

\*\*\* Date: April 2, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mr. Edward Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 188 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Comments: There is one point in this document where the phrase “kown” was used instead of “known.” \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, April 2<sup>d</sup>, 1846.

*My Dear Edward:* – You can imagine better than I can describe how glad I was to receive your token of remembrance, together with the letters from yourself and Jane last September, as two of the emigrants called on us to deliver them. Your letters, Edward, were just the thing for me. I like such kind of letters as show me the spirit and make of the writer. I cannot see how it should be so difficult for you or the girls to write me, and should think you might write me five or six times a year instead of once in two or more years. I really believe if you were situated as I am you never would write at all. Think of me now while I am attempting to write – half a dozen children making a noise around me, and to put on the climax, the doctor must come in, and taking a paper sit down and read aloud or talk to Mr. Rogers, who is sitting in the room; then in comes an Indian woman or two to sell some dry berries, and I must stop to attend to them, until I am quite lost and scarcely know what I am thinking about, especially when I have nearly twenty letters to write, and but little time to accomplish it in; but enough of this.

I have just asked the doctor what I should say to you about your coming to Oregon. He says there is no want of inducement for you to come, and he intends to write you some of them at least; but the only qualification you need, he says, is a *wife*, and then you must bring Jane. I do not know what you will say to that. If there were any here to be had, I should prefer to have you come without; but as there is none, and to make the trip twice to get one would be dubious; for this reason, if you could find a good one, by all means get her and come on, and bring Jane with you. You cannot tell how anxious I am to see you. I have been looking for you more or less for several years past. You know not how disappointed I was that the doctor did not bring Jane with him. He wants to have her here as much as I do; but the reason he did not bring her was – (you will laugh when I tell you) – the Indians would say that he had got tired of me and taken another wife, as they do, or was wishing to have two wives. Don't be frightened at this, Jane, and stay away, but by all means come, both of you. We have work enough for all of you to do, and want your help very much. It is a pleasant, healthy country to live in. When once here you will not wish to go away again. It is a bad job to get here, but make the best of that you can and come. I do wish Mr. Pope and his lady would come. Good men are needed here and he would do well for himself. Jane might have come with husband if he had known in season of some good family for her to come in, but it will be pleasanter for her to come with her brother.

The journey is a trying one to the faith and hopes of Christians. Should you come I hope you will look well to the exercises of your own heart and never neglect to watch and pray. Hold sweet communion with God every day. Make it a point not to neglect

this duty and you will be assisted to make the journey without having to experience the bitter reflection after your arrival of dishonouring God and your profession by the way.

Dear brother, this is the most important subject to be looked at in making a journey to this country. "See that ye fall not out by the way," was Joseph's advice to his brethren. And it would be well if it were written on every Christian's wagon, or to say the least, his heart, to be called to mind every day or hour of the day as need be. You will be tried in every point and in many ways you never were before. You may be persecuted and reviled, "but if you suffer for Christ's sake, happy are ye;" but if for your own faults, then it will be trying. Much of this will be avoided if you have a select few who are devoted Christians, united in all points for each others, interest, especially in keeping the Sabbath and social worship, etc. If you come together and keep together all the way, it may be made very agreeable. This, perhaps, may be difficult to find a party sufficiently large to be safe. There are several gentlemen going back this spring that left their families last year and intend returning next year, I believe. I hope you will have an opportunity of seeing some of them, from whom you may learn more about the journey than I can write. I am not concerned but that you will get here well enough if you start with any suitable arrangement; but I am more anxious lest you should not at all times bring honour upon Christ, our dear Redeemer, who died to save us. The excitement is great and objects of faith are too apt to be lost sight of in objects of sense, and our duty of prayer and watchfulness neglected. When you have experienced what I have, and heard and seen what I have in others, you will believe me if you do not feel the importance now.

Hoping the Lord will bring you safely here and that we shall be permitted to see each other's faces in the flesh and enjoy His unspeakable favours together in glorifying Him while we live.

So prays your devoted sister,

Narcissa.

P. S. – There were many very useful articles in the box you sent me for all of which I thank you. I was in hopes of finding one little article more that is needed more than most any other because it cannot be obtained here; namely, a pi-la-ain, as the Indians call it (louse trap). You will understand me, I suppose – the finest fine combs cannot be obtained here, for that reason I was in hopes of finding one in the box. I know you would have sent me some if you had kown my need. At any rate, I was very proud to get what I did from you, because it came from you, dear brother.

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 2, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: April 2, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Ms. Jane Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 191 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, April 2, 1846.

*My Dear Jane:* – The season for sending letters has nearly arrived, and I begin to feel as if I must be about writing to some of my friends or they will complain of my negligence or forgetfulness. I believe I have written very few letters since the doctor returned. My health has been so poor, and my family has increased so rapidly, that it has been impossible. You will be astonished to know that we have eleven children in our family, and not one of them our own by birth, but so it is. Seven orphans were brought to our door in Oct., 1844, whose parents both died on the way to this country. Destitute and friendless, there was no other alternative – we must take them in or they must perish. The youngest was an infant five months old – born on the way – nearly famished and but just alive; the eldest was 13 – two boys and five girls; the boys were the oldest. The eldest daughter was lying with a broken leg by the side of her parents as they were dying, one after the other. They were an afflicted and distressed family in the journey, and when the children arrived here they were in a miserable condition. You can better imagine than I can describe my feelings under those circumstances. Weak and feeble as I was, in an Indian country without the possibility of obtaining help, to have so many helpless

children cast upon our arms at once, rolled a burden upon me insupportable. Nothing could reconcile me to it but the thought that it was the Lord that brought them here, and He would give me grace and strength so to discharge my duty to them as to be acceptable in His sight. The Lord at the same time sent us a very good young man, originally from New York, whom we employed to teach an English school. He was of great assistance to me in bringing the children into good habits and advancing them in reading, as well as in the government of them. He was not pious when he entered the family, but the influence of being once more in a Christian family, called to his mind the feeling and many prayers and tears of a pious mother and deceased father for him, and overwhelmed him. He went to a retired spot just below the house on the river side and wept bitterly and poured out his soul to God in prayer and consecrated himself to His service. He immediately engaged in religious duty and was my associate in instructing and labouring with the children in Sabbath school and otherwise. At the annual meeting of our mission he united with the mission church. He is now in the Willamette teaching in the Oregon Institute. This was the winter of 1844 and 1845.

I received no letters from you or Edward that fall and thought it surprising that in all that great company you could not have sent us a single letter. I think I wrote you in the spring by Overton's party; hope you have got it by this time. It seems to me the immigration might bring me letters from my friends every year. I have not had a letter from mother in a great while, and I most envy you your privilege and wonder why you did not send it to me, so that I might have the reading also; the last from father was when doctor returned. I have just been writing to Edward how much we wish to see you both here and hope you will three of you come; there is work enough for you to do. We could

give you a school all the time – an English school – our children and the children of the other families of the mission and perhaps some others; also, an Indian school some part of the time.

Dearest Jane, you know not what special tokens of our dear Redeemer's love and mercy we have been receiving the last three months. Last Saturday, however, was a day of all days never to be forgotten by me, while I live. And can you think what it was, beloved sister? It was this: The triumphant death of a dear brother in Christ. I wish I could enter into particulars and lay out the whole scene before you so that you could see and feel it as I do and those who were witnesses of his glorious departure. The individual was Joseph L. Finley from Illinois, who came over with the last immigration for his health; his disease was consumption, and deep-seated when he left the States. He was advised to stop here for the winter because it would be so unfavourable for invalids in the lower country in the winter. You will wonder how I could have the care of him in my feeble state of health and large family. He kept about until about the middle of January and during that time boarded with a cousin that stopped for the winter; when he became confined to his room, I opened my bedroom to him, as there was no other on the premises suitable for a sick man, and a cousin, a young woman, came and took care of him until the families left for the Willamette, the first of March. Mr. Rogers, our school teacher, had the principal care of him, as also during the journey. He was without a well-grounded hope when he came here, and the Lord was pleased to bless our efforts for his salvation. He afterwards desired to unite with our church, and accordingly did Feb. 26th, in company with Mr. Rogers, who had formerly been a member of the Seceders. Being in my family, I was very much with him and read and prayed with him almost daily

towards the close of his life. He grew in grace steadily and felt that he was over-privileged to die in such a quiet place, where he could have the society of those who cared for his soul. Dear sister – he was a stranger, moneyless and friendless, in one sense – no relative who felt the responsibility of caring for him. He was just such a one as the Saviour says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Mr. Finley was nearly 32 years of age – was never married.

We felt, that is Brother Rogers and myself, that we were abundantly rewarded for all the care and labour we had bestowed upon him. It was such a glorious sight, especially to Brother Spalding and Brother Rogers, who had never seen the like before. Husband and myself saw much the same in Mrs. Satterlee, at Liberty, when we were coming to this country. Let us praise the Lord, dear sister, and live so that our death may be as triumphantly glorious.

