

WHITMAN RIDES  
1842-1843

Whitman and Lovejoy left Waiilatpu for the States on Monday morning, October 3, 1842. Considerable detail regarding their experiences during the three months before they arrived at Bent's Fort, in what is now southeastern Colorado, is to be found in the three accounts that Lovejoy wrote, to which reference has been made. Lovejoy's reminiscences harmonize with statements that Whitman made about the journey and add many details that Whitman never mentioned. The two men followed the usual trail eastward to Fort Hall which, according to Lovejoy, was reached in eleven days. Several times Lovejoy mentioned the fact that Whitman refrained from Sunday travel, with but one exception. If Lovejoy meant eleven days of travel, then the two men arrived at Fort Hall on Friday, October 14. Since the distance between Waiilatpu and Fort Hall was about 530 miles, this meant that they averaged about forty-eight miles a day. It had taken the Whitman-Spalding party a month to cover that distance going westward in 1836.

At Fort Hall the two men met Richard Grant, the Hudson's Bay trader then in charge of that post. Grant advised the two not to follow the usual route east through South Pass. Lovejoy explains: "He said it was just perfect folly. The Indians had been up there and murdered the Snake Indians that very season. He told us not to do it. So then

Whitman changed his course and goes by way of [Fort] Uinta, away out to Taos. And around to Santa Fe<sup>1</sup>—away round that way. We were all winter. We made terrible work of it. When we got to Fort Hall, we took men from the Fort, a half breed from St. Louis by the name of Rogers” [L-3]. According to another report, Whitman secured the services of Black Harris, also known as Moses Harris, as a guide at Fort Hall.<sup>2</sup>

There had long been a trail connecting Taos and Santa Fe, in what was then Mexico, with the headwaters of the Platte River. In 1776, the Franciscan explorer, Fray Vélez de Escalante, led an expedition from Santa Fe into the Great Salt Lake Basin, thus opening the way for trappers and traders. Antoine Robidoux seems to have been in the Uinta Basin, in what is now northeastern Utah, as early as 1831.<sup>3</sup> Robidoux established several trading posts along this old Spanish Trail, including Fort Uncompahgre at the mouth of the river by that name at what is now Delta, Colorado, and another on the Uinta River where it flows from the Uinta Mountains near present-day White Rocks, Utah. These two trading posts were about 150 miles apart.

When Marcus Whitman saw Horace Greeley in New York on March 28, 1843, he told him that his route from Fort Hall went by “Soda Springs, Brown’s Hole,<sup>4</sup> Colorado of the West [i.e., Colorado River],<sup>5</sup> the Wina [i.e., Fort Uinta], and the waters of the del Norte [i.e., the Rio Grande].”<sup>6</sup> When Whitman and Lovejoy discussed with Grant at Fort Hall the route to be followed, Grant had considerable reliable information at hand on which to base his recommendations. T. J. Farnham had traveled over the Brown’s Hole route in 1839 as had Joe Meek. In all probability, Whitman, Lovejoy, and their guide left Fort Hall on Monday, October 17, for Fort Uinta having decided to take the southern route through what was then a part of Mexico in order to flank the Indian hazard.<sup>7</sup>

An early winter storm struck the area through which Whitman and Lovejoy were traveling shortly after they left Fort Hall. Lovejoy refers to it as “terribly severe weather” [L-2]. This was but a foretaste of much worse weather which they were to encounter. Somewhere along their route in what is now Utah, perhaps at Fort Uinta, Whitman met Miles Goodyear. As a red-haired, nineteen-year-old youth, Goodyear had joined the 1836 mission party in its trek from the Missouri frontier to Fort Hall. Now after an interval of six years, Whitman and Goodyear met again. Good-

year had become an independent trapper. He is reputed to have been the first white settler in what is now the State of Utah. Goodyear wrote a letter dated "Frontier of Mexico, Rocky Mountains, November 1, 1842," which he gave to Whitman to carry to the States.<sup>8</sup> The date of this letter possibly indicates the time that Whitman and Lovejoy were at Fort Uinta.

Whitman hired a new guide at Fort Uinta, of whom Lovejoy wrote: "I think it was an Iroquois Indian and he went on with us. Then came on a big snow storm. We thought we were lost altogether. And this fellow could not go any further. But old Dr. Whitman was a man of great energy.<sup>9</sup> He was going on to the States, he said. We got lost there, got snowed in, the snow buried us & we had to stay there until the storm was over" [L-3]. Lovejoy stated that they were "snowed in for some three or four days," and that when the storm subsided, the weather became "intensely cold" [L-1].

Lovejoy's reference to the cold weather is confirmed in a letter Spalding wrote to A. T. Smith on December 15, 1842, in which he said that the week beginning November 14 was the coldest he had experienced in the country. For three days the mercury was from six to fifteen degrees below zero.<sup>10</sup> This is indeed a low reading for that early in the season for the Clearwater Valley near Lewiston, Idaho, which today is called the "banana belt" of the Inland Empire. Reference has already been made to the cold weather that Dr. White and his party experienced when they left the Willamette Valley on November 15 for Waiilatpu.

The trail that Whitman and Lovejoy followed after leaving Fort Uinta, led down the Uinta River to the Green River. After crossing the Green, the men followed the White River to a tributary which brought them out on the crest of Book Cliffs in what is now east central Utah. The trail then led them over a watershed which divides the flow of the Green from that of the Colorado. They traveled, at what Lovejoy called "a snail's pace," through deep snow to what is now Grand Junction, Colorado. Lovejoy gave no dates for this part of their journey, but it appears that it took them at least two weeks to go from Fort Uinta to the Colorado River.

## CROSSING THE COLORADO RIVER

When Whitman, Lovejoy, and their guide arrived at the Grand or Colorado River, they found that it was frozen about one-third of the way across on either side. Only the central part was open and that was be-

cause the current was so rapid that the water could not freeze, although, as Lovejoy wrote, “the weather was intensely cold.” Lovejoy’s account of their hazardous experience in crossing the river follows: “This stream was some one hundred and fifty, or two hundred yards wide, and looked upon by our guide as very dangerous to cross in its present condition. But the Doctor, nothing daunted, was the first to take the water. He mounted his horse, and the guide and myself pushed them off the ice into the boiling, foaming stream. Away they went completely under water—horse and all; but directly came up, and after buffeting the waves and foaming current, he made to the ice on the opposite side, a long way down the stream—leaped from his horse upon the ice, and soon had his noble animal by his side. The guide and myself forced in the pack animals; followed the doctor’s example, and were soon drying our frozen clothes by a comfortable fire” [L-1].

On July 4, 1917, the Mt. Garfield Chapter and the Grand Junction Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution dedicated Whitman Park in Grand Junction. This is an inner-city community park of one square block. A large glacial granite boulder, which measures about 6 x 4½ x 3 feet, was placed in the park bearing a plaque with the following inscription:

WHITMAN PARK

In Honor of

MARCUS WHITMAN

Who Swam the Grand River near this Site

On his Heroic Trans-Continental Ride

Mid-Winter, 1842-43

Which Saved the Great Northwest to the United States

The last line of the inscription shows that those responsible for the wording had accepted the Whitman-Saved-Oregon legend.<sup>11</sup>

After crossing the Colorado River, the men followed the Gunnison River, which empties into the Colorado at Grand Junction, to

the mouth of the Uncompahgre River where the Fort by that name was located. This is now the site of Delta, Colorado. There Whitman and Lovejoy remained for three or four days, resting, and obtaining some fresh supplies. Lovejoy stated that a new guide, a Spaniard, was hired to take them to Taos.

