

HALL'S VISIT TO OREGON IN 1839*

Mr. Edwin O. Hall and his fiancée, Miss Sarah Lyons Williams, were appointed assistant missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions by the Prudential Committee of the Board, in 1834.

In their minutes it is recorded:

"At the regular meeting of the Prudential Committee, held at the Missionary Rooms, on Tuesday afternoon, May 27, 1834, it was:

"Resolved that Mr. Edwin O. Hall of the city of New York be appointed an assistant missionary of the Board and designated to the Sandwich Islands, to be employed as a printer in connection with that mission.

"Resolved that Miss Williams, of the city of New York be appointed an assistant missionary of the Board, with the expectation of her being united in marriage with Mr. Edwin O. Hall, this day appointed to the Sandwich Island mission."

Embarking December 5, 1834, on the ship *Hellespont* with six other missionaries comprising the sixth reinforcement to the mission, after a voyage of six months, Mr. Hall and his bride reached Honolulu, June 6, 1835.

He at once took charge of the printing office in Honolulu, relieving Mr. Rogers, who was transferred to the branch printing office at the High School at Lahainaluna, Maui.

Mrs. Hall's health failed after a year or two, as she became afflicted with a serious spinal trouble, which prevented her from walking and kept her confined all day on her couch.

It was suggested by Dr. Judd and other physicians who had examined Mrs. Hall that a temporary sojourn in a colder climate would be beneficial to her health, and in 1839 an opportunity arose enabling her to pass a winter in Oregon Territory.

After the Oregon missionaries had found that their earliest ideas of instructing the Indians in the Gospel by teaching them English, without reducing their own language to writing, were not only impracticable but absolutely impossible, they wrote to their brethren of the Sandwich Islands mission asking if it were not possible to have a second-hand printing press given to them. They also requested that someone whom they would send from Oregon might receive instruction in the art of printing, and print on their

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own press a few small books from manuscript sent on for the purpose.

In reply to a communication from Mr. Spalding, the members of the Hawaiian mission at the delegate meeting of June, 1838, voted:

"That we comply with his request to print small books for the Nez Perces missions and also forward a few copies of scripture and other cuts; also a Ramage press and small font of types from Lahainaluna, at the discretion of the printer there."

They suggested that instead of having a man sent on from Oregon, one of their own assistants could more advantageously be sent to set up the printing station there and to teach those selected to do the printing for the Oregon mission. This offer was accepted at the next general meeting of the Oregon Mission.

It was finally decided that as the health of Mrs. Hall necessitated a visit to a colder climate, Mr. Hall could be spared for a year to perform the requested service for the Oregon brethren.

In a letter to the secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. dated Jan. 26, 1839, Mr. Hall writes:

"Mr. Spalding has sent me a small elementary book in the Nez Perces language in order that I could see the proportions of the various letters in putting up the type. He says also, that he shall this winter prepare some others, so that they will be ready for me to print when I arrive. I have accordingly put up our old fount of Pica and Long Primer English, and also the new fount of English, received within a year ago. The two former are nearly worn out; but the latter is almost new, but a small fount, being all contained in one case. This latter we can dispense with, with some inconvenience; and the two former are supplied with new founts recently received. The Press designed to be taken is only a small hand, card, press, which was a donation to this Mission, and came out with us in the Hellespont. I have had it put in order, by adding a frisket, points, etc, and hope to make it answer the purpose till the wants of those missions shall require greater facilities for the prosecution of that branch of labor. The type, also, will probably do till the language is so far reduced to system that the proper proportions can be sent for all of the letters. This will be done in the course of a year or two."

