

Original line drawing by Michel Pilon 1984.

HONORÉ-TIMOTHÉE LEMPFRIT, O.M.I.
HIS OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL
AND
LETTERS FROM THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST
1848 — 1853

EDITED BY
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PICTURE CREDITS

- Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa: Manuscript reproductions, pages 6 and 42.
Grande-Chartreuse, France: Pages 10, 20 and 46.
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa: Picture #4 between pages 190 & 191.
Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria, B.C.: Picture #3 (ref. 10607) and picture #7 between 190 & 191, page 194, page 240 (ref. 27849) and page 248 (ref. 27848).
Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa: Facing page 152 (ref. C.69731 copyright C.W. Jefferys), and facing page 153 (ref. C.69730).
Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto: Pages 55 and 136, and picture #8 between pages 190 & 191. All by Paul Kane (1810-1871).
Société Historique Franco-Colombienne, Vancouver, Canada: Frontispiece and picture #1 between pages 190 & 191, both by Michel Pilon (1984), and map in colour of Fort Victoria and District circa 1852, cartographer Ronald L. Deakin, C.P., (A.S.P.), Victoria, B.C. (1984), back pocket of book.
Stark Foundation, Orange, Texas: Pages 167 & 191. Both by Paul Kane (1810- 1871).
Washington State Museum, Olympia, Wa.: View of Olympia, Wa., circa 1870, picture #5 between pages 190 & 191.
Ye Galleon Press, Fairfield, Wa.: Page 78, facing pages 94 & 95, page 96, facing pages 110 & 111, facing pages 158 & 159, page 168, facing pages 174 & 175, and pictures #2 and #6 between pages 190 & 191, all from *A Report in the Form of a Journal* by Major Osborne Cross, published by Ye Galleon Press, 1967. (Oregon Trail lithographs).

ILLUSTRATIONS—ERRATA

- Vancouver Island Map (Fort Victoria & District, 1852): delete page 6, should be "Back pocket of book."
Page of original Lempfrit *Journal*: delete page 12, should be page 6.
St. Louis, Missouri: delete; should be "Interior view of the Grande Chartreuse Convent," page 46.
Snake River: delete page 114, should be "Picture #6 between pages 190 & 191."
Grand Rond: delete page 122, should be page 168.
Stone oven: delete page 152, should be "facing page 153."
H.B.Co. Engagee: delete Engagee, substitute Engagé; delete page 153, should be "facing page 152."
The Dalles: delete page 158.
Nisqually on Puget Sound: delete; should be "Descending the Grand Rond," page 168.
A Fur Trader: delete page 176, should be "Picture #4 between pages 190 & 191."
Olympia, W.T.: delete page 191, should be "Picture #5 between pages 190 & 191."
Interior Chinook Lodge: delete.
Fort Victoria, V.I.: delete page 192, should be "Picture #3 between pages 190 & 191."
Saw-se-a (Cowichan Chief): delete page 193, should be "Picture #8 between pages 190 & 191."
Fort Victoria 1852: delete 1852, substitute c. 1843; delete page 219, should be "Picture #7 between pages 190 & 191."
Indian Village, Esquimalt: substitute "Indian Village, Fort Victoria"; delete page 240, should be page 191.
Cadboro anchored outside Fort Victoria, 1849—Picture #1 between pages 190 & 191.



PREFACE

THE 1848 OREGON TRAIL JOURNAL AND THE 1849-1850 Fort Victoria Letters of Father Lempfrit, O.M.I., missionary to the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, rank among some of the most interesting historical documents to be translated into English during the last several years. Their author, a mature, well educated French Catholic priest, was a member of the Congregation of Oblates of Mary Immaculate who, prior to joining the Oblates, had spent a number of years in Carthusian monasteries in both France and Italy. Possibly he had received some medical training in the infirmaries of these institutions. He was known as "doctor" to the people with whom he travelled in the Oregon-bound caravan that he joined at St. Joseph on the Missouri, and his medical skill was called upon several times during the long journey west.

When Father Lempfrit arrived in the region of Walla Walla in the Middle Columbia he found that the Oblate mission he was supposed to join had closed down as a result of the Cayuse war that followed in the wake of the massacre at the Whitman Mission. He had to change his plans, as his Superior, Father Pascal Ricard, O.M.I., to whom he had to report, had retired temporarily to the Willamette pending the cessation of hostilities. This meant further travel, an overland journey to The Dalles and from thence, a voyage by canoe down the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver. On arrival at Fort Vancouver he learned that Father Ricard had left the Willamette and was now at the recently established Oblate Mission of St. Joseph, a small log cabin under construction on the shore's of Puget Sound, a few miles north of the present-day city of Olympia, Washington.