### CROSSING THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

The journey from Fort Uncompahgre to Taos took them over the Continental Divide. This proved to be the most dangerous part of their travels. Shortly after leaving the fort, the men encountered a severe snowstorm. Lovejoy, looking back on their terrible experiences, wrote: "After spending several days wandering round in the snow without making much headway, and greatly fatiguing our animals to little or no purpose, our guide informed us that the deep snows had so changed the fact of the country, that he was completely lost, and could take us no further" [L-1].<sup>12</sup>

Although greatly disappointed, Whitman was determined not to give up. "We at once agreed," wrote Lovejoy, "that the Doctor should take the guide and make his way back to the fort, and procure a new guide, and that I should remain in camp with the animals until his return, which was on the seventh day,... With our new guide, traveling slowly on, we reach Taos in about thirty days." The men ran out of provisions. One by one the pack mules were slain and eaten, and even the dog was not spared.

Just at the critical time when the three men were facing the possibility of famishing for want of food, they met a hunting party. "I shall never forget that time," Lovejoy told Bancroft. "I know the old Dr. ate so much it liked to have killed him. We were nearly starved to death though. They told us where to go and put us on the track so that we soon reached Taos" [L-3].

The trail the men followed after leaving Fort Uncompahgre went along the river of that name past the present-day sites of Montrose and Ouray, Colorado. It then swung around the west side of the San Juan Mountains<sup>13</sup> the ridge of which is part of the Continental Divide. The trail crossed the present-day Colorado-New Mexico border before turning eastward to go over the Divide. Although Lovejoy is not definite in giving dates, it seems that they arrived in Taos about the middle of

December 1842. It had taken Whitman and Lovejoy over two months to travel from Waiilatpu to Taos.

## FROM TAOS TO ST. LOUIS

According to Lovejoy, he and Whitman remained in Taos for “some twelve or fifteen days” [L-1]. They secured fresh animals, bought clothing and other supplies. Lovejoy wrote: “There the Dr. gave us a new outfit.” Whitman drew upon the treasurer of the American Board for expenses incurred along the way. This caused some dismay at the Board’s offices when the drafts were received in Boston and had to be paid. If Whitman bought a new suit for himself at Taos, it must have been the buckskin he was wearing when he arrived in the East, and which attracted so much attention.

Whitman’s next objective on his eastward journey was Bent’s Fort, founded in 1833 near what is now Las Animas in southeastern Colorado, by several of the Bent brothers who were engaged in the caravan trade with Santa Fe. Located on the Arkansas River, it became an important station on the trail connecting Taos with Westport, Missouri. The trail from Taos crossed the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, east of Taos, and then angled off in a northeasterly direction towards the Arkansas River. Bent’s Fort was about 150 miles, as the crow flies, from Taos.

A detailed account of their travel experiences from Taos to Bent’s Fort was given by Lovejoy in his interview with Bancroft in 1878. In reading this report, we get the impression that Bancroft’s secretary, Amos Bowman, was taking down in shorthand all that Lovejoy was saying. One can almost hear Lovejoy chuckling as he recalled memories of his travels with Whitman made some thirty-five years and more earlier. “We got a new outfit,” Lovejoy said, “and then when we started, that was the wildest chase in the world.” He recalled the difficulties they encountered shortly after leaving Taos. “The snow looked just as hard as this floor and about two feet deep.” But in places the snow was deeper and the surface crust was not strong enough to bear the weight of the pack animals. “The first thing you saw,” Lovejoy said, “the mule would go out of sight & [you] would see nothing but her ears. Some days we would not travel out of sight of the smoke where we had slept. We had a Spaniard from Taos to guide us & nobody else.<sup>14</sup> We used to lift out the mules & start them on again. Like as not they could not go over ten rods before

they went into another ditch. We could not see; there was no sign in the world. I think we were from 15 to 20 days traveling what ought to have taken two or three.”

When Whitman and Lovejoy were out from Taos about fifteen days, they met George Bent, one of the partners in charge of the fort, who gave Whitman the important news that a party of traders was about to leave Bent’s Fort for St. Louis. Whitman, who was impatient over the delays already encountered, decided to push on ahead of Lovejoy with the hope of joining the St. Louis party. Since Lovejoy was planning to return to Oregon with the 1843 emigration, tentative plans were made for the two to meet, perhaps at Fort Laramie. Lovejoy explained that Whitman “taking the best animal, with some bedding and a small allowance of provision, started alone, hoping, by rapid travel, to reach the fort in time to join the St. Louis party, but to do so he would have to travel on the Sabbath, something we had not done before” [L-2].

When Whitman, traveling alone, arrived at the Arkansas River, he believed that he was below Bent’s Fort and made the mistake of turning left and went upstream when he should have turned right and gone downstream. When Lovejoy arrived at Bent’s Fort on Tuesday, January 3,<sup>15</sup> he discovered to his alarm that Whitman was not there. No one had seen him. The St. Louis party had already left and was encamped about forty miles below Bent’s Fort. At Lovejoy’s insistence, a messenger was hastily sent to the captain of the caravan asking him to tarry until the Doctor could be found.

Lovejoy’s account continues: “Being furnished by the gentlemen of the fort with a suitable guide, I started in search of the Doctor, and traveled up the river about one hundred miles. I learned from the Indians that a man had been there, who was lost, and was trying to find Bent’s Fort... I knew from their description that it was Dr. Whitman. I returned to the fort as rapidly as possible but found that the Doctor had not arrived. We had all become very anxious about him. Late in the afternoon, he came in very much fatigued and desponding; said that he knew God had bewildered him to punish him for traveling on the Sabbath. During the whole trip, he was very regular in his morning and evening devotions, and that was the only time I ever knew him to travel on the Sabbath” [L-2]. No doubt Whitman felt it wise to follow the curves of the river while Lovejoy and his guide might have cut across

the country at times. This would explain why Lovejoy passed Whitman twice, once while going up the river and again while returning, without them seeing each other.

Whitman remained at the fort overnight and on the following morning, Saturday, January 7, said good-by to Lovejoy and hastened on to join the St. Louis party. Before leaving the fort, Whitman signed an order on January 6, 1843, on the American Board for \$301.25 which Bent and Company cashed.<sup>16</sup> With these funds, Whitman paid off his Spanish guide and covered other expenses.

Not a single reference has been found relating to the 400-mile trip that Whitman made with the caravan from Bent's Fort to Westport. We learn from a letter that he wrote to Greene on April 4, 1843, that he arrived at Westport on February 15. Ever since Narcissa bade her husband good-by on October 3, 1842, she had been following in her imagination his progress across the country. By the time Marcus arrived at Westport, Narcissa figured that he was then with her relatives, for on February 7 she wrote to her parents: "I speak as if you were enjoying the society of my dear husband at this time." Months passed before she learned of the long detour that he had been obliged to take in what has been called one of the worst winters of our history.

