

## **NARCISSA FEBRUARY 1842**

*by Crystal Calhoun*



**Feb. 2, 1842**

Dear Jane:

Since I commenced this letter much has transpired of deep interest, and is constantly transpiring that is of importance to this country, and those who are interested in her welfare. But I must talk to you a little before I tell about things here. I have just read your letter again, written in March, 1840, and it is now '42, and do you not think that is a long while to wait for letters from one's beloved sisters and friends? You have placed yourself so near us, I had hoped to receive letters from you every year, and even now I must wait until September before I can expect to hear from you again. Do, dear sister and brother, write a large parcel and have them ready-do not wait for an opportunity. It would be so comforting to get the history of you from one month to another, and from year to year. It would be such a treat that I should cry for joy over them. I suppose you feel the same about us. I write you all I possibly can-all that poor health and numerous cares will admit of. Besides, I have so many to write to, both here as well as to friends at home.

I wish you were here to comfort me with your society and aid me with your labors, for there is more work to do than we can do, although it is not with me now as it has been ever since we have been here. I am blessed with an excellent associate in Sister Gray, who is now located here. She is a sister, indeed. I love her much. It is not good to be alone-so many cares will wear out the health and life of anyone, as we feel ours to be already, although we are recruiting some this winter.

Jane, I hear things about you that I do not like to hear. Sister L. says you watch sick folks a great deal. You must stop it, or you will repent it when your health fails, and it will fail-you cannot always endure. Take care of yourself, for I want you to come here when you are through your care of Edward, if you do not marry. What do you think about it? How would you like to come? When I know your mind we can then make arrangements for your coming, by writing to the Board, etc. The missionary work is hard work, both for a body and mind, and requires health and strength. You say, "it is delightful work." So it is, when faith and love are in lively exercise, but where these are not in lively exercise, the work becomes burdensome, especially if health fails.

**Feb. 4th.-** I should like to give you the transactions of this day, and will if I can gather strength to do it. I was sick last night, with a severe headache, and have been so frightened to-day that I have not much strength of nerve left. The Indians are just now returning from their wintering quarters, and some of the Nez Perces have been serving the devil faithfully, especially those who spent their winter on the Columbia River below, in the region of the Des Chutes and Dalles. A young Nez Perces that had been to the Red River school died last summer. A brother of his, and three other principal men, managed to frighten the River Indians, as being the cause of his death, and compelled them to give many horses and much property, as a compensation, to keep them from other acts of violence upon them. Husband, learning of their base conduct, took advantage of their passing, on their way to Mr. S.'s station, to reprove them for what they had done. These men are all firm believers in the te-wats, or medicine men. This is a crying sin among them. They believe that the te-wat can kill or

make alive at his pleasure.

Yesterday the mother of the young man that died was in to see me. She is an old medicine-woman, and as she had some of the horses and property thus basely obtained husband talked to her about it and told her it was her duty to give them back to those who stole them, as they had distributed among many. She at last said she would do it. Her talk aroused two others, as they were all that were here, who came in last evening and received the same plain admonition. They did not like such plain talk. They are great worshipers or at least feel and profess to be, and the man who would believe that they could do such great wickedness, and tell them of it and warn them of the consequences, was a bad man and would go to hell. One of them, more daring than the others, gathered twelve or fourteen of his friends and came in the forenoon to frighten us. One had a bow and arrows with iron points; another had a rope and another had the war club. When they first made their appearance these things were concealed under their blankets. The head man commenced the talk by saying that he was always good and that husband was bad and was always talking bad to them; that he had brought in his friends that were very powerful. This he said to frighten us and excite his allies. Soon husband spoke and told him to stop, and began to explain the conversation of last night. After a little, one of them took down a hair rope that was hanging near, and threw it down near the doctor, one of them that stood near put his foot on it. I began to be suspicious of that movement and thought they were intending to tie him. I told husband it was our rope and he picked it up and sent it out of the room. Soon a tall Indian advanced as the conversation increased in spirit—under his blanket I saw another rope and one behind him had a bow and arrows. I asked husband if I had not better call help, he said no, he was not afraid. I had not yet discovered the war club, but I had seen enough to excite my fears greatly. I went into another room, as slyly as I could, and called Packet, who is living in the Indian rooms, and told him what was going on; he went and got two other men and came in and seated themselves. (The gathering was in the kitchen.) The conversation continued and they soon saw that they had been led wrong by their leader, and their excitement died away. A native woman, a friend of ours, was in when they came in and I had just begun to read a chapter of the translation of Matthew to her. She was in yesterday, also, and was appealed to as a witness of what was said yesterday and was of service in quelling their rages. One of our men who came in first discovered the club, and the Indian was asked, when the excitement was over, what he came in with a club for? He flushed and put it around under his blanket out of sight. They all went away, ashamed of themselves and defeated. Their aim, doubtless, was to frighten us and cause the doctor to take back what he said yesterday; but that he would not do, but still said to them if he did not tell them plainly of their sins the Lord would be displeased with them. They said it would not do for him to talk so to Ap-ash-wa-kai-kin, their leader in wickedness, and the brother of the deceased young man; if he did, he would fight him. He told him that it was his duty to tell him that he had done wrong, and that he, as well as they, must make restitution to those whom they had so unjustly injured, and that he should not hesitate to tell them so.