells, the Smiths, and the Walkers several years later, the total membership of the Mission reached thirteen. It grew no larger.[4] Thus did Marcus Whitman establish a permanent mission station at Waiilatpu, a station which was to serve as the center of operations for the entire Oregon Mission.

b. Work of Medicine

Doctor Whitman's medical practice was quite extensive as might be imagined of any doctor on the frontier. In his ministry of healing, he would often be called to attend a sick patient many miles away, and he went uncomplainingly. It has already been noted how he nursed one settler back to life, taking him into his own home.[5] In a letter to Samuel

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1. Shelton, op. cit., p. 149.
2. Ibid.
3. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 114.
4. Ibid.
5. Ante, p. 32.

Parker, September 18, 1836, he mentions extracting a steel arrowhead from the back of wilderness scout Jim Bridger, a wound received three years earlier.[1] This incident in itself reveals how scarce trained medical skill was on the Oregon frontier.

His services were in constant demand by the various mission stations and by the friendly Indians. In ministering to the physical needs of both white settler, and Indian, Whitman performed an invaluable service as Christ's healing messenger.

c. Work of Education

Whitman was not an educator as we would think of the term today. Here was no learned pedagogue lecturing on the fine points of Christian doctrine, but a man of practical theology, trying to educate the Indians to a better way of life, and trying to give to his friends and associates in the east an insight into some of the problems involved.

1) Agricultural

As skilled as Doctor Whitman was in medicine, he was equally adept as a man of the soil. To the Indians who disdained labor of any sort, other than the hunt, the sight of Marcus Whitman laboring in the fields or around the mission station was a telling example. He understood with

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 229-232.

Spalding, the absolute necessity of winning the Indians from their nomadic ways before they could be won to Christ.

The Indians were encouraged to make their homes near the mission. They were given seeds if they would agree to plant and cultivate.[1] Altogether, about two hundred acres of land were put under cultivation at the Whitman mission.[2] Whitman himself planted an orchard, and built a grist mill, to improve the usefulness of the station. The few cattle he had managed to bring along the torturous trail from the east became herds.[3] Through the introduction of agriculture and stock-raising, Marcus Whitman made the Indians more teachable by improving their means of making a living, and in altering their wandering nature.

2) Pastoral

Whitman's role as pastor, was somewhat different from Marcus Whitman, doctor and farmer. Though not an ordained minister, he assumed many of the responsibilities of one. Beside visiting the sick, and teaching in the mission school, he delivered sermons and kept up his important correspondence with friends and fellow-workers in the east. Just as the Indians needed to be educated in the more profitable life of agriculture, so people in the east needed to learn

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 160.
2. Creegan, op. cit., p. 353.
3. Humphreys, loc. cit.

just what life on the frontier was like and what the situation was that confronted the missionaries.

a) Letters

Mr. Lovejoy, who accompanied Doctor Whitman on his mid-winter ride to the east, claimed that, "Dr. Whitman was too busy a man for retrospect with the pen."[1] Though this was no doubt true in part, the fact remains that Doctor Whitman did manage to write quite a few letters, a number of which have been reproduced for the interested reader by A.B. Hulbert.[2] Whitman was not a letter writer in any accomplished sense. Being much overworked he wrote sporadically and hurriedly, a fact which may account for the unique spelling of many words. And yet there is to be noted a great power in his letters, and the firm belief in the cause for which he labored.[3]

(1) To Mission Board

As has been noted on the preceding page, Whitman's letters to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions contained many practical matters of information

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 165.
2. op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 144-329. In this portion of Vol. 1, is an excellent collection of dated correspondence between Doctor Whitman and the American Board, dealing with such matters as the securing of associates, details of outfitting, problems and experience on the field, etc., and the replys from the Board. Each of the other two volumes in the series have similar material, a most valuable source of information for the reader who would truly understand Marcus Whitman.
3. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 131.

relating to life and work on the field. References to several of these will give the reader an indication of their general content.

In a letter to Doctor Green, Secretary of the Board, Whitman told of his recent arrival on the field and gave his impressions of real Indian country. He mentioned the extreme readiness of the Indians to receive religious instruction, and credited much of this to the favorable influence of traders and trappers. He described the existing Indian religion as being, "...a mixture of Catholic ceremonies, Protestantism, and common morality."[1]

Showing himself to be a good steward of the money entrusted to him, in another letter Whitman spoke of a draft for one hundred dollars which he drew for necessities of outfit. He characteristically accounted for its spending right down to the last six dollars which he lost along with his wallet.[2]

In a letter of somewhat later date, Whitman showed his increasing awareness of the part the Mission would have to play in meeting the competition of the Roman Catholic missionaries, and in helping the incoming settlers obtain a foothold in the new country.[3]

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 167-169; Nov. 7, 1835.
2. Ibid., pp. 144-145; May 13, 1835.
3. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 88; June 8, 1840.

This correspondence with the Mission Board is particularly revealing as it bares Whitman's heart concerning the work of the Mission and his own attitudes. It is also valuable for the insight it gives one into the policy and spiritual depth of the Board itself. In Doctor David Green, Secretary of the Board, the missionary effort seems to have had a particularly sensitive and inspired leader.[1] Through the study of both sides of the Whitman-Green correspondence, one is given a new appreciation of both missionary and Mission Board as they worked together for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

(2) To Friends and Family

Whitman's letters to his family and friends in the

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 190; Feb. 25, 1836. In a letter to H.H. Spalding on this date, Secretary Green expresses himself thus: "...you must not be angry with the ungodly trader or traveler. Treat them kindly, pity them, pray for them, though they will not hear you, or even despise & [sic] curse. Do nothing to irritate. Show forth under all circumstances the loveliness of the Gospel. Strive to promote piety in your own soul & [sic] in your associates. Live near to God. You will have no Christian community or public sentiment around you to hold you up. All will be of an opposite tendency. You must draw directly from God & [sic] must be living epistles from him. May he dwell with you, travel with you, protect you,& [sic] give great success to all your labors, comforting & [sic] encouraging you in all yr [sic] emergencies." and in another letter of May 4, 1836: "... while you are strict & [sic] uncompromising as to yr [sic] own principles & [sic] conduct, do not be harsh & [sic] dictatorial to others. Do them good & [sic] be kind to all as you have opportunity. Let Christian love shine brightly in all that you do." What sound Christian principles for missionaries in any day!

east contained much of his mission work, but sometimes assumed a more personal tone as might be expected.

In a letter to Narcissa's brother, Edward, Whitman expressed the desire that her brother would finish his formal education, so that he might be able to make a greater contribution to the cause of Christ.[1]

Writing to his mother on May 27, 1843, a deep concern for his mother's personal salvation is to be noted, a salvation based on the mercy, faithfulness, and power of Christ. The letter closes with, "God is our Father," an attempt, no doubt, to bridge the endless miles separating him from those whom he loved.[2]

In other letters he expressed the feeling that a large wave of westward migration was inevitable,[3] and talked of the work he had already been doing with both settlers and Indians.[4] He forsaw the ultimate cessation of missionary activity because of this coming tide of emigration.[5]

Though completely dedicated to the work of Christ, and upheld by His power, Whitman was not immune to the pangs of loneliness caused by separation from family and friends.

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 314-316; May 27, 1843.
2. Ibid., pp. 312-314.
3. Ibid., pp. 316-318; Letter to brother-in-law Jonas, May, 28, 1843.
4. Ibid., Vol. 3, pp. 134-136; Letter of April 8, 1845, to his brother Henry.
5. Ibid., pp. 108-109.

This feeling is detectable in several letters,[1] and gives to the reader a deeper understanding of what this missionary service must have involved in terms of personal sacrifice for those so engaged.

b) Theology

Though Marcus Whitman never sat down to write a systematic treatment of Christian theology,[2] his theology is to be noted throughout his letters, and need only be collected and examined to understand whence came the strength and sustaining power for his great work.

(1) God

His belief in a personal God has already been noted on the preceding page, in his reference to God as a Father. With this was also coupled a firm belief in God's power,[3] and His providence.[4] Throughout his letters a thread of joyous Christian optimism is evident, founded on this complete trust in the love and providential mercies of God.