From Honolulu, Mr. Levi Chamberlain, the secular agent of the Hawaiian Mission, writes to the Rev. R. Anderson on February 11, 1839:

"The health of Mrs. Hall has been feeble for a long time. A voyage to the region of the Columbia River has been recommended as a measure promising benefit. An opportunity now offers of a passage to Vancouver in one of the Hudson Bay Company's vessels, and Mr. Hall has concluded to avail himself of it. He will take passage with his wife in the ship *Nereide* to sail in about a fortnight. We shall send by him about 50 reams of paper, a small assortment of types and a card press, being the one which was sent to this mission some years ago, and for which we have had no use.

"Mr. Hall will make himself useful to the Mission in the Oregon Territory in various ways, and by putting up this press and printing such little works as the means which we are able to furnish will admit. His passage and freight of goods will be \$250 payable here. He will probably take charge of two or more natives of these islands who will go to assist the families of the missionaries in their domestic concerns. The persons in view are members of the Honolulu church, who in a certain sense devote themselves to the work of foreign missions, and will go with a design to help forward the cause. A man & his wife were sent last year, and we hear from them very pleasing accounts. We hope these who are expected to go now will prove to be equally devoted & useful."

Rev. Hiram Bingham had greatly interested his church, the Kawaiaha'o Church of Honolulu, in the matter of converting the Indians of Oregon, and the previous year it had made a small present to assist the missions there.

This year a subscription by the native women of the congregation was used to defray the expenses of sending Mr. Hall and the little press to Oregon.

In a letter written from Honolulu, April 19, 1839, he informs Mr. Anderson:

"The church & congregation of which I am pastor has recently sent a small but complete printing and Binding establishment by the Hand of Brother Hall, to the Oregon mission, which with other substantial supplies amount to 444,00 doll.—The press was a small Hand press presented to this mission but not in use. The expense of the press with one small font of type, was defrayed by about 50 native females including Kinau or Kaahumanu 2d. This was a very pleasing act of Charity. She gave 10 doll. for herself & 4 for her little daughter Victoria Kaahumanu 3d."

Leaving their little babe in the care of Mrs. Dimond, Mr. Hall and his wife left Honolulu March 2, 1839, arriving at Fort Vancouver, the Hudson Bay Company's principal post on the Columbia River, about April 10, 1839.

An express was sent to Dr. Whitman at Waiilatpu and to Mr. Spalding at Lapwai, Clear Water, that Mr. and Mrs. Hall, with F. Ermatinger as a guide, would leave Vancouver on April 13, with the hopes of reaching Fort Walla Walla, April 30.

Mr. Spalding, in a letter begun at Clear Water, March 5, 1839, informs Mr. Greene, the secretary of the A. B. C. F. M.:

"April 22.

"Since writing the above the Co.'s vessel has arrived from Honolulu bringing Mr. & Mrs. Hall with a press, small fonts of type, binding material and a quantity of paper, all of which I believe is a donation to this Mission from Rev. Mr. Bingham's church and congregation. Also a quantity of sugar, molasses and salt. Mr. Hall has come to this country on account of Mrs. H's health, and while he remains will put our press in operation and labor otherwise as he may find occasion.

"Fort Walla Walla, May 3, Mrs. S. & myself arrived here 30 ult. & Mr. & Mrs. Hall with the press, etc. safe 29. Hope to start tomorrow. Mrs. Hall in a canoe, effects on horses."

After a week's rest, leaving Fort Walla Walla, May 6, Mrs. Hall was poled up the Snake River in a canoe by three Indians with setting poles, the rest of the party riding on horseback along the water's edge, though sometimes obliged to make wide detours where impassable bluffs came down to the river. The navigation was not dangerous but tedious, as the distance to be travelled was about 150 miles. They camped together at night and took their meals night and morning in their tent.

After a journey of eight days, including one Sabbath when they rested, they reached Mr. Spalding's station at Lapwai or Clear Water, near the present city of Lewiston, Idaho, on May 14.

Mrs. Hall was stronger than when she left Oahu, though her spinal affection had not experienced any benefit from the change and voyage, as the constant motion of the ship, boat, and canoe could not have been expected to produce a favorable effect on a disease of that nature.