Whitman remained in Westport for about a week. This we know from a letter in the archives of Whitman College dated from Westport, February 22, 1843, and addressed to C. W. Boyers of Independence. The letter reads: "Dr. Sir. Allow me to introduce to you the bearer, Doctor Whitman, Suprintd. of American Boards Missions Oregon and of the Presbyterian order. Your attention to him will be duly acknowledged by your friend & Obt. Svt. A. G. Boone." The identity of Boone is not known, but Boyers was an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Independence and the town's postmaster. According to Perrin Whitman, his uncle left his animals with Boyers until his return in the late spring.<sup>17</sup>

The next documented date which traces Whitman's progress across the country is found in a letter from B. Clapp to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., dated at St. Louis on March 7, 1843. After referring to the draft for \$301.25 which Whitman had cashed at Bent's Fort, Clapp wrote: "Doctor Whitman brought the dft. himself from Bent & Co on his way from the Columbia, where he is established as a mission, being now [On] a visit to Boston. He left to day via the Ohio."<sup>18</sup> According to this,

Whitman was planning to go by river steamer up the Ohio, perhaps to Pittsburgh, and then overland to Washington.

As has been stated, Whitman carried several letters written by his wife to some of her relatives, including one to her sister and brother, Jane and Edward. Narcissa had hoped that Marcus would be able to deliver the letter in person at Quincy, Illinois, where they lived. The long detour to Taos, however, had caused such a delay that Whitman felt it imperative to hasten on to Washington; Narcissa's letter to Jane and Edward was mailed in St. Louis. A notation on the back of the letter in Whitman's handwriting reads: "Narcissa Whitman, Rocky Mountains, March 9:43." The postmark bears the stamp of the St. Louis office for that date. Evidently there was a delay of at least two days after Clapp wrote before Whitman left St. Louis.

### WHITMAN, A GUEST OF DR. EDWARD HALE

**D**uring his stay of two or three days in St. Louis, Whitman was a guest in the home of Dr. Edward Hale, a dentist, with whom he also stayed on his return journey to Oregon. On July 19, 1871, when Hale was seventy years old, he wrote to H. H. Spalding: "I had the pleasure of entertaining Dr. Whitman at St. Louis on his last visit eastward to confer with the President & heads of departments in relation to the settlement of the N.W. boundary question with Gr. Britain by bartering away for a song the whole N.W. Pacific Territory."<sup>19</sup> Hale's comments regarding the political purpose of Whitman's ride reflect, almost literally, some of the exaggerated statements that Spalding was making in his promotion of the Whitman-Saved-Oregon theory. Spalding's *Senate Document* was ordered to be printed on February 9, 1871; possibly Hale had this item on his desk when he wrote during the following July. Certainly, in view of the circumstances, we cannot take seriously Hale's testimony regarding the political motives involved in Whitman's ride.

Living in the Hale home at the time of Whitman's visit, was a twenty-eight-year-old schoolteacher, William Barrows, who, forty years later, published his *Oregon: The Struggle for Possession*. "On his arrival in St. Louis," wrote Barrows, "it was my good fortune that he should be quartered, as a guest, under the same roof, and at the same table with me... Marcus Whitman once seen... was a man not to be forgotten by the writer." Barrows remembered him as being a man of "medium

height... large head... covered with stiff iron-grey hair, while his face carried all the moustache and whiskers that four months had been able to put on it.”

Although Whitman’s buckskin dress did not attract undue attention in St. Louis, we find several commenting on its strangeness as he traveled East. But Barrows, after forty years, had vivid memories and gave us the following description: “His dress would now appear much more peculiar than in those days and in that city. For St. Louis was then no stranger to blanket Indians, and Yellowstone trappers, in buckskin and buffalo [skin]. The Doctor was in coarse fur garments and vesting, and buckskin breeches. He wore a buffalo coat, with a head-hood for emergencies in taking a storm, or a bivouac nap,... heavy fur leggings and boot-moccasins... If memory is not at fault with me, his entire dress on the street did not show one square inch of woven fabric.” Barrows then stated that, notwithstanding his fur clothing, “he bore the marks of irresistible cold and merciless storms... His fingers, ears, nose, and feet had been frostbitten, and were giving him much trouble.”<sup>20</sup>

### WHITMAN’S PROMOTION OF OREGON EMIGRATION

Barrows remembered that the arrival of Whitman in St. Louis from faraway Oregon aroused great interest in a city of about twenty thousand inhabitants. As soon as news of his presence was spread abroad, Whitman was besieged by a flood of visitors, including “Rocky Mountain men, trappers, traders, adventurers, and contractors for military posts”—who asked a multitude of questions regarding the fur trade, Indian wars, the fate of those who had migrated to Oregon in 1842, and the possibilities of the future for Oregon.

According to Barrows, Whitman was more interested in asking questions than in answering. Elijah White had told him about the pending Webster-Ashburton Treaty which, it was hoped, would deal with the Old Oregon boundary, and the Linn bill which promised 640 acres of land to every white male over eighteen years of age who would settle in Oregon. Barrows remembered that Whitman asked: “Was the Ashburton Treaty concluded? Did it cover the Northwest?” He was told that the Treaty had been signed on the preceding August 9 but that it dealt with the Maine boundary and not with the Oregon.

The Linn bill came to a vote in the Senate on February 3, 1843, and

passed by a vote of twenty-four to twenty-two. The opposition claimed that the provisions of the bill violated the Treaty of Joint Occupation and that the boundary question had to be settled before the United States could legally extend its jurisdiction over any part of the Oregon territory. After passing the Senate, the bill was sent to the House, where it was lost in the rush of business which usually marks the closing days of any session of Congress. The third session of the Twenty-Seventh Congress had adjourned on March 4, 1843, but due to the slowness of communications of that time, this was not known in St. Louis when Whitman was there. Hoping that he could reach Washington before Congress adjourned, Whitman was eager to be on his way.

The sentiment on the western frontier at the time of Whitman's visit to St. Louis was strongly pro-Oregon. It was generally believed that the Linn bill would eventually pass, and hundreds of men were ready to migrate to Oregon with their families in anticipation of that enactment. The promotion of the 1843 emigration had been started before Whitman arrived in St. Louis. No claim has ever been made, even by the most fervent adherents of the Whitman-Saved-Oregon story, that Whitman was solely responsible for the large number who went to Oregon that year. There would have been an 1843 emigration had Whitman never gone East. On the other hand, we have evidence that Whitman was zealous in encouraging people to go to Oregon. A study of this influence was made by Myron Eells who published in 1883 his findings in a pamphlet under the title *Marcus Whitman, M.D., Proofs of His Work in Saving Oregon, and in Promoting the Immigration of 1843*.

In gathering information for this pamphlet, Eells wrote to all of the 1843 emigrants whom he could locate and made inquiry regarding the motives which inspired each to go to Oregon. Lindsay Applegate wrote that he had inserted a notice in the Booneville, Missouri, *Herald*, about March 1, 1843, announcing that a party would be going to Oregon and calling on those who wished to join such a party to meet at Westport about May 1. Several stated that they were induced to go to Oregon because of personal interviews with Whitman, through newspaper articles he had inspired or written, and two referred to a pamphlet he had published.<sup>21</sup> Perrin Whitman, a nephew of Marcus who went out to Oregon with his uncle in 1843, claimed in 1898 that many of the emigrants of that year "had come as a result of hand-bills which he [i.e., Marcus]

distributed on the frontier as he went through [i.e., while en route to the East], saying that he must be back to start with them at the first peep of grass.”<sup>22</sup> It is most improbable that Whitman would have had time or opportunity to write and publish a pamphlet while passing through Missouri but he could have issued a handbill stating the advantages of migrating to Oregon, together with some simple directions as to what should be taken for an overland journey. If such a pamphlet was issued, no copy is known to be extant today.