(2) Prayer

Whitman shared with his wife, Narcissa, a strong belief

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 108-109: "Every time you write try & [sic] let us look at you. Let us see you as you are." pp. 134-136, he expresses the wish that his brother might somehow be on one of the wagon trains continually passing by.
2. It is to be noted that Whitman never wrote any sermons either, for he was not a trained preacher. His practice when none of the ordained men of the mission were available, was to read from a book of sermons; Ibid., pp. 37, 43.
3. Ante, pp. 29-30; Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 46.
4. Hulbert, Ibid., pp. 46, 203.

in the efficacy of intercessory prayer. This was most strikingly demonstrated when he and his guide became hopelessly lost in the blinding snowstorm.[1] He expressed the need for prayer, in a letter to Doctor Green, September 8, 1846:

> "Surely no mission has more need than ours to prize every effort to call forth concert of feeling with our patrons and the Board or more to prise [sic] concert in prayer and effort."[2]

Through his trust in God and this ability to speak with Him, Whitman derived strength and courage equal to his tasks.

(3) Christ

Whitman's expressed concern for his mother's salvation was grounded in his interpretation of Christ's death. He believed that Christ's death was for all men,[3] and that God speaks to man in all His mercy and grace through this atonement of His Son.[4] It was upon God, working through this atonement of Christ, that Whitman depended for his daily needs and support.[5] The Lordship of Christ was not simply a theory for him. It was a living reality.[6]

(4) Heaven

Whitman apparently did not dwell on the exact nature

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1. Ante, p. 30.
2. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 183-187.
3. Eells, op. cit., p. 23.
4. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1. p. 145.
5. Ibid.
6. Eells, op. cit., p. 23.

and characteristics of the life after death. But he maintained a sure belief in the life to come as an obvious fact. This is most clearly pointed out in the untimely death of Whitman's only child, little two-year-old Clarissa. In commenting on the tragedy Whitman said, "...if we are obedient to his will we may have the consolation that she has only gone a little before us to the 'rest of the people of God.' "[1] The life after death was a certainty, to which the faithful Christian could look forward with anticipation.

Reading through Whitman's writings one is forcibly struck by his strong belief in God's providence and power. This is a theme which may be noted reoccurring again and again, traceable no doubt to his Calvinistic upbringing and to the theological climate of his times which it reflects. Though not systematized in any orderly fashion, it may be seen that his theology contains the essentials of sound Christian doctrine, and served as the basis for a consecrated life of fruitful service.

C. Master of Difficulties

Some secular historians in dealing with Marcus Whitman mention only the physical hardships of weather and trail

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 160; Letter to Secretary Green, Oct. 22, 1839.

with which he had to contend. But there were many other problems equally as difficult which Whitman faced and finally conquered as he went about his work as frontier missionary.

1. General Political and Religious Difficulties

The unsettled nature of both political and ecclesiastical policies of his day, caused no little difficulty in Whitman's work with the Indians.

a. Political

Two chief problems confronted the Oregon missionaries in the area of government and politics, the power and influence of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the matter of an unsettled Indian policy in the United States government.

1) Power of the Hudson's Bay Company

Much more has been made of this problem than the facts seem to warrant. Certain scholars have asserted that the Hudson's Bay Company was definitely antagonistic to the work of the missionaries.[1] One of these, a Doctor Hillis, having access to the Hudson's Bay Company archives, maintained he found evidence there proving his point of view.[2] After examining the same documents, W.I. Marshall states that Hillis has perverted the truth, there being no evidence

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1. Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 99.
2. W.I. Marshall, The Hudson's Bay Company's Archives Furnish No Support to the Whitman Saved Oregon Story, pp. 3-5.

in either archives or diaries of the missionaries involved to give credence to such a position.[1]

It is true that the Hudson's Bay Company had control of a vast wilderness empire, nearly three hundred thousand square miles.[2] The company had done everything within its power to discourage other fur companies and settlers from coming into the area, wanting to keep the territory in its virgin state.[3] But there is no indication that the company itself was ever hostile to the missionaries, though a few of its members may have been.[4] The company gave timely aid to the missionaries who survived the tragic massacre on the Walla Walla River,[5] and it is a matter of record that Peter Skene Ogdon, chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, once made a special trip to Boston, to persuade the American Board to send more helpers for the Whitman Mission.[6] Whatever opposition Whitman may have encountered from the company must surely have been in relation to his work with the immigrants and not relating directly to his work as missionary to the Indians.

2) Unsettled United States Indian Policy

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1. Marshall, op. cit., pp. 3-5; see also, Marshall, History vs. the Whitman Saved Oregon Story, pp. 73-75.
2. Creegan, op. cit., p. 346.
3. Ibid., p. 347.
4. Mowry, op. cit., p. 226.
5. Marshall, History vs. the Whitman Saved Oregon Story, pp. 73-75.
6. James F. Willard and Colin B. Goodykoontz, eds., The Trans-Mississippi West, "Undeveloped Factors in the Life of Marcus Whitman," A.B. Hulbert, pp. 87-102, Boulder Colo., University of Colorado, 1930.

A related problem presented itself with respect to control, or a lack of it, in the United States government. Our country was sadly lacking a clearly defined and uniform Indian program. With each changing political administration in Washington came changes in the Indian policies. It is no wonder the Indians were completely bewildered by the "Great White Father," in Washington, who was so changeable and apparently so self-contradictory.[1] Most high governmental officials were motivated by the highest ideals and a genuine concern for the welfare of the Indians, but were confronted with certain difficult problems.

Basic of course to the entire situation was a lack of understanding between Indian and white man. Until the missionaries went west, few white men had shown any genuine interest in the Indian's culture, religion, or way of life.[2] Without understanding there could be no adequate policy.

There was also extreme difficulty in enforcing the treaties once they had been made. Governmental agents and traders alike were all too ready to take advantage of the Indians' cultivated thirst for the white man's "fire water," instead of administering justice as representatives of a better way of life.[3] The incidents of inhuman brutalities

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1. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 263.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 264; Cannon, op. cit., p. 88.

inflicted upon the Indians are all too clear. Many people think that the Red Man was to blame for all the bloodshed and treachery laid at his door. But the records are full of white savagery and perfidy even greater.[1]

The ravages of venereal disease, introduced by immoral settlers and sailors, were appalling. Entire tribes were destroyed by this scourge alone.[2] The missionaries who did speak against this foul practice were silenced by the lust and passions of the white men. It has been well said, "...the Americans were in greater need of missionaries than the Indians."[3] The government which should have been regulating the conduct of its citizens and their treatment of the Indians did not do so. This failure on the part of the government was a real handicap to Whitman in his work among the Indians and appears to have been one of the contributing factors to the later Indian massacre.

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1. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 267. Indians were shot from ambush for no reason whatever. General Nelson A. Miles terms the Sand Creek atrocity against the Indians, "... perhaps the foulest and most unjustifiable crime in the annals of America." Indians called to peace treaties by white generals, were taken prisoner, in breach of good faith. Cannon, op. cit., p. 89; Perhaps one of the ugliest examples of white savagery on record, took place when smallpox was deliberately introduced into the Blackfoot Indian tribe to subdue these proud and terrible warriors. The resulting mortality was ghastly.
2. Ibid., p. 88.
3. Ibid.

b. Religious

The major ecclesiastical problems which confronted Whitman were a lack of enough missionary workers for the field, and a singular failure to appreciate or understand the Indian's culture and native religion.

1) Lack of Missionary Workers

In the early days of mission work when the field was not so large, there were more than enough candidates to supply the need. But in the period following 1830 many vacancies remained to be filled. This was diagnosed by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1841 as traceable to a political lack of power to protect the Indians, causing many white people to believe the Indians were due for eventual extinction. Hence there was a declining desire to reach the Indians with the gospel.[1]

There were other deterrents to the recruiting of missionary volunteers. Reports of sickness and hardship on the field combined with a growing love for the material comforts of life, led to a decreased rate of volunteering. Then, too, some who had agreed to go to the mission field decided against accepting an appointment at the last minute, thus leaving the Boards short-handed.[2]

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1. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 273.
2. Ibid., pp. 273-274.

2) Lack of Missionary Understanding

Missionaries often failed completely to take into account that many of the Indians' customs and methods in teaching their young, had great moral and spiritual worth developed over countless generations. Whatever knowledge the missionaries might have had concerning the Indians' religion was too often disregarded in the zeal to reach the "heathen savages."[1] All too frequently evangelism was undertaken with a basic motive of pity, the Indians being told about the gospel with no attempt being made to listen to a thing the Indian might have to say concerning the deep and quite valid spiritual insights into his own religion.[2] Had this understanding been cultivated, much opposition and actual conflict could have been avoided between missionaries and Indians.