Affectionately your sister,

Narcissa Whitman.

Mr. Edward W. Prentiss,

Quincy,

Illinois.

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 2, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: April 9, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mrs. Clarissa Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 71 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*My Dear Mother:* – It is now ten years since I left the parental roof of my home east of the Rocky mountains, and how much have I been thinking of the scenes that transpired at that time, and of the dear, dear friends, I have left behind. My father, my mother, venerable friends – shall I ever behold your faces again in the flesh? O, how I long to see you, yet I dare not indulge the thought lest I should be found to murmur. If it would give such joy and satisfaction to meet again in this world, to interchange thoughts and feelings, what will it be to meet above, when we shall be free from sin and sorrow, in the immediate presence of our Saviour to adore and wonder together and praise God and the Lamb before the throne. My thoughts have been very much in heaven, on heavenly subjects for two or three months past, having been permitted to accompany a fellow traveler down to the gates of death and to see him pass the dark waters triumphantly and enter joyfully the New Jerusalem above. O, what a glorious sight, and I may say that reluctantly I turned away, mourning that I was not permitted to follow him in reality as with an eye of faith. The individual I refer to, was not a relative, or I could not have stood and looked on with such composure and quietness, he was a young man nearly

thirty-two years of age; far gone in the consumption when he arrived here last fall, as one of last immigration – Joseph S. Findly, from Illinois, and without friends and money, left here to die among strangers. His brother went on past to the Willamette, and he stopped here because it was more unfavorable for an invalid there in the winter time than here. We had assistance, however, in taking care of him until the last month of his life, when the sole care devolved on me and the children; my health very poor all the time. You can see, beloved parents, what my work was, when I tell you that when he came here, he was without a Saviour. This gave deep anxiety of mind and earnest prayers, until the Lord was pleased to bring him to himself, but the evidence was not always so clear as to feel very confident in his case, so that, during the whole time, I felt a tender anxious watchfulness for him, which led me to be constantly seeking an opportunity of nourishing and cherishing him as I would a little child. Blessed be the Lord, he did not suffer me to labor in vain, but from time to time gave me evidence to believe that the good which he had begun, was progressing. Along in February he manifested a desire to join with the church. An opportunity was presented.

Mr. Spalding and family visited us the last of February, and on the 26th, he with Mr. Rogers, another young man that had been employed as teacher of our children, offered themselves and were received most joyfully into our little church here in the wilderness. He was unable to sit up, consequently we were gathered around his sick and dying bed, to commemorate with him for the first and last time the dying love of our blessed Redeemer before he left us to join the church triumphant above. From this time on his evidence of an acceptance grew brighter and stronger, yet it never exceeded a calm and steady trust in the Saviour, sometimes doubting almost that such a sinner could be

saved. I never could discover anything like ecstasy, joy, or rejoicing at any time in his state of mind. He never had received very much religious instruction in his youth, his mother having died when he was quite young.

Many, very many, precious seasons I have spent with him, reading, conversing, and praying with him, and I have been very much refreshed myself in doing it. Although I had more work and care on my hands than I could do, without him, in the care of my eleven children, yet I felt that it was work that the Lord put in my hands and He would and did give me strength to do it. He died on Saturday, 28th of March, few minutes past one. He was more than two hours dying. Mr. Spalding was providentially present at the time of his death. When I discovered a change had taken place in his breathing, I went to him and told him that I thought Jesus was about to take him away, and asked him if he did not rejoice? He said he did, if he knew what rejoicing was. Soon he said, "Lord, help me now," and then asked Mr. Spalding and myself if we thought he was smothering, meaning that he was distressed to get his breath; we told him we thought he was dying, and asked if he did not wish Mr. Spalding to pray? He said, "Yes;" and we united in fervent prayer that the Lord would not forsake him now in this trying hour, and commended his departing spirit into the hands of his Saviour.

The family were called in. I asked him if he felt the Saviour present with him now? He said deliberately, "I think He is." Occasionally ejaculations like these would be heard from him as we stood watching around him, "Lord, help me now; Thy will be done." After a little he looked up and around and said, "Farewell to this world;" then, some moments after, "Father, Thy will be done." Afterwards he reached his hand to husband and I, with a look of gratitude and thankfulness for the kindness he had received

from us. Soon after Mr. Spalding asked him if the Saviour was with him? After a moment he said, "I think so." Shortly after he ejaculated, "Jesus, save me." Mr. Rogers stood by him holding his hand. In a few minutes he looked at us with inexpressible sweetness depicted in his countenance, and said, "Sweet Jesus! sweet Jesus! sweet Jesus!" as if anxious that we should receive the evidence of his Saviour's presence with him and the token he had just received from Him. It was like a ray of glory bursting through him upon our minds. It completely melted us all. From this time on he lay breathing still more and more laborious, and he desired us to try and turn him to see if he could not find relief; but the change of position made it still more difficult, and he wished to lie back again as he was before, exclaiming "Sweet Jesus! sweet Jesus!" as if the Saviour had again given him another taste of His sweetness, and assurance that rest or ease was not for him in this world. After this the occasional uttering of these words, "Sweet Jesus!" led us to think that his communion was more with the inhabitants of the heavenly world than with us, although he was most perfectly conscious of every thing that passed up to the last moment. A little after one o'clock he uttered "Sweet Jesus!" sweet Redeemer!" and then "Farewell, farewell, farewell!" and, indistinctly, "I am going!" and thus expired, sweetly yielding up his spirit into the hands of his Redeemer.

This was new and unexpected to Mr. Spalding and Mr. Rogers, they having never seen the like before. As for me, I had been asking that the Lord might be glorified in his death, and thus we were left without a doubt that our brother, on whom we had bestowed so much anxious care, had gone to be forever with the Lord; feeling, too, that we had been more than amply rewarded for the labor bestowed upon him. He was always so grateful for the attention shown him, particularly for the instruction and religious help he

received – said if he had ever in his life had such instruction, he would never have lived so far from the Saviour as he had done. He felt that I had been a mother to him, for he never received such attention before from any one, and he said it weeping. But it was all of the Lord to dispose my heart in kindness toward him when I am always so weak and burdened with cares. “I was a stranger and ye took me in; sick, and ye ministered unto me” – these and similar passages all the way through were my support; and I pray God I may always be in a frame of mind to apply this scripture, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 9, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: April 10, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Honorable Stephen Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 75 \*\*\*

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

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*My Dear Father:* – I have received no letters from father, mother or any the sisters or brothers in Allegheny county since husband returned. I wonder why, sometimes, and feel a little like complaining. Nothing I receive from the United States gives me so much comfort as letters from my dear parents. I am sure those sisters and brothers might write oftener if they would think so. It may be that you are feeling as if I had not been as faithful lately as formerly; true, I have not, but it is not for the want of a disposition. The greatest reason is want of health, then the care of a large family of eleven children, aside from our complicated duties to the Indians. Think of our being the sole instructors spiritually and mentally of so many children, except during the winter, we hire a teacher; otherwise all these mental and physical instructions devolves upon us, and no responsibility is greater than the care of so many immortal souls to train up for God, and we must be the ministers, Sabbath school teachers, parents and all to our children. I am sometimes about ready to sink under the weight of responsibility resting upon me, and should, were it not that an Almighty hand sustains me. Bringing up a family of children in a heathen land, where every influence tends to degrade rather than elevate,

requires no small measure of faith and patience, as well as great care and prayerful watchfulness. Under such circumstances, how comforting could I call in the superior wisdom and experience of my beloved parents to aid us in times of emergency. As a substitute for this, however, and for it I desire to be thankful, the influence of the impressions made upon my young mind by those beloved ones are now being called forth and acting upon other minds to a degree that astonishes me many times, and I may say that almost always those impressions are of such a nature, that if faithfully carried out, would greatly tend to promote the honor and glory of God. Children of such parents have much, very much, to praise God for, and if it should be found at last that any of them have not borne fruit to His Name's glory, how great will be their condemnation.

There has been considerable evidence of the movings of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of the children since the first of January, as well as upon some that wintered here. For ourselves, we feel that our own souls have been greatly revived, and I hope and pray that we may never again relapse into such a state of insensibility and worldly-mindedness as we many times have found ourselves in. This may seem strange to my dear father, that missionaries should ever become worldly-minded; and it should be strange, for it never ought to be; but situated as we are, with every thing of a temporal nature to see to, in supplying our own family with food and clothing, to try and save expenses to the churches, and also to relieve as much as possible a starving immigration as they pass, together with the temporal and spiritual calls of the Indians – what time is there left for the care of one's own heart? If there is any, it may all be required to restore our over-exhausted natures, which often groan under their burden and will sooner or later tumble and fall down. I would not plead any excuse; if there is fault any where it is in

undertaking to accomplish too much of a worldly nature. When I say this, a thought comes in: Where shall we draw the line? As it is, we but just make the ends meet, and sometimes with the greatest difficulty, too. Much, very much, is left undone that might be done to make us more comfortable and save labor. Thus we struggle on from year to year.