He travelled as far as the Cowlitz with Chief Factor James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company and from thence by horseback along the Nisqually trail to St. Joseph's Mission. He spent the winter and the

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spring there, helping to build the mission house and construct a vegetable garden. In June, 1849 he was appointed missionary priest to Fort Victoria, possibly at the request of Mr. Douglas, Governor *pro tempore* of the newly established British Colony of Vancouver Island. Father Lempfrit travelled to Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island in the company of Mr. James Douglas and his family, and arrived there on the 6th of June, 1849.

After arriving at Fort Victoria Father Lempfrit corresponded regularly with his Superior, Father Ricard then at St. Joseph's Mission. Most of these letters are devoted to "housekeeping problems" but they also provide significant unofficial information about life and events at Fort Victoria during the early months following the establishment of the British Colony. There are seven letters in all, the last of which was written on November 28, 1849. This is all that remains of what must have been an ongoing correspondence.

There are however two other letters written from Fort Victoria by Father Lempfrit. The first of these, dated February 9, 1850, is a long letter addressed to the Grey Sisters of Montreal describing his first six months on Vancouver Island. He mentions in this letter that he has kept "an exact record" of his long journey to Oregon and that he has sent this to them in Montreal in the trust of one, Jean Leman, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Victoria. This "exact record" proved to be Father Lempfrit's 1848 Oregon Trail Journal.

The second letter, dated January 26, 1851 is addressed to Cardinal Barnabo, Head of the Propaganda in Rome. In this letter Father Lempfrit describes the problems the O.M.I. missionaries in the Pacific Northwest were having as a result of the unco-operative attitude of the two bishops of Oregon, Archbishop F.N. Blanchet and his brother, Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet of Nisqually.

In June 1852 Father Lempfrit was appointed to serve in one of the missions in California. He remained there for just over a year. On September 23, 1853 he wrote to his Superior, Father Ricard, O.M.I. in

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Oregon telling him that as a result of the disturbed state of affairs in California and his poor health, he had decided to return to Europe. This is the tenth and last letter of Father Lempfrit from the Pacific Northwest.

Father Lempfrit left San Francisco by steamer for France on October 1, 1853. Thus ended his North American Odyssey.

The manuscripts of Father Lempfrit's Journal and the ten letters featured in this publication were photocopied at the Archives Deschâtelets, Ottawa, for study and translation into English by the Société Historique Franco-Colombienne of Vancouver, British Columbia. The translation of these documents is the joint work of Ms. Catou Lévesque, administrative secretary of the S.H.F.C. and myself, the editor of this book and a member of the Société. The original illustrations are the creations of Mr. Michel Pilon, also a member of the Société.

We are most grateful to Mr. Glen Adams, Ye Galleon Press, for undertaking the onerous task of publishing and printing this work.

The translation of the manuscripts and the extensive research required to explain them editorially has taken well over two years, and has been aided by a modest grant from the Secretary of State of Canada. A French language publication of this work is planned when circumstances permit. We would like to express our thanks for the financial help received.

We are especially grateful for the sustained and understanding help we have received from the distinguished historian and scholar, the Reverend M. Gaston Carrière, O.M.I., C.M., former archivist of the Archives Deschâtelets, who has read and checked our translations. His unfailing patience when confronted with a continual stream of letters asking for clarification of certain words and mid-nineteenth century idiomatic expressions not found in contemporary dictionaries has enabled us to produce a translation which we believe is free from inaccuracies.

CHAPTER TWO

JOURNEY UP THE MISSOURI RIVER



27th April [1848]

SECOND DAY OF OUR EMBARKATION. WE ARE NOT travelling very fast on the Missouri: the river is full of huge tree stumps which have to be avoided with the greatest care for fear of capsizing or getting our boat stuck amidst the thousands of tree branches that obstruct the waterway. During the evening, as we had to stop to take on wood to feed the steam engine, we took advantage of this halt to step on shore. I set about looking for plants and unusual flowers. We found a species of white camelia that was very beautiful.¹ There are many shrubs the flower of which is very similar to those of our European apple-trees. These flowers do not however produce any fruit.