The related problem of language faced many of the frontier missionaries. Desiring to get to work immediately, they either spoke through interpreters or resorted to the "jargon" used by the traders. Either method was wholly inadequate for the accurate conveying of Christian truth.[3] The language problem was not so accute for Whitman and the members of his mission for they finally learned the language and did translation work themselves.[4]

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1. Barclay, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 268.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 271.
4. Ibid., p. 223.

2. Internal Mission Difficulties

As one might surmise, the missionaries to the Oregon country were, for the most part, strong individualists. They were men and women with deep Christian convictions, or they would not have been there at all.[1] The first two years of the Oregon Mission were passed in perfect harmony, not yet disturbed by the internal storms which were soon to shake it to the very foundations.[2]

a. Henry Spalding

In a letter to her father October 10, 1840, Narcissa Whitman mentions the chief source of the discord that was building up between the members of the mission, Henry Spalding. In her opinion Spalding ought never to have come with the other members of the Mission, since he was the cause of much ill will and jealousy.[3] This was a true observation on Narcissa's part, for so great was Spalding's dislike for Whitman, and so great was the prejudice which he had nourished among the other missionaries against the Whitmans, that before the drowning of the Whitman's only child the Mission had decided to send Whitman to another locality to maintain a semblance of peace and order.[4] But because of the tragedy this was not carried out.

Spalding's jealousy over Whitman's success at Waiilatpu

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1. Drury, Henry Harmon Spalding, p. 210.
2. Ibid., p. 190.
3. Cannon, op. cit., p. 54.
4. Ibid., p. 53.

appears to have been more a matter of location and not so much the quality or quantity of work accomplished. The Whitman mission strategically located on the Oregon Trail, served as a haven for explorers and settlers, and was also the distribution point for all Mission supplies.[1] This apparently made the master of Lapwai a bit envious, to the great detriment of the entire Mission.

The continual uproar instigated by Spalding was in sharp contrast to the uniform zeal of the Roman Catholic priests and the Methodist missionaries, serving to hinder Protestant work rather than help it.[2]

b. Matters of Policy

Besides the problem of Henry Spalding, the Mission was also perplexed by W.H. Gray, the Mission mechanic, who aspired to strike out on his own and establish his own station. This question concerning the right of local agents to make their own decisions pending direct orders from the home base was a question common to many other mission fields as well, and by no means restricted to the Oregon Mission.[3]

There was also a bit of jealousy on the part of the other missionaries when Whitman suggested that Waiilatpu, because of its central location, be expanded with mills,

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 47.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 90.
3. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 45.

printing presses and greatly increased agriculture, to free the rest of the missionaries for more important work. This was looked upon by some of the missionaries as being far too worldly, and was subsequently turned down by the Board for lack of funds.[1]

As a result of these internal differences, the various members of the Mission began to write letters back to the Board in Boston, airing their grievances,[2] a contributing cause to the Board's later order to close the mission at Waiilatpu.

Surprising as this insight into mission life in Oregon may seem to the present-day reader, it is to be noted that such a situation was not at all unusual:

> "...the rumors of human failings in the Oregon Mission only echoed what was very true on most missionary fields, and the secretaries of the Board found that writing conciliatory letters was a routine part of their work."[3]

These troubles were caused mainly by the hardships of pioneer life aggravating natural human eccentricities.[4] What some historians fail to note is that all these differences were settled among the missionaries themselves before Whitman began his long ride back to Boston. Gray continued living with the Whitmans, and Spalding, admitting his own

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 48-49.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 52.
3. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 61.
4. Ibid., p. 44.

faults, promised to cause no more discord, a promise that was kept.[1]

It is indeed a tribute to the character of Marcus Whitman that throughout the entire period of disagreement his conduct was one of a true Christian gentleman, reflecting poise, patience, and quiet heroism.[2] His example set before the eyes of his compatriots, ultimately resulted in the breaking down of their self-will.

3. Mission Board Misunderstanding

Marcus Whitman was hindered in his efforts to develop the mission station by the Board's ignorance of the actual situation on the field. The continued insistence that the mission be made self-supporting was an utterly senseless request under the existing circumstances.[3] The Board was simply not aware of conditions in Oregon.

Before word could reach the Board that the missionaries had composed their differences, their letters of discord arrived causing the Board to completely misinterpert the situation at the Mission.[4] On the basis of this information the Mission was given what has become known as the "Destructive Order," ordering the closing of Waiilatpu,[5] an order

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 46.
2. Ibid., p. 44.
3. Cannon, op. cit., pp. 45-46, p. 59.
4. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
5. Ibid.; other details of the order included Spalding's recall along with W. H. Gray and Mr. Smith, thetransfer of Whitman and Rogers to the northern branch of the Mission, and the sale of all Mission property in the southern branch.

that was later recinded in accordance with reception of the true facts.[1]

4. Mission Board Finances

The order to close Waiilatpu was not motivated solely by the unfavorable reports from the missionaries themselves. The Board at this time was undergoing some very serious financial difficulties, its debts running as high as sixty thousand dollars at times.[2] Days of financial plenty saw W.H. Gray sent out in 1838 with Walker, Eells, and Smith. Financial need occasioned the orders to retrench the Mission in 1836 and to abolish the Waiilatpu station in 1842.[3]

It is important to note that the order to close the Whitman mission in 1842, recalling Spalding and others, was of a similar nature to orders given to cut back missionary work all over the world. At this time forty-seven missionaries had to be dropped from the work of the Board.[4] All orders to expand or consolidate the work were caused by the presence or lack of sufficient funds in the Board treasury,[5] though these orders were no doubt influenced by conditions on particular fields such as the trouble in Oregon.

In spite of internal mission difficulties and Board

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 44, 116.
2. Willard and Goodykoontz, op. cit., pp. 92-93.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., pp. 93-94.
5. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 4-5.

misunderstandings, Whitman labored on in the work to which he had been called and finally saw his patience rewarded as harmony once more settled upon the Mission, bringing with it the recinding of the Board's Destructive Order.

5. Catholic Competition

In November 1838 the first Catholic missionaries arrived on the Walla Walla River, tarrying only long enough to celebrate mass and baptize three people.[1] Some of the Protestant missionaries were greatly concerned but not so the Whitmans who saw the advent of the Jesuit missionaries as a further stimulus to their work.[2]

And this competition on the field was stimulus indeed. The Catholic pageantry and ceremonialism attracted the Indians who had such elements in their own pagan religion.[3] The simple symbolism of the Catholics, the raising of the cross, the bead counting, the act and incantations of baptism, all these had immediate meaning for the Oregon Indians while the Protestant abstractions of revelation, sanctification, forordination and infant damnation, held little appeal in comparison.[4] The rigid puritanical standards of Whitman and the other missionaries caused the Indians to be reminded in no uncertain terms that the wrathful God of

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1. Cannon, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
2. Ibid.
3. Malone, op. cit., p. 142.
4. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 65.

the Old Testament was angry with them for their sins. The Protestant missionaries failed to see that the Indians were still only spiritual infants, a fact the Catholic priests realized at once and upon which they capitalized.[1] The priests did not try to change the Indians overnight but gave them the basic essentials of dogma and allowed ample time for their charges to assimilate it.[2] It is little wonder that the Protestant missionaries were stimulated to improve their methods and make their message more relevant.

Largely through the efforts of Mr. Spalding, in the minds of some this competition sprang into open antagonism. In 1843 the predominating thought in Spalding's mind was the cause of the Whitman massacre. This cause he believed to be the Catholic missionaries,[3] a belief which had widespread dissemination because of his prolific writings. That these writings were extremely prejudiced, may be gathered from the statements of the Mission Board regarding Spalding's extravagant statements,[4] and from the character of the man himself as has already been noted. As a result of Spalding's opinions on the matter, it appears that some later students of the subject have been unfavorably biased.[5]

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 3, pp. 51-52.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 90.
3. Eells, op. cit., pp. 201-202.
4. Ibid.
5. Shelton, op. cit., p. 164; He believes that the Indians were encouraged to rebel against the Protestant missionaries by the Jesuit priests; F.F. Ellinwood, Marcus Whitman and the Settlement of Oregon, p. 11; "That some of

Much of the reported antagonism between Catholic and Protestant missionaries seems to be a product of the natural antipathy of certain Protestant missionaries toward all Catholics. This hatred of everything Catholic was instilled in them as a part of their New England religion, and seems to have tinted much of the Jesuit mission work with an unfavorable color.[1] The Protestants being first on the field, there would naturally be a certain spirit of professional competition. But any relation between the work of the Jesuits and the Indian massacre which some have tried to demonstrate, would be extremely difficult to prove.[2] Willard and Goodykoontz have the following pointed statement on the matter:

> "To try to implicate the Catholic Fathers in his [Whitman's] death shows nothing but ignorance of, or defiance of, every contemporary document as well as the dictates of common sense. Nothing so much as the murder of Whitman could have injured all Catholic plans for extension of their work on the Upper Columbia."[3]

That the arrival of the Catholic priests caused the missionaries of the Oregon Mission to redouble their efforts can be little doubted. And in this respect, in managing to win converts after the advent of the Catholic priests,

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> the Hudson's Bay Company's officers and all of the Jesuit missionaries did much to prejudice the Indians against the Americans, and earnestly desired their removal from the country, is beyond a doubt."

