

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman Papers, 1834-1897

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Whitman, Marcus, 1802-1847
Title	Marcus and Narcissa Whitman Papers
Dates	1834-1897 (inclusive) 1834 1897 1834-1847 (bulk) 1834 1847
Quantity	.5 cu. ft. (1 document case)
Collection Number	Mss 1203
Summary	Papers relating to a pioneer Presbyterian missionary and physician in the Pacific Northwest. Includes correspondence of Marcus Whitman (1834-1847) and his wife Narcissa Prentiss Whitman (1836-1847) concerning operation of the mission, overland journey, emigrant conditions, family matters, Catholic missionaries, as well as attitudes of Indians toward medical practice and white emigrants; and newspaper accounts, documents, and recollections related to the Whitman Massacre and subsequent trial. Correspondents include fellow missionaries Henry H. Spalding and David Greene, and members of Narcissa Whitman's family. Contains both copies and original materials.
Repository	Oregon Historical Society Research Library 1200 SW Park Avenue Portland, OR 97205 Telephone: 503-306-5240 Fax: 503-219-2040 libreference@ohs.org
Access Restrictions	The collection is open to the public.
Languages	English
Sponsor	Funding for encoding this finding aid was provided through a grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Historical Note

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman were a pioneer Presbyterian missionaries in the Oregon country. Marcus Whitman was born in Rushville, New York on Sept. 4, 1802. He received his schooling in Plainfield, Massachusetts and studied medicine at Rushville. In 1835 he journeyed with Dr. Samuel Parker beyond the Rocky Mountains to determine the feasibility of a mission to the Indians. He returned with an optimistic report and was commissioned by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to establish such a mission. He married Narcissa Prentiss in February of 1836, and later that year they journeyed overland to the Oregon country with the Spaldings and William H. Gray. The Whitmans established a mission in the Cayuse country at Waiilatpu, near present-day Walla

Walla, Washington, where Marcus set up a rigorous program of agricultural pursuits combined with ministering both the gospel and medicine to the Indians. Conflicts arose between the American Board and Whitman, and in response he returned overland to the East in the winter of 1842-1843. After his return to Waiilatpu, difficulties developed with the surrounding tribes. In November of 1847 an outbreak of measles at the mission precipitated serious animosities between the missionaries and members of the Cayuse tribe. On November 29, 1847, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and others were killed by a group of tribal members. A number of women and children were held hostage but later freed by Peter Skene Ogden of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Narcissa Prentiss Whitman was born in Prattsburg, New York on March 14, 1808. In 1828 she attended Emma Willard's Female Seminary in Troy, New York, and in 1831 she was a student at Franklin Institute, where she met Dr. Marcus Whitman. After their marriage, in February 1836, she accompanied him to Oregon. The couple had one daughter who, at the age of two, drowned in a creek in front of the mission.

Content Description

The papers form an artificial collection assembled by the Oregon Historical Society from a variety of sources. Materials include: typescript copies of correspondence of Marcus Whitman (1834-1847) and Narcissa Prentiss Whitman (1836-1847) concerning operation of mission, overland journey, emigrant conditions, family matters, and Catholic missionaries, as well as attitudes of Indians toward medical practice and white emigrants; newspaper accounts, documents, and recollections related to the Whitman Massacre and subsequent trial. Correspondents include fellow missionary David Greene and members of Narcissa Whitman's family.

Subjects of the letters include: initial desire to undertake missionary work; selection of the party to accompany Dr. Whitman and H. H. Spalding on their journey west; description of overland trip in 1836; losses sustained by mission during skirmish with Sioux Indians; relations with the Office of Indian Affairs; recruitment of additional missionaries; activities at Waiilatpu station; improved health of the Cayuse Indians; increasing emigrant travel to Oregon; advice on equipment for journey West; and interaction with Hudson's Bay Company.

Letters (1835-1847) written by Narcissa Prentiss Whitman, most of which are original holographs, describe missionary duties and personal matters. Topics include: the overland journey from New York to Fort Vancouver in 1836; the birth of the Whitman's daughter; daily activities at Waiilatpu mission; the difficulty of communicating with the Indians; the necessity of missionary reinforcements; drowning of the Whitman's daughter; Indian education; medical duties of Dr. Whitman; events related to "maternal association" formed by the missionary wives; Catholic missionaries; the orphaned Sager children; and the desire to have the Prentiss family migrate to Oregon.