28th April

[The Mormons]

Ever since daybreak the weather was heavily overcast. About 7 o'clock in the morning we reached a small island where we saw several pitched tents. I was told that a small colony of Americans called Mormons² lived in these tents. They are vagabonds who live in the manner of Indians. They have their own separate customs. They have a chief, and a religion that consists in not having any, or rather one that

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gives rise to unrestrained licentiousness which allows free rein to all animal passions. They live in promiscuous disorder, men and women together. These people have been chased out of America several times. Recently, their supreme chief incited his clansmen to set themselves free from all alien yoke. They roamed around in the vicinity of the fortress perpetrating all kinds of brigandage. The authorities stepped in, they were surrounded in their own town. The supreme chief appeared on top of the walls announcing to the besiegers that he was the messenger of God and that consequently he despised human weapons. He carried his audacity to the extent of defying them to inflict him with the slightest wound, saying that he was invulnerable and that their bullets would flatten on his sacred breast. One of the besiegers wanted to make this experiment, he fired a shot from his musket which dropped him dead. Confusion then reigned among the people. The town, taken by assault, was seized. Rumour has it that their chief, who also was their high priest, had a magnificent church in which one could see a baptistery supported by twelve golden oxen. This church remained the property of the queen wife, for there were twelve (wives) descending in rank. It appears that she sold this church to the government for the sum of 400,000 dollars. Now these poor people are pursued as fugitives. They are leaving the banks of the Missouri to go and settle in the upper Mississippi area; they also have vast lands in the Oregon country where they have built a fort.³

28th April (Continued)

Jefferson City

The same day at one o'clock in the afternoon we found ourselves at the mouth of the Beautiful Waters⁴ river. This river is so named because of the limpidity of its waters which creates a curious contrast with the muddy waters of the Missouri. We then arrived at a little town called Jefferson City,⁵ a recently founded town that has a nice penitentiary.

The town is laid out in the manner of an amphitheatre. A building of superb architecture can be seen on the sky-line, this is the Parliament.

29th April

Saturday. Today is the fourth day of our journey on the Missouri. The weather was cold. At 8.30 in the morning we arrived at Rocheport, a small market town. Around 2 o'clock in the afternoon we were pleasantly surprised to see two deer crossing the river against the current. Our captain had the engine stopped in order to give them time to gain the shore.

30th April

Sunday. We celebrated the Holy Mass this morning in our cabin. During the course of the morning we passed by a burnt down forest, large trees were falling into the river. I thought of our poor people in France when I saw such an enormous quantity of wood going to waste. How many unfortunate people could be supplied for several years with what this river brings down, and all this is lost!

1st May

In order to place our journey under the protection of the Blessed Mary⁶ we commenced, as early as yesterday, our religious exercises of the month of May. I have nothing but praise for the behaviour of the *Tamerlane* officers. Last Friday the captain was thoughtful enough to have a meatless soup served to me. At 8 o'clock we passed by a coal-mine. It was stormy all the evening.

2nd May

At 5 o'clock in the morning we were at Fort Independence. The town is six miles away from here. At 10 o'clock in the morning we were at the little village of Keutzee⁷ [Kansas Landing] where we unloaded a great deal of baggage.⁸ Four miles from there we came upon the Camp river [Kansas River]⁹ which is the frontier of the land belonging to the Americans. The other bank belongs to the Indians. At 1 o'clock we are at Parkville, a small village where we saw the first Indians on the river bank. We observed an Indian with his whole family. He was standing [still], a posture he maintained without moving for half an hour. All along the river-side we noticed very pretty tiny little birds which build their nests on the banks of the river. At 6 o'clock in the evening we are at the fort¹⁰ that the Americans¹¹ have constructed on the left bank of the river in order to protect themselves from the incursions of the Indians. Mr. Laberge, one of the officers of the *Tamerlane*, offered to accompany us for a visit to the fortress. This worthy gentleman was very kind to us, he offered to forward to us free of charge all the letters that we might receive from France. The fort was guarded by a detachment of volunteer soldiers. That evening, after returning to the steamboat, a young German, a native of Sarrelouis, [Western Germany]¹² came to see me, having learned that there were priests on board. I was really pleased with his conversation, the young soldier had excellent qualities.

