

DOCUMENTS ILLUSTRATING THE BEGINNINGS OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN ADVANCE INTO
THE OREGON COUNTRY

(Concluded from July Issue)

L.

LETTER FROM OREGON⁵⁰

Pacific Ocean, off the Coast of Oregon, June 6, 1851.

REV. JOSEPH T. COOPER, D. D.,

DEAR BROTHER, This is Friday afternoon: to-morrow night we expect, (*Deo volente,*) to be off the mouth of the Columbia river, but no time to enter the river; vessels do not attempt to enter the river only in day light. As we will not have another opportunity of sending letters for half a month longer, (the mails arrive and depart here twice a month,) I will have a few lines to drop in the mail at Astoria, as the mail for the States will leave that in a few hours after our arrival. We had expected to reach San Francisco in time for the mail steamer on her trip before this one, but head-winds for the last few days of our voyage from Panama to San Francisco, so retarded our progress that the Oregon steamer was gone more than twenty-four hours before our arrival. This occasioned a detention of two weeks in San Francisco, the great city of the west. But I am not now going to give you a description of it—this must be reserved for more leisure.

We were twenty-three days from Panama to San Francisco, a distance of 4300 miles, I believe. The last five days of this route we encountered brisk head winds and rough seas; the rest of that voyage was smooth and delightful. Much sickness prevailed, and two deaths occurred while on board. Our lives have been all mercifully preserved hitherto, and if this letter reaches you, you may infer that we all reached Astoria in safety.

Our delay at San Francisco gave us an opportunity of seeing that wonderful city, its harbour crowded with shipping like the harbour of New York. There are to be seen ships from all ports of the world which trade in ships. We made a number of interesting acquaintances there, and met a number of old friends, some of them very unexpectedly. All that I am going to say of San Francisco at

⁵⁰ *The Evangelical Repository* (August, 1851), X, 136-137.

present is, that it is an admirable location for a mission, designed to operate on the world, civilized and heathen; for there appear to be persons congregated there from all nations. There are many hundreds of Chinese there; they are rapidly acquiring the English language, and a large proportion of people speaking Spanish. They are there from New Granada, Chili, and the whole extent of the Pacific coast of South America, from Van Diemen's Land, from the South Sea and Sandwich Islands, and even from Japan, which has sworn non-intercourse with all nations. Now, if even some of these different nations could be made acquainted with the gospel, and brought under its saving influence, no pen, no tongue can tell the amount of good which would result from this Babel of confusion.

Our church should, undoubtedly, have a mission stationed there.⁵¹ I was strongly importuned by a few Scotchmen to remain.⁵² I am satisfied that California has been greatly underrated generally in its resources and character. There are a great many excellent men and women too in San Francisco, and I am informed also in other parts of California. I made the acquaintance of some very excellent men who were going to the mines, or who had been there. I am satisfied, from what I have seen, that both the mineral and agricultural character of the country is underrated, by the more sober and staid part of the community. Many have gone to the mines and come away as poor as they went, and even poorer; but I am assured, by reliable men, that any person who will persevere, and apply himself with ordinary diligence, cannot easily fail of accumulating a reasonable portion. The vegetable productions of the country exceed anything I ever saw. I think the design of Providence, in the occurrences and events which have led to the rapid peopling of this coast, is pretty plain. This coast is to be the great mixing-pot, where the inhabitants of the eastern and western hemispheres are to be amalgamated, preparatory to their becoming *one*. Here the old and new worlds will unite. God is making use of the gold, which has been buried in the sands of the Sacramento or hid in the mountains of Nevada, to gather together here a population which he will afterwards make use of in carrying out his eternal purposes. The great object of Providence in concealing this gold here was not to

51 Before the end of the year 1852, the Reverend James C. Herron was appointed missionary of the Associate Church to California. Edit., *Mission to California*, in *The Evangelical Repository* (December, 1852), XI, 371. With his wife and child, Herron sailed from New York on February 19, 1853. *Ibid.* (April, 1853), XI, 557.

52 In a letter to the Reverend Joseph Banks, dated at Albany, Oregon Territory, [September 19, 1851], Mrs. James P. Miller said that she and her husband would have preferred to stop in California. *The Evangelical Repository* (January, 1852), X, 426, reprinted from *The Friend of Missions*.

enrich many graceless gold-hunting adventurers, into whose hands it has chiefly fallen as yet. He who formed the silver and the gold has other objects, infinitely higher and nobler in view.

When you receive this you can announce our safe arrival in Oregon. Our journey has been long, tedious, and very expensive. We have heard of Elizabeth and James all along.⁵³ The captain of this ship informed us that they are now in Oregon city. Love to Mrs. C. and yourself, in which we all unite. I will write more particularly as soon as I can.

Yours truly,

JAMES P. MILLER.

JUNE 8. Entered safely the mouth of the Columbia river—passed Pacific city, eight or ten houses—now in full view of Astoria, three or four houses—the green hills on either side of the river, most beautiful. All well.

M.

OREGON CORRESPONDENCE⁵⁴

Oregon City, O. T., July 11th, 1851.

REV. JOSEPH T. COOPER, D. D.

DEAR BROTHER, I have not yet leisure to write as I would wish to see published, but I wish to keep you advised of all our movements; and you can make such extracts, or condense statements for publication, as your judgment will approve.