Also includes microfilm copy of handscript reminiscences and deposition (with typed transcriptions) of Mary M. Saunders describing events during the Whitman Massacre; plus handscript recollections of Mary Saunders' daughter, Helen Saunders, concerning the murders at the Whitman mission in 1847.

Use of the Collection

Alternative Forms Available

Letters of Narcissa Prentiss Whitman are published in: *The letters of Narcissa Whitman* (Fairfield, Wash. : Ye Galleon Press, 1986).

Letters of Marcus Whitman, 1836 June 4-1846 Nov. 5; and letters of Narcissa Whitman, 1836 Mar. 15-1847 Oct. 12, available on microfilm at the Oregon Historical Society Research Library, Mss Microfilm 1203.

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Preferred Citation

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman Papers, Mss 1203, Oregon Historical Society Research Library

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The collection is arranged in the following series:

Series A: Marcus Whitman Materials, 1834-1897

Series B: Narcissa Whitman Letters, 1836-1850

Series C: Whitman Massacre Materials, 1848-1894

Acquisition Information

The collection was assembled by the Oregon Historical Society from a variety of sources.

Bibliography

Dictionary of Oregon History 2nd ed. edited by Howard McKinley Corning, Binford & Mort Publishing (Portland, Or), 1989. p. 264

Related Materials

Additional materials relating to Protestant missions in the Pacific Northwest can be found in Mss 1200 through Mss 1225, Oregon Historical Society.

Location of Originals

Originals of some materials located at Yale University Library; and in the records of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series A: Marcus Whitman Materials, 1834-1897

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Folder		
1	<p>Correspondence with American Board Typescript transcriptions of originals held in the records of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Includes recommendation for Dr. Whitman from James H. Hotchkin, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Wheeler, N.Y.; and co-signed by elders of the church, Nov. 27, 1834 (typescript copy, 2 p.). Also includes the following letters from Marcus Whitman (all letters from Marcus Whitman unless otherwise specified):</p> <p>To H. P. Strong from B. B. Wisner (2) May 1, 1834; June 14, 1834 Requesting further information on Whitman's condition of health. Boston. 3 pp.</p> <p>To B. B. Wisner June 3, June 27, Dec. 2, 1834 Info on his parentage, education, Subject[s]; desire to become a missionary. Regard to his application as missionary with A. B. C. F. M. (in Whitman's correspondence with Board 1834.</p> <p>To Whitman from B. B. Wisner, ABCFM June 14, 1834; July 17, 1834. Condition of Whitman's health. Offer to send Whitman to Marquesas Islands as physician. Boston. 5 pp.</p> <p>To B. B. Wisner from Henry P. Strong Dec. 1, 1834; 5 August 12, 1834 (2) Recommendation for Dr. Whitman. Whitman an excellent physician and well respected. Subscription to Herald. Rushville. 2 pp.</p> <p>To Whitman from David Greene Jan. 7, Feb. 9, Feb. 18, Dec. 8, Dec. 30, 1835. (5) To accompany Parker to the Rockies. Requesting full report—should missionaries be sent out. Candidates that wish to go West. Will regret bringing Indian boys East. Death of Wisner. Suggests visit to Dunbar and Allis.</p> <p>Narcissa Prentiss to American Board of Commissioners February 23, 1835</p>	1834-1836; 1844-1847