1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 72-73.
2. Mowry, op. cit., pp. 227-228.
3. Op. cit., p. 101.

Whitman and his colleagues showed themselves equal to the challenge. But that the priests were the immediate cause of the bloody missionary massacre is a matter open to serious question. As will be seen in the following section, there were other more pertinent causes.

6. Indian Temperament

At first the Indians were eager for the Protestant missionaries to come to them. This was especially noted, when in crossing the continental divide on their way west, the Whitman party was met by a group of Nez Perce' Indians who were overjoyed that the missionaries had come.[1] Shelton has observed that, "Their desire for religious instruction exceeded anything ever before met with among North American Indians."[2]

But this Indian enthusiasm gradually began to wane, because they did not fully understand the motives and actions of the missionaries, and because of a deep and growing suspicion of both missionaries and white settlers.

a. Mission Life

This growing opposition was particularly noticeable with respect to the everyday life of the Whitman mission. Whitman had been promised free use of the land by the Indians, but soon discovered that this was not a universal

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 21.
2. Shelton, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

feeling among all members of the tribe.[1] The Indians deeply resented the apparent prosperity of the mission. The growing buildings and expanding fields seemed to justify more payment than the simple preaching of the gospel.[2] Especially distasteful to Indian minds was Whitman's practice of selling the produce of his fields to the migrating settlers, produce from fields which had been a gift.

The Cayuse Indians of Waiilatpu practiced polygamy and kept their wives in virtual slavery, secluded from public appearance. Imagine then the obvious presence of the white women in the mission, especially Narcissa Whitman who was continually being aided by her husband.[3] The Indians also misunderstood Mrs. Whitman's intentions when she took a homeless Indian waif into her home. The adult Indians expected similar treatment and were deeply hurt when their efforts to beg met with stern opposition.[4]

b. White Settlers

With this feeling against certain facets of mission life went a strong suspicion of the white settlers. Priests, traders, and trappers were welcomed by the Indians. But the white settlers with their families and possessions represented an impending threat to the Indian civilization,[5]

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1. Eells, op. cit., p. 250.
2. Cannon, op. cit., p. 57.
3. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 2.
4. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
5. Creegan, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

especially the migration of 1843 in which one thousand settlers entered the territory. The Indian naturally feared the loss of his land and valued hunting grounds.[1] Where traders were welcome, living without families, the settler with his family and wagon load of possessions posed a real threat to the Indians' way of life.

c. Whitman's Medical Work

It is hard to understand how the Indians could have considered Whitman's healing work with suspicion. But a little closer look at Indian demonology may help to clear up the problem.

It was very hard for the missionaries to appreciate the centuries of tribal superstition and demonology ingrained within their swarthy pupils. This superstition was particularly strong among the Oregon Indians where the dividing line between starvation and plenty was so thin. This belief in the supernatural was to be seen at its highest in the awe surrounding the medicine men, who were believed to have power over life and death. If a sick Indian lived because of a medicine man's ministrations, it was a sign of supernatural power. But if the patient died, then medicine man or not, the luckless charmer would be killed by the sorrowing relatives.[2]

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 186.
2. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 6-9.

Because of the adverse influences mentioned above, white settlers and particular aspects of mission life, Marcus Whitman was losing contact with many of the Indians. The last straw was the epidemic of measles brought to the country by the settlers of 1847. Doctor Whitman's medicine proved effective for the white children but failed to halt the spread of the disease among the Indians. The Indians came to the conclusion that Whitman was poisoning them, and began formulating plans to get rid of this menace.[1]

And so this lack of proper understanding on the part of the Indians succeeded in splitting them into two factions, those who followed the white man's ideas and religion, the others who opposed him. The non-Christian element accused the religious faction of profiting from the work of the missionaries and determined to do away with the source of this tribal schism. This was first attempted by undermining Indian confidence in Whitman, and later by encouraging the rumors that he was "poisoning" them with measles.[2]

7. Indian Aggression

This spirit of native unrest broke forth into acts of open violence against both the missionaries and their property.

a. General Depredations.

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1. Creegan, op. cit., p. 364; Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 20, p. 142.
2. Willard and Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 100.

Food stealing and stock pilfering were hazards for which the missionaries had to be continually on the alert. At Waiilatpu, the Cayuse Indians destroyed Whitman's irrigation system, let their horses into the grain fields, and on one occasion threatened Whitman's life with an axe.[1]

In 1840 the Nez Perce' Indians at Lapwai destroyed Henry Spalding's grist mill, threatened him with a gun and insulted his wife.[2] But the worst blow was yet to come.

b. The Massacre

The fateful day was November 29, 1847.[3] Whites and Indians alike were dying from dysentery and measles. About two o'clock in the afternoon two Indians came to the door of the mission station to see Doctor Whitman. He let them in, and as he was talking to one of them, the other slipped behind Whitman and drawing a tomahawk from beneath his blanket buried it in the Doctor's skull. The bloody carnage which followed has no need of description. Suffice to say that before the grisly work was complete fourteen missionaries of the gospel lay dead, martyred for their faith. The damage to the mission property has been estimated at about forty thousand dollars.[4]

To those who might share the opinion of Bancroft[5] and

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 52.
2. Ibid., p. 51.
3. Ibid., p. 96.
4. Ibid., p. 89.
5. Ante, p. 24.

consider this the final proof of complete missionary failure, let the reader consider the thought-provoking words of Clifford Drury:

> "The Whitman Massacre, which began on November 29, 1847, might be likened to the birth pangs which mark the arrival of new life, for when the news of that event reached Congress, all Old Oregon was officially recognized as a territory of the United States. The new Oregon was then born."[1]

8. Summary

Though struggling against great obstacles Marcus Whitman is to be seen as a man completely able to cope with any exigency. Though hampered by the lack of an adequate Indian policy in Washington and a dearth of sufficient missionary workers, he and his fellow-laborers continued their work among the Indians of Oregon. Though they were foreigners to the culture and religion of the Indians, still they managed to win many of them for the cause of Christ. Torn as the Mission was by internal strife and discord, Whitman displayed a nobleness and strength of character which not only gave him the proper perspective in which to see the situation, but gradually helped the other missionaries to end their differences, assuring the Mission of continuing support by the American Board. Persevering in his labor with unflagging zeal following the arrival of the Catholic

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 186.

missionaries, Marcus Whitman continued to proclaim the message of Christ through his medical, agricultural, and pastoral work. No matter how insurmountable the obstacles, these merely seemed to increase his enthusiasm for his work,[1] a work that triumphed over death itself. For the Christian work of Marcus Whitman did not stop with the fateful tomahawk at Waiilatpu. Chief Tilaukaits, one of the murderers, later surrendered himself to governmental authorities, an act which he knew could only result in his own death. When questioned as to why he was giving himself up, he replied, "Did not your missionaries teach us that Christ died to save His people? Thus we die, if we must, to save our people."[2] Whitman's success and effectiveness were revealed as forcibly in his death, as they had been in his life.

D. Patriot

Though Marcus Whitman made a great contribution to the Presbyterian Church as churchman and missionary, his contribution to the work of Christ as pathfinder and patriot was also of vital significance. Actually, his work as missionary and explorer cannot be separated, for these

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1. Cannon, op. cit., p. 67.
2. Ibid., pp. 170-171.

two aspects of his work are to be seen in continuous interaction. It is only for the convenience of analytical study that they are separated as distinct functions of the one great work. Marcus Whitman, missionary was always Marcus Whitman, American citizen.

1. Pathfinder and Colonizer

Whitman's accomplishments as an explorer and pathfinder are better understood when one considers his philosophy of travel.[1] The same determination with which he attacked problems of mission life carried over into his work on the trail.