We have been just a month in the territory, the last three weeks of which I have spent in riding through the Willamette Valley, because here are the principal settlements, and the weight of the population must still be concentrated in this valley, as it appears to be much the most extensive body of good land together. The land is as good as need be desired for all agricultural and grazing purposes. The climate is very different from what it is in the States, in the same latitude. The sun is now hot for several hours in the middle of the day, but it is comfortably cool in the shade, and we can not only bear a fire in the evenings and mornings, but very often it is necessary to comfort; and yet winters, it is evident, from the openness of the houses, as well as from the declarations of the inhab-

⁵³ Apparently Miller here refers to two of his children. His eldest daughter went to Oregon as a teacher under the patronage of the Board of National Popular Education. *The Evangelical Repository* (July, 1851), X, 56. On the work of this board, see *The Christian Instructor* (January, 1849), n. s., V, 93, and Emerson Davis, *The Half Century . . .* (Boston, 1851), 129.

⁵⁴ *The Evangelical Repository* (October, 1851), X, 229-232.

itants, are little if any colder. Cabbage grows all winter in the gardens, potatoes remain in the ground as they grow, and the best probably in the world. It is very usual to have several good crops of potatoes in succession, from the same planting. It is indeed a remarkable feature in this country, and makes it the easiest country I have ever seen for a farmer to live in, that so many crops can be taken in succession off the same ground. I have seen most splendid fields of wheat, of second and third year's crops, without any culture but one ploughing the first time it was sowed and harrowed in.⁵⁵ But, as a general thing, the third crop is not so good; but I have seen some fields of the third year's growth that would yield from fifteen to twenty bushels per acre. And oats also grow in the same way—several crops from one ploughing and sowing. But I did not in this letter intend to dwell on the physical features, or productions either, of the country. . . .

I have seen Mr. Blain. He is a very pleasant and respectable man, and is much esteemed here generally. He has fourteen members in full communion, and from sixty to seventy hearers; but he has an encouraging prospect of increase. He is settled in a good part of the country, and is surrounded with scenery and prospects as beautiful and varied as the imagination could fancy, except that it is distant from any large or navigable water; but to counterbalance that, he is well backed by beautiful mountains, covered with rich grass, which look as if they had been planted for ornament. He is, and has been, alone in most respects here. The community at large here could not easily be made sensible of the difference between him and us, and explain them as you can, it is not probable that they would appreciate them, and it will require much prudence not to make our separation hurtful to both him and us, in our influence among the people. And regarding the salvation of sinners as our great work, there are points which have a more imperious claim, as lying more directly near the foundation, in such a community as that by which we may expect to be surrounded for some time here. I have much confidence in Mr. Blain's prudence and piety, and hope we will get along without giving a wound to the cause we wish to advance. . . .

There are two old school Presbyterians in the territory—Mr. Thompson, in the Clatsop Plains, on the coast just below the mouth of the Columbia, and Mr. Geary, sent out by the Presbyterian Board

⁵⁵ Cf. a letter from Thomas S. Kendall, January 25, 1852, in *ibid.* (September, 1852), XI, 180-181.

of Missions, settled in the Willamette Valley, about twenty-five miles above this place.⁵⁶

There are six or seven congregational ministers in the territory, two of them sustained by the A. B. F. M. Society. The others, or the most of them, are Indian missionaries at the different stations, which were broken up at the time of the massacre of Dr. Whitman and his people.⁵⁷ These have been holding themselves in readiness to resume their labours again among these Indians, as soon as Providence might open the way. But the superintendent of Indian affairs has just returned from the Cayuse country, some 600 or 800 miles up the Columbia;⁵⁸ but I understand it is judged not expedient to resume the missionary operations. The papists seem to have influence to keep out other missionaries.

I am not exactly informed of the exact number of Methodist and Baptist preachers in the territory; but perhaps eight or ten of each, including the different divisions of each sect. Campbellites appear numerous in proportion to the inhabitants. But I must draw to a close.

I have concluded to locate my family at the town of Albany, the seat of justice for Linn county. Albany is situated on the Willamette river, probably seventy miles above this city, and consequently about ninety miles above the entrance of the Willamette into the Columbia. This valley must for some time contain the weight of the population of the territory. It contains much very fine land, and is the largest. It lies between the Coast and Cascade ranges of Mountains. Albany is and will be a central position for the territory. It is a new place, and altogether unoccupied by any other denomination. It is twenty-five or thirty miles from Mr. Blain's, and nine from where Mr. Kendall is preaching. I hope Mr. Irvine will soon be here, and I will endeavour to be more methodical in my next. Direct to "Albany, Linn Co., O. T."

Your brother in the gospel and in affection,

JAMES P. MILLER.

56 The Reverend Lewis Thompson and the Reverend Edward R. Geary, *Infra*, II, Documents E and F.

57 This passage is not clear. After the Whitman massacre, in 1847, the surviving Oregon missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions abandoned their stations. The writer seems not to have been aware that by this time the American Home Missionary Society had in the Oregon field two missionaries, the Reverend George H. Atkinson and the Reverend Horace Lyman. Perhaps he confounded these two societies.

58 The distance given here is somewhat exaggerated.

N.

MISSIONARY EMIGRATIONS TO OREGON⁵⁹

As if convinced that the earlier settlers in a new country have the best prospects of present and future usefulness, the several evangelical denominations of the States have held out liberal encouragement, for the last year or two, to their members, to seek a home in the extensive and inviting Territory of Oregon. Under the auspices of the Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, and Old School Presbyterians, churches have been organized, schools have been established, and preaching stations formed in various places and under promising circumstances. More recently the Associate Church has entered energetically upon the good work, and sent out the Rev. J. P. Miller, late of Argyle, Washington county, N. Y., and Rev. Samuel Irvine, of New Concord, O. The former of these brethren has already reached his field. He has fixed his location at Albany, the county seat of Linn county, and about seventy miles above Oregon City. Such is the interest felt in his undertaking, that two young men of the name of Montieth, formerly of Johnstown, N. Y., have made him a donation of a block of eight building lots, in any part of the village he may choose, and they have also given him a lot on which a church shall be built for an Associate Congregation. Mr. Miller's route was by the Isthmus; and the expense for himself and family, (two passengers and a half,) from New York to Oregon City, was \$1,438.