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Info on her birth, education and fitness for missionary work. (in Marcus Whitman correspondence with American Board, 1835.) Amity. 4 pp. [includes recommendations.]	
	To Narcissa Prentiss from David Greene Concerning Narcissa's desire to become missionary. Boston. 1 p.	March 19, 1835
	To David Greene Regarding plans for going to Oregon. Libery. (1 p., typescript copy from ABCFM Vol. 71, letter 185)	May 13, 1835
	To Whitman from David Greene (7) Approval to return to Flathead Indians and set up mission. Use caution in choosing associates. Osage tribe. Spalding as associate. Information desired from Whitman during journey. Rules to follow. Gray-appointed.	Jan. 6, Jan. 15, Feb. 5th Feb. 27, March 4, Mar. 9, March 15, 1836
	To David Greene Difficulty in finding associates. Date expected to leave. Rushville. 2 pp.	January 29, 1836
	To Lewis Cass, Sec. of War, from David Greene Appointment of Whitman and Spalding. Requests approval of War Department. Boston. 1 p.	February 25, 1836
	To David Greene Settlement of country inevitable. Plans so missionaries may take up claims. Suggestions for equipment. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 177)	May 18, 1844
	To David Greene Immigration of 1843. Examines candidates for church. Gray's policy with Methodist mission. Asks for Harvey Clark. Disposition of Mr. Griffin. Mrs. Spalding in poor health. Mrs. Whitman's health improved. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 178)	July 22, 1844
	To David Greene Friction between Spalding and Board. Immigration of 1844. A. Hinman hired to teach school. Flour mill. Methodist mission policy changed. Asks for threshing mill. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 179)	October 25, 1844
	To David Greene Arrival of emigration 1844. Mentions orphan (Sager) children kept at mission. Building saw and flour mills. Requests plows be sent. Murder of Elijah Hedding in Calif. Dangerous attitude of Indians toward medical practice. Jesuits to establish station. Improved state of Indians. Spalding's	April 8, 1845

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	translation of Matthew. Birth of daughter to Spaldings. Ellis, chief of Nez Perce. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 180)	
	To David Greene, Sec. of ABCFMMay 20, 1845 State of the missions. Presence of Catholics. Mr. Hinman teaching school. (ABCFM Letter No. 181).	
	To David GreeneJune 30, 1845 Harvey Clark. Visits Willamette. Organic law. Letter by White's party exploring route across Cascades. Vancouver. (typescript, letter 182)	
	To David GreeneOctober 26, 1845 Ogden succeeds Dr. McLoughlin at Vancouver. McKinlay books arrive. Immigration. Warns against Dr. White's attempts to establish a manual labor school among the Nez Perces. Success of mission school. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 183)	
	To David GreeneDecember 17, 1835; Feb. 2, 1835 Sends journal for trip of 1835. Plans for journey of 1836, Rushville (typescript). Request for further information concerning trip to Rockies. (In ABCFM Whitman correspondence)	
	To David GreeneNovember 1, 1845 Encloses a letter with request that it be sent to the addressee. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 184)	
	To David GreeneApril 13, 1846 Attempt to teach English to Indians a failure. School at Kamiah. Wants to start boarding school. Death of Joseph Findlay. Dr. White induces immigrants to buy flour at Dalles. Saw mill operating. Asks for mechanic. Wants carding machine. Joel Palmer buys half of water power north of Willamette Falls. Cost of goods at HBC higher on account of dislike of Methodist mission. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 185)	
	To David GreeneMay 15, 1846 Asks for plows. Andrew Rodgers to study for the ministry. List of books desired. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 186)	
	To David GreeneSeptember 8, 1846 Emigrants. Mr. Geiger to teach school. Indian school would fail. Catholic influence. Methodist mission at Dalles. (ABCFM Ltr. no. 187)	
	To David Greene New southern road. Agricultural pursuits of Indians. Craig's efforts to record land claim. Alderman's conflict with Douglas	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>at Vancouver. Temporal and spiritual occupation. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 188)</p> <p>To David Greene April 1, 1847 Whitman's trail of 1843. Severity of winter. Defense of aiding immigrants. Sawmill in operation. (ABCFM Ltr. No. 189)</p> <p>To David Greene May 19, 1847 Combating Catholics. Nephew working to qualify as interpreter. Acquiring Dalles mission. (ABCFM Ltr. 190)</p> <p>To David Greene August 3, 1847 Supplies received. Mission press to be used to publish information on education, temperance and religion. Importance of Dalles station. Religion of HBC employees. (ABCFM Ltr. 191)</p> <p>To David Greene September 13, 1847 Purchase of Methodist station at Wascopam. Whitman's work with Indians Fight between Indians and immigrants at Dalles. Waskopam. (typescript, letter 192)</p> <p>To David Greene October 18, 1847 Ltr. for Thomas Glenday. New road from Umatilla to Dalles. Establishment of Catholic missions. Failure of plan to settle families among Indians. Claims credit for success of 1843 immigration and its effect on Oregon question. Plea for ministers and settlers. Suggests building school at Dalles. Waiilatpu. (typescript, letter 193)</p>	
2	<p>Letters from Whitman</p> <p>To Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Prentiss (1) June 4, 1836 On Platte River. News of journey to Oregon to that date. (original)</p> <p>To T. H. Crawford, Commissioner of Indian Affairs April 8, 1843 Transmittal letter for papers concerning loss of horses and cows at the mission. Typescript copy, 1 p.</p> <p>To Edward Prentiss May 27, 1843 Refers to Edward's coming to Oregon. Number of emigrants to start. Fremont goes with them. DeSmet goes to Europe to bring missionaries. Two priests and three lay helpers with emigration. Emigrants a good acquisition. Oregon a good country. Instructions as to sending a letter. Shawnee Mission. (3 pp., original)</p> <p>To J. Galusha Prentiss May 28, 1843</p>	1836-1846