How cheering under such circumstances, when the heart is weighed to the earth with a burden too heavy for mortal man to sustain, to have an aged Christian, a minister whose heart is always glowing with love to God and for the souls of men, call in, sit and converse awhile and draw the mind to heavenly things and sympathize and pray with us. To me it would seem to fill my soul with such ecstasy that I should want nothing more. It would be a heaven on earth. Perhaps, dear father will say that I can draw a richer draught from the fountain head, Jesus, oftener and easier than that. True, I may; but that requires effort and energy of mind more than I at all times possess, laboring as I am under the infirmity of a debilitated nervous system. But why should I be indulged in such a melancholy strain? Can it be that I wish to excuse myself for negligence on my part? This, I confess, is too often a fault; for if it were otherwise, I should not be mourning for my beloved Jesus as I often find myself now, notwithstanding His permitting me to speak of His faithfulness and of His tender care and love for me, unworthy as I am. He gives me now and then streams from which to gather refreshing sweetness. But the fountain head oftener pours its healing waters into my weary, sin-sick soul. Instead of complaining that I enjoy so little, rather let me rejoice that my mercies and spiritual comfort and enjoyments are so many and great.

If my dear father and mother were here, I think they would be very well contented, for we could give them a very comfortable home and enough to eat and do, and if the distance were not so great, I should hope they would come and finish their days with us. But it is a dreadful journey to perform to get here, and I ought not to ask such a sacrifice of them for my own comfort, merely; but if there could be a design worthy of the sacrifice and fatigue to such elderly people, I should ask it with all my heart, if there was a willing mind. I know father once used to think he should come to Oregon; but if I recollect right he wrote me that he had given it up. It is not so difficult to get here now as when I came, for families come in wagons all the way. The fatigue is great, however, and the dust from Fort Hall here is very afflicting; aside from that, with food enough and teams enough, no loading except necessary clothing, it would not be difficult.

Father, if you would send word from Fort Hall we could send and meet you and assist you on. But the greatest affliction would be to the pious soul – it is so continually vexed with the ungodly conversation and profanity of the wicked, and is so often brought into straitened circumstances with regard to his own duty in obeying the commands of God, such as keeping the Sabbath, etc., that he often is wounded to that degree that it requires many months, if not years, before he is restored to his wonted health again. To be in a country among a people of no law, even if they are from a civilized land, is the nearest like a hell on earth of anything I can imagine. I do not say that the journey cannot be performed and the Christian enjoy his peace of mind and continued communion with God all the way. But this I know, that the experience of all proves it to be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. It is often said that every Christian gets so that he can swear before the journey is completed. One thing has been true of almost every party that have

crossed the mountains; Christians are not warned of their danger before starting, and are consequently off their guard. If I had to ever again, I should try and pray more, both in secret, family and social meetings, but above all in secret, for if faithful there the soul is kept alive and in health, Generally speaking, every religious duty has been neglected and possibly none more so than reading the Bible, consequently dearth prevails over the whole mind.

If I am not permitted to see my dear parents here, I hope I shall hear from them often. I love to have them both write; when they receive this, they will know how to pray for us, and will I trust most fervently.

From your most affectionate child,

Narcissa.

Hon. Stephen Prentiss,

Cuba, Allegheny Co.,

New York.

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 10, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: April 13, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mr. James Findlay \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Whitman Mission – Vertical Files III B 18 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Comments: The vertical file mentioned above has a typed copy of this document. It is not known who transcribed that copy or where the original letter is at this point. Mrs. Whitman may have referred to this document in a letter that she and her husband wrote to Mr. Edward Prentiss and Ms. Jane Prentiss on May 15, 1846. In that letter, Mrs. Whitman wrote that *“I have had to write such a long letter to Mr. Finley's father – the young man that died here – that I could not get the time.”* On a different issue, there is one point in this document where the phrase “ken” is used. I believe that “knew” was the intended word. There is another point where the phrase “for a life” is repeated. Yet another typo is “Orsborn” instead of “Osborn.” It is not known if Mrs. Whitman made these typos or if the transcriber made them. \*\*\*

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

Wailatpu Oregon Territory, April 13th 1846

To Mr. James Findlay

My dear Sir

Having been permitted the acquaintance, and more especially the privilege of ministering to the comfort, in the dying moments of your deceased son Joseph S. Findlay, and at his earnest and oft repeated request, I now address you, although an entire stranger,

for the purpose of giving you information concerning him, and that too which I trust will cause your paternal heart to rejoice in God, although he has bereaved you, and humbly and meekly to acquiesce in his holy will and say, “The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Under these considerations you will I trust excuse me and deem an apology unnecessary.

Mr. Findlay arrived here on horseback late Sab. evening Oct. 19th in company with Mr. Andrew Rodgers, whom we had employed to teach school for us. The moment we cast our eyes upon him our first impressions were that he had come here to die. He continued about however for more than a month after his arrival, and appeared comfortably well. As our family was large and no domestic help but children and my health poor – We did not feel that we could board him. He accordingly after a few days took lodgings in Mr. Orsborns family, who had stoped here for the winter. Nothing particular occured for several of the first weeks, worthy of notice – except he did not attend worship on the Sabbath, which I attributed to the fatigue of the journey. He would occasionally call in sit and converse a while with us and some times spend the night. About the first of Dec. he began to attend our meetings on the Sabbath and continued to as long as he was able to walk here. About this time some inquiries were made to him about the state of his mind, and his future prospects for Eternity. He appeared a little sceptical and not as communicative as afterwards. However he took to reading the Scriptures and seemed more and more interested in the sermons read on the Sabbath. About the last of Dec. his health began to fail. His friend began to feel increasingly solicitous about the salvation of his soul and frequently desired some of us to visit and

converse with him upon the subject. Accordingly my husband visited for that purpose and also Mr. Rodgers. As opportunity offered I took occasion to interest myself in the state of his feelings, and to become acquainted with the obstacles in the way of his salvation. He at first gave us to understand that he was indulging a hope, and that it had been of some years standing, but regretted that he had never made a profession of religion, and given himself to the service of Christ while he was well. He remarked that when he felt well enough to converse, he should like to communicate to me something of his past experience – it being evident that he was laboring under some trial of mind from which he desired relief. Not being aware of the nature of his difficulties, but supposing they lay between God and his soul, I visited him on the first Monday of January, it being a day of fasting and prayer, and spent nearly two hours in conversation with him.

He spoke of the great loss to himself and other members of the family, in the death of a beloved Mother, of the situation of the family at that time, of the subsequent removal on to the frontier, of his wish and the consent of his Father for him to remain in New Albany, his religious advantages while there, and means of grace enjoyed, which were very considerable. He remarked that during a revival of religion there he had stood alone while all his young companions had gone forward and professed their love to the Saviour, and that because it was in a Methodist Church he could not do as they had done. His mind evidently at that time was much impressed, and in consequence of not feeling it his duty to unite with the Methodist Church he had a desire to go and converse with a Presbyterian Minister a Mr. Sneed residing there, one who had his entire confidence and love, but feeling diffident, he yielded to the temptation, and did not go to make his feelings known, and receive that advice and assistance he so eminently needed, at that

important crisis. This occurred when he was some where about nineteen or twenty years of age. After leaving New Albany his mind became increasingly drawn away from the subject of his duty and obligations to serve the Lord and much engrossed and in love with the cares and perishable objects of the world. He then spoke of his efforts to assist a dear Father in keeping the family together, and of his success in making their situation more comfortable, and subsequently of the trials that existed between his friends and himself on leaving the States for this country. This part he dwelt upon no longer than to give a view of his situation, with a desire that it might result in good to his soul. I told him that I would not consent to hear anything of that nature unless it was absolutely necessary for the good of the individuals concerned.

I remarked to him that it was his duty to exercise a spirit of forgiveness even if he felt he had been never so much injured. He replied, That it was impossible so long as it had not been sought. After some further remarks upon that point, I left him.

The next day Dr. Whitman visited conversed and prayed with him after which he urged him to lead in prayer also but he steadily refused. As soon as he left the house, we afterwards learned that he was much distress to think he was so ungrateful as to refuse to pray, and said if he had another opportunity he would not refuse again.

The next time I visited him he told me he had been meditating on the subject of forgiveness, as exhibited in Christ prayer on the cross, and now felt it his duty to forgive, as he wished to be forgiven. He further remarked that he had spent to much of his life in studying forms of church government, and other technical points of religion, more to keep his mind at rest and diverted from doing his immediate duty to God and his own soul. He also spoke of his feelings on leaving home for this morally dark region.