Nor has the Associate Reformed Church looked upon this field without interest. Some years ago, the Rev. Wilson Blain, of the Synod of the West, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and after a somewhat varied life, has settled down at Union Point, Linn county, where he has the charge of an excellent school, and is laboriously engaged also in the ministry of the everlasting Gospel. Numerous families from Asso. Ref. churches, particularly in the West, have removed to different parts of the Territory, and they are sending the cry to ministers and others, "Come over and help us." Already that cry is being responded to; ministers are leaving comfortable charges in the States; and in several instances families and individuals who have been under their pastoral care, are setting out for the distant land. The Rev. James Worth, of the A. R. Presbytery of Indiana, is making arrangements to start early in the spring, in company with a large colony. They are to assemble in Cincinnati, in

⁵⁹ *The Christian Instructor* (February, 1852), n. s., VIII, 185-187.

time to leave for St. Joseph, Mo., on the 15th of March. The Rev. William Connor, an active, energetic, and devoted member of the Presbytery of Blairsville, Pa., is to set out also early in the spring. It is known already there will be five or six families in his company, and probably the number will be increased ere the time of departure arrives.

All these movements are, we conceive, tokens for good. Able ministers of the New Testament are going forth fully prepared for the fields which are white for the harvest; and with them are the *nuclei* of flourishing churches and noble moral institutions and influences for general and lasting good. Let, then, such emigrants to Oregon have the benefit of the counsels, the prayers, and the needed sympathy and aid of the many brethren they are leaving far behind. And let the question be earnestly asked throughout all our congregations, Ought not more earnest efforts be put forth to have the banner of Truth and Righteousness early and widely unfurled all along those Western shores which are already attracting the gaze of all nations, and it may be, are big with the most momentous interests of the world?

O.

*Extract from the Report of the Board of Missions*⁶⁰

[to the General Associate Reformed Synod of the West in 1852.]

... Our mission in Oregon, after having struggled with peculiar difficulties, appears at present to enjoy a good degree of prosperity. Our brother Blain, who has been comparatively alone in that vast moral wilderness, has laboured with great assiduity and with an encouraging degree of success. Having been subjected to the necessity of teaching a school, as a means of support for his family, it was impracticable to spend as much time in missionary labours as would have been desirable. At Union Point a congregation was organized in June last, at which time it consisted of fourteen members. The number of members is at present thirty-five; and the congregation is now able to give something like an adequate support to the pastor. The Library [Literary?] Institution established at the same place is in a prosperous condition, and promises to be of great advantage to the church, as well as to the community at large.⁶¹

*A footnote containing an itemized expense account is omitted.

⁶⁰ *The Christian Instructor* (July, 1852), n. s., VIII, 425.

⁶¹ In a letter to John B. Dales, dated April 1, 1851, Mr. Blain told of the establishment of an academy at Union Point. "We of the Asso. Ref. Church have adopted the same general plan with the other Protestant churches, and have erected an academy at this place," he wrote. "Our village occupies a beautiful, healthy, and central position,

In accordance with the direction of Synod, the Board addressed a circular to all the churches under our care, desiring them to take up collections for the purpose of procuring a library for the use of the institution which Mr. Blain has established. To this appeal a considerable number of our congregations promptly responded; but by the greater portion of them, as usual, it was utterly disregarded. As brother Blain proposes to deliver up this institution into the hands of the Presbytery as soon as one shall have been organized in that territory; and, as under proper management, this institution may exert a most happy influence not only in favour of the cause of education, but also in training youth for the service of the church, it is recommended to the favourable regard of Synod. The books already furnished for the use of the Oregon mission, with the exception of the common school books, have been of a religious character. A library adapted to the literary wants of the institution is very desirable, and it is hoped that some means will be devised by Synod for the purpose of supplying this deficiency.

As there are now three ordained ministers in that region, and a fourth on his way to it, and as the tide of emigration is flowing rapidly in that direction, it is important that a Presbytery should be organized with as little delay as possible. . . .

JOHN T. PRESSLY, *chairman*.

P.

*Report of the Associate Presbytery of Oregon*⁶²

. . . As soon as practicable, after Mr. Irvine's arrival, a meeting was called for the purpose of organizing the presbytery; which meeting took place on the 28th of November, [1851] at the place where Mr. Kendall had usually preached.⁶³ . . .

By order of presbytery,

S. G. IRVINE, *Clerk*.

with reference to one of the best agricultural districts in the territory. Our Board of Missions have kindly furnished us with a small supply of books, which will enable us to run a successful competition with other schools; and, altogether, I feel that we have a most interesting field for Christian enterprises. We, however, will be compelled to look to our brethren in the States to furnish us with a school library, books, and stationery; and without this aid we will have to labour to great disadvantage, if not be reduced to absolute failure. Are there not many generous Christian men who will experience pleasure in affording us help in this good work?" *The Christian Instructor* (July, 1851), n. s., VII, 278.

⁶² "Minutes of the Associate Synod of North America. . .", May 20-29, 1852, in *The Evangelical Repository* (July, 1852), XI, 56.

⁶³ In a letter to Dr. Joseph T. Cooper, dated December 1, 1851, James P. Miller said that the Presbytery was organized on November 27 of that year. *The Evangelical Repository* (February, 1852), X, 484.

Q.