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Mentions visit to Quincy to see Jane and Edward Prentiss. Preparing to start with emigration. Fremont camped nearby. No. of emigrants 200 men besides women and children. Plan was to obtain funds for schools and have good people come to teach. Oregon will be occupied by American citizens. Wagons will go all the way this year. Refers to DeSmet's Indian sketches. Shawnee Mission. (4 pp., original)</p> <p>To U. S. Secretary of War, Hon. Jas. A. Porter 1843 Encloses synopsis of a bill, with his views in reference to importance of the Oregon Territory. Typescript Copy, 18 pp. [ltr. attached from Samuel J. Parker requesting copy of above.]</p> <p>To Edward and Jane Prentiss (1) May 15, 1846 Concerns possible emigration of Edward and Jane to Oregon. 4 pp. (original)</p> <p>To Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Prentiss May 16, 1844 Cannot leave station to return to States. Must speed up white settlement of Oregon. Photostat, 4 pp.</p> <p>To L. P. Judson November 5, 1846 Admonition against Judson's beliefs. Instructions about equipment for journey to Ore. Refers to leading immigration of 1843 and the necessity of settling the country with Americans. Sheep imported in 1838 have increased 125 percent. Waialatpu. (7 pp.)</p>	
3	<p>Letters to Whitman</p> <p>To Marcus Whitman from David Greene (1) January 22, 1836 Concerns question of who will accompany Whitman to Oregon. Typescript, 1 p.</p> <p>To M. Whitman, H. H. Spalding, W. H. Gray from E. Walker and C. Eells August 10, 1842 Regarding the changing of stations between Spalding and Whitman. Typescript copy, 1 p.</p> <p>To Marcus Whitman from T. H. Crawford, Office of Indian Affairs (1) April 21, 1843 Concerns claim for losses by mission in skirmish with Sioux Indians in 1837. Typescript, 1 p.</p>	1836-1843
4	Miscellaneous Material	1835-1897

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Permission from U.S. War Department to cross Indian country, January 20, 1836, signed by Lewis Cass (typescript copy, 1 p.)</p> <p>Certificate acknowledging Marcus Whitman as an assistant missionary to the Indian tribes west of the State of Missouri, February 17, 1835 (photographic copy).</p> <p>Letter from Rev. G. Gillespie, Marshfield, Or., pledging \$1 for Whitman monument, Nov. 22, 1897 (original)</p> <p>Letter from A. Hinman [?] regarding the Whitman monument, undated.</p>	

Series B: Narcissa Whitman Letters, 1836-1850

Mostly original holograph letters from Narcissa Whitman to her family describing her experiences at the mission.

