

## **DR. WHITMAN JUNE 1836**

*by Crystal Calhoun*



## ON PLATTE RIVER, 30 MILES ABOVE THE FORKS.

June 4th, 1836.

Dear Father and Mother Prentiss:

You will be anxious to hear from us at this distance and learn our situation and progress. We have been greatly blest thus far on our journey. We have had various trials, it is true, but they have mostly been overruled for our good. Narcissa's health is much improved from what it was when she left N.Y. We failed of going from Liberty to Bellevue as was expected in the Fur Co's. steamboat. We were waiting at Liberty for the boat for some time and though we would go on with our cattle, horses and wagons, and let Mr. Allis from the Pawnee agency stay with the ladies and go on the boat. Accordingly Messrs. Spalding and Gray went on and I was to join them at Cantonment Leavenworth. In the meantime Mrs. Saterlee died and boat passed but refused to stop for us. Mr. Spalding wrote me he would wait eight miles the other side of garrison until I came up, so that when the boat passed I did not send an express as I otherwise should have done, but proceeded to hire a team to take us on; but when we arrived at the garrison he had crossed the river and gone directly on for Bellevue and had been gone for three days, which caused me to have to send an express for him, which did not overtake him until they were within forty miles of the Platte. I followed with the women and baggage, with a hired team. We met out teams the fourth day on their return. From that on we were greatly favored with fair weather, never having to encounter any rainstorm or serious shower. We have not been once wet even to this time, and we are now beyond where the rains fall much in summer.

We had several days delay from my going ahead to see Maj. Dougherty's brother, who was very sick and sent for me when he learned I was coming. It was Sabbath and we were within 18 miles of the Otto Agency, which is on the Platte, where Mr. Dougherty lives. On Monday I sent the man, who came for me, after the party, and I went to see Fitzpatrick, the leader of the Fur caravan, with whom we were to travel. I found him encamped ready for a start on Thursday morning, about twenty-five miles from the Otto Agency. When I returned our party had not arrived and did not come until Wednesday, the man who was to pilot them having lost his way.

We had great difficulty in crossing the Platte which, together with repairs to our wagons, detained us until Saturday noon, May 21st, and he (Fitzpatrick) had been gone from Sunday. We felt much doubt about overtaking them, but we pushed on, and after ferrying the Horn in a skin boat and making a very difficult ford of the Loup, we overtook the Company at a few miles below the Pawnee villages on Wednesday evening. We then felt that we had been signally blessed, thanked God and took courage. We felt it had been of great service to us that we had been disappointed in these several particulars, particularly as it tested the ability of our ladies to journey in this way. We have since made good progress every day, and are now every way well situated, having plenty of good buffalo meat and the cordial co-operation of the company with whom we are journeying.

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June 6th. - We have just met the men by whom we can send letters and have to close without farther particulars or ceremony.

With Christian regards to your family, farewell.

Yours affectionately,

MARCUS WHITMAN