As Whitman returned east to secure reinforcements in 1835, he was a full seven years ahead of John Fremont the great northwest explorer and trail scout,[2] and so contributed much information about trail and wilderness previously unknown. On his return to the west with the party of missionaries, Whitman's taking a wagon all the way to the Columbia River for the first time, "...proved to be one of the most important acts of Dr. Whitman's life."[3] This taking a wagon of household effects across the mountains for the first time, demonstrated that Oregon could be settled, and added to the growing desire in Washington to annex the

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 177; "Travel, travel, travel. Nothing else will take you to the end of your journey. Nothing is wise that causes you delay."
2. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 26.
3. Shelton, op. cit., p. 146.

Oregon country to the United States.[1]

The letters of the missionaries were widely circulated in the east, describing Oregon as a home, and together with the writings of Washington Irving, caused the beginning of a great migration to Oregon.[2] In the strategic location of Waiilatpu where it could be a haven for incoming settlers, Whitman saw a real opportunity to serve as a spiritual bulwark, protecting the settlers from the moral evil that accompanied them.[3]

Doctor Whitman was not only the leader of Protestant missionary migration to Oregon, and a strong moral influence upon the coming settlers, but he served as a personal guide for several of these migrant wagon trains. When Whitman arrived in Washington during the winter of 1842-1843, it was agreed in talks with President Tyler that Whitman would demonstrate the feasibility of overland migration, by taking out a band of settlers himself.[4] This he did, returning to the frontier in Missouri and leading a party of over one thousand settlers back to Oregon.[5] The years that followed saw large wagon trains streaming across the open prairie to the land of promise.[6] Above all this

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1. Creegan, op. cit., p. 351; Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 186.
2. Morison and Commager, op. cit., p. 467.
3. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 87-88.
4. Ellinwood, op. cit., p. 6.
5. Cannon, op. cit., p. 65.
6. Ibid., p. 73; In 1844 a wagon train of 1475 persons passed Fort Laramie on its way west. The train contained 250-300 wagons and took 3½ hours to pass a given point.

thronging immigration stood the figure of Marcus Whitman, missionary, guide and friend.

2. "Ambassador" to Washington and Boston

As a loyal citizen of his country Whitman was naturally interested in seeing his government receive a correct impression of the Oregon country, thus negating perverted accounts circulating in Washington. As a missionary, Whitman felt that the Oregon Mission needed to be represented personally at the American Board offices in Boston. These two concerns prompted the famous mid-winter ride of 1842-1843.

a. Motives for the Journey

Whitman's primary reason for attempting such an undertaking in the middle of winter was to have the Board's order to close part of the Mission reversed.[1] He also desired to bring back more lay workers to help in the work of the Mission[2] and more Protestant settlers to offset the influence of the Catholic priests who were interested in making the country a dominion of Rome.[3]

Too many people have imposed upon Whitman's ride of 1842 the changed political conditions of 1844, and have tried to show that Whitman rode east to save Oregon from going to England. At the time of the ride no such political crisis

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1. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, pp. 177-178; Edward G. Bourne, Essays in Historical Criticism, p. 55.
2. Drury, loc. cit.
3. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 75-82.

was in sight,[1] though he did want to correct some false impressions then current in Washington.

In order of importance his motives for riding east seem to have been to save the Waiilatpu mission station, to bring back more Protestant settlers to offset Catholic influence, and to take an accurate report of the country to Washington.[2]

b. Reception in Boston

No attempt will be made to describe the entire trip east. Only let it be said that from Waiilatpu to Independence, Missouri, was a distance of over eighteen hundred miles,[3] and from there to Boston over fifteen hundred more.[4] This entire distance was covered on horseback in the dead of winter, the members of the little band being forced to eat their dogs, their mules, and what they could catch in way of game.[5]

Upon arriving in Boston March 30, 1843 and presenting himself at the Board offices, he was greeted rather cooly. But on appearing before the Prudential Committee, the order to abandon his mission station was rescinded and orders were given to obtain another missionary to help him, if such could be found.[6]

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp. 75-82.
2. Ibid., pp. 97-106.
3. Cannon, op. cit., p. 61.
4. Rand McNally Pocket World Atlas, p. 89.
5. Cannon, loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 65.

Part of Whitman's cold reception in Boston was caused by the Board's unfavorable attitude toward sending out Protestant settlers to save Protestant interests threatened by the Catholics, as Whitman requested. The Board said that the New England brand of Christianity was not strong enough to endure the rugged frontier life, and that sending such people would do more harm than good.[1]

He was also chided for incurring unnecessary expense and danger in leaving the mission without orders.[2] Because Oregon and the Board offices were so far apart there was bound to be misunderstanding on what was needed. But Whitman did achieve the repeal of the Destructive Order, the major purpose of his mission east.

c. Reception in Washington

From the tales of certain trappers and explorers there was a popular impression in Washington that Oregon was a virtual wild and uninhabitable wilderness, completely useless for any civilized pursuit.[3] This general feeling was summed up by a certain Congressman:

> "I would not give a pinch of snuff for the whole of Oregon for agricultural purposes, and I thank God that he put

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1. Willard and Goodykoontz, op. cit., p. 97.
2. Barrows, op. cit., pp. 241-242; Barrows goes on to say that Whitman believed his 7 years on the field would entitle him to a hearing in the home office, and the granting of his requests. But his knowledge and position were too far advanced for a man of his day, though years later his insight was to be vindicated.
3. Ibid., p. 189.

> the Rocky Mountains between it and the east."[1]

Whitman devoted much of his time in Washington to giving a picture of the country as it really was. This he did by calling on President Tyler and Daniel Webster, and talking with other men of influence.[2] He also suggested a number of improvements such as protection of immigrants while migrating. He voiced the need for the pony express which was not to come until seventeen years later.[3]

And so Marcus Whitman served his country while he served his Lord. Helping the settlers become established in the new country he also helped to establish a growing community in which the Christian principles taught by the missionaries could take hold. As unofficial "ambassador" to Boston and Washington he cleared up certain misconceptions concerning the Mission and the nature of the country, a valuable contribution indeed for the religious and territorial expansion then in progress. The importance of this example of mid-winter hardihood is pointed up by Charles Creegan when he says, "This memorable ride must take rank with other pivotal events in our history..."[4] Some writers have attached a great deal more importance to Whitman's ride than the facts warrant. For this reason and also because of the

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1. Creegan, op. cit., pp. 359-360.
2. Ibid.
3. Drury, Presbyterian Panorama, p. 116.
4. Creegan, op. cit., p. 356.

great quantity of heated debate which has arisen over this question, a more detailed examination of the facts is in order.

E. Cause of a Controversy

As the cause of a bitter controversy following his death, Whitmans was responsible for the reexamination of certain important historical materials which had a direct bearing upon his work and the work of the entire Oregon Mission. The controversy essentially was this, "Did or did not Marcus Whitman save Oregon to the United States?" If he did influence Congress to annex the Oregon country to the United States as some maintain, then in a very real sense he helped gain protection and status for the Oregon missionaries as citizens of a territory of the United States, protection which made their work as missionaries less hazardous and more effective. If he did not influence the annexation of the country to the United States, then naturally he cannot receive credit for any of the benefits which the missionaries received as residents of a new United States territory and state. Did Whitman's dramatic ride of 1842 have a deeper motive than attempting to clear up misunderstandings in Boston and Washington? From the mass of writing which the discussion of this question has occasioned, two general points of view emerge.