Arrived at Lapwai, Mr. Hall soon set up and printed on the little press a book of eight pages in an artificial alphabet which had been devised by Mr. Spalding, where the unneeded consonants were used to designate different vowel sounds.

This alphabet was soon found to be impracticable and impossible of use as no two missionaries would spell a word alike and often the same man would spell the same word differently.

The missionaries had been unable to agree on any improvement, but by Mr. Hall's judicious advice, the alphabet recommended by Pickering in his essay, "On a Uniform Orthography for Indian Languages," was adopted and the Nez Perces first book reprinted, this time enlarged to twenty pages. The title pages of the two books are nearly identical, a little wider spacing between some of the words alone showing that the type was reset.

A month after reaching Lapwai, Mr. Hall was called to attend at Waiilatpu the funeral of Dr. Whitman's only daughter, a child of but 2¼ years, who was drowned June 23 while attempting to get a drink from the river flowing near their house. She was interred June 29, the funeral being postponed to await the arrival of Messrs. Hall and Spalding.

The summer weather was extremely hot—much hotter than any they had experienced at the Islands—and Mrs. Hall continued confined to her couch, as for two years past, not able to sit up but for a few minutes at a time.

The annual meeting of the Oregon mission was held at Lapwai from September 2nd to the 5th, after which they accompanied Dr. and Mrs. Whitman to their station at Waiilatpu, about six miles from the present city of Walla Walla, Washington.

Dr. Whitman had previously made one journey to visit and prescribe for Mrs. Hall, though he writes that he was unable to do any thing for her affliction on account of her approaching confinement.

At Waiilatpu they had the pleasure of being waited on by two native Hawaiians, Iosepa Mahi and wife, from Mr. Bingham's Kawaiahao Church, who had come to Oregon the year previous to assist Dr. and Mrs. Whitman in their domestic concerns.

On the fifth of November, 1839, Mrs. Hall gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Caroline Alice, a healthy child, though weighing less than nine pounds when a month old.

An attempt was made to bring the press from Lapwai to Waiilatpu to accommodate Mr. Hall while printing the Nez Perces book, but on the first day of the journey the animal laden with it fell down a precipice. It was recovered not materially damaged, but was taken back to Mr. Spalding's. Mr. Hall was obliged to go on to Lapwai on January 20th to commence the

printing, but after printing three or four forms of an elementary book prepared by Messrs. Smith and Rogers at Kamiah, he hastened back to his wife and baby on January 28th, leaving Mr. Rogers to complete the printing of the book.

On February 29, they left Waiilatpu on their return to the Islands, Dr. Whitman accompanying them as far as Fort Walla Walla. They reached Fort Vancouver on March 6th, in three days from Fort Walla Walla.

Mr. Hall evinced great disappointment, in a letter he wrote to the Rev. Rufus Anderson from Fort Vancouver on March 16th, at the little printing he had been able to do for the Oregon Mission, as he had been led to believe that much more manuscript would be ready for him.

In fact, no more printing was done on the little press for nearly two years after Mr. Hall's return.

While waiting for an opportunity to take ship for Honolulu, they made a visit to the Methodist Mission at the falls of the Willamette, about two days distant in a canoe, to call upon Dr. and Mrs. White, who had spent several months in Honolulu on their voyage out to Oregon.

The account given of Mrs. Hall's call upon Mrs. White, the wife of the physician of the mission, in the book "Ten Years in Oregon, or the adventures of Dr. E. White and lady," is amusing, though not entirely accurate in all its details.