3rd May

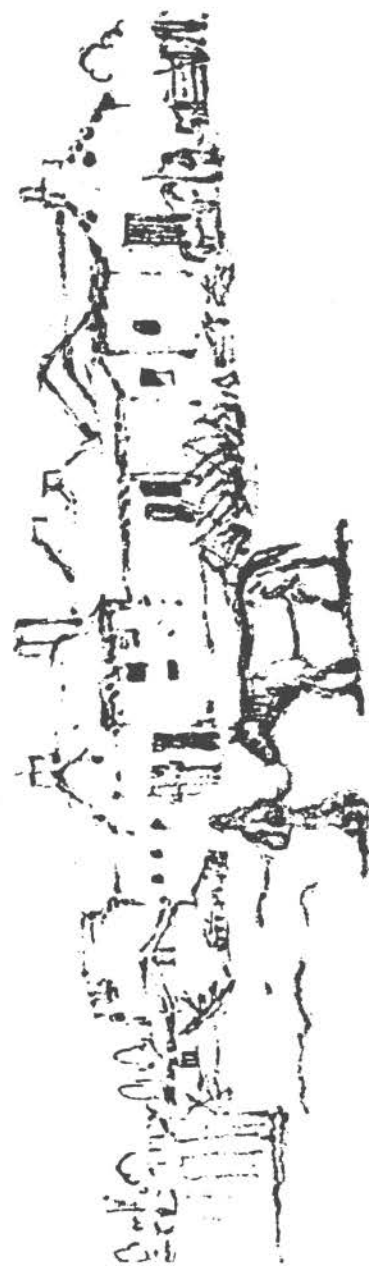
The eighth day of our journey on the Missouri. At 8 o'clock [in the morning] we went past some Indian huts, these were made from the bark of trees. Until midday we saw only immense forests. All of a sudden a vast plain comes into view, a delightful sight and [there were] very pretty little hills. On the side of a little hill there was a nice little

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cabin made of rushes. The owner of this dwelling was a dark complexioned Indian of fine stature; his shining black eyes manifested surprise. We hailed him and he responded to our greeting in the most gracious manner. Towards 2 o'clock our ship hit one of the numerous tree stumps which clutter the river, the motion made by the steamboat made us think we were lost for it bounced up nearly three feet. We arrived at last at St. Joseph at 6 o'clock in the evening. This is the place where we had to leave the steamboat and travel from now on by caravan. We took our leave of the officers of the *Tamerlane* and went to stay with Mr. Scanlen, the worthy parish priest of St. Joseph who welcomed us in his house as messengers of the Lord. We gave him the letters that the Most Reverend Archbishop of St. Louis had given us.

Saint Joseph on the Missouri

The little town of St. Joseph is not very old for it was founded only four years ago. Just six years ago this lovely country was still completely deserted. A Métis, M. Robidoux¹³ came to establish himself by the river and bought a three mile piece of land around there. Soon, other settlers came to establish themselves in the area when emigration to Oregon became more frequent. Consequently, one obtains supplies at St. Joseph today just as well as at St. Louis. Food is very inexpensive there; salted port is 10 centimes [2 sous]¹⁴ a pound and so forth. There are really nice shops. The population numbers about 1,000 souls, but it is a mixture of all the American sects. There is a little Catholic church, a temple¹⁵ for the Protestants, one for the Quakers and another for the Methodists. We stayed in St. Joseph until the 10th of May whilst waiting for the departure of the caravan. On Sunday, the good parish priest wished me to officiate at the service, and I said a few words to these brave people. I found several Germans had settled in this parish and they were very pleased to be able to make their confessions.¹⁶ I must pay tribute to the Imfeld family who provided so generously towards



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the expenses of my journey. At St. Joseph we heard that a settler named O'Neil wished to go to Oregon and we made a deal with him for the transportation of our baggage. He asked only fifty piastres [dollars] per person. We thought we had done well in selling our waggon and thus entrusting ourselves to our conductor. The agreement was concluded in good order and we were to leave on the 11th May. On the 10th, towards midday, we saw a cavalcade arriving which we at first took to be Indians, but little by little we discerned white men. These presumed Indians were a deputation from the Oregon states¹⁷ on their way to Washington to ask help from the United States against the Oregon Indians.¹⁸ We learned that the Indians of Walla Walla¹⁹ were in rebellion and had massacred Doctor Whitman with his wife and children, in all eleven persons.²⁰ I learned that the missionaries had not suffered in anyway and that they had been able to withdraw to a safe place.²¹



CHAPTER THREE

DEPARTURE FROM ST. JOSEPH JOINING THE CARAVAN

11th May [1848]



IT WAS ON MAY 11TH THAT WE CROSSED THE river to go and camp that same day five miles from where the caravan was stationed. Our conductor, O'Neil had allowed several animals to stray when we were crossing the river, consequently we were obliged to remain in the same place for several days until they had been recovered. I passed an excellent night under our tent. In the afternoon I went hunting and was quite lucky.