Linn Co., O. T., Nov. 1852.⁶⁴

To the Synod of the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America, the Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of Oregon sendeth greeting:

... On the 20th of October, 1852, the Associate Presbytery of Oregon, and the first Associate Reformed Presbytery of Oregon, (which had been organized on the day preceding,) met at Union Point, O. T., and having each judicially declared their unanimous and cordial approbation of the Basis⁶⁵ agreed on by the convention, proceeded, with appropriate religious exercises, to constitute the "United Presbytery of Oregon."

We are not able to give the exact statistics of our presbytery, many of the late immigrants not having yet reported themselves, but the following will serve to give a general view of our strength.

Ministers. ⁶⁶	Post Office Address	Fam.	Com.	General Remarks
Rev. James P. Miller,	Albany, Linn Co.,	4	12	Not organized
" Samuel G. Irvine,	Marysville, Benton Co.,	10	31	Organized.
" Wilson Blain,	Calapooya, Linn Co.,	27	62	Organized.
" James Worth,	Not located.			
" Thos. S. Kendall,	Albany, Linn Co.,			Without charge.
" J. M. Dick,	Albany, Linn Co.,			Engaged in teaching.
" S. D. Gager,	Eugene, Lane Co.,			Without charge.

... While we have outstripped our brethren in the United States in the work of union, we do not claim a greater degree of zeal or activity in that good cause, but merely to have yielded to the imperative and pressing demands of divine providence. . . .

By order of Presbytery,

WILSON BLAIN, *Clerk.*

R.

Minutes of the Associate Synod of North America, etc., 52d Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, May 18-27, 1853.

... No. 16. A communication from the Presbytery of the United Presbyterian church of Oregon Territory, which was laid on the table. . . .⁶⁷

On motion resolved, that the consideration of the letter from

⁶⁴ *The Evangelical Repository* (April 1, 1853), XI, 531-532.

⁶⁵ The "Basis of Union" is in *The Evangelical Repository* (December, 1852), XI, 368-370, reprinted from *The Preacher*.

⁶⁶ James Worth, J. M. Dick, Wilson Blain, and Stephen D. Gager were ministers of the Associate Reformed Church; the other three were ministers of the Associate Church. Worth and Gager had recently arrived in Oregon.

⁶⁷ *The Evangelical Repository* (July, 1853), XII, 62.

the missionaries in Oregon be postponed till next year, and that the Board of Foreign Missions be directed to correspond with them.

Upon motion it was resolved, that during the coming year, the salary of the ministers of the United Presbyterian Church in Oregon, formerly sent out by this Synod, be left with the pleasure of the congregations, and be transmitted to them through the Board of Foreign Missions. . . .⁶⁸

II.

The Old School Presbyterian Church

A.

. . . *Texas* and *Oregon* have recently been added to the Domestic field. They are now portions of our own country, and are rapidly populating. The importance of the Gospel to the people of these immense territories, *now* while society is in a forming state, is beyond all human calculation. *Now* is emphatically the time for establishing there, a salutary, conservative, saving influence. What is done *now*, in the infancy of our settlements there, to introduce and establish Gospel institutions, will be of more value to them, and to our whole country, than ten times the amount attempted even a few years hence. . . . Applications have been made to the Board to send without delay missionaries to Oregon, which, we hope, will soon be done.⁶⁹

B.

. . . During the year the Board have made special efforts to send a Mission to Oregon Territory. Their plan was to send at least three Missionaries. Four appointments have been made for Oregon. One of the brethren⁷⁰ appointed is already in Oregon, and engaged in his ministerial work; and the Board had strong hopes that at least two others, would have now been on their way to that territory. But the brethren appointed failed in being able to make their preparations for going the present season. This subject is still before the Board, and during the present year, they hope to be able to send three or more good missionaries to that new and important field. . . .⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 87. At the annual meeting of the Synod in 1852, the Oregon Mission Board was dissolved, and the Oregon Mission was placed under the care of the Board of Foreign Missions. *The Evangelical Repository* (July, 1852), XI, 82.

⁶⁹ "The Domestic Chronicle," in *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle* (New York: November, 1847), XVI, 350. This is excerpted from an official statement from the "Mission Rooms, Philadelphia, November, 1847."

C.

... During the year now closed, a number of new and very important missions have been established. The fruits of these missions are yet to be reaped. *A new field*, of almost boundless extent, has claimed, and will increasingly claim the attention of your Board. In Oregon you have a single missionary. More are needed, and will be sent as soon as suitable men can be obtained. California has called for special attention. Thousands from all portions of our own land, and multitudes from other lands are rushing to that newly acquired territory. Missionaries will be greatly needed there. The Board have made *four* appointments for California. The brethren appointed, are all men of experience in the ministry, able and valuable men. Two of these brethren are now there. The others are on their way, and more good Presbyterian ministers have gone, or will soon go. There are ample materials for forming at once, a good Presbytery in California. And it is more than probable, the next Assembly will find materials sufficient for forming a California Synod. . . .⁷²

D.

... Among the schools established during the year is one at *Clatsop's Plains* in Oregon Territory, to which the Board have just sent a supply of books to the value of one hundred dollars. It is expected that one or more schools will soon go into operation in California. The brethren in that distant field realize the importance of Christian education as one of the indispensable elements of the elevation, moral and intellectual, of that heterogeneous and enterprising population. There can be no doubt that the future influence and character of our Pacific States will depend in a great degree upon the amount and quality of the education prevalent throughout their bounds. If the mines of knowledge are unworked, no drafts can be made upon the treasures of political economy to supply the loss.⁷³

E.

... We enter Oregon over the Rocky Mountains; we stand upon their summits; before us are her interminable forests of enormous

⁷⁰ The Reverend Lewis Thompson; his first commission was dated December 1, 1847.