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Folder		
5	<p>Letters from Narcissa</p> <p>To Mrs. Stephen Prentiss March 15, 1836 Describes journey to St. Louis. Written aboard steamer Siam. Original (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Jane Prentiss March 31, 1836 Visit to cathedral at St. Louis. Journey from St. Louis. Makes tent. outfit and traveling party. On SS Chariton. Original (2 pp.)</p> <p>To Edward and Harriet Prentiss June 3, 1836 Describes method of traveling. Joined by fur company and Capt. Stewart's pleasure party. Platte River, just above Forks. Original (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. Stephen Prentiss, mother Dec. 5, 1836 (diary) Detailed account of life since leaving Vancouver. Journey Up river to Walla Walla, Dec. 3-26; House and furniture birth of daughter. Mr. Gray to Flathead country to learn language. Owhyees best laborers. Services for Indians, Sickness among Indians. Danger to Dr. Whitman. Only girls have head flattened. Walla Walla. 16 pp. Not signed.</p>	1836-1837
6	<p>Letters from Narcissa</p> <p>To Parents, Stephen and Clarissa Prentiss March 14, 1838</p>	1838

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Incomplete. John McLoughlin. Sinking of long boat. Death of Capt. Home. Visit to Spaldings. News of daughter, Alice. 8 pp.</p> <p>To Stephen Prentiss (father) April 11, 1838 Damage to house by high water. Plan new house. Letter sent with Jason Lee on way to States with Mr. Ewing. Visit from Mrs. Pambrum and Madame Dorion Chief Umtippe's conversion. Waiilatpu. Portion of letter, 3 pp.</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins July 4, 1838 Entertains Mr. & Mrs. McDonald. Difficulty of communicating with Indians. Nothing done separately for Indian women. Visits Pambruns at Walla Walla. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Jane Prentiss (1) September 18, 1838 Family matters, mention of several of the names involved in missionary program. Photostat, 4 pp.</p> <p>To Mrs. Mary Ann Judson (Prentiss) September 25, 1838 3 years to write and receive answer via Sandwich Islands. Time shorter by railroad over Isthmus of Darien. Death of Mrs. Lee. Drowning of White baby. Dr. Whitman and Spalding rebuilding Spalding house. Death of Sarah Hull. Waiilatpu. Original (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Mr. Stephen Prentiss (father) September 28, 1838 Asking Board for farmer. Mrs. Lee Dies and White baby. Maternal Association. Wants Letters. Waiilatpu. 4 pp.</p> <p>To Mrs. Jerusha Parker October 3, 1838 Charles Campo. Organizes church Joseph Mahi and Wife Sandwich Island. Religious revival. Illness of John Indian boy who crossed plains with them. Gray-Walker-Eells reinforcement. Waiilatpu. 4 pp.</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins November 6, 1838 Removal of Mrs. Perkins to Willamette. Six missionaries at Whitmans for Winter. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p>	
7	<p>Letters from Narcissa</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins February 18, 1839 Revival meeting at Willamette. Visit with husband and baby to Indians. Waiilatpu. Original (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins March 23, 1839 Visits Mrs. Pambrun, Daughter of McKay. Subject[s]: with her. Mentions own daughter. To visit Indians to learn</p>	1839-1840

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Language. Mr. & Mrs. Smith to start translating scriptures. Mrs. Gray has child. Waiilatpu. (4 pp)	
	To Jane Prentiss Birth of son to Mrs. Walker and to Mrs. Gray. Trip to Tukanon and service with Indians. Arrival of Mr. & Mrs. Hall. Disappointed with new reinforcement. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)	May 17, 1839
	To Mrs. Perkins J. Drowning of daughter. Waiilatpu. Original (4 pp.)	June 25, 1839
	To Mr. and Mrs. Perkins Invites her to visit. Mentions baby's death. Coming meeting of the Maternal Association. Waiilatpu [sic]. Original, 2 pp.	July 26, 1839
	To Mr. Stephen Prentiss Death of daughter. Waiilatpu. 4 pp.	September 30, 1839
	To Mrs. Prentiss Drowning of daughter. To Smith's mission about alphabet. Illness of Mrs. Eells. Arrival of Geiger, Johnson, Griffin, Munger Mr. and Mrs. Hall to spend winter at Waiilatpu. Printed book for use in the School begun with 120 on list. Conflict with Catholic priests. Waiilatpu. Original, (8 pp.)	October 9, 1839
	To Mrs. Elvira Perkins Discouragement as missionary. Few Indians for winter. School of 20. Mrs. Spalding has son. Waiilatpu. Original (2 pp.)	January 1, 1840
	To Stephen Prentiss Two years since letters from family. Death of daughter. Duties as teacher curtailed by poor health. Dejection during husband's absences. How Indians react to mission teaching. Original (4 pp.) Incomplete.	April 30, 1840
	To Mr. Stephen Prentiss Plan of new mission house, drawn by Asahel Munger. Anecdote on Indians. Expecting Mr. Lee's ship with emigrants. Medical duties of Dr. Whitman. Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Munger soon to be confined. Departure of Mr. and Mrs. Hall.	May 2, 1840
	To Mrs. Stephen Prentiss Asks for more letters. Receives adequate supplies. Birth of daughters to Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Death of Joseph the Hawaiian. Her ill health. Arrival of independent missionaries and problem of caring for them.	October 9, 1840
	To Stephen Prentiss	October 10, 1840