Among those who were induced to go to Oregon by Whitman were the Hobson, Eyres, and Thomas Smith families, and a young lawyer, John Ricard. At the time Whitman was in St. Louis, Eyres owned a shop in the city which was a meeting place for many who were thinking of going to Oregon. It was there that Whitman met John Hobson. Mention will be made later of the two motherless Hobson girls, Emma and Ann, being received into the Whitman home at Waiilatpu. A reference to sheep in a letter that Whitman wrote to his brother-in-law, J. G. Prentiss, from the Missouri frontier on May 28, 1843, provides evidence that on his eastward journey through Missouri, he was giving advice to would-be emigrants. He wrote: “A great many cattle are going, but no sheep, from a mistake of what I said in passing.”

## WHITMAN IN WASHINGTON

Since Whitman planned to be back on the Missouri frontier in early May, he had but two months to make his journey to Washington, Boston, and then to western New York to see his relatives. Time was short, especially when we remember the conditions of travel of that day. The journey from St. Louis to Washington would have taken about two weeks, which would have put him in the capital city about March 21.

Whitman stopped at Cincinnati on his way up the Ohio River, where he called on Dr. George L. Weed, a representative of the American Board who frequently entertained its missionaries in their travels up and down the river. George L. Weed, Jr., in 1897 wrote his reminiscences of Whitman's visit: “Most unexpected was his appearance at my father's in Cincinnati, where he was a welcome visitor when on his journey across the continent, and where he had brought his bride seven years before. We thought him on the banks of the Columbia. It fell to me

to receive him at the door. My memory of that morning is still fresh with boyish wonderment. I stared at what seemed an apparition. He was still dressed in his mountain garb. His fur garments, buckskin breeches, fur leggings, boot moccasins, and buffalo overcoat with head hood, had been poor protection from the cold and storms of the fearful ride. His face and hands and feet had been frozen.”<sup>23</sup>

When Whitman asked to see the boy’s father, he was told that Dr. Weed was attending a prayer meeting at Dr. Lyman Beecher’s church. “Thither,” wrote George, Junior, “he hastened. His entrance created consternation, while everyone asked: ‘Who, what is he?’” “According to the son, Dr. Whitman remained in Cincinnati for only a few hours, perhaps just long enough for the river boat to discharge and take on cargo, and then he left.

Whitman’s visit to Washington has been a focal point of discussion in the Whitman controversy. The fact that he went to Washington is so well documented that it is no longer questioned by the severest critic of the Whitman–Saved–Oregon story. The strongest evidence of his presence in Washington is found in the following quotation from a letter that Whitman wrote to the Hon. James M. Porter, Secretary of War, which bears the notation of having been received on June 22, 1844: “In compliance with the request you did me the honor to make last Winter, while in Washington...” [Letter 143].

When Whitman was in Washington, he tried to get in touch with William C. McKay, whom he thought to be still studying at the Fairfield Medical College. At the time Whitman wrote, McKay had transferred to a medical school at Willoughby, Ohio. Dr. McKay, writing his recollection of the incident on January 30, 1885, stated that Dr. Whitman had written to him from Washington, but, since the original correspondence had been lost, he could not give the exact date.<sup>24</sup>

The advocates of the Whitman–Saved–Oregon story have stressed the fact, which can easily be documented, that Whitman visited Washington before going to Boston as evidence that his main motive for going East was political. W. I. Marshall, the caustic opponent of that theory, wrote: “It is altogether probable that he went to Washington from Boston, as he seems to have reached his home in Rushville, N.Y., about April 18<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>25</sup> However, the known chronology of Whitman’s travels makes Marshall’s theory untenable. We know that Whitman was in Boston as late as April 8 and that

he left Rushville for the Missouri frontier on the 20<sup>th</sup>. This twelve-day period is not long enough for him to have gone from Boston to Washington and then to Rushville with a week or more for visiting his relatives. The fact that Whitman went first to Washington and then to Boston neither proves nor disproves any theory as to which motive, the political or mission business, was primary in his thinking. The determining factor was simply that of convenience in a tight time schedule.

There is evidence that Whitman knew the Hon. John C. Spencer, 1778–1855, who was Secretary of War in President Tyler's cabinet from October 1841 to March 1843, when he was made Secretary of the Treasury. Spencer hailed from Canandaigua, New York, the county seat of Ontario County, where he practiced law. Since Rushville is but ten miles from Canandaigua, it is altogether probable that Whitman, as a medical student riding with Dr. Bryant, had had opportunities to meet Spencer. The first entry in Jonathan Pratt's diary, of which mention has been made, dated January 1, 1824, states that Jonathan had been to Canandaigua to hear Spencer speak. If Pratt knew Spencer, it is reasonable that Whitman did likewise.

Since Elijah White had been in Washington in the spring of 1842 and had received his appointment as Indian Agent for Oregon from Spencer, there is reason to believe that White had told Whitman of Spencer's official position. All Indian affairs were then a part of the responsibilities of the Secretary of War. The Oregon Trail went through Indian country, thus the Secretary of War would have been the Government official most interested in the welfare of Oregon emigrants. When Whitman visited Washington, therefore, he had an important contact with a member of the President's cabinet.

After his return to Waiilatpu, Whitman told William Geiger, Jr., about his experiences in the capital city. According to Geiger, Whitman called on Spencer who introduced him to the Hon. James M. Porter, the new Secretary of War, and also to Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, and even arranged an interview with President Tyler.<sup>26</sup> Another who claimed that Whitman told him that he had seen the President was Lovejoy, who wrote: "He often expressed himself to me about the remainder of his journey [i.e., from Bent's Fort to Washington and Boston]... He had several interviews with President Tyler, Secretary Webster, and a good many members of Congress" [L-2]. Still others who

claimed that Whitman told them he had seen President Tyler include Spalding, Gray, Perrin Whitman, and David Lennox.<sup>27</sup> It is inconceivable that so many different people would have deliberately concocted the story of Whitman's interview with President Tyler.

In Spalding's account of Whitman's meeting with Secretary Webster and President Tyler, we come to the very core of his Whitman-Saved-Oregon story. After pointing out that Whitman and Webster came from the same state, Spalding wrote: "Mr. Webster lived too near Cape Cod to see things in the same light with his fellow statesman who had transferred his worldly interest in the Pacific Coast." Possibly, when Whitman told Spalding of his interview with Webster, he told of the latter's desire to obtain for the United States some rights to a cod-fishery off the Newfoundland coast. Writing more than twenty years later, Spalding's memory could have misled him when he tried to recall exactly what Webster had told Whitman, for Spalding wrote that Webster "had about traded it [i.e., Oregon] off with Gov. Simpson to go into the Ashburton Treaty, for a cod fishery."<sup>28</sup> There is no documentary evidence to support this part of Spalding's Whitman-Saved-Oregon story.