"Mr. E. O. Hall and lady also arrived, bringing with them a small printing press, a present from the Sandwich Islanders to the upper mission, and a man and woman who were very pious, and cheerful in rendering any service which they could do most usefully. Their principal object in visiting the Columbia river, was to seek the benefit of Mrs. H.'s health, which was very delicate. She had not for years been able to walk any distance. Mrs. White's impressions were very curious as she witnessed Mrs. Hall's singular entry into her house. Two Sandwich Islanders entered the house without speaking or knocking, bearing the sick lady in a mat litter, and deposited their burden unceremoniously in the middle of the floor, from which she arose as unconcernedly as though stepping from the little carriage in which the ladies of the islands are usually drawn by a single attendant. After some weeks had expired, as Mrs. Hall's health was much improved, and her husband had instructed the missionaries in the art of printing, they started for home, their departure much regretted by their entertainers."

Mr. and Mrs. Hall at length embarked on the barque *Columbia*, Capt. Charles Humphreys, on the 19th of May, though they did not finally get out of the river till June 3rd.

After a very quiet and pleasant passage of 21 days they arrived home on the 24th of June.

Mrs. Hall's general health was found to be considerably improved, but her local diseases were not materially benefited. Mr. Hall reported his own health as being as firm as for years past.

Some specie in Dr. Whitman's hands, amounting to \$123, which to the great surprise of the Oregon missionaries had been utterly refused by the accountant of the Hudson Bay Co. at Fort Vancouver, was sent to the Islands by Mr. Hall to be placed to the credit of the Oregon mission on Mr. Chamberlain's books.

Iosepa Mahi, the Hawaiian, died during the summer following Mr. and Mrs. Hall's visit. He and his wife, Mrs. Maria Kewau Mahi, had been two of the charter members of the original Oregon Mission Church, being admitted by letter from the Kawaihau Church at its organization on August 18, 1838.

Dr. Whitman, in reporting his death, thus eulogizes him:

"Before the Annual Meeting of the Mission Iosepa Mahi our Hawaiian was sick, but recovering he & wife accompanied us to the Meeting. After our return he appeared unusually well. We had done but little towards cutting our wheat when he was taken ill again but taking medicine soon recovered so as to be about quite well but did not go to work. From some cause perhaps eating unripe melons he was taken again with inflammation of the bowels, which proved rapid & incurable. He died August 8th leaving us to mourn a Brother & fellow labourer.

"His death was one of great peace & triumphant hope. After expressing his strong love, for missionaries & in particular to Mr Bingham Mrs Whitman & myself he said he came here to live & die for the good of the Indians, & it was good to *die here*, He wished to die no where else. He wanted this told to Mr Bingham, saying, 'He laboured with his hands to aid me while his heart went up to God.' He had become deeply interested in every thing that pertained to the instruction of the Indians & in all the concerns of the station. He was greatly beloved by all who knew him & his death leaves a blank in our family not easily filled. A wise Providence has ordered it & we feel to

acquiesce & say. 'The Lord gave & the Lord hath taken away
Blessed be the name of the Lord'."

About a year after her husband's death, the Hawaiian woman returned home when Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Smith left the Oregon Mission for the Sandwich Islands during the latter part of 1841.*

HOWARD MALCOLM BALLOU.

*By this article and a more extended one, illustrated with photographed pages from the early printing, which appeared in the *Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, issues of March and June, 1922, Mr. Ballou has established the identity and record of the famous first printing press in the Pacific Northwest. The press remained at Lapwai until 1846, when it was sought to be used for printing a paper in Salem. Plans were interrupted after the press had been packed on horseback as far as The Dalles. There it remained until it was taken to the home of Rev. J. S. Griffin near Hillsboro, Oregon. It was there used to print eight numbers of the *Oregon American and Evangelical Unionist*. The press was not used after 1849, but was taken to Salem and deposited in the State Historical Rooms. Later the Oregon Historical Society obtained the precious relic and placed it in the Society's museum in Portland. There arose a claim that this old press was the same one that had made its way to Hawaii in the *Thaddeus* with the first missionaries in 1820. This claim was disputed by such Hawaiian authorities as George R. Carter and the late R. W. Andrews. Mr. Ballou has justified their denials and has proved that the very interesting Oregon press is not the original Hawaiian press.—Error.