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Writes twice a year. Last reinforcement of mission personnel not very pious but object to women praying in public. Independent missionaries not encouraged. Mr. Whitman caused trouble because of dislike for Mrs. Whitman. Animosity of Indians. (Opening pages of letter missing.)</p> <p>To Harriet Prentiss October 20, 1840 Glad to hear Jane and Edward to become missionaries. 4 pp.</p>	
8	<p>Letters from Narcissa</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins March 2, 1841 Insanity of Mr. Munger. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Edward Prentiss and Jane May 30, 1841 Account of death of P. C. Pambrum Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Jane Prentiss October 1, 1841 Letters sent by Mr. Munger returned. Arrival of emigrants and Jesuits led by Fitzpatrick. Death of Pambrum. Arrangement of marriage between Cornelius Rogers and Miss Pambrun Rogers to Willamette. Difficulty with Indians. General meeting. Mr. Spalding does not attend. Hints of trouble at mission. More Missionaries to come next year. Death of Mr. Munger. Letter to be carried by Edward Rogers. Waiilatpu. (8 pp)</p> <p>To Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Prentiss October 6, 1841 No regret at coming to Oregon. Mr. and Mrs. Smith leave mission. Cornelius Roger goes to Willamette. Twenty-five emigrants to settle in the Willamette area. New factor at Walla Walla. The fort burned. Mr. Munger deranged. Attitude of Indians. DeSmet establishing Catholic Missions. Refers to Catholic leader at Ft. Vancouver. Prayer Meeting and Bible classes and maternal meeting. Women not allowed to pray. Mary Ann Bridger and Helen Meek in her care. Waiilatpu. (8 pp.)</p> <p>To Stephen Prentiss November 18, 1841 Copies letter from husband to David Greene on serious trouble with Indians. Indians struck him repeatedly and threatened uprising. Copy of letter from A. McKinlay to Whitman in regard to trouble. Waiilatpu. (8 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. L. L. Brewer July 22, 1842 Refers to memoirs of Mrs. Smith. Birth of daughter to Mrs. Brewer. Waiilatpu. (2 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. Jerusha Parker July 25, 1842</p>	1841-1842

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Trouble with Indians previous fall. Influence of Catholicism. Party of military and scientific men expected. Successful farming of Kayuses. Nez Perce more of laboring people than Kayuses. Mrs. Spalding teaches girls to spin, knit and sew. Deaths of John McLoughlin, Jr. and Mrs. Lee. Five men of Ogden's brigade drowned near Okanagan. Mrs. McKinlay interesting woman First part of letter missing. Waiilatpu. (4 pp)</p> <p>To Mr. and Mrs. Allen August 23, 1842 Solicits their interest in mission. Fears influence of Catholics. Indians cultivating soil. Two books printed in Indian language. Sends hymn transcribed In Nez Perce sung to tune of "Rock of Ages." Postscript added October 2 that husband departing for States Waiilatpu. 4 pp.</p> <p>To Jane and Edward Prentiss September 29, 1842 Dr. Whitman to leave for States. He wants to reach Boston early as possible. Interest of mission cause of trip. Wants Jane to come to Oregon. Rogers and Little John to winter at mission. Gray goes to Willamette to teach school. Dr. Whitman travels with Mr. Lovejoy. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Stephen Prentiss, father September 30, 1842 Departure of husband. Lovejoy to be with him to Boston, perhaps to Washington. Mr. Gray to Willamette for school, dismissed from mission. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Marcus Whitman October 4, 1842-Oct. 27, 1842 Effort of Indian to enter her room. Goes to Ft. Walla Walla. Hears Mr. Ermatinger has become a Catholic. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p>	
9	<p>Letters from Narcissa</p> <p>To Stephen Prentiss February 7, 1843 Happenings since husband left for states. Burning of mill. Visit To Methodist mission at Dalles. Dr. White's visit and councils with Indians. Death of Cornelius Rogers. Waskopum. (8 pp.)</p> <p>To Harriet Jackson March 11, 1843 Maternal Association. Comments on sister's marriage. Religious meditations. Waskopum. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Jonas Prentiss, brother March 31, 1843 Brother's domestic troubles. Report Indians preparing for war after conference with White. White has no knowledge of Indian character. Cayuses more troublesome than other tribes. Waskopum. (4 pp.)</p>	1843-1844