1. Whitman DID Save Oregon to the United States

Creegan flatly states that Whitman did save Oregon to the United States.[1] He also mentions that when the Whitman party had crossed the continental divide and finally stood on the Pacific slope, they knelt down with an American flag and Bible and claimed the land before them for Christ and His Church. He further affirms that the result of this great event was the annexation to the United States of some three hundred thousand square miles of Pacific territory.[2] He also alludes to a dinner Whitman attended at Fort Walla Walla along with some twenty traders and trappers. An announcement was made during the meal that a colony of British settlers from the Red River had just crossed the mountains. Upon hearing this news a young priest rose and cried, "Hurrah for Oregon; America is too late, and we have got the country." This, according to Creegan, caused Whitman to make an abrupt exit from the dinner. After a hasty trip to Waiilatpu, he prepared to leave for Washington to notify the government.[3]

John T. Faris has a different version of the reason for Whitman's ride. Faris maintains that Jason Lee, a Methodist missionary, rode to Washington in the spring of 1838 to persuade the government to annex Oregon, but Congress, slow to

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1. Op. cit., p. 366.
2. Ibid., p. 349.
3. Ibid., pp. 354-355.

act, filed his petition away. Two years later Marcus Whitman decided to go and see what he could do to expedite matters.[1]

W.A. Mowry asserts that the main purpose of Whitman's eastern ride was to save Oregon:

> "Such a multitude of facts is at hand, such an accumulation of evidence from a great number of reputable persons, as to show beyond a doubt that the main purpose in Dr. Whitman's mind was of a political nature."[2]

He mentions Mrs. Elkanah Walker believing that Whitman's motives were political, but the reason no one knew of them was because he was afraid that if the reason for his ride became known, it might cause unfavorable criticism of himself and the other members of the Mission, as had happened to the Methodist missionaries.[3] He cites an impressive number of Whitman's personal friends who have given similar testimony, and concludes with a quotation from one of Whitman's letters to his father and mother, "As I hold the settlement of this country by Americans rather than by a British colony most important..."[4]

A similar list of testimonial letters is given by Myron Eells who holds the same convictions on the matter as Mowry, that Whitman did save Oregon from British control.[5] In

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1. Winning the Oregon Country, pp. 162, 168-169, 173.
2. Op. cit., p. 132.
3. Ibid., p. 135.
4. Mowry, op. cit., pp. 136-141.
5. Ibid., pp. 176-185.

another book,[1] he proceeds to take exception to professor Bourne's conclusion that Whitman did not save Oregon.

Jonathan Edwards says that Whitman had been thinking for a long time about what he could do to save Oregon from the British, and finally concluded the way to accomplish this would be to go east and bring back a horde of immigrants to populate the country.[2] He quotes Henry Spalding, Elkanah Walker, W.A. Gray, and Cushing Eells as being unanimously agreed that Whitman's reason in visiting Washington was to retain Oregon for the United States.[3] F.F. Ellinwood draws the same conclusion on the basis of testimony by Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Canfield, witnesses of the massacre.[4]

On the basis of Senate documents, O.W. Nixon states that Whitman's arrival in Washington was timely, for it prevented President Tyler from finishing the negotiations which might have given Oregon to Britain, an opinion shared by Mary G. Humphreys.[5]

Henry W. Parker takes professor Bourne's "The Legend of Marcus Whitman" to task as being untruthful and biased. He further affirms the validity of the testimony of the

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1. A Reply to Professor Bourne's "The Whitman Legend," p. 122.
2. Marcus Whitman, M.D. the Pathfinder of the Pacific Northwest, p. 22.
3. Ibid., p. 26.
4. F.F. Ellinwood, Marcus Whitman and the Settlement of Oregon, p. 5.
5. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 174.

sworn witnesses whose veracity Bourne has questioned. Parker also cites W.A. Mowry in backing up his own conviction that Whitman was directly responsible for the annexation of Oregon.[1]

This appears to be the bulk of the material supporting the point of view that Marcus Whitman did save Oregon to the United States. The other side of the question must now be examined.

2. Whitman DID NOT Save Oregon to the United States

Clifford Drury in refering to Spalding's account of the dinner at Fort Walla Walla and the triumphant shout of the Catholic priest has this to say:

> "Spalding's account was written in the heat of controversy and bears more evidence of an eloquent imagination than it does of historical accuracy."[2]

Drury further affirms that the story about the dinner was denied in later years by Archibald McKinlay, in charge of Fort Walla Walla in 1842, who also maintained that the taunt of the Catholic priest was a clear fabrication.[3] Drury states positively that Whitman's visit to Washington in 1842 was of secondary importance to his main objective of Mission business in Boston.[4]

Professor Bourne states that the real cause for Whitman's ride was to protest the order to close the mission

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1. Henry W. Parker, How Oregon Was Saved to the United States, pp. 4-5.
2. Marcus Whitman, M.D. Pioneer and Martyr, p. 443.
3. Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 180.
4. Presbyterian Panorama, p. 115.

and to further his opinion that Catholic influence must be offset by increased Protestant migration.[1] He accuses Barrows of distortion of facts and downright fiction in Barrow's, "History of Oregon." Bourne sharply criticizes him for not consulting the records of the American Board of Commissioners when writing his history, depending as he did on Gray's, "History of Oregon," and Spalding's highly imaginative accounts.[2] Professor Bourne also levels and accusing finger at Nixon for taking all legends as truth, and for not mentioning contrary evidence.[3] He accused the sworn witnesses of having bad memories, nothing having appeared in writing concerning the question until twenty years after Whitman had made his famous ride.[4] He takes exception to Nixon's opinion that Whitman's arrival in Washington kept President Tyler from signing Oregon over to the British, saying this was not true.[5]

Whitman's desire to encourage anti-Catholic migration is mentioned by Willard and Goodykoontz who also say Whitman wanted to make a more intensive effort to teach the Indians irrigation and agriculture, while indoctrinating them in the "true religion."[6]

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1. E.G. Bourne, Essays in Historical Criticism, pp. 99-100.
2. Ibid., p. 40.
3. Ibid., p. 47.
4. Ibid., pp. 7-8.
5. Ibid., p. 79.
6. Op. cit., p. 11.

In the person of W.I. Marshall the advocates of the Whitman-saved-Oregon viewpoint have a sharp critic indeed. He takes Creegan's story of the missionary flag-raising on the Pacific slope as rank fiction, since Mrs. Spalding's diary mentions no such incident, nor does Myron Eells.[1] He says that the party would hardly have had a flag with them, since none of the extant diaries mention it. Moreover, to have taken possession of the territory in such a fashion would have been a serious political blunder, as the country was still jointly controlled by England and the United States.[2] In another volume, Marshall devotes his attention to an examination of the references used by Eells and Mowry and concludes they are wholly unreliable distortions of existing records.[3] He goes on to make a similar analysis of Barrows and Nixon and comes up with the rather sharp criticism that, "...in neither book is there so much as one honest quotation on any important disputed point."[4] He sums up his opinion of the Whitman saved Oregon story thus:

> "As to all the other books and magazines and newspaper articles advocating the Whitman Saved Oregon Story, they without exception, are as far from being trustworthy history as are Dr. Mowry's "Marcus Whitman" and Rev. Dr. M. Eell's "Reply,"..."[5]

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1. Marshall, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 12.
3. Marshall, History vs. the Whitman Saved Oregon Story, pp. 9-91.
4. Ibid., p. 5.
5. Ibid.

A.B. Hulbert directly accuses W.A. Mowry and Henry Spalding of juggling the true date of Whitman's arrival at various points on his journey to back up their preconceived notion that he influenced legislation in Washington and thus saved Oregon. Spalding originally stated that Whitman arrived in Washington the last of March, but learning Congress had adjourned at that time, he deliberately moved the date of Whitman's arrival to March second or third.[1] Whitman himself said he arrived in Westport, February 15, 1843, yet Mowry wanted him to arrive in Washington before Congress adjourned and so put his Westport arrival somewhat earlier.[2]

3. Conclusion

It was believed in some circles that the Hudson's Bay Company and the Catholic missionaries were responsible for the Whitman massacre. This viewpoint provoked much of the controversial material to be written in an effort to discredit Doctor Whitman's work in Oregon.[3]

No doubt there has been exaggeration on both sides of the issue, but that Marcus Whitman did influence the settlement of Oregon can be little doubted. Whether he saved the territory of Oregon to the United States or not, is quite another question.

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1. Hulbert, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 95.
2. Ibid.
3. Ellinwood, op. cit., p. 3.

From reading the above mentioned authors, some observations must be made. The majority of eye-witnesses, or those who knew Whitman personally, might possibly have distorted the facts either conscipusly or unconsciously, in a mistaken desire to give additional honor to their friend. The writers who deny that Whitman saved Oregon are, for the most part, farther removed in time from the actual heat of the controversy, and can observe the facts on both sides in a more objective light. Further, as some of the more recent writers have pointed out, nothing was actually written down one way or the other until about twenty years after the ride itself. This does not always make for the greatest objectivity. It should also be observed that many of the letters collected express the point of view of the writers and what they thought Whitman's purpose was, not Whitman's purpose itself. It ought also to be mentioned that it would certainly be to the advantage of any Catholic writers to prove Whitman rode east to save Oregon and not to bring back reinforcements to compete with the Jesuit priests. Proving this, would help negate the view that the Catholics had something to gain by Whitman's death.

Perhaps the best thing is to let Whitman speak for himself on the matter:

> "Two things, and it is true those which were the most important, were accomplished by my return to the States. By means of the establishment of the wagon road, which

> is due to that effort alone, the emigration was secured and saved from disaster in the fall of 1843. Upon that event the present acquired rights of the United States by her citizens hung."[1]

Whitman apparently believed that he helped the emigration, and that the emigration helped the cause of the United States. More than this one may not dogmatize.