⁷¹ *Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented May, 1848.* (Philadelphia, 1848), 34.

⁷² *Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented May, 1849.* (Philadelphia, 1849), 34.

⁷³ *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1850.* (Philadelphia, 1850), 18.

growth; her great rivers and wide-spread vallies, rapidly filling up with a hardy race of emigrants: and a coast of some 800 miles looking out upon the Pacific sea! The emigration was last year greater than ever before, amounting to between 4000 and 6000. The population will shortly be sufficient to form a State. What have we done for Oregon? We have sent out two missionaries, and a third settled in the Territory is connected with our Board. We could do no more for the want of men and means. The area of Oregon is 341,463 square miles.

... Two Missionaries were sent out to Oregon this Spring, *the Rev. Edward R. Geary*, and *the Rev. Robert Robe*.⁷⁴ The former went by the Isthmus, and the latter by the overland route.

These brethren, together with the Rev. Lewis Thompson, who is already in that field, are sufficient to constitute a Presbytery. And it is the desire of the Board that the General Assembly direct the organization of the Presbytery of Oregon at such time and place as they may think best.*

F.

CLATSOP PLAINS, *Mouth of the Columbia River*,⁷⁵

October 7th, 1850.

To the Secretary, &c.

Rev and Dear Sir—Since the organization of the Clatsop Church, in 1846, we have received but four members by certificate and one on examination. And yet our prospects are encouraging. Our house of worship, put up at an estimated cost of two thousand five hundred dollars, was dedicated last Sabbath. The Rev. Albert Williams, of San Francisco, being present, and aiding us in the services. The house is not entirely completed, but will be, we hope, in two weeks. One member of the congregation furnished the lumber;

⁷⁴ Before entering upon his work as a home missionary in Oregon Territory, the Reverend Edward R. Geary had been for thirteen years pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Fredericksburg, Ohio. With his wife and two children, he sailed from New York for Oregon on February 13, 1851. *The Home and Foreign Record of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: April, 1851), II, 127.

⁷⁵ "On the 19th of November, by the Presbytery of Zanesville, Mr. Robert Robe was ordained as an evangelist, with a view to a mission in Oregon." *Ibid.* (February, 1851), II, 63.

*"The following Resolution was passed unanimously by the Assembly, and this Presbytery directed to be constituted

"Resolved, That the Assembly do hereby order and institute a presbytery in Oregon, consisting of Rev. Lewis Thompson, Edward R. Geary and Rev. Robert Robe, and that they be empowered to assemble and constitute themselves a Presbytery, at such time and place during the ensuing Summer and Autumn, as may be found most convenient to them, and report to the next General Assembly; and for this purpose these brethren be detached from the Presbyteries to which they belong; and when formed, the Presbytery be attached to the Synod of New York, and the Presbytery to be called the Presbytery of Oregon." *Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented May, 1851.* (Philadelphia, 1851), 11, 23.

⁷⁵ *The Home and Foreign Record* (January, 1851), II, 6.

two others contributed five hundred dollars each; and there are some smaller contributions. There will probably be a balance against us after our subscriptions are paid.

We have had preaching regularly every Sabbath, and we confidently anticipate larger congregations, so soon as our public services are held in our new church. Our Sabbath-school has an attendance of from fifteen to forty children. Lessons are recited in the Shorter Catechism, and some of the scholars have already committed the greater portion of it. A member of our church has been employed to teach a Parochial school in the church, for the next twelve months. Our Temperance society numbers fifty members, and not long since, \$50 were remitted to New York for Temperance books and periodicals, which we have not yet received. The Ladies, members of our church, have sent on \$50 to our Board of Publication, for a church Bible and hymn books. The box of school-books, shipped by Dr. Van Rensselaer,⁷⁶ on board the steamer Constitution in June last, has not been received. We are anxiously expecting them, as our parochial school is not to be commenced until the books arrive. Living is quite expensive. Our dwelling is six miles from the church; five miles of that distance is on the sea-beach, a splendid road for carriages, except at high tide. As we have but one horse, we often go down in an ox-wagon. This mode of conveyance is too slow; we must have a *good Jersey wagon*, with a covered top, to run with single or double harness, that the whole family may go comfortably and speedily together.*

We have been anxiously expecting a *reinforcement*. I think the time has arrived, when our church should make greater efforts to occupy this highly important and widening field. What the future developments of God's providence in regard to this western coast may be, it is difficult now even to conjecture. But the pious and reflecting Christian, while contemplating the wonderful providence of the Almighty, in suddenly throwing open vast mines of wealth long hidden from the eyes of the world, delights to anticipate the time, when that same bountiful hand will enrich us with spiritual blessings in like abundance. We humbly hope that the Great Head of the church has mercies in store for us; and that the little Church planted here on the shores of the Pacific, will prove a rich blessing to many future generations. And that from this, as a radiating point, the light

⁷⁶ Dr. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Education.

*"This excellent brother is in much need of many articles of furniture, essentially necessary to his comfort. Who among our benevolent friends will contribute specially to this end?"

of the glorious gospel will shine forth even *across* the great ocean, dispelling the darkness of heathenism, which has for so many centuries brooded over the nations of Asia.

LEWIS THOMPSON.

G.

PRESBYTERIAN COLONY FOR OREGON⁷⁷

Every thing connected with the founding of a State has an interest which increases with years. The fragments of Puritan history have a value far transcending the estimate of past generations. The items of individual self-denial and toil, the initiatory plans of associated action, the grander schemes of state polity in their well developed results, all invite the scrutiny of the philosopher and the Christian, and teach lessons of wisdom which bring God and providence to view.