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>To Mr. and Mrs. Perkins June 8, 1843 Grievance at Methodist mission. In danger of drowning at portage. Under care of Dr. Barclay. Vancouver. (2 pp.)</p> <p>To Jane Prentiss July 11, 1843 Long time since letters. At Vancouver under care of Dr. Barclay and Dr. Tolmie. Expect to visit Willamette missions. Vancouver. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Prentiss (1) August 11, 1843 Mention of Babcock, Smith, Gray, D. Lee, Perkins, McKinlay, Leslie, Abernethy, Waller. (Photostat copy), 4 pp.</p> <p>To Mrs. L. L. Brewer January 30, 1844 Her illness and present state of health. Six children in mission family. Two English girls. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. Elvira Perkins January 31, 1844 Observe day of fasting. Returns from Waskopum and house full of people. Mrs. Littlejohn opens school for white children. Expects always to be invalid. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Stephen Prentiss, father April 12, 1844 State of health. Visit to Methodist mission in 1843. Thinks she may soon them of Spaldings. Better feelings toward them. Waiilatpu. (8 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. L. L. Brewer April 24, 1844 Refers to visit of Mrs. Brewer Emigration expected to disturb quiet of mission. Waiilatpu. (2 pp.)</p> <p>To Clarissa Kinny May 20, 1844 Cares of missionary. Birth of son to Mrs. McKinlay. Emigrants roused arrival of many additional immigrants. Suggests family come to Oregon. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. L. L. Brewer August 5, 1844 Expecting to be disturbed by emigrants. Refers to Mr. and Mrs. Gary. Waiilatpu. (2 pp.)</p> <p>To Mrs. Lydia C. Porter May 18, 1844 Visit to Methodist mission during husband's absence in State. Speaks of feeble health. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p> <p>To Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Prentiss, parents October 9, 1844 Arrival of immigrants. Mill finished Weighs 167 lbs. Country destined to be filled Start English school. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)</p>	
10	<p>Letters from Narcissa To Mrs. L. L. Brewer February 20, 1845</p>	1845-1846

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	Conversion of Mr. Hinman. Husband fitting out immigrants. Sends seed of corn and squash. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)	
	Mr. and Mrs. Prentiss April 8, 1845 Describes family of eleven. Trials with Indians from killing of Elijah and two Indians. Whitman accused of magical power. 4 pp.	
	To Mrs. L. L. Brewer August 9, 1845 Justifies discipline with Sager children. Receives the Mothers magazine. Waiilatpu. 4 pp.)	
	To Mrs. L. L. Brewer November 26, 1845 Mr. Rinearson engaged to teach. Disturbed state of mission. May have to leave in spring. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)	
	To Jane Prentiss April 2, 1846 Death of J. S. Findlay. 11 children in mission family including Sagers. Wrote in spring by Overton party. Waiilatpu. (5 pp.) One page written on last page of letter to Edward	
	To Edward Prentiss April 2, 1846 No letters received. Describes situation. Edward and Jane should come to Ore. Box received. No "louse trap" (fine comb) Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)	
	To Mrs. Prentiss, mother April 9, 1846 Desires to see parents again. Death of J. S. Findlay. Waiilaptpu. (4 pp.)	
	To Stephen Prentiss April 10, 1846 Relating some of the cares of the mission. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)	
	To Harriet Jackson April 13, 1846 Care of the Sager baby and other children at the mission. Waiilaptpu. (4 pp.)	
	To Mrs. Brewer July 17, 1846 Invites Mrs. Brewer to visit. Peaceful state of Indians. Favorable prospects for remaining. Children of household. Waiilaptpu. (2 pp.)	
	To Harvery and Livonia Prentiss September 11, 1846 Urges coming to Oregon. Good English school and soon Academy or college. 5 to 900 wagons each year for the past three years to Oregon and California Proposed mail route across the mountains. Waiilatpu. (3 pp.)	
	To Mrs. L. L. Brewer October 19, 1846 Asking her to send children to their school. School taught by Mr. Geiger. Waiilaptpu. (1 pp.)	