12th May

[1st Camp]

Around 10 o'clock we were surrounded by Indians called Pawnee.¹ If I would not have been in America I would have believed myself present at carnival time, a real masquerade!² They were daubed with red, white and yellow; some had their skin painted in long lines rather like the zebra, some had one eye red, the other white, and others had their faces painted in four or five colours. Their chief wore on his chest three big tin medals, these bore the effigy of George III, King of England. The chief's hair was dressed in the form of a horse's mane, the hair at the back was drawn up towards the front, and instead of a large hairpin

he stuck a sheaf of green reeds through his hair. This handsome head of hair was adorned with what? Guess . . .³ That's it, exactly. Instead of the royal sceptre he had a long dragoon's sword sheath from which hung a sheaf of reeds At St. Joseph I had procured a pretty little black pony for myself. I had a beautiful saddle with a fur blanket [horse blanket]* that was very attractive to the Indian chief, he eyed it with envy.

13th May

[2nd Camp]

I took the lead with my little pony. We came into vast and beautiful prairieland [where there were] some very pretty little hills. Unfortunately, my horse was too nimble, and I found myself too far ahead. The caravan had halted at 6 o'clock that evening. I was alone in that immense prairie—it was as if I were alone in the world. Not the smallest sound came to tear me away from my reveries. I waited in vain until 9 o'clock in the evening. In Europe, the Christian soul rejoices when hearing the sound of the bells; here, there is absolute silence, it is as if nature is in suspended animation. I started to feel afraid and decided to return on my tracks. It was not until very late at night that I caught sight of our campfires.

14th May

[3rd Camp]

There were only 11 waggons in our caravan; another of 21 waggons was three days ahead of us. The captain proposed to me that I take the lead with an Irishman and go [ahead] and request the captain of that caravan to wait for us. I was told that the caravan was only 45 miles away, that is why we took only a very small quantity of food with us. I had three biscuits and a roasted starling—we left at 8 o'clock in the

morning. We covered twenty-five miles without meeting up with the caravan. We arrived at a little village called Nemaha. There I found a good Canadian who gave us dinner. He was so generous that he would not accept anything in return. We left him at 3 o'clock, and later we laid down to sleep at the edge of a meadow. Not having found the caravan, I left a pencilled note for Mr. Lionnet, letting him know that we had gone on further ahead.

15th May

We left at 4 o'clock in the morning. On the way we saw three Indian cabins, and a cemetery. We were going down a hill; before long a piercing scream came to our ears; my companion is terrified, he thinks the Indians are after us. "Indian, Indian," he cries, taking off at a gallop. I followed him. Fear had led astray this poor man's senses, he was out of his mind. He did not stop until he reached the edge of a forest more than ten miles away. As it was dark we were able to go no further. I wanted at least that we take cover in the thickness of the forest. Impossible! My friend was so fearful of the Indians that he wanted to bed down in open country. We set our horses free to graze, attaching them with a rope long enough for them to find sufficient grass. Then we ate the remainder of our provisions. The weather was stormy, we were without shelter and I had only my coat to protect me from the rain. We both wrapped ourselves up in it. I would have slept quite well but for my Irishman who could not sleep a wink, believing at every moment that he heard Indians coming upon us unexpectedly. I told him to arm himself with the sign of the cross and to go to sleep without fear. When I spoke to him about the sign of the cross he set about doing this endlessly, he kept waking me up to show me that he knew how to make it well, asking me if it was properly done like this . . . ? About 4 o'clock in the morning I woke up absolutely soaked by the rain that had been falling throughout a good part of the night. We at once saddled our horses in

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order to resume our search [for the caravan]. We went thirty miles without eating anything. On our way we noticed herds of deer grazing on the hilltops, but as soon as we wanted to get close to them they would take off. Towards 4 o'clock in the afternoon we came to the place the caravan had left the previous day. We recognized the waggons' recent tracks but as we would have had to travel for another whole day without provisions we lost heart; we thus resolved to return [to our own caravan]. The Irishman still had a piece of bacon that we roasted on the fire, and we ate it with great relish. We went to bed down a few miles from there, then the next day we travelled the whole day without eating anything. It was only towards evening that we discovered the route our caravan had taken. It had rained during the day, and all of a sudden we noticed fresh tracks on the left bank. Great was our joy when half an hour later, we found our people. Nearly all of them were asleep. They made haste to prepare something for us to eat, as we were in dire need of food. What [had] made me suffer the most during those three or four days was being deprived of tobacco. I had forgotten to refill my tobacco pouch, with the result that I spent two complete days without having any. Those who have the unfortunate habit of taking snuff^s will be able to understand what I had to endure!