Another point brought out by Spalding in his published lectures is the undocumented claim that Governor Simpson deliberately misrepresented the nature of the Oregon country in order to mislead Webster as to its worth and consequently lessen the interest of the United States in that distant territory. Spalding considered such an alleged degradation of Oregon to be part of a diabolical plot of the Hudson's Bay Company to help England get title to Oregon. Regardless of whether or not Webster had heard the alleged misrepresentations, it would have been perfectly logical for Webster to make inquiry of Whitman regarding the potentialities of the Oregon country.

In reviewing the writings of both Whitman and Spalding regarding the extension of United States jurisdiction over Oregon, we find that neither had anything definite to say about the location of the boundary. Whitman's interest seems to have been centered on emigration; he evidently believed that the boundary question was secondary in importance to getting a large American population to settle in the country.

Regarding Whitman's interview with the President, Spalding wrote:

The Doctor next sought an interview with President Tyler, who at once appreciated his solicitude and his timely representations

of Oregon... He said that, although the Doctor's representations of the character of the country, and the possibility of reaching it by wagon route, were in direct contradiction to those of Gov. Simpson, his frozen limbs were sufficient proof of his sincerity, and his missionary character was sufficient guarantee for his honesty, and he would therefore, as President, rest upon these and not act accordingly; would detail Fremont with a military force to escort the Doctor's caravan through the mountains; and no more action should be had towards trading off Oregon till he could hear the result of the expedition. If the Doctor could establish a wagon route through the mountains to the Columbia River, pronounced impossible by Gov. Simpson and Ashburton, he would use his influence to hold on to Oregon.<sup>29</sup>

As has been stated, there is evidence to indicate that many in England believed that Oregon could never be colonized by overland emigration from the United States;<sup>30</sup> hence this statement of Spalding's as to what Simpson said in this regard may be accepted as factual.

No doubt Government officials, including the President, were delighted to have the opportunity to talk with Whitman about Oregon. Never before had anyone arrived in Washington from that distant territory so well informed, so qualified to speak with authority about its resources, its Indian tribes, travel conditions on the Oregon Trail, and the desires of the American population already there. Elijah White, who had been in the capital city the previous year, had spent only three years in Oregon; Whitman had spent six. White had gone to and from Oregon by sea; Whitman had made the round trip overland. Moreover, Whitman's arrival in Washington was most timely; the Oregon question was becoming increasingly a subject of great popular interest as well as of official concern.

### SYNOPSIS OF WHITMAN'S BILL

The best indication of the subject of Whitman's interviews with such officials as Porter, Webster, and Tyler is the contents of a bill which he drew up for Congressional consideration, and which he sent to the Secretary of War after he had returned to Waiilatpu.<sup>31</sup> It is possible that Porter or Tyler, after hearing Whitman stress the necessity for the Government to provide protection to the Oregon-bound emigrants, asked

Whitman to put his recommendations in writing. Much that Whitman had to say struck a responsive chord in Tyler's thinking. In his message that he delivered at the opening of the Twenty-Seventh Congress on December 6, 1841, Tyler had endorsed a recommendation made by the then Secretary of War, John C. Spencer, for the establishment of "a chain of military posts from Council Bluffs to some point on the Pacific Ocean within our limits."<sup>32</sup> When Senator Linn introduced a new Oregon bill early in the Congressional session of 1842-43, he included a provision that the Government build "a line of forts from our western frontier to the mouth of the Columbia River."<sup>33</sup>

Whitman in his proposed bill stressed the need for the protection and welfare of the Oregon emigrants. Whereas the Linn bill called for the establishment of "a line of forts," Whitman suggested "a chain of agricultural posts or farming stations." In Section I of his proposal, Whitman stated: "Which said posts shall have for their object to set examples of civilized industry to the several Indian tribes, to keep them in proper subjection to the laws of the United States, to suppress violent and lawless acts along the said line of frontier, to facilitate the passage of troops and munitions of war into and out of said territory of Oregon, and the transportation of the mail..."

Section 5 of the proposal outlined the duty of the superintendents of said posts, calling upon each to cultivate up to 640 acres of land in areas where such was possible, in order to raise produce which could be used by the military and the passing emigrants. Whitman in his accompanying letter to Porter was more specific on this point than he was in his bill. He wrote that if produce were raised at these "farming stations," it could be sold to the emigrants, thus "diminishing the original burdens" of the travelers and at the same time helping "to defray the expenses of such posts." Each post was to be equipped with storehouses, blacksmith, gunsmith, and carpenter shops.

Whitman also thought about the transportation of the mails. In his letter to Porter, he wrote: "I need only add that contracts for this purpose will be readily taken at reasonable rates for transporting the mail across from Missouri to the mouth of the Columbia in forty days, with fresh horses at each of the contemplated posts." The Pony Express, which Whitman here proposed, did not become a reality until April 1860, nearly seventeen years later, and then it served California rather

than the Pacific Northwest.

There was a political purpose in Whitman's visit to Washington, how else is it possible to explain his presence in the city and the contents of his proposed bill? Even though no treaty affecting the Pacific Northwest was then under consideration, Whitman, as an enthusiastic booster of Oregon, was able to pass on much valuable information to high Government officials. Although we have no evidence that he discussed the possible location of the Old Oregon boundary, we do know that Whitman stressed the importance of promoting Oregon emigration and the necessity of protecting those traveling over the Oregon Trail. Whitman was eager for the extension of the jurisdiction of the United States over Oregon, and he was convinced that this could best be obtained by first establishing a large American colony in that region.

### WHITMAN IN NEW YORK

Whitman could not have tarried in Washington for more than two or three days, as he was in New York on Saturday, March 25, 1843. He took passage on a ship bound for Boston on Monday evening, the 27<sup>th</sup>. During his two-day stay in New York, Whitman made two important calls. The first was on Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*. When Whitman knocked at the door of Greeley's office, a woman received him. She was so surprised to see a man standing before her clad in such strange garb that, when Whitman asked to see Mr. Greeley, she curtly told him that he was not in. Disappointed, Whitman turned to go away. In the meantime, Greeley inquired regarding the visitor and was probably told that the stranger, dressed worse than a tramp, had been turned away. Greeley hurried to the window and caught a glimpse of Whitman. Greeley, himself none too particular in matters of dress, saw something in Whitman which attracted his attention. He hurried to the door and called Whitman back. After due apologies, the two men had a long visit.

An account of the interview which Greeley had with Whitman appeared in the March 29 issue of the *Daily Tribune*.<sup>34</sup> It was evidently written on the 28<sup>th</sup>, for Greeley began by writing: "We were most agreeably surprised yesterday by a call from Doctor Whitman from Oregon, a member of the American Presbyterian Mission in that territory. A slight glance at him when he entered our office would convince any one that

he had seen all the hardships of a life in the wilderness. He was dressed in an old fur cap, that appears to have seen some ten years of service, faded, and nearly destitute of fur; a vest whose natural color had long since faded, and a shirt—we could not see that he had any—an overcoat, every thread of which could be easily seen, buckskin pants, etc.—the roughest man we have seen this many a day—too poor, in fact, to get any better wardrobe. The doctor is one of those daring and good men who went to Oregon some ten [sic] years ago to teach the Indians religion, agriculture, letters, etc. A noble pioneer we judge him to be, *a man fitted to be a chief in rearing a moral empire among the wild men of the wilderness.*"<sup>35</sup>

Greeley passed on to his readers information that Whitman had brought about those who had gone out to Oregon in the 1842 migration. He outlined the route that Whitman had followed on his hazardous journey, mentioning the fact that he had gone along the western side of the Anahuac [i.e., the San Juan Mountains] before crossing the Continental Divide. Greeley also had the following story to tell of an unhappy experience Whitman had had when he first arrived in New York: "We are sorry to say that his first reception, on arriving in our city, was but slightly calculated to give him a favorable impression of the morals of his kinsmen. He fell into the hands of one of our vampire cabmen, who, in connection with the keeper of a tavern in West Street, three or four doors from the corner near the Battery, fleeced him out of two of the last dollars which the poor man had."