The people of the United States are great *colonizers*. The best elements of effective colonization are intelligence, enterprise and religion. Where these prevail, prosperity is the sure reward in the ordinary working of the divine laws which regulate the affairs of this world. The Pacific territory of the United States peculiarly needs the choicest materials of population to assist in giving shape to its future destiny. Great interests are depending upon the mighty West. Our country, bounded by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, is developing its character and resources on a scale almost beyond computation. What shall unite us in the harmony and power of a Christian nation but the institutions which, under God, have cultivated our present prosperity?

It is with peculiar satisfaction that we learn that a Presbyterian colony is on the eve of taking up its march over the Rocky Mountains, to assist in planting liberty, knowledge and religion in the wilds of Oregon. With the view of calling the attention of our church to this enterprise, we record some of the business details of the organization. Every one may learn something from the *private life* of such an undertaking.

PRESBYTERIAN COLONY FOR OREGON

"In compliance with many and repeated solicitations, I now undertake the responsible duty of selecting places of rendezvous, ap-

⁷⁷ *The Presbyterian Magazine* (Philadelphia: April, 1852), II, 161-164. This magazine, a monthly, was edited by Dr. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer.

pointing the time of starting, and furnishing a list of articles necessary for the outfit, &c.

The prospects of the colony are good. There have been several valuable additions to the company since the report of our Corresponding Secretary, dated December 1st. Our colony now numbers over sixty persons.* The Rev. James Worth, of the Associate Reformed Church, and a small colony, expect to join us, with a view of crossing the plains together, thus forming a large Sabbath-keeping Company. Every one, wishing the privileges of such a company, should report to our Cor. Secretary, Prof. S. Harrison Thompson, South Hanover, Ia.

We deem it injudicious to have many places of rendezvous; hence we will only name Cincinnati, Ohio, and St. Joseph, Mo. All those in the North and East, are requested to assemble in Cincinnati on or before the 13th of March, 1852, and be in readiness to leave Cincinnati for St. Joseph on the 15th. Perhaps those farther down the river might join us at St. Louis. We would name the 1st day of April for organizing the company, and appointing a business committee for procuring cattle, provisions, &c. I am informed that nearly every article necessary for the outfit may be procured at St. Joseph, as well and as cheaply as anywhere else.

Everything should be provided, and all in readiness for moving on the plains, by the 15th of April. If the spring should be favorable and grass abundant, we may start at that time; we should be ready by all means, that we may start as soon as the grass will allow.

A mess of four persons should provide themselves with one good strong wagon; what is commonly called a light two-horse wagon is generally recommended, but see to it that it is well made, and the bed water-tight. Oxen are supposed to be preferable for the draught; three or four yoke should be attached to each wagon. Mules may be used by those who prefer them. Horses should not be relied on for the draught; but every family should have one American mare, and two milch cows.

The following amount of provisions will be sufficient for a mess of four persons for the journey, or for one hundred and twenty days.

*"Since increased to one hundred."

Flour,	300 pounds.	Saleratus,	2 pounds.
Hard bread,	300 "	Black Pepper,	3 "
Bacon,	300 "	Cayenne Pepper	2 "
Corn meal,	60 "	Salt,	25 "
Coffee,	25 "	Cheese,	10 "
Tea,	2 "	Dried beef,	25 "
Rice,	20 "	Molasses,	6 gallons.
Sugar,	50 "	Vinegar,	4 "

A little dried fruit, dried corn, beans, &c. will be useful. Every mess should have a good meal tent, a camp kettle, coffee pot, frying pan, tin plates and cups, knives, forks and spoons. Also fifteen pounds of star candles, twenty-five pounds of hard soap, and two pounds of Windsor soap. Every mess should have a tin canteen, or gum elastic sack, to carry water on the plains where it is scarce. Also an axe, hatchet, spade, gun, saw, augers, nails, a few bedcords, light drawing chains, &c.

Take no more bedding and clothing than is really necessary for the journey. Every male should have three red flannel shirts, three pair of red flannel drawers, and four check shirts. Be careful or you will overload your team. Leave all unnecessary baggage behind; if not, you will be obliged to drop it on the way.

L. A. HANNA,⁷⁸

W.[estern] T.[heological], Allegheny City, Pa., January 1st, 1852."

Another Presbyterian colony is about to be organized, to settle in another part of the Territory. This latter colony is expected to emigrate in the spring of 1853. We publish a part of "the outlines of a plan of organization."

PRESBYTERIAN COLONY IN MIDDLE OREGON

"The formation of a colony, to emigrate to a new country, presents facilities for the mutual benefit of its members, and especially its families, vastly superior to the ordinary mode; provided, there be a clear understanding of the objects desired, and the method by which these are to be secured. In its very incipiency these objects should be clearly defined, and some outlines, *at least*, of a plan of organization submitted, so that each person, upon enrolling himself as a member of the colony, will do it understandingly; and for the promotion of the good of the whole, obligate himself to bear that portion of the burden which may be requisite.

⁷⁸ It appears that "L. A. Hanna" should read "J. A. Hanna."

The institutions of religion and education demand, and of right occupy, a prominent position, and to these everything else should be made more or less subservient. The following outlines of a plan, having special reference to these, are submitted:

1st. Prior to the time designated for removal, it is designed that the colony shall procure, for its use, either by donation or otherwise, a new, large and well elected Sabbath-school library, to be taken chiefly from the publications of the American Sunday School Union,^{78a} and the Presbyterian Board of Publication. And in addition to this, if it be found practicable, we will endeavour to procure both a congregational, and a well selected library of a general character.