Thought it was possible that he might never again enjoy the means of grace, or any religious privileges, was grateful that his lot should be cast among those in this remote land who should “care for his soul.” He said his former views of Missions and Missionaries had not been the most favorable, was rejoiced to have them so happily changed from actual observation.

In about a week from this time, my husband being absent, I visited him again conversed and prayed with him, after which he followed me in a very humble and penitent prayer. This was the fifteenth of January, and as he had long been desiring to be able to come to our house, to do some business with Mr. Rodgers, and feeling some better he concluded to come that afternoon. He spent that night, also Friday and Saturday, and then proposed to go home. We desired him to spend the Sab – which he accordingly did, but that night the next day and night he grew so much worse as to be unable to leave his bed. In consequence of there not being a quiet comfortable room in the house Mr. Orsborn occupied (several families living there) we concluded to offer him a retired room in our house, Mr. Rodgers offering his services in taking the charge of him and Lydia Courtney, expressing a willingness to come over and attend upon him. On Monday he entered evidently with much satisfaction, that he had found a place to lie down and die. He never left it but once, as long as he lived, and that was to come into the Dining room, but for a short time. From this time he continued to decline gradually until death came to his relief on Saturday the 28th of March about fifteen minutes past one.

During this time I made every effort possible to spend as much time in his room, in reading the Scriptures and other devotional and religious books, and in conversation upon subjects that would lead his mind to a contemplation of his true situation and

necessities, and of the glorious plan of redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ. Previous to this while he was yet able to be about, I had heard him give an account of his dangerous sickness the time when he had the Small Pox. From recent inquiries, it appears that his mind was exercised and he felt that he was reconciled and prepared to die; but promised himself if he recovered he would not live as he had done but make a profession of religion and devote himself to the service of the Lord. But as usual with sick bed resolutions, a return of health brought with it a return of cares and forgetfulness of the Author of our mercies, and he neglected to fulfill what he then felt to be his imperious duty. He however continued to indulge a secret hope that he [had?] an interest in Christ, but not an enlightened one, and was in the habit of occasional secret prayer. He often said that if he had had any instruction upon the subject or assistance from Christians in leading his mind to a right view of his duty to God and his own soul – it would have been far different with him.

From the time he spoke of the change in his feelings on the subject of forgiveness, I could see an evident difference in his state of mind. He seemed to be making a general review of the past, as if in the act of setting his house in order feeling “that he must die and not live.” O how often did he regret with tears that he had lived such a life, that he had so ungratefully neglected the Saviour, and spent so much of his precious time thought and strength in accumulating property – just to have some thing to live upon in time of need, but now that time had come and how was he the better. Surely, said he; “The hand of the Lord must be in all this.” How strangely has he dealt with me that he might bring me back to himself, and now it seems too much for me to believe that he should be willing to accept of me now, after having spent my life in the service of the

world. When asked – “Could you see your dear brethren and Sisters, what would you say to them now?” He replied – I would tell them as my last dying request, to take warning by me, and not to neglect preparation for Eternity until health strength and life were almost gone. They know how I have lived, and my anxious desire that they should not do as I have done.

He frequently manifested a desire to make a public profession of his faith in Christ, should an opportunity offer. This Providence was pleased to grant him. On the 26th of Feb. he together with Mr. Andrew Rodgers were received into the Mission Church at this place and we were permitted once to unite with him in commemorating the dying love of our risen and ascended Lord, before he left us to join the Church triumphant above. He was very weak and spoke with great difficulty – yet he remarked that his mind was unusually calm and reconciled during the exercise.

On the 12th March Mr. Orsborn and family and the most of those who wintered here left for the Willamette. At the same time Mr. Rodgers went a journey of one hundred and twenty five miles to visit Mr. Spalding, but more particularly for the benefit of his health being much worn out with the care of Mr. Findlay as the greatest burthen rested upon him during the day and the sole care during the night. This left him entirely on my hands without any assistance more than what my children and boys could render me my husband’s attention being entirely engrossed with the natives and his other duties. During the day he was unable to converse but little, generally inclined to rest as the nights were spent in wakefulness and occasional severe fits of coughing. Evening he generally revived and seemed desirous of conversing more than at any other time. At his request we assembled in his room for our morning and evening family devotion, a

privilege he was unwilling to deprive himself of although at times he appeared much fatigued by the exercise. For more than a week I spent the evenings with him until eleven or twelve o'clock as long as my health would admit in reading and conversation, and he never would permit me to leave without first committing him to the care and protection of a kind Providence for the night.

It was a bitter trial to him to be so far separated from his friends, his beloved Father, Brothers and Sisters and the spot where he had been laying up store that he might have some thing to call his own, in time of helpless and need, and in the most dependant circumstances, to be cast among strangers without the most distant relative to administer consolation in smoothing the dying pillow or wiping the cold sweat from his brow and that among strangers he must die and with strangers make his grave. Why it should be so was often a query in his mind he could not solve. Yet he was willing to submit this Mysterious Providence to the future unfoldings of Eternal light – and rest himself quietly in the same hand that wisely disposes of all things for his own glory and our best good. He did not murmur, nor for once regret that he had come to this country, although his sufferings in the journey were indescribably great, and it appeared he had come but to die. He told me more than once, that if he ever prayed for any thing in his life, it was that he might be taken away from that scene of perplexity and difficulty, even if he did not live but for a short time. Yet he wished to go that he might be able to give his mind rest, and prepare to die. For said he, “I felt that if I stayed there I should lose my soul.” But the Lord ken what he needed better than he did himself and [had?] dealt with him in infinite kindness, in not suffering him to die in the journey but brought him thus far, and although he had no idea of stoping here for the winter, but had gone past with his fellow

travelers, and had got by some day and a half in distance, a casual remark made by Doctor Whitman to some of his friends that had come here for provisions – who said that he had got the consumption. In reply to which he told them that if that was the case it would be better for him to stay in this Upper country for the winter on account of the rains below. But for this remark he would have gone on and suffered far more than he otherwise has done, and perhaps died before reaching the end, as so many did, who had perhaps far better prospects of life, than he. For the whole winter he seemed to have no wish to go any further but so far as his own feelings were concerned, here he wished to die, and here he wished to be buried.

He often expressed great gratitude for the attention and means of religious instruction he enjoyed here. To use his own words he would say with tears flowing flowing fast as a witness to the truth of his feelings, “I am overprivileged to die in such a place. I never expected to find such opportunities of enjoyment as I have here. You are a Mother to me. I never before have had any one to converse so freely with, upon the difficulties and trials of my mind. I feel that I never can be thankful enough.” I seldom could inquire after the state of his mind without the conversation leading to some feature of his trials with his family friends. It was impossible to hear him speak of them, without the evident conviction of his ardent attachment to, and deep interest in them. That he loved you all, no one could doubt, and most affectionately too. It was painful to me to witness these deep emotions, without being able in some way to mitigate or relieve. And my Dear Sir could you have seen them, could you have stood by his bed as I have done and witnessed the falling tear, which bespoke emotions of a soul too deep for utterance, the deep repentance for a life for a life of ingratitude to the best of beings our dear

Saviour; and more still the anguish of his mind lest any of those dear objects of his fond affections should fail of salvation or lost. You could not have refrained from clasping this son to your bosom, assuring him of a Fathers forgiveness and a Fathers love still. And what consolation this would have afforded him, to die feeling that all were at peace with him, as he evidently felt at peace with them. It was an anxious thought with him and one frequently expressed, "What more is there for me to do that I have not done," and he would often ask us if we could see anything in his feeling that was wrong or any thing more that he ought to do on his part. On one of those evenings of conversations, I took my pen, and told him I would write for him if he wished to say any thing to them before he died, and on the following sheet you will find what little I was able to write for him.

Joseph S. Findlay's last words to his Father, Brothers and Sisters written twelve days before he died.

March 16th 1846

He began by saying, "I am too weak to write such a letter as I desire." I said to him what would you say to your Father if he was now standing by you. He replied, "I would try to convince him that it was wrong in him to indulge hard feelings towards me without any just cause, or to censure me, without seeking to know the true state of things, whether I deserved it or not. It distresses me to think that there should be such a state of feeling existing between me and the dearest friends I have on earth. I am not conscious that I have wronged any of you. If I have injured your feelings it is by my words when I was excited. I have felt that I never should be reconciled to some of you without a

confession on your part. But I do not feel so now. I freely forgive you all for all the trouble and distress you have caused me. You all know that I have ever been anxious that you should want for nothing when I could supply you. I do not regret any thing I have done for your comfort. I have done no more than was my duty.

I should feel very sorry, I should not know how to forgive myself if I thought I had given my dear Father distress or trouble in his old age willfully on my account. I may have hurt his feelings when I have been excited and I am very sorry for it now. I have not done it at all with a malicious design.

I should like to say something to Mary but know not how. I have nothing against her although she has many times caused me great distress and trouble of mind. I respect her as a sister and wish she and all of you could have the same feelings towards me that I have towards you.