Several critics of the Whitman-Saved-Oregon story have wondered why Greeley's article about Whitman did not mention the latter's desire to promote Oregon emigration. Greeley's silence on this point, however, is understandable as he was opposed to Oregon emigration. Although he is reported to have said, "Go West, young man, go West," he evidently did not advocate that any go as far west as Oregon.<sup>36</sup> When he learned of the large 1843 emigration, he called the men associated with the venture insane.

The second important call that Whitman made while in New York was on Edward R. Ames, secretary in charge of the Oregon Mission of the Methodist Missionary Society. Ames informed Whitman that because of dissension in the Oregon Mission, Jason Lee had been recalled. Among those most critical of Lee was Elijah White who had passed on unfavorable reports to the Missionary Society when he was in the East

in the spring of 1842. As will be told later, Whitman was the first to tell Lee of this action by his church.<sup>37</sup>

## WHITMAN IN BOSTON

Whitman secured passage on the steamer, *Narragansett*, which sailed from New York, Monday evening, March 27, for Boston. The vessel met with rough weather in the Sound, which caused the captain to put in at New Haven at midnight. The inclement weather kept the ship in port until Wednesday morning, the 29<sup>th</sup>, when she was able to continue her voyage. Thus Whitman was not able to arrive in Boston until the late afternoon or evening of that day.

Among the passengers was a man who, attracted by Whitman, wrote the following sketch of his impressions which appeared in the *New York Spectator*, April 5, 1843.<sup>38</sup> The unknown reporter signed his article "Civis." Under the caption, "The Rev. Dr. Whitman From Oregon," Civis wrote:

We also had one who was observed by all—Doctor Whitman, the missionary from Oregon... Rarely have I seen such a spectacle as he represented. His dress should be preserved as a curiosity; it was quite in the style of the old pictures of Philip Quarles and Robinson Crusoe. When he came on board and threw down his traps, one said 'what a loafer!' I made up my mind at a glance that he was either a gentleman traveler, or a missionary; that he was every inch a man and no common one was clear.

The Doctor had been eight years [sic] at the territory; has left his wife there; and started from home on the 1st of October. He has not been in bed since, having made his lodging on buffalo robe and blanket, even on board the boat. He is about thirty-six or seven years of age, I should judge, and has stamped on his brow a great deal of what David Crockett would call 'God Almighty's common sense.' Of course when he reached Boston, he would cast his shell and again stand out a specimen of the 'humans.'

I greatly question whether such a figure ever passed through the Sound since the days of steam navigation. He is richly fraught with information relative to that most interesting piece of country, and I hope will shortly lay it before the good people of Boston

and New York. Could he appear in New York Tabernacle—in his traveling costume—and lecture on the Northwest coast, I think there would be very few standing places. Much of his route was on foot and occasionally on horse or mule back, with a half-breed guide. To avoid the hostile Indians, he had to go off to the Spanish country, and thence to Santa Fe.<sup>39</sup>

Civis then told the story of how Whitman had been victimized by a “rascally hackman” in New York City. The fact that Civis considered Whitman to have been “about thirty–six or seven years of age,” when he was forty, speaks well for Whitman’s physical appearance. Early on Thursday evening, March 30, 1843, Whitman called on David Greene in the offices of the American Board in Boston. Although the two had exchanged correspondence for nearly nine years, they had never met before. It is easy to imagine Greene’s surprise when he first saw his buckskin-clad visitor. If he was shocked at the outlandish dress of the stranger, he was even more so when the visitor introduced himself as Dr. Marcus Whitman from Oregon. “Why did you leave your station?” Greene demanded. Whitman hastily explained that the Board’s order dated February 25, 1842, which dismissed Spalding and Gray and which called for the closing of the stations at Waiilatpu and Lapwai, was the reason. He then presented the original copy of the action taken by the Mission at its September 1842 meeting which was signed by Walker, Eells, and Spalding, and which authorized him to go East to confer with the “Committee of the A.B.C.F.M. in regard to the interests of the Mission.” On the back of this page, now in the files of the American Board, is the notation in Greene’s handwriting that it was received on March 30, 1843. It had taken Whitman six months to travel from Waiilatpu to Boston.

After his return to Waiilatpu, Whitman told Geiger that he had been given a cool reception in Boston. Henry Hill, Treasurer of the Board, was also shocked at his appearance and asked, quite roughly: “What are you here for, leaving your post?” Hill gave Whitman some money and told him: “Go, get some decent clothes.”<sup>40</sup>

The next day, Whitman, now properly clad, was back in Greene’s office where his reception was more cordial. On this occasion, Greene brought Whitman up-to-date on the actions of the Board regarding its Oregon Mission subsequent to its February 1842 order. Greene showed Whitman a copy of a letter written to him on April 28, 1842, in which

Whitman read: "When the case of your mission came up in February, it seemed to be a perfectly clear case that the Committee should decide upon it as mentioned in my letter to yourself and the mission written about the first of March<sup>41</sup>... But had your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> of July [Letter 92] and Mr. Spalding's of the same date, 1841, been before the Com., they would almost necessarily [have] decided differently." Greene, in this letter, authorized Whitman "to go on as you were going before those instructions were received."

After telling of this favorable development, Greene explained to Whitman how further correspondence from Oregon had changed the picture again. He referred to Whitman's letter of May 12, 1842, in which Whitman had written that there was "no better understanding with Mr. Spalding." This letter was written a few days before the scheduled Annual Meeting which Spalding at first refused to attend. Greene then told Whitman how he had laid all of this latest information before the Prudential Committee which met on March 21, a little more than a week before he had so unexpectedly arrived in Boston, and how, as a result, the Committee had voted to abide by the fateful order issued in February 1842.

Thus Whitman learned that, had he not gone to Boston, Spalding would have been dismissed, the two southern stations of the Oregon Mission would have had to be closed, and he and Narcissa would have been expected to move to Tshimakain. Whitman pled for the opportunity to appear before the Prudential Committee. He insisted that conditions had changed. Three of the main complaints against Spalding—Smith, Gray, and Rogers—were no longer in the Mission. A new understanding had been established with Spalding which promised to endure. Whitman argued that it was folly to abandon the flourishing fields at Waiilatpu and Lapwai for the Spokane station with its limited agricultural possibilities. No doubt he emphasized the strategic importance of Waiilatpu as the first outpost in the Columbia River Valley on the Oregon Trail. Perhaps Whitman threatened to leave the Mission and move to the Willamette Valley if the Committee continued to insist that he and his wife move to Tshimakain. Greene was sufficiently impressed with the seriousness of the situation that he agreed to call a special meeting of the Prudential Committee for the following Tuesday, April 4, so that Whitman could present his case in person.