That Marcus Whitman went to Washington and Boston to clear up misunderstandings regarding the Oregon territory and the Mission, is a matter of record. That Whitman's untimely death at the hands of the Indians finally moved the legislators in Washington to annex the country to the United States, is also generally conceded.[2] But that Whitman directly influenced the Ashburton Treaty or any other pending legislation while in Washington, does not seem to be supported by existing facts.

In deepening the eastern interest in the Oregon territory he materially contributed to its ultimate annexation to the United States, and in so doing, helped give to the missionaries and settlers in the territory needed protection and status as American citizens, a status which made missionary life in Oregon less precarious and much more fruitful.

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1. Humphreys, op. cit., p. 181.
2. Drury, Elkanah and Mary Walker, p. 186; Allen, op. cit., pp. 276-277; and others.

Though the reason for Whitman's trip east was not prompted by a desire to save Oregon to the United States, two points are clear. Through his courageous ride he cleared up existing misconceptions in Washington thereby contributing to the ultimate annexation of the territory. He also caused certain important details of American history to be examined anew, resulting not only in a deepened understanding of the conditions in Oregon under which the missionaries labored, but also a growing appreciation of the part which he himself played in improving these conditions.

F. Summary

As a churchman Marcus Whitman has been seen as a man of the highest ideals and motives. His work in the Oregon Mission reflects this as he labored among the Indians to teach them a better way of life and to heal their sick bodies. His efforts to keep Board members and friends informed of Mission activities have also been noted.

Whitman was master of any situation in which he found himself. His great resourcefulness and courage enabled him to overcome great difficulties with respect to governmental Indian policy, and lack of sufficient missionary workers. The nobleness and strength of character which he possessed enabled him to lead the way out of a labyrinth of internal

Mission bickerings and disputes. His tireless zeal and spirit of Christian love made him more than a match for both Catholic competition and Indian aggression, a spirit which transcended the grave.

Serving his country and his Lord, he helped establish the migrating settlers, and assured the future existence of both state and Mission, by personally representing his cause in the east, thereby clearing up great misunderstandings.

As the cause of a controversy Marcus Whitman has caused certain important historical facts to be uncovered, facts which not only show what a vital part he had in the annexation of Oregon to the United States, but which also give one a clearer insight into the benefits the missionaries derived from such annexation, making their work more fruitful and productive. By virture of his famous ride, Whitman has caused an important period in our nation's history to be reexamined, creating both a better understanding of the times in which the western missionaries labored, and a deeper appreciation of the part he himself played in this work.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Summary

The purpose of this thesis has been to discover the contribution of Marcus Whitman to the development of the Christian mission of the Presbyterian Church as he worked among the Indians and white settlers of the Pacific northwest. Chapter one was devoted to a discussion of the chief influences bearing upon Whitman, concluding with an analysis of the character which these influences helped to produce. An inspection of certain events in world history has indicated how the United States was providentially spared from French occupation of the Louisiana territory, thus preserving this region for future settlement by Americans.

It has been noted that the industrial revolution which gripped England, swept over the United States bringing with it a swelling prosperity, great improvements in transportation, and an increased population mobility. These closely related movements greatly stimulated American migration to the far west.

In the actual acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase the United States obtained a land of great opportunity, a land into which the sturdy pioneers were soon streaming,

pushing back the borders of the crumbling frontier as they pressed on to the land of Oregon in ever-increasing waves. The part the western explorers played in this process cannot be underestimated. Making their way through the trackless wilderness and then relating their discoveries to a waiting nation, these bold men gave the needed assurance that settlement was indeed possible, giving to men and women like Marcus Whitman the vision of a great work to be done.

Strained relations between England and the United States developed because of English aggression on the high seas. This feeling of animosity towards England was further nourished through the actions of the Hudson's Bay Company as it favored British settlers in the recently explored northwest. The resulting boundary disputes were finally settled in a manner mutually agreeable to both nations. It should also be mentioned that the Monroe Doctrine was a strong deterrent to any potential Russian settlement of the Pacific coast, that country not wanting to antagonize a nation that had expressed itself so forcibly with respect to foreign interference. The growing missionary societies prospered in the favorable religious climate of our country, beginning to send out missionaries to the new field of Oregon.

Marcus Whitman's home and religious background helped prepare him for the rugged life of a frontier missionary, a life that required all the strength and character which

he possessed. Above all, in the character which emerged was that firm trust in God and in His purposes which undergirded all his work. A man influenced by the times in which he lived and by the family of which he was a part, there appeared a great strength of chracter and spirit which sustained and upheld him as he accepted the missionary call to the great mission field of Oregon.

Those who actually worked with Marcus Whitman have been observed in chapter two, in an attempt to understand more intelligently the work of Whitman himself. Through his exploring work Samuel Parker prepared the way for the establishing of the mission stations that were to follow.

In Narcissa Whitman those strong traits of Christian character were evident which not only gave such fruitfulness to her own work, but which also upheld and steadied her husband, through her tireless efforts as a woman of prayer.

Henry Spalding not only contributed to the work of the Oregon Mission, but also to the disharmony within its ranks. As the versatile head of the Oregon Mission's Lapwai station he performed a valuable work as educator, agriculturalist, and evangelist. But certain traits of personality and temperament led to a developing discord between the various members of the Mission as the storms of his temper broke over them all.

Mary and Elkanah Walker have been seen sowing the seeds

of future Christian growth among the Spokane Indians at Tshimakain, as they threw themselves into their work of love. The peaceful influence which these two had upon the Indians was a fact to be noted years afterward. Thus through the work of Whitman's associates a better understanding of the work in the Oregon Mission has been obtained, thereby throwing the distinctive contribution of Whitman himself into its proper perspective.

The work of Marcus Whitman paralleled that of his associates at a number of points yet remained distinctly different as he made his unique contribution to the work of his church. For as a woodsman and explorer, Whitman had many abilities not shared by his friends. The remainder of the thesis has been devoted to the exact nature of this contribution.

Basic to all Whitman's work was his deep trust in God and the conviction that Christ had personally called him to Oregon. As a churchman his establishing a central base for mission operations showed great forethought and vision. Only the financial limitations of the Board prevented him from developing it as much as he thought necessary. Though other missionaries had a knowledge of the rudiments of medicine, Marcus Whitman was the only member of the Oregon Mission who had real medical training. As a missionary doctor he rendered an invaluable service to his church, ministering to sick Indians and white settlers alike, in the name of Christ. Through his educational work he not only showed

his Indian parishioners a better way of life, but also kept friends and associates in the east informed of his progress. Throughout his writings basic elements of his theology have been noted increasing one's understanding of his success as a missionary. Whitman's complete trust in God's providence and power was a belief that sustained him through all the hardships of a life's work.

Far from being overcome by the difficulties which constantly surrounded his labors, he overcame these obstacles to the successful completion of his work. His strength of Christian character and boundless energy made him equal to all that he encountered.

Not only was Whitman instrumental in helping the migrating settlers find their way to the new land, but as pathfinder and woodsman he assured the beginnings of a community in which the seeds of the Christian gospel were to take such firm root. Representing his Mission and the expanding west, he cleared up serious misunderstandings in the east, leading to the continuance of the Oregon Mission and the eventual annexation of Oregon by the United States.

In examining the controversy which his daring ride inspired, it has been shown how Whitman had a vital part in the United State's acquisition of the Oregon territory, an act which brought great benefit to the Christian missionaries on this far-western field.

B. Conclusion

Such a study leads to certain conclusions. That Marcus Whitman was a great historical figure there can be no doubt. But that he was also a man after God's own heart is equally clear, a man completely dedicated to serving the One who had called him, as his writings so richly attest. Through this service Marcus Whitman made a great contribution to the Christian mission of the Presbyterian Church, laboring devotedly among the Indians and settlers of the Pacific northwest. This contribution to his church resulted also in a great benefit to his country. For in opening the door to the gospel of Jesus Christ, he also made possible the entrance of future settlers and the beginning of American colonization.

As a churchman Marcus Whitman contributed greatly to the success and effectiveness of the Oregon Mission. As a patriot his Christian convictions expressed themselves in another area, relating the gospel of Christ to the practical matters of life and making that life more worth living for missionaries and settlers alike. Both patriot and churchman were inseparably united in Marcus Whitman, missionary, two complementary aspects of one great Christian character.