My youngest brother David. He is advancing in years and is now in the prime of life, but he has not yet given his mind to the salvation of his soul. He has given me great deal of trouble but I forgive him all. My only anxious desire is that he should seek the salvation of his soul now, and prepare to meet his God in peace.

I should like to say some thing to you all, and especially to my two youngest sisters, for I think they would not take it amiss. I do believe they would profit by what I might say to them.

This was as much as he had strength to say at that time and we deferred it thinking to renew it again on the following evening. 17th Tuesday eve – He says, “I could say much very much to my dear Father if I only had strength to do so. It is very difficult for me to collect and fix my mind to say anything at all as I wish.”

This is all I find written under that date. He wished me to get his papers and assist him in looking them over and to burn those that were of no use. This occupied the whole of the evening, and consequently did not write any more. At this time he was much worse and continued to fail so rapidly, that each night when I left him it was in the expectation that we might be call up to see him die. As he was able however, he gave me from time to time verbal messages which he wished me to write you, when I should have opportunity.

To his eldest sister Nancy. He wished her particularly to be assured of his tender and affectionate regard for her, and of his deep interest in her welfare and that of her children. She had ever been kind to him and for this he was very grateful. Said he, "She is a kind Mother and faithful to do every thing to make her children comfortable in this world, but I wish she would think more of their immortal souls, and strive to train them up for a happy Eternity." Upon this subject he wished me to add a few words. Knowing as I do his feelings and interest for you and them, you will pardeon me I trust if I urge upon you this last request of a dear dying brother. Your children my dear Madam have precious souls that will exist as long as God shall exist, either in a state of happiness or misery, and much very much depends upon a Mothers example, influence, instruction, admonition, counsels, and prayers whether her children shall be fitted for that Holy place. It is not enough for us to know these things, we must feel the truth of them, and deeply too, so that our daily deportment may be such as to convince our children of the sincerity of our feelings for them, and that they may be made to believe that religion is as important to the young as to the old. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is a truth we are bound to believe, and practice,

for they are the words of Holy Writ, and in it we find encouragement and comfort to go forward in our duty believing that if faithful we shall not lose our reward. May you dear Madam have a heart and wisdom to apply yourself more to this solemn truth and seek for grace to discharge your duty in the fear of the Lord.

To his eldest brothers James and John, he was very anxious I should say a word to you in his behalf. I know not how to express the tender earnestness of his heart for your salvation. He loved you as his own soul. He wept to think of his own former ingratitude and disregard to a Saviour's dying love – and to think how narrowly he had escaped the destruction of his own soul, which he so richly deserved for his cruel disobedience, and seeing you in the same situation and fearing that you would be deluded on, with the snares and promised happiness of a deceiving world until the door of mercy would be shut against you forever. How could he do otherwise than weep and pray you. For “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul,” or “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul,” when he has lost it forever. Do my dear Sirs listen to this last dying request of your brother and prepare to meet him in heaven and your God in peace that his last agonizing prayers for you may not rise up in judgment to condemn you.

To Adam. He wished particularly that his love and tender regard should be given him.

To Jane and Sarah his beloved sisters. I can say but a few words that he would have said to them had they been present with him. You, are professors of religion and to you, and others of the family who are professors the import of his feelings was this, that you would strive to adorn your profession by a holy and godly conversation. Devote and

dedicate unto the Lord your whole selves. Live above the world and near to God in constant prayer and watchfulness and in the daily study of the Holy Scriptures. Live a consistent and useful life, labor and pray for the salvation of souls, and as if this was not your home, but as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, live, seeking a better country above where Christ our Saviour has gone.

He also wishes some thing to be said to his two nephews living in your family if I recollect aright. Tell them that their Uncle Joseph prayed for them that they might all of them repent forsake their sins and loved the blessed Saviour, who died to save them, that they might be prepared to go and live in heaven with Jesus and meet their dear Uncle there, and so he would say to all the little children of your families.

This and much more might be added to what he strove to communicate. I can give you but a faint idea of his intense anxiety for the Eternal well being of every one of you. He had spent at least a part of his life trying to make some of your comfortable as to the things of this world, but now his chief concern was, that you should prepare for the world to come and regretted that he had not set about the work sooner for himself as well as for you. Suffice it to say, that in the dead of night when all around were locked in the arms of sleep his feeble voice might be heard supplicating the throne of mercy for you all night after night, even to the last one of his life.

Mr. Rodgers did not return untill the Wednesday evening before he died, and with him came Rev. Mr. Spalding. We truly felt this Providence a timely relief, for we needed their assistance and their prayers and sympathy – in helping to sustain this our dear brother during the last conflict, which we felt every moment approaching.

He was very anxious to see his brother William whom he had been expecting to come from the Willamette for some time. On Thursday he told me with reference to seeing him that he had made up his mind that it was not best for him to have every thing he wished for in this life. "The Lord knows what is best for me." On Friday morning as Mr. Rodgers and I were standing by him during one of his paroxisms of distress, he asked us to pray with him. After uniting in prayer he requested us to sing a hymn commencing with, "Why do we mourn departed friends, Or shake at death's alarms, Tis but the voice that Jesus sends, To call us to his arms. During the day he was much distressed but was patiently waiting and preparing his mind for the solemn moment of his departure. That night he rested considerably owing to the influence of the opiate. Usually his mind was calm, his hope trembling, yet trusting, his faith unwavering. At no time did he express great joy or rejoicings, but a quiet comfortable state of mind seemed to characterise all his exercises. His repentings were deep and genuine, his sense of his unworthiness continual and his humility evident.

And now my Dear Sir come with me to the bed side of your beloved Joseph, to see him die, and let the dear sisters and brothers gather around and gaze in imagination upon that calm and peaceful countenance as the King of Terrors made his approach.

About eleven o'clock I observed his breathing to be more laborious and of a character that indicated that death had begun his last work. I said to him, my dear brother, Jesus is about to take you to himself; Do you not rejoice? After a moments pause he answered Yes; if I know what rejoicing is. Soon he asked Mr. S. and myself if we thought he was smothering. We told him we thought him dying. This did not appear to move him in the least, but soon ejaculated, "Lord help me now." I asked him if he was

sensible of the presence of the Saviour. To which he thoughtfully replied, "I think so." At his desire Mr. Spalding led in prayer and we united in fervently supplicating a throne of mercy for dying and sustaining grace and that God would not leave him now in this the most trying moment of his existence, but give him the victory over death and the grave through Christ our Redeemer. We immediately sent for Doctor Whitman and Mr. Rodgers and call in the children, and for more than two hours he lay in the agonies of the dying before he ceased to breathe.

During this time he was not able to converse but from occasional ejaculations we could see that he was calm and composed – and in the most perfect exercise of his reason untill the very last. At one time he was heard to say, "Lord help me now." At another, "Lord Jesus be with me now." A little after looking up and around he said, "farewell to this world." And again after an interval, "Father thy will be done." Some time after this Mr. S. asked him again "if he was sensible of the Saviours presence." After a moments pause he said, "I think so" as before. After this, at intervals, the same ejaculations were heard – untill about half an hour before death finished his work. At this time a wonderful change in his feelings was exhibited and to most of us unexpected. Looking at each of us, as we stood watching around him and with heavenly lustre beaming in his countenance he said, "Sweet Jesus," "Sweet Jesus," "Sweet Jesus," expressions I never before had heard him use, as if the veil of the Eternal world had been lifted, and he had caught a glimpse of the inexpressible sweetness of Him, who fills that holy place with his Presence. For us who were eye witnesses of this glorious scene we felt that it was enough. Such an assurance of his acceptance was more than a compensation for all our toils and anxiety for him. At another time he lay as if in a half slumber and we could

hear him use the same sweet expressions – indicating that his communion was more above than with us.

And again in attempting to turn in hopes of some relief from change of position, but finding none, he sunk back again on his pillow, exclaiming, “Sweet Jesus,” “Sweet Jesus,” as if his Saviour had gently touched his heart, saying, Look not for rest on earth, but in me. Gradually his breath grew shorter, and he was again heard to say, “Sweet Jesus,” “Sweet Redeemer,” for the last time – then after bidding each of us farewell – his happy spirit took its flight to the arms of his Sweet Redeemer, to be forever in his presence. Again we knelt in silent and solemn adoration and prayer and poured out our souls in praise to God that another soul had been brought off conquerer through Christ, and made to enter through the gates into the celestial city, and for ourselves we supplicated that we might have grace given us thus to die. We arose sung a hymn – and then prepared his lifeless remains for the silent tomb.

On the Sabbath his funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Spalding, and attended by a large party of Americans, who arrived here while he was dying, on their way to the States, and a large concourse of Indians. We buried him by the side of our dear and only daughter not far from where many bodies of the natives are slumbering. There his body lies, and there let him remain, untill the morning of the Resurrection for he rest in Jesus.