Although eager to be on his way as soon as possible in order to visit relatives in western New York State before leaving for the Missouri frontier, Whitman had to be patient. No record remains as to how he spent those days of waiting. Perhaps one of the Board secretaries would have invited him to his home as a guest. We are told that while in Boston Whitman had his silhouette drawn by a Mr. R. K. Cummings. Whitman considered the result so unsatisfactory that he did not even get a copy for his mother.<sup>42</sup> Daguerreotypes were then being made in Boston, but the cheapest, as then advertised in the daily papers, cost \$3.50. No doubt Whitman felt that this was more than he could afford.

### THE FATEFUL ORDER OF FEBRUARY 1842 REVOKED

The archives of the American Board contain the minutes of the meeting of the Prudential Committee for April 4, 1843. Seven were present including Greene and Hill. Included with the minutes is a document which seems to be a secretary's summary of what Whitman told the Prudential Committee. It states: "Left the Oregon country 3d October 1842, & arrived at Westport Mo. 15 February & in Boston 30 March 1843. Left unexpectedly & brought few letters. The difficulties between Mr. Spalding & the others were apparently healed. Mr. S. promises to pursue a different course. The mission wish to make another trial, with Mr. Smith & Mr. Gray out of the mission."

Whitman succeeded in persuading the Committee to revoke its former action; for it adopted the following: "Resolved, That Doct. Marcus Whitman & the Rev. H. H. Spalding be authorized to continue to occupy the stations at Waiilatpu & Clear Water, as they did previous to the adoption of the resolutions referred to above." Whitman had the great satisfaction of realizing that one of the main purposes of his long journey had been accomplished. He then brought up Gray's case and asked that his request for release be granted. This was a mere formality, for the Grays had already left the Mission; but for the sake of the record, his resignation was officially accepted.

### WHITMAN'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE OREGON MISSION

According to the unsigned document of April 4, Whitman gave an optimistic report regarding the response of the Indians to the Christian message. He claimed that "half the year from 30 to 100 & the other

half from 100 to 300 attend worship [weekly] at Waiilatpu & Clear Water, each—(giving good) attention & advancing somewhat in knowledge—their temporal condition much improved & improving.” The reference to “half the year” reflects the custom of both the Cayuses and the Nez Percés to be gone in search of food for the other half of the time.

In the spring of 1838, Whitman and Spalding, moved by Jason Lee’s over-optimistic dream of the political and religious future of Oregon, had asked the Board to send out 220 additional workers. Now, five years later, Whitman had a more realistic understanding of the situation as it affected both the work in Oregon and also the resources of the Board. Hence, his requests for a reenforcement were very modest. In his presentation of the needs of the field, he made reference to the “influx of Papist” missionaries and the need to counteract their influence. He also referred to the expected large 1843 Oregon emigration and to ever increasing migrations in the years to come. He pointed out the demands which the incoming whites would make on the Waiilatpu station for supplies and other forms of assistance. Whitman urged the Committee to appoint an ordained man who could be stationed at Waiilatpu and relieve him of his religious duties.

Whitman also had the following practical recommendation to make: “[That] a company of some five or ten men... be found, of piety & intelligence, not to be appointed by the Board or to be immediately connected with it, who will go to the Oregon country as Christian men and who, on some terms to be agreed upon, shall take most of the land which the missions have under cultivation with the mills & shops at the several stations, with most of the stock & utensils, paying the mission in produce, from year to year, in seed to the Indians, & assistance rendered to them. . .” Whitman felt that if a few Christian laymen could be found who would settle in the vicinity of each of the three mission stations, they could relieve the three ministers and himself of “the great amount of manual labor, which is now necessary for their subsistence, & permit them to devote themselves to appropriate missionary work among the Indians, whose language they now speak.” There is no evidence that Whitman gave any consideration to possible Indian reaction to the establishment of colonies of white people in the vicinity of the mission stations, except the assumption that this would be for their benefit. The Prudential Committee gave a lukewarm endorsement to the idea, but

stated that the Board could accept no financial responsibility for the plan and that he was to do the recruiting. Since Whitman had less than two weeks before leaving for the Missouri frontier, there was little possibility that he could enlist men to go to Oregon that year on such short notice.

Whitman raised the question of making a claim on the Government for the value of the horses and other property taken by the Sioux Indians from Gray at Ash Hollow in the summer of 1837. Permission was given Whitman to follow up the claim that Gray had submitted on August 7, 1837, for \$2,096.45. An examination of the correspondence bearing on Gray's claim, now in the National Archives, shows that the well-known fur trader and Indian Agent, Major Joshua Pilcher, was asked to investigate the merits of the claim. In his report, Pilcher wrote that he was convinced that "the difficulty arose from Mr. Gray's own imprudence and that most of the claim is altogether unfounded." He recommended that nothing be done.

Whitman wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs from Boston on April 8. His request for indemnity was courteously worded: "We do not wish to press the subject, but leave it with your department to do what you deem proper." He pointed out that: "The horses for which an indemnification is asked belonged in part to the Mission and in part were received by the Mission from the Indians to be vested in cattle & cattle were to be given the Indians in return. As the horses were lost, the Mission has had to pay the Indians for them in cows. There was a considerable abridgment of our, at that time, very small stock." The letter closes with the following: "As missionaries of the A.B.C.F.M., we have no private salary or emolument so that neither Mr. Gray nor myself can have any private interest in the indemnity we ask for the Board. The money would enable us, however, to import more stock to the Indians than we have been able thus far to do." There is no evidence that the claim was ever paid.

Whitman was asked by the Prudential Committee at its meeting of April 4 to write an account of his work, the customs of the natives, their superstitions, legends, etc. In response Whitman penned an illuminating report of about 2,500 words dated April 7, which bears a notation by Greene of being received on the 8th [Letter 128]. In his comments on the customs of the Indians, Whitman noted that if an Indian medi-

cine man, a “te-wat,” failed to cure a patient, then “very often in cases of this kind, nothing can save the Conjurer but one or more conspire to kill him.” Whitman added: “The number & horror of the deaths of this kind that have come under my observation & knowledge have been great.” More than four years later, Dr. Whitman, himself as a white “te-wat,” who had been unable to check the ravages of a measles epidemic which was taking a heavy toll of life among the Cayuses, was to become a victim of this custom.

Since the motives for Whitman’s ride East have been under such scrutiny, it is well to give the Board’s explanation as found in its Annual Report which appeared in September 1843: “Early in the autumn of last year, and immediately after receiving instructions of the Prudential Committee to discontinue the southern branch of the Oregon mission, a meeting of the missionaries from all the stations was held to consider the course to be adopted. In their estimation, the circumstances of the mission and its prospects were so far changed, that they should be justified in going forward with the mission as it then was, until the case could be again referred to the Committee; and it was thought expedient that Doct. Whitman should proceed immediately to Boston with the hope that he might return to his labors early in the ensuing spring.”