2d. Measures for the constitution and organization of a church, may be taken after assembling on the frontier, and prior to the time of departure, or deferred until after arriving at the place of destination; but such organization as may be requisite for the securing of religious services upon the route, such as preaching, bible class, Sabbath-school and catechetical instruction, will be secured before starting. The same plans to be pursued after arrival to the place of settlement, until a thorough church organization shall be effected, and that, as soon as practicable, suitable buildings for church and school purposes shall be erected.

3d. From and after the first day of January, 1855, it is hoped and expected, that the colony will be fully able to sustain its own religious institutions, as well as assist in promoting the enterprises of the church, through its regular and appointed channels.

4th. It is intended that we shall, as soon as possible after settlement, establish a good parochial school, for the benefit of the children and youth of the colony, to be suited to their immediate wants; and no efforts will be spared to elevate the character of the school, and to make it an institution of learning of the highest grade, so soon as the interests of the colony may demand it. It should be a settled principle that no child or youth, connected with the colony, shall ever be permitted to grow up without the benefit of a good English education, and a thorough religious training.

Such are briefly some of the outlines of a plan which, if fully carried out, with the blessing of God cannot fail to elevate and en-

^{78a} The American Sunday-School Union, an interdenominational organization, was formed in Philadelphia on May 25, 1824. The American Sunday-School Union, *The First Report* (Philadelphia, 1825), 3-4. In May, 1849, the Managers reported that during the year just ended the Union had given books of the value of \$41.00 to aid Sunday Schools in Oregon. *The Twenty-Fifth Annual Report* (Philadelphia, 1849), 40.

noble a community, and make it virtuous, religious and happy, so far as happiness is attainable in this world. All then who are like-minded with us, and can cordially adopt and subscribe to the above principles we invite to join with us, and enrol themselves at once as members of the colony.

Those who are desirous of uniting with us are requested to report themselves by letter, *post paid*, to Rev. GEORGE F. WHITWORTH, *Cannelton, Perry Co., Indiana*, and at the same time to state their trade or occupation, or what pursuit they can engage in, the number, sex, and age of the members of their family, how many of them are professors of religion, together with such other information as may be deemed of any importance."

These colonists will be men of no ordinary character. The spirit of enterprise *in subordination to the love of Christ* appears to be a leading motive in their emigration. Do they not need, and are they not entitled to, the prayers of the Church? Let us remember our OREGON COLONISTS before the throne of heavenly grace, and co-operate according to our ability in furthering their plans. May God bless our brethren, with their wives and children, and make them a blessing on those distant shores!

H.

. . . And still another Missionary⁷⁹ has taken his departure for *Oregon*, emigrating *with a Colony*, as their Pastor; an admirable method of removing to and peopling these destitute regions. Upon his arrival we shall have four Ministers in that territory.

It gives us pleasure to report to the Assembly, *the constitution of the Presbytery of Oregon* on the 19th day of November, 1851, agreeably to the order of the last Assembly.⁸⁰ *Minutes* 1851, p. 35. And also to state that the Presbytery of California, as [at] its meeting in Benicia, February 17, 1852, after full discussion, resolved to overture the present Assembly, to divide that Presbytery into two Presbyteries, severally to be called the Presbytery of California, and the Presbytery of Stockton, and that these Presbyteries together

⁷⁹ Joseph A. Hanna; commission dated March 1, 1852. *Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1852* (Philadelphia, 1852), 54. "On the 24th of February, by the Presbytery of Wooster, Mr. Joseph A. Hanna was ordained as an Evangelist. Mr. Hanna's address will be Oregon City, Oregon." *The Home and Foreign Record* (April, 1852), III, 127.

⁸⁰ Mrs. James P. Miller to Joseph Banks, December 22, 1851: "At the time our Presbytery [Associate] was organized here, we suppose it was the first organized in the [Oregon] Territory, but have since learned that the O. S. Presbytery, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Thompson, Geary, and Robe, was organized nine days previously." *The Evangelical Repository* (April, 1852), X, 594.

with the Presbytery of Oregon be constituted a Synod, to be called "the Synod of the Pacific," to hold its first annual meeting in the city of San Francisco on the third Thursday of October, at seven o'clock P. M., and to be opened with a sermon by the oldest minister present. We have reached the Pacific. The voices of the worshippers mingle with its waves, "slow swinging to the shore." Yea, we have formed a Synod there! This is expansion! THE SYNOD OF THE PACIFIC! The announcement of the fact causes the great heart of the Assembly, and of the whole Church to break forth in thanksgiving and praise to God. We hail the formation of this Synod with fond anticipations; believing that it will in an eminent degree conduce to the firm and speedy establishment—by God's blessing—of our Zion in that important and distant land. . . .⁸¹

I.

PRESBYTERIAN COLONY TO OREGON⁸²

The Rev. J. A. Hanna, whose letter we publish below, went out to Oregon as a missionary of the Board of Missions, with quite a large colony, principally from the State of Ohio. The colony soon separated, because quite a number of them persisted in travelling on the Sabbath. And here again we have the testimony of God's favour to those who keep holy the Sabbath day; for those who travelled on the Sabbath did not reach the Territory until eight days after those who rested, and were severely scourged with sickness and death, whilst the others were graciously preserved from both—as we learn from other sources. Their trials and difficulties, however, were very great, as will be seen by the following letter. He has now entered upon an important field of labour, and with God's blessing, may do much in planting our Church and advancing the Redeemer's kingdom in that important Territory.

Clatsop Plains, October 4th, 1852.

My Dear Brother—My commission, accompanied with your letter, reached me at St. Joseph, Mo., in which you request a brief history of our journey. It affords me pleasure to inform you that we arrived safely in the Willamette Valley on the 16th day of September. For this special favour we would praise our Heavenly Father, for truly he has been merciful to us.