Thus Sir, I have endeavoured to give you as faithful an account of your Son as I am able, under the circumstances in which I am placed.

His clothes the few remaining ones he had with him he wished to be given to his eldest sister should she come to this country, and I have laid them by for that purpose. A lock of his hair is bequeathed and sent to each of his sisters.

Mr. Rodgers proposed to meet the expenses of Mr. Findlays board etc. while here. As he is dependant upon his own efforts for support, and is now devoting himself to study with a view to the ministry, we did not feel it duty to accept any thing at his hand.

We are Missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and are labouring here for the benefit of the Indians, and have been for nearly ten years. We receive our support from the contributions of the American Churches, and consequently are accountable to them under God for the manner of spending our time and money. It was your Son's wish that I should propose to you, should it meet your minds, to make a contribution to the funds of our Board, according to the means God has put in your hands – not so much that we ask it as a reward for what we have been enabled to do for him, as for the exercise and testimony of your gratitude to the Lord for what he has done for you and yours. What we have done for him has been done cheerfully, as unto the Lord, and we have not failed of our reward.

It would give us pleasure to hear from you at any future time for we feel a deep interest in the welfare of yourself and family, and may I ask the privilege of receiving a communication from you.

Wishing you and all your family, the consolations and comfort of the Spirit of grace, in your afflictive bereavement, and fervently praying that the registered prayers of those sainted ones, now in heaven, your beloved wife and Son Joseph, together with your own daily supplications may come up in remembrance before God, be heard and answered in the conversion of all your remaining children now out of Christ.

I subscribe myself

My Dear Sir

Most Sincerely and Truly Yours

Narcissa Whitman

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 13, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: April 13, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mrs. Harriet Jackson \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 79 \*\*\*

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

Wailatpu, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*My Dear Harriet:* – I believe I have not written you since the Lord brought this orphan family under our care. How could I, for I have been so unwell and had this increase of care upon my mind, that I have written to no one in the States, as I recollect. I find the labor greater in doing for so many, especially in instructing them – where they come in all at once – than if they had come along by degrees and had received a start in their education, one before the other; whereas all their minds appear to be alike uninstructed, especially in the great truths of Christianity.

I would like to know how you and Clarissa get along in unfolding the minds of your little ones. I hope you both feel that the immortal part is of the greatest moment in all your strivings for them, and to educate the physical in such a way as to give the immortal part the utmost vigor and energy possible.

I used to think mother was the best hand to take care of babies I ever saw, but I believe, or we have the vanity to think, we have improved upon her plan. That you may see how we manage with our children, I will give you a specimen of our habits with them and we feel them important, too, especially that they may grow up healthy and strong.

Take my baby, as an example: in October, 1844, she arrived here in the hands of an old filthy woman, sick, emaciated and but just alive. She was born some where on the Platte river in the first part of the journey, on the last day of May. Her mother died on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September. She was five months old when she was brought here – had suffered for the want of proper nourishment until she was nearly starved. The old woman did the best she could, but she was in distressed circumstances herself, and a wicked, disobedient family around her to see to.

Husband thought we could get along with all but the baby – he did not see how we could take that; but I felt that if I must take any, I wanted her as a charm to bind the rest to me. So we took her, a poor, distressed little object, not larger than a babe three weeks old. Had she been taken past at this late season, death would have been her portion, and that in a few days. The first thing I did for her was to give her some milk and put her in the cradle. She drank a gill, she was so hungry, but soon cleared herself of it by vomiting and purging. I next had a pail of warm water and put her in it, gave her a thorough cleansing with soap and water, and put on some clean clothes; – put her in the cradle and she had a fine nap. This I followed every day, washing her thoroughly in tepid water, about the middle of the forenoon.

She soon began to mend, but I was obliged to reduce her milk with a little water, as her stomach was so weak she could not bear it in its full strength.

Now I suppose you think such a child would be very troublesome nights, but it was not so with her; we put her in the cradle and she slept until morning without waking us more than once, and that only for a few of the first nights. Her habits of eating and sleeping were as regular as clock-work. She had a little gill cup which we fed her in; she

would take that full every meal, and when done would want no more for a long time. Thus I continued, giving her nothing else but milk, she only required the more until her measure became half a pint. In consequence of the derangement of her digestive powers, which did not recover their healthy tone, she had a day of sickness some time in Dec. when we gave her a little oil and calomel; this restored her completely, and since that time, and even before, she has nothing to do but to grow, and that as fast as possible; she is as large or larger than her next older sister Louisa was when she came here, then nearly three years old. She now lacks a month and a half of being two years old. She is strong, healthy, fleshy, heavy, runs any where she is permitted, talks everything nearly, is full of mischief if I am out of the room. She is energetic and active enough, and has a disposition to have her own way, especially with the children, if she is not prevented.

She contended sharply for the mastery with her mother before she was a year old, but she, of course, had to submit. Since then she has been very obedient, but frequently tries the point to see if her parents are steadfast and uniform in their requirements or not. She will obey very well in sight, but loves to get out of sight for the purpose of doing as she pleases. She sings a little, but not nearly as much as Alice C. did when she was of her age. Thus much for my baby, Henrietta Naomi Sager. She had another name when she came here, but the children were anxious to call her after her parents. Her father's name was Henry and her mother's was Naomi – we put them together.

What I call an improvement upon mother's plan is the daily bathing of children. I take a child as soon as it is born and put it in a washbowl of water and give it a thorough washing with soap. I do this the next day and the next, and so on every day as long as the washbowl will hold it; when it will not, then I get a tub or something larger and continue

to do it until the child is able to be carried to the river or to go itself. Every one of my girls go to the river all summer long for bathing every day before dinner, and they love it so well that they would as soon do without their dinner as without that. In the winter we bathe in a tub once a week at the least. This is our practice as well as the children. I do not know but these are your habits, but if they are not, I should like to have you try them just to see the benefit of them. I never gave Henrietta any food but milk until she was nearly a year-and-a-half old. She never wanted any thing else. I avoid as much as possible giving my children candies, sweetmeats, etc., such as many parents allow their children to indulge in almost all the while; neither do I permit them to eat cakes and pies very often.

It is well to study these things with regard to our children, for it saves many a doctor bill; and another thing with our children, we never give medicine if we can help it. If children complain of the headache, or are sick at the stomach, send them to bed without their supper or other meals; they are sure to get up very soon feeling as well as ever.

My husband says many times when a physician is called to see a patient he finds nothing ails him but eating too much. If he is told this he will be offended, so he is obliged to give him something, when all he needs is to do without a meal or two and to fast a day or two and drink water gruel.

Doubtless you will think this a strange letter, Harriet, but you must take it for what is worth and make the best of it.

We sleep out of doors in the summer a good deal – the boys all summer. This is a fine, healthy climate. I wish you were here to enjoy it with me, and pa and ma, too. We

have as happy a family as the world affords. I do not wish to be in a better situation than this.

I never hear as much as I wish about Stephen's children. I should think Nancy Jane might write her aunt now – tell me something about them.

O, how I wish you were all here. I could find work enough for you all to do; and every winter we have a good school, so that our children are learning as fast as most children in the States.

Harriet, I do want you and that good husband of yours to come here and bring pa and ma. I know you will like it after you get here, if you do not like the journey. There are many of the last immigration that came without their families, that are now going back to bring them as quick as possible, and are only sorry they did not bring them last year. Bring as many girls as you can, but let every young man bring a wife, for he will want one after he gets here, if he never did before. Girls are in good demand for wives. I hope Edward and Jane will come. I have written to them to come. Judson wants to come, too. I hope he will, and many other Christians. Where is Jonas G.? Why does he not come? Poor man, I never can think of him without sorrow.

Love to all, and a kiss for all those little ones.

Narcissa.

\*\*\* End of the original document from April 13, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: May 15, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Authors: Dr. Marcus Whitman

Mrs. Narcissa Whitman \*\*\*

\*\*\* Recipients: Mr. Edward Prentiss

Ms. Jane Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 194 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*Edward and Jane Prentiss. My Dear Brother and Sister:* – It gave us much pleasure to receive your letter by the last emigration, but it would have given us more to have seen you both here. If I could have known more when I was home I would have tried to have had you both come out with me. It is now, however, still favourable for you to come. Narcissa wants Jane to come and I want Edward, but it is not for us that you should come but for yourselves and the Lord. Edward would do well to have a wife and then come, and Jane will be agreeable with or without a husband, as suits her best; but if she comes without one, I shall try to convince her of her duty to marry. This country needs those who are able and willing to found and support society, religion and schools. There are the best inducements to young men to come and locate a mile square of first-rate land in a better climate than in any of the States, with the broad Pacific ocean to open in prospect before them. A good title will be secured to all who locate and reside on or occupy land or mile squares, according to the Oregon laws.