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	To Mrs. Stephen Prentiss November 3, 1846 Letter received 5 months later. Prospect of monthly mail from St. Louis to Ore. Good piety in Willamette. Papists trying to get control. Urges brothers to come. Feeds twenty daily. Geiger teaches school, Rodgers singing. Six families of immigrants with them. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)	
11	Letters from Narcissa To Jane Prentiss October 12, 1847 Plans for Jane, Harvey, and Edward Prentiss to come to Oregon with Mr. Glenday. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.) To Mrs. Prentiss July 4, 1847 Letter from Jane by Mr. Thornton. Expecting Jane and Edward this year. Marcus Whitman's visit to Quinsy in 1843. Need new missionary to take charge of station at Dalles. Mr. Walker declines appointment. Mr. Hinman gets mission press for paper in Willamette. To Jane Prentiss April 15, 1847 Urges her to come to Oregon. Husband at Vancouver. Enjoys company of Mr. Rodgers. Mentions Mr. & Mrs. Thornton. Advises against southern route into Oregon. Waiilatpu. (4 pp.)	1847

Series C: Whitman Massacre Materials, 1848-1894

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
12	Massacre and Trial Documents dealing with the Whitman massacre and trial of the accused: signed pledge to pay Indians for capture of two Cayuse Indians (original); notes on "friendly and guilty" Indians (original); indictment and verdict in trial (photostatic copies); declaration made by five Cayuse Indians who were hanged for the crime of murdering the Whitmans, 1850 June 2-3 (photostatic copy).	1848-1850
13	Newspaper Accounts Accounts of the Whitman Massacre: by O. Wheeler in <i>The Oregonian</i> , July 21, 1894; <i>St. Louis Daily Union</i> , May 20, 1848; by Rev. J. Griffin, <i>The Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist</i> , Nov. 1847; J. Osborn's account; "History of the Waiilatpu" by H. Spalding, in <i>The Oregon American and</i>	1847-1894

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<i>Evangelical Unionist</i> , number of installments, 1848; Stricture of Peter H. Burnett on Spalding's "History of the Wailatpu." (all typescript copies)	
14	Massacre, Blanchet account Statement of Rev. A. M. Blanchet's interpreter concerning the Whitman massacre (2 typescript copies, 19 p.; handwritten copy, 25 p.)	undated
Microfilm Reel		
Mss 1203 Microfilm	Reminiscences and deposition of Mary M. Saunders relating to the Whitman Massacre; and reminiscences of her daughter Helen Saunders	1878-1915, undated

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Cayuse Indians--History
 Cayuse Indians--Missions
 Indians of North America--Missions--Northwest, Pacific
 Indians of North America--Northwest, Pacific--History
 Missionaries--Northwest, Pacific--Correspondence
 Overland journeys to the Pacific
 Whitman Massacre, 1847--Personal accounts

Personal Names :

Greene, David, fl. 1838-1847--Correspondence
 Saunders, E. M. (E. Mary)
 Saunders, Helen, 1834-1921
 Saunders, Mary, 1813-1883
 Spalding, Henry Harmon, 1803-1874--Correspondence
 Whitman, Marcus, 1802-1847--Correspondence
 (creator)
 Whitman, Narcissa Prentiss, 1808-1847.
 (creator)

Corporate Names :

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions--Archives
 Hudson's Bay Company

Geographical Names :

Oregon National Historic Trail
 West (U.S.)--Description and travel
 West (U.S.)--History--To 1848

Form or Genre Terms :

Letters
 Reminiscences

Finding aid prepared for encoding by Geoffrey B. Wexler

Marcus and Narcissa Whitman Papers, 1834-1897
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv05143>

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