⁸¹ *Annual Report of the Board of Missions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Presented to the General Assembly, May, 1852* (Philadelphia, 1852), 14.

⁸² *The Home and Foreign Record* (January, 1853), IV, 5-6.

I have time at present to give but a brief sketch of our journey. A fuller account will be sent to the *Presbyterian of the West* for publication, which you can see. For a description of the route, camping places, &c., I would refer all emigrants to Capt. R. M. Walker's *Emigrants' Guide*. The guide is full and complete, and gives general satisfaction.

You will, no doubt, have learned before this reaches you that our colony were subject to divisions on the Plains. Strange as it may appear, all large companies on this route divide and re-divide. We started with a company of eighty persons and twenty wagons; twenty persons were professors of religion, twelve of whom were members of the Presbyterian church. We resolved to be a Sabbath-keeping company, and this was the point on which we divided. A few of us were fully resolved to observe the Sabbath, but persons on the Plains generally become restless and wish to be moving even on the Sabbath. We had three divisions on this point. At sundry times three parties left us—each left on the Sabbath because we refused to travel on that day; the members of the Presbyterian church chiefly remained with us. Owing to these divisions we were so reduced that when we entered the Cascade Mountains our company consisted of eighteen persons and five wagons. Whilst in these mountains we had sore trials and privations—the cattle dying, the teams failing, &c.; this caused us to scatter and each one travel as he was able. I had an interest in an ox-team which failed in the deserts, the wagon was left, all the oxen died except one; and at the summit of the Cascade Mountains my mules became so jaded and weak for want of food, that they were not able to draw my carriage. I was obliged to leave it and all my goods in the mountains until I sent back a fresh team. They were left seventy miles from Oregon City. I walked this distance, the mules being so weak as not to be able to carry a rider. Mrs. H. rode on horseback until her horse gave out, after which she travelled much of the way on foot. We have met with considerable loss in the deserts and mountains; our carriage was considerably broken in bringing it in from the mountains, and since our arrival here we have lost a mule; yet we should be thankful and praise God for his mercies. Mrs. H. and I had good health when on the Plains, and are now quite hearty, probably more vigorous than we have been for many years. We entered the valley alone; the colony is completely broken up. I have been solicited to go and settle in Salem. I hope the Lord will direct me to a field where I may be

useful. Soon after my arrival, I learned that Presbytery was to meet at Clatsop Plains on the 2d day of October. Not having time to go up the Willamette and return in time for the meeting, I concluded to come direct down the Columbia to this place, and found Brother Thompson in expectation of the brethren for the meeting of Presbytery. On Sabbath, 3d instant, Brother Thompson held communion in his church. I was with him on the occasion, it was a pleasant and solemn meeting. The little church appears to prosper; they have quite a missionary spirit.

I am quite well pleased with Oregon, so far as I have seen, and the people appear kind and obliging. I would just say that it is my intention to devote my whole time to the work of the ministry; others have had to resort to teaching, &c. I will probably ride this winter, preaching at points hitherto unoccupied, and no doubt will receive little or no support from the people.

Means of subsistence here are very high. The following are the current prices: Flour \$25 per barrel; potatoes \$2 per bushel; beef 12½cts. per pound; butter 75cts. per pound; chickens \$1 each, and eggs \$1 per dozen. You will see from these prices that a family cannot live comfortably in Oregon on a very small salary.

There was a great deal of sickness and suffering on the Plains. We passed 168 fresh graves between St. Joseph's, Mo., and Oregon City. As to dead cattle we cannot speak definitely, they may be enumerated by hundreds and thousands. In our company there was but little sickness and no deaths. There was sickness and death with those who separated from us.

We have great reason to be thankful for our mercies, which were many and undeserved. Pray for us.

Your co-worker in the gospel of Christ.

J. A. HANNA.

J.

OREGON⁸³

Recent letters from the brethren state that they are all in good health, and making some progress in their labours, although, from the new state of the country, and the many engagements of the settlers, it will be some time before society becomes well organized in the various localities selected for occupation.

⁸³ *The Home and Foreign Record* (October, 1853), IV, 295.

We subjoin a letter from Rev. G. F. Whitworth, on his way out to Oregon, with his congregation:

FORT LARAMIE, July 1st, 1853.

REV. C. C. JONES, D. D.⁸⁴—I intended writing to you before leaving the States, but having been delayed beyond the time I had designated for starting, and my coming being rendered somewhat uncertain, I delayed writing until I had made my requisite arrangements, and then being pressed for time, I found it impossible. A part of my company started ahead, failing to receive letters which I wrote to the place of rendezvous, and some two or three weeks ahead of us. Our present number is limited, having but five families altogether, numbering thirty-five souls. We are progressing rapidly and pleasantly, and find the keeping of the Sabbath (though not able to keep it just as we could wish) is profitable both to us and our teams. We have preaching in the morning, and Bible class and Sabbath-school in the afternoon.

One-third of our distance is now accomplished, our teams in good order, rather better than when we started, grass is abundant, and we therefore hope to be able to make our trip with safety. I should be glad to write you more fully, but it is exceedingly difficult, almost impossible, to get time to write. A few lines is all that can be accomplished. May we not ask an interest in your prayers, for our prosperity and safety? No danger from Indians or others has threatened us. Our health has been generally quite good, and the weather very favourable. Ere this reaches you, if we be prospered, we shall be beyond the mountains.

Yours, respectfully,

G. F. WHITWORTH.

J. ORIN OLIPHANT.

⁸⁴ The Reverend C. C. Jones was corresponding secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Domestic Missions.