You must see how fine it is for a settler not only not to have to feed his stock as a general thing, but when he first comes, his poor stock can winter the first winter without the need of providing for them. We want a school teacher every winter, and shall like to employ you the first winter, at least, until you can look around. We had a good, pious teacher last winter and may have him the next. He adds instruction in musick. I believe he wrote Jane on the spur of Mrs. Whitman's promising to write his mother in case he would write one of her friends. He is studying for the ministry with one of the ministers of our mission, Rev. Elkanah Walker.

It cannot be much for you to come the rest of the way now you are so near, and more since you have become weaned from favorite spots of your youth. If Father and Mother Prentiss should consent to come with you, I think they would be rejoiced in their old age. A light wagon with an ox team is best for families, as all must keep company on the road. Let provisions so far as can be, be the only loading. Necessities for the journey are all you want, unless you have special reasons for bringing something in particular. The intimations in your letter that you might come if we would write you, give us hope to look for you the next year. In the meantime, get Brother Jackson and Kenny, etc., to come with you, as also Galusha and Father and Mother Prentiss.

It is a hurried letter I have to give you, but I hope it will be taken as a token of our love to you both, with desire to see you.

With our united love to you both,

I am your affectionate brother,

Marcus Whitman.

Jane, you need not fear what my husband says. I am not anxious you should without you find a good husband and desire to. But come and see us at any rate. Mr. Rogers has written you and given you much interesting information about the journey, etc. Don't take it amiss that he has written you – he has only helped me to tell a part of my story. I should have written to his mother if I could, but I have had to write such a long letter to Mr. Finley's father – the young man that died here – that I could not get the time. I wish you could see it. He lives in the same town that Mr. Roger's parents do, so if Edward ever travels there he can inquire for it if you please, and they are willing to show it. E. and Jane, where are you now? Have you gone back to see mother again? I wish I could see her, too; but you will not thank me for writing so. I am in a hurry and cannot do otherwise; so this or none. Goodbye; come and see us as soon as you can. Love to all inquiring friends.

Your sister,

Narcissa.

Mr. Edward W. Prentiss,

Quincy,

Illinois.

Care of Mr. Pope.

\*\*\* End of the original document from May 15, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: July 17, 1846 \*\*\*

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

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

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 196 \*\*\*

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

Wailatpu, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*My Dear Mrs. Brewer:* – A long silence has prevailed of late between us as to letter writing, and it is perhaps my fault as much as any one. I find it increasingly difficult for me to command a sufficient relief from the cares of so numerous a family of children to write as many letters as I desire to. Another reason – I have been looking for a visit from you all summer long, and do not yet feel willing to give it up. We have heard you started once and came part way and was obliged to return on account of sickness. I regret this very much, for had you come at that time you would have met Mr. and Mrs. Eells here, who would have rejoiced very much to see you. Will you not make another effort when Mr. S. returns and accompany him. I should be so delighted to see you and yours once more, and also to become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Gary of whom I have heard much. This is a dry and thirsty land for Christian communion and fellowship. I do long for the society of some Christian sisters.

We have had a quiet time for a few weeks past, and a precious season of rest it has been to us. We seem to be renewing strength for the season of burthen and trial that generally falls upon us the other portions of the year. I have been trying to read a little,

for I find my mind suffers without more food than I am able to give it at some seasons, especially when we are thronged with company, and many and complicated duties are pressing upon our hands.

But seasons of rest and quiet are of but short duration both for you as well as us. The Indians tell us that more Americans are coming, so that we shall soon be thronged again. We are looking with some interest for an associate to be among them, and hope we shall not be disappointed.

The Indians are very quiet now and never more friendly. There has been some deaths among them of the most important Indians, the past winter and spring, and we are not without hope that some of them have gone to be with the Saviour. So far as the Indians are concerned our prospects of permanently remaining among them were never more favourable than the present. I feel distressed sometimes to think I am making so little personal effort for their benefit, when so much ought to be done, but perhaps I could not do more than I am through the family. It is a great pleasure to them to see so many children growing up in their midst. Perrin, the eldest, is able to read Nez Perces to them and when husband is gone, takes his place and holds meetings with them. This delights them very much. I have much to write you, but I am still waiting, hoping to see you. But I will give you a specimen of my eligible situation for writing. I have six girls sewing around me, or rather five – for one is reading, and the same time my baby is asking to go and bathe – she is two years the last of May, and her uneasiness and talk does not help me to many very profitable ideas. Now another comes with her work for me to fix. So it is from morning until evening; I must be with them or else they will be doing something they should not, or else not spending their time profitably. I could get along some easier

if I could bring my mind to have them spend their time in play, but this I cannot. Now all the girls have gone to bathe and this will give me time for a few moments to close my letter in peace; they are very good girls and soon will be more help to me than they are now, although at present they do considerable work. Please give my love to all your missionary friends and believe me, as ever,

Sincerely yours,

N. Whitman.

\*\*\* End of the original document from July 17, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: September 11, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mr. Harvey Prentiss

Mrs. Livonia Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 86 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*Mr. Harvey P. Prentiss, Mrs. Livonia L Prentiss, My Dear Brother and Sister:* – It is but a few days since I received that good family letter bearing date of March, 1836, [1846?]. Since that time my mind has been much upon you for this reason: I hear you are removing to the South for the sake of a warmer climate. I had much rather you would come this way, and have been studying ever since to see if I could not induce you to come. There are many reasons why we wish you to come, but my time is so limited that I can give you but a few of them now. I shall write again this fall to some or all of you, if permitted. We wish you were here to assist us in our work; we have more than we can do and if you were here now we could give you both labor and support and would be glad to do it. I know you would like this mild and healthy climate better than the one where you have gone, at least we think so. Take the map, if you please, and just look at our situation on this Western coast. The Sandwich Islands and China are our next door neighbors. I see I cannot enlarge upon this subject. I was going to speak of the facilities for acquiring competency, if not wealth, in this country, but my time will not permit.

A little reflection will show you what I wish to say and I hope induce you to come. If you will only manage to get here, we are here to assist you all you need to get a start, if you should not wish to continue with us. Do not be anxious for your children; here is a good place for them to do well for themselves, both as to education and getting a living. We have a good English school here every winter and eventually intend to have an academy or college. Do come. I say this with all my heart. You will find the journey a trying one, but there is no difficulty in getting here. A good wagon with an ox team, and cows to change with, will in time bring you here, and then I wish you would bring Jane. I want her here very much as a teacher, and Edward, too. If you come they will come, I have no doubt, for last year they wrote us proposing to come if we wanted them. The Board had rather we would employ a farmer than appoint one and send to us. We expect the line will be settled with England soon, if it is not already, and that the United States will extend her jurisdiction over us; when that is done, we expect there will be a flood of emigrants rolling this way. For three years past there has been large companies of from 500 to 700 wagons each year to Oregon and California.

Brother Kinny says he would come to Oregon, if he had no wife. Please tell him he is in a much better situation for coming to Oregon as a settler than if he had none, for nothing makes bachelors feel so much like getting a wife as to come here and find none to be had. Many are often disposed to degrade themselves enough to take a native.

I see Congress is talking about starting a mail across the mountains. When that is accomplished, I shall hope to hear from home friends oftener and more regular. Mother thinks if she should come here she would be afraid of the Indians. It might be, yet I think she would soon get over it. They never were more quiet and peaceable than now, and

appear to be getting more so. We feel that your going to Virginia will not be in the way of your coming, for we think you will be more likely to come here, for having come thus far. I hope you will write us and tell us all about it. As I know not where to direct this letter, I shall send it to father to have him forward it. I have written this in great haste, for the Indian post is waiting to take this, with many other letters, to Walla Walla, where the boats will leave to-morrow morning.

My health is quite good for me. All of the family are well; indeed, we have no sickness at all in the family scarcely, although the orphan family, before they came here, were quite subject to sickness.

Please give our united love to all our dear friends, and believe me

Affectionately your sister,

Narcissa Whitman.

Hon. Stephen Prentiss,

Cuba, Alleghany Co.,

New York.

\*\*\* End of the original document from September 11, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: October 19, 1846 \*\*\*

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

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

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 198 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1846.

*Dear Sister:* – I have been trying to write you some time, but find it difficult on account of bustle and necessary care, and even now it is not much better. By Mr. Littlejohn we wrote you and Brother Waller, inviting you to send your children to school; as you said nothing about it in your last, we think perhaps you did not receive the letter. Be that as it may, we would be glad to have you send your child if you think she is not too young, and particularly Brother and Sister Waller, as they have expressed a wish to Brother Spalding when he was there. We have an excellent school, taught by Mr. Geiger, and when he leaves, Mr. Rogers will continue. We have been looking for Brother Waller to bring his children for some time, and hope he will yet do it.

I have much to say to you and would be glad to write much longer, but you must excuse me for the present as I have been washing today and am now coloring madder. I send this by some young men of the immigrants who are to leave today, and are the last, among whom there is one from Massachusetts; you will find him intelligent and learn, perhaps, news about your home. He is a member of the Congregational church and returns next spring for his father's family.