An amplification of the above was given in the September issue of the *Missionary Herald*: “Another object of Doct. Whitman, in making the above mentioned visit, was to procure additional laborers. He desired to induce Christian families to emigrate and settle in the vicinity of the different stations, that they might relieve the missionary of his secular responsibilities, and also contribute directly, in various ways, to the social and moral improvement of the Indians.”<sup>43</sup>

As far as the Board was concerned, Whitman went East on mission business. Nothing was said in its printed accounts of his visit to Boston about a prior visit to Washington. Whitman’s modest request for an ordained man to be appointed to serve with him at Waiilatpu was never granted. The financial report of the Board for 1843 shows that the expenditures for the Oregon Mission for that year totaled \$3,043.33 [See Appendix 2]. The figures, however, do not indicate just how much of this was incurred by Whitman on his Eastern journey.

Another item from the Board’s *Annual Report* for 1843 should be mentioned. Whitman had so stressed the importance of location of

Waiilatpu that Greene wrote: "In view of the subject, the importance of sustaining the mission becomes much more obvious & great. It is seen to have new, wider and more permanent bearings... They anticipate the wave of white population which is rolling westward." Whitman, during his visit to Boston, had succeeded not only in inducing the Board to revoke its disastrous order of February 1842, but also in having it recognize that its missionaries in Old Oregon had a responsibility to that "wave of population rolling westward."

- <sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that Whitman and Lovejoy visited Santa Fe beyond this statement by Lovejoy. Whitman in his report to the Board mentioned only Taos. To have gone to Santa Fe would have required a detour of at least two day's duration and there was no reason for making such a trip. Lovejoy's memory was in error.
- <sup>2</sup> Alanson Hinman, in an article in *O.H.Q.*, II (1901):268, refers to Black Harris as "the guide who conducted Doctor Whitman across the Rocky Mountains." Hinman taught school at Waiilatpu in 1844-45 and, no doubt, received this information from Whitman.
- <sup>3</sup> Although Robidoux was with Fremont in California, Mount Robidoux, near Riverside, was named for his brother, Louis.
- <sup>4</sup> Brown's Hole was on or near the 42° parallel near Green River, in what is now southwestern Wyoming.
- <sup>5</sup> Whitman evidently believed that the Green River to be the Colorado River and not merely a tributary. Because of another river in Texas, also called the Colorado, the larger river was then designated as "Colorado of the West."
- <sup>6</sup> From interview with Horace Greeley, *New York Tribune*, March 29, 1843.
- <sup>7</sup> Rufus B. Sage traveled from Fort Uinta to Fort Hall, Oct. 29-Nov. 5, 1842. See his *Rocky Mountain Life*, Boston, 1857. Possibly Sage met Whitman and Lovejoy while making this trip.
- <sup>8</sup> Charles Kelly and Maurice L. Howe, *Miles Goodyear*, Salt Lake City, 1937, p. 43, gives the text of Goodyear's letter which Whitman carried.
- <sup>9</sup> Actually at the time Whitman was in his fortieth year and Lovejoy was six years younger. Rather strange that Lovejoy should have referred to him as being "old."
- <sup>10</sup> Original Spalding letter in Spokane Public Library.
- <sup>11</sup> Information supplied by the Rev. J. Frederick Speer in a letter to me dated December 5, 1965, when he was pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church of Grand Junction, Colo.
- <sup>12</sup> An embellished and highly dramatic account of Whitman's ride over the Rockies is in Spalding's *Senate Document*, p. 21. No doubt Spalding did receive some information from Whitman about the hardships he had endured on this transcontinental journey.
- <sup>13</sup> The San Juan Mountains were first known as the "Sierra de Anahuac." Whitman once referred to the "Anahuac Mountains."
- <sup>14</sup> This was the third Spaniard or Mexican that Whitman had hired as a guide. In his letter to Greene of May 30, 1843, he referred to paying "the Spaniard who came in with me from Taos."
- <sup>15</sup> Here Lovejoy gives an exact date which can be confirmed from other sources.
- <sup>16</sup> My attention was drawn to this order by Erwin N. Thompson, once historian at the Whitman Mission National Historic Site. Original in Chouteau Collection, Folder 1843, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.
- <sup>17</sup> Perrin Whitman to Myron Eells, Feb. 10, 1882, Coll. W.
- <sup>18</sup> Original in Chouteau Coll., Folder 1843.
- <sup>19</sup> Original letter in Coll. W.
- <sup>20</sup> Barrows, *Oregon*, pp. 174 ff.

- <sup>21</sup> Eells, *op. cit.*, pp. 27 ff. Eells quotes from letters written by two people who claimed knowledge of a pamphlet that Whitman is alleged to have written. The evidence is doubtful.
- <sup>22</sup> *W.C.Q.*, II (1898):2:34.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ladies Home Journal*, Nov. 1897; *Sunday School Times*, Aug. 23, 1903. Drury, *F.W.W.*, II:54, gives an account of Dr. Weed entertaining members of the 1838 reinforcement on their way to Old Oregon. Dr. Weed conducted a bookstore in Cincinnati.
- <sup>24</sup> *T.O.P.A.*, p. 92.
- <sup>25</sup> Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon*, II:68. He also wrote: "The claim that he went to Washington first has not a particle of contemporaneous evidence to support it." Eells, *Marcus Whitman, M.D.* (Pamphlet), p. 20, quotes Mrs. F. F. Victor as writing in 1880: "There still remains the romantic, though unfortunately foundationless story of Dr. Whitman's visit to Washington with a political purpose." Eells also quote the Hon. E. Evans who, in 1881, wrote: "There is no authentic evidence that Dr. Whitman visited Washington City at all during that journey." Today no reputable scholar makes such claims.
- <sup>26</sup> Eells, *Marcus Whitman, M.D.*, p. 4.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon*, II:65, quoting from one of Spalding's lectures which appeared in the *San Francisco Pacific*, Nov. 9, 1865.
- <sup>29</sup> *San Francisco Pacific*, Nov. 9, 1865.
- <sup>30</sup> See Chapter Sixteen, "War, Diplomacy, or Emigration."
- <sup>31</sup> See Appendix 7 for a copy of Whitman's proposed bill.
- <sup>32</sup> Marshall, *Acquisition of Oregon*, I:212.
- <sup>33</sup> Herbert D. Winters, "Congress and the Oregon Question," *Rochester Historical Society*, II (1931):289.
- <sup>34</sup> Greeley's article was reprinted in *O.H.Q.*, IV (1903):168 ff.; also in Hulbert, *O.P.*, VII:111 ff.
- <sup>35</sup> Italics are the author's.
- <sup>36</sup> According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 2nd ed., 1955, p. 506, this quotation first appeared in the *Terre Haute, Ind., Express*, 1851.
- <sup>37</sup> Jason Lee to the Methodist Missionary Society, Oct. 13, 1843, quoted by Brosnan, *Jason Lee*, p. 213.
- <sup>38</sup> *O.H.Q.*, IV (1903):169; *O.P.*, VII:114.
- <sup>39</sup> "Civis" could easily have confused a reference to the Santa Fe Trail to the city of Santa Fe. See ante, fn. 1.
- <sup>40</sup> Whitman to Greene, April 1, 1847: "I often reflect upon the fact that you told me you were sorry I came."
- <sup>41</sup> Greene several times referred to the order of Feb. 25, 1842, as having been written "about the first of March."
- <sup>42</sup> Mary Alice Wisewell to Myron Eells, March 10, 1882, Coll. W. All efforts to locate a copy of this silhouette have failed.
- <sup>43</sup> *Missionary Herald*, XXXIX (1843):356.