

# NARCISSA WHITMAN LETTER JULY 1843

*by Crystal Calhoun*



Vancouver, July nth, 1843.

My Beloved Sister Jane:

Your letters of March' and April, '42, I received about three weeks since, and can assure you I was not a little rejoiced in hearing from you, they being the first I have received from you since March, '40, by Mrs. Little John. I have written you and Edward several times since — indeed, I always write you every opportunity, whether you get them or not. I heard of the death of dear sister Judson last September through Lawyer Divine, but no particulars until your letters came. About the same time one came from poor brother Judson, the only one I have received from him or Mary Ann since '39. My last from dear parents and Harriet was in September, '40; so you see I have not the means of knowing but little about you all, yet I trust that I am truly thankful for that little. It is a great cordial to me. I love you all with an undying love, and every fresh breeze I receive fans it into a burning flame. I feel not the least disposition to shed a tear on dear sister Judson's account, but rather to rejoice that she is so safely harbored in the bosom of her and our Savior's love; but for the sake of those who still live and whom she might be the means of leading to Christ, I could mourn and weep in bitterness of soul. I rejoice, too, that the sustaining grace of God was so manifest to her beloved bereaved husband, and our dear parents, as well as you all, under the inflictive dispensation. My first thought when I heard of her death was that I should be the next to go; but it may be otherwise, the Lord only knows. This I do know, His time will be the best time, and my chief concern is, and shall be, to be ready and have my work done and well done. But O, what a poor weak creature I am; how little I can do to glorify His great Name. What poor returns I make daily for His unbounded goodness to me. If I am saved I am sure it will not, it cannot, be because of any intrinsic worth in me, or an)' of my friends, but solely and alone for His sake who gave His own life a ransom to save a lost world.

Dear Jane, I have the privilege of once more addressing you from Vancouver where I am spending a little time very pleasantly, and where I am favored with the medical advice and treatment of two very able physicians, Doctors Barclay and Tolmie. It will soon be seven years since I first saw this place. I should not be here now if my husband had not gone home and left me, or, I should have said, if my health had been sufficient for me to have continued at my post of labor among the Indians. Doctor White, the government Indian agent of this country, advised me to avail myself of this opportunity to rid myself from care and labor, come here and attend to the advice of Doctor Barclay for the perfect restoration of my health, and I have no reason to regret it so far. I feel that my health is improving, I hope, permanently.

You speak of Mr. and Mrs. Abernethy. I have seen your letter to them and have only seen him a short time since I have been here. I hope to see them both in a few days, for I am waiting a convenient opportunity to go to the Willamette, where I expect to visit the different members of the Mission and spend a pleasant season among them. The two Missions are three hundred miles apart and it is not

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easy to visit back and forth, especially where all hands are full of business each in his own field of labor.

✘ You almost make me feel, from your letters, that you will accept of my invitation and come over and live with me and help me teach the poor Indians. Indeed! are you not now almost here with my beloved husband? The time draws near when I hope to see his dear face again, and O! am I to greet a beloved sister with him, and, perhaps, a dear brother, too? I know not what inexpressible joys or sorrows are before this frail, trembling heart of mine; I feel that I could not survive an excess of either, my nervous system is so much impaired. But I know assuredly that the same grace that has sustained me hitherto under fiery trials, is able and will sustain in time to come. I am in His hand. The nine months past that I have been separated from my precious husband, have been months of His special favors to me in this dreary land of heathenish darkness. The sacrifice, if I may call it so, has been a very great one — much more so than I at first thought it could be, even to exceed that of leaving my native land and beloved friends, and coming to dwell among the heathen. But the precious promises have" been fulfilled in my case leaving all for Christ's sake, as J trust I did in coming to this country, and freely consenting to be left so feeble and lonely in such a lonely situation, by my earthly protector, my husband. I feel that I have indeed received manifold more in this present time with an assured hope of receiving in the world to come life everlasting.

I am pleased to hear so good an account of dear E.'s progress in study and piety, and sincerely hope he will be a useful and devoted Christian minister. I wish he would write me more, for his own sake as well as mine.

Miss Jane A. Prentiss,  
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