Affectionately yours,

N. W.

Please excuse so short a letter; I hope to do better soon. Because it is so difficult for husband and self to write, I persuaded Mr. R. to write to your husband. Adieu.

Mrs. L. L. Brewer,

Wascopum.

Favour of Mr. Imbree.

\*\*\* End of the original document from October 19, 1846 \*\*\*

\*\*\* Date: November 3, 1846 \*\*\*

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

\*\*\* Recipient: Mrs. Clarissa Prentiss \*\*\*

\*\*\* Source for this document: Transactions – 21st reunion, 1893, p. 88 \*\*\*

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

Waiilatpu, Oregon Territory,

Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1846.

*Mrs. Clarissa Prentiss, Honored and Beloved Mother:* – It is with indescribable pleasure I received and perused those excellent lines, penned by that hand that has been so much of my life devoted to my comfort, and dictated by that heart that has so often beat with emotion for my good, too deep for utterance. It really seemed as if the very fountains of my heart were broken up and my whole soul was filled with emotions indescribable. O, my mother, my dear mother and father! How I love to dwell upon these blessed sounds. Do I love these dear ones less, as I grow in years and separation widens? Surely not. Yea, my heart clings to them with an undying grasp; and I bless God that we have the assurance that this union is not to end in this life, but will exist, yea and increase, too, through an unending eternity.

It was but a few mornings ago that I read mother's letter to the children, and husband was sitting by. Afterwards I handed it to him, and looking at it, he said (the tears filling his eyes), "Mother writes well for one that writes so seldom;" said he "she writes better than any of her daughters." And so I think, too. I hope mother will be

encouraged, when she finds her letters so acceptable and doing so much good, to write oftener, at least once a year, if not twice.

I have not yet received father's promised letter; it may be it failed to be in time for the opportunity of a transport across the mountains. Mother's, dated March 26th, 1846, was sent from Boston to Westport and reached me in about five months after it was mailed. This brings me very near home. Indeed, it is the first I have received since those sent by husband. It would be well to send everything direct to Westport, to the care of Boone & Hamilton, and in the summer and fall to Boston, and they will be most sure to reach us. There is a prospect of a monthly mail to be established soon from St. Louis to Oregon – so we judge from movements in Congress; when that is accomplished a new era will commence in our western world and a happy one, too, to us, if our friends will write us often.

Since writing the above we have been assembled for our Tuesday evening concert, established more than seven years ago by the two Missions, to pray for the cause of Christ in Oregon. We have evidence to believe that this concert of prayer has been greatly blessed to us, and this infant country. We feel that God has heard prayer, for many precious souls give evidence of having passed from death to life, some among the Indians and many more among our own countrymen. The standard of piety and morals in the Willamette is good for so new a country. Many pious people and professing Christians have found their way here, and many ministers of different denominations; yet there is a want of able ones. Mother asks what sort of people come to this country. There are very many intelligent and excellent people, and also many others who are lawless and ignorant. It would be well for the Home Missionary Society, in her

benevolence, to look this way, for this country is destined to exert an influence that will be felt the world over. The Papists are at work with all their might to get the control of the country, and have been ever since we have been here, nearly. We hope they will not succeed. Protestants need to be up and doing in order to save this the only spot of the whole western coast of North America from their iron grasp. God grant we may. For this purpose we need more active Christians, teachers, and ministers to come to this country from the East, and my dear father will, I hope, use all his powers in persuading such to come. I cannot bear the thought that my brothers and their families should go to Virginia to settle. Why will they not come here? It is both warm and healthy. Here they would be exerting an influence that would be felt for good, and here they would make a comfortable living without so much hard labor. I have written to Brother H. urging him to come here. We want him to help us very much. I hope he will get the letter. Brothers H. and C. I think would like the country, if once here. His being a married man is no objection, but rather a good reason why he should come, for with his family here, he would be worth something to the country. O, how I have desired, and still desire, to have Jane and Edward come as teachers. The Lord grant that they may, and that soon, too. I could wish that the Prattsburg colony might be turned this way, instead of going to Virginia. They are much needed here, and in the end would be much better satisfied, we have no doubt. I would ask father to come, but mother says she would be afraid of the Indians. I have a widow lady in my family who came over this fall that is fifty-seven years old. She is an excellent woman, so kind and motherly. She makes me think of my own dear mother every day, and what it would be to have her here.

Mother wishes me to write about my children. I wrote last spring very fully about them all, and if I had room I might again say much more.

We have a good school taught by Mr. Geiger, son of Deacon Geiger, formerly of Angelica. He is an excellent young man and superior teacher – children all happy and learning fast. Brother Spalding's two eldest board here and go to school, and we are expecting three from Brother Walker's. We set the table for more than twenty every day three times, and it is a pleasing sight. Mr. G. serves the children. Mr. Rogers, the young man that taught last winter, is still with us studying for the ministry. He is a good young man and his Christian society affords me much comfort. He is an excellent singer and has taught the children to sing admirably. When they came here not one of them could make even a noise towards singing; now they constitute quite a heavy choir. None of them could read except the three eldest very poorly; now they are quite good scholars and are making good progress.

Six families of immigrants winter with us, and some young men. Three of them are at the saw-mill twenty miles from here. The children of the three families that remain here go to school; when they arrived here, several were quite sick; one woman remains so still, having been afflicted with an inflammation of the lungs.

Last Saturday, Marcus was called to attend a woman at the mill at the birth of a son. We find it quite agreeable to have neighbors to winter with us, but this may be the last, as a good southern route is now open into the head waters of the Willamette, and all will wish, probably, to go that way, as it will be much nearer and better.

I must tell mother of a luxury we enjoy very much, and one that has a tendency to make us very cheerful and happy. For me it has done much toward restoring my health to

be so much better than it has been for several years. It is daily cold bathing. Our students and teachers go out every morning, winter and summer and jump into the river. Husband does it frequently, but not so regular. on account of his business. The children all delight in it. Both would be glad to, all winter, if we had conveniences. In the summer I go with them to the river, and now when it is warm enough, and when it is cold we take the tub in the house. I know father would like to live here on that account, and he would enjoy it so much, too, as some of our folks do. The climate is so mild and exhilarating. Husband is doing all he can to induce friends to come. He has written to Father Hotchkiss inviting him, and requested him to copy and send the letter to father, and many others.

I see I must soon stop for the want of room. The children all send their love to their grandparents, and aunts and uncles; some of them will be able to write soon to some of you.

I have spoken of many things and subjects, but one still remains about which I should like to write, and that is the other half of self. I wish mother was more acquainted with him; he is all benevolence, has amazing energy of thought and action, nothing is too hard or impossible for him to do, that can be done. I often think he cannot last always; indeed, his strength is not what it used to be, although his health is quite good.

We try to do good to our neighbors that winter with us. I hold a prayer meeting with the females on Wednesday, which is precious to us. Thursday evening is the children's meeting, which I superintend, also. Saturday evening, Mr. Rogers has a Bible class, in which the children bring forth the text of Scripture they have selected on a given subject. Last week it was "Prayer"; the present week it is the "Sabbath." Besides this,

the children commit a verse a day which is got in the morning as their first lesson to be recited in Sabbath school.

By this mother will see that both my hands and heart are usefully employed, not so much for the Indians directly, as my own family. When my health failed, I was obliged to withhold my efforts for the natives, but the Lord has since filled my hands with other labors, and I have no reason to complain; when I am not overburdened with work and care, I am happy and cheerful, but as I many times am straitened with more than I can do and no one to assist but my children, I become fretful and impatient. I am most happily provided for now. I have a good girl in the kitchen, and the old lady, which relieves me a great deal; and Mr. Geiger is such a good governor and teacher, that the children give me little, if any, trouble as to that part. Of course I take the place of moderator out of school. We pay the girl one dollar and a half a week; the widow is a boarder, but does a great deal in keeping things straight in the kitchen; do not charge her for her board.

If this goes from the Islands to Panama and across the Isthmus, mother will receive it in a short time; if otherwise, it may be some time before it will reach home, if it ever does. I would be glad to speak of the Indians, but one sheet is too small to contain all. I would be glad to say to my dear parents, the Indians are kind and quiet and very much attached to us, none the less so for having so many children about us. Many that were on the stage when we came here, are dead and new ones have taken their places. And as husband has just written to our Board, he says he never has felt more contented and that he was usefully employed than for the last year and the present. May the Lord

incline the hearts of my dear parents and friends to pray especially for us this winter that  
He would send His Spirit urging us that new souls may be born into His kingdom.

We send much love to all our relatives and friends.

Ever your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

Narcissa.

Mrs. Clarissa Prentiss,

Cuba, Allegheny Co.,

New York, U. S. A.

\*\*\* End of the original document from November 3, 1846 \*\*\*