In the strength of his character, in his devotion to his Lord, and in the far-reaching effects of his work, Marcus Whitman stands head and shoulders above the other members of the Oregon Mission. In retrospect the words of H.H.

Bancroft seem especially fitting:

> "...His nerves were of steel; his patience was excelled only by his absolute fearlessness; in the mighty calm of his nature he was a Caesar for Christ."[1]

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1. Ante, p. 36.

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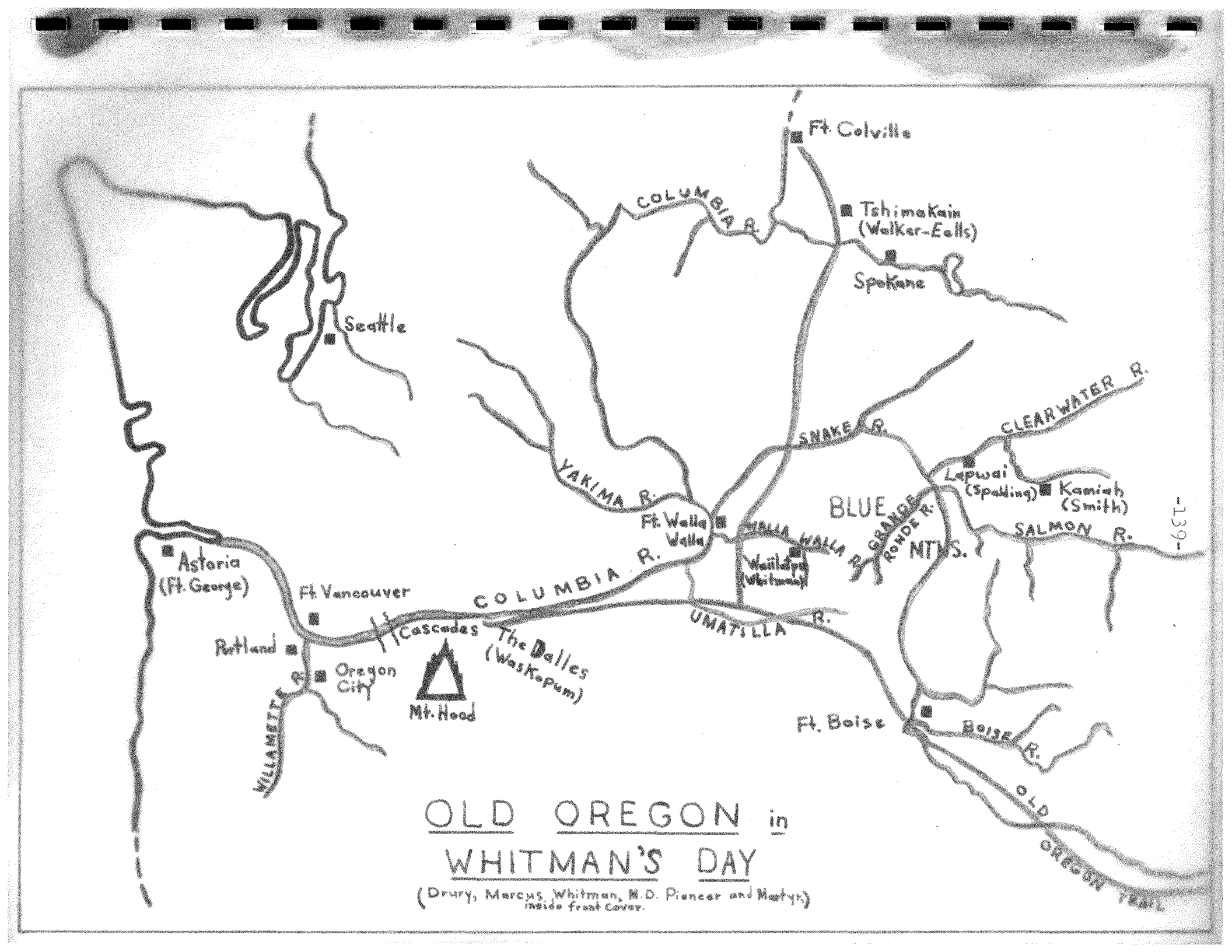
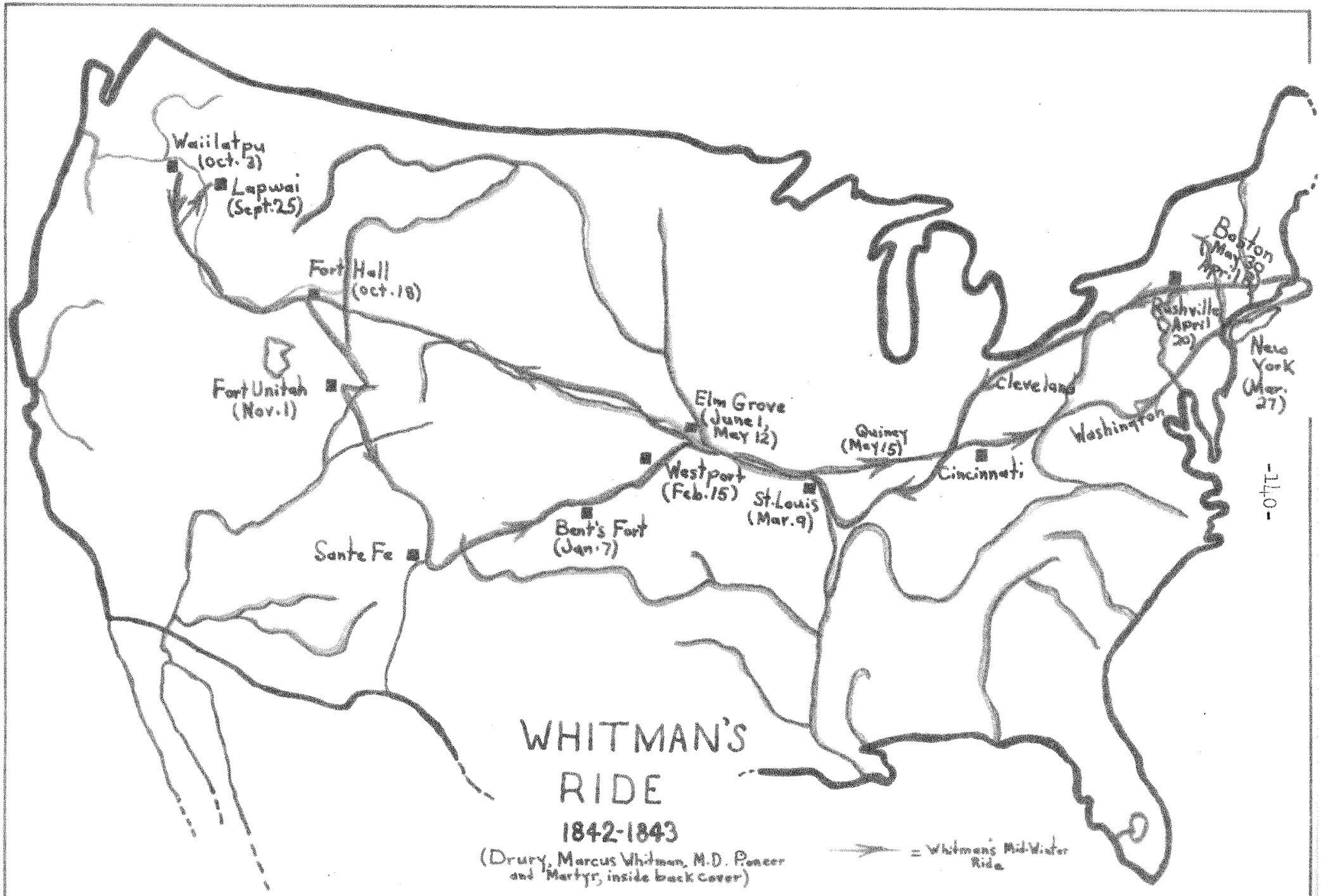
APPENDIX



OLD OREGON in WHITMAN'S DAY

(Drury, Marcus Whitman, M.D. Pioneer and Martyr)
inside front Cover.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Bent's Fort
(Jan. 7)
Sante Fe
Cincinnati
Washington
Cleveland
Nashville
(April 20)
New York
(Mar. 27)
WHITMAN'S
RIDE
1842-1843
(Drury, Marcus Whitman, M.D. Pioneer and Martyr, inside back cover)
= Whitman's Mid-Winter Ride