17th May

[4th Camp)

The exertion of my three days' forced march procured me a sound and refreshing sleep. I awoke with a sense of well-being. We left at 6 o'clock in the morning but had hardly gone three miles before the axle of our wagon broke. Fortunately, not being too far from a forest, a piece of wood could be cut so that we could make a new one. Our workers laboured at this so energetically that we were able to get on our way around 3 o'clock [the next] morning.

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18th May

[5th Camp]

We halted around noon by a little river where I saw several snakes playing in the water. We left to go and camp 6 miles from there.

19th May

[6th Camp]

On Friday, we left after a frugal breakfast. We found some pieces of red granite, and several rocks of pink marble streaked with grey that I believe would take on a beautiful polish.

20th May

[7th Camp]

Today, a strange adventure befell me. I had taken the lead with my pony. I came into a huge plain. By midday I had not yet found the smallest stream and I was dying of thirst. The caravan was late and I urged on my horse hoping to come across some little spring. Around four o'clock I stop to say my office.⁶ My horse was grazing about ten paces away from me. All of a sudden I see him rear up on his hind legs, absolutely terrified, immediately I notice two moving shadows that seemed to me like the top of two barouches. At first I thought that it was the caravan's vehicles arriving, but while I reflected that we had no waggons covered in blue, I could discern two objects, one white, the other blue. So I went up to my horse to get my spyglass.⁷ What was my surprise when, with the aid of my glass, I unmistakably distinguished two Indians creeping along, with blankets over their heads. The wind was blowing up the blankets in a way that made them appear like carriages to me. I was frightened. I mounted my horse, departed at a gallop, and made for a forest in which to hide whilst waiting for the

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caravan to arrive. Towards 7 o'clock in the evening I thought I could see three men coming. Indeed these were our people. I told them about my adventure, and they laughed uproariously!

21st May

[8th Camp]

The night of the 20th to the 21st was both frightening and catastrophic. A terrible storm broke around 8 o'clock that evening. The rain came down in buckets and the wind blew with extreme violence. Our tent was just about carried away by the hurricane a score of times. Since they had failed to put out the fire, large burning embers were being picked up by the wind and tossed as far as our waggons. We narrowly escaped being burnt alive. An hour later, water was streaming into our tent, and as I was crouched down in order to hold down the tent's sides I could soon feel my knees soaking in the water that was pouring over our bedding. So I let go my hold to go to find shelter in the waggon, and I spent the rest of the night there, chilled to the marrow. Later in the day we came upon a beautiful river in the forest, and we crossed this without any accidents. Not too far away from there we found a spring that had excellent water, the first we have happened upon since we joined the caravan. On a little knoll I saw a cairn, the grave marker of a child who had been drowned while crossing the river.

22nd May

[9th Camp]

It has been a rainy day. The thunder has been rumbling all day long. I had to travel in the waggon and I put my horse on a leading rein. I found a nice turtle from which I made an excellent stew. The rains of these last few days have brought on several cases of fever. I am treating my patients, all of whom are on the way to recovery.

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23rd May

[10th Camp]

We have had a very bad night. The storm ceased only at daybreak. Because of the violence of the wind we had not been able to light a fire. We ran short of water.

24th May

[11th Camp]

Bad weather all day, still raining. Came upon some stone-quarries. Having arrived at our campsite one of our good Americans kills a calf, he gives us the "portion de Benjamin."⁸ We see more and more wolves. They prowl around our camp all night long and their howling gives one the shivers.

25th May and 26th May

[12th and 13th Camps]

Nothing of interest the first day. We meet two men from Oregon coming from Walla Walla and we give them lunch, we see some buffalo heads.⁹ We set up our camp on the banks of the Blue River.¹⁰

27th May

[14th Camp]

It was very windy all night. I find some very pretty little roses and some jasmine. My patients¹¹ are becoming more numerous. Mr. Lionnet himself is unwell. We come across three graceful deer. The further we go the more picturesque the country becomes. One might say that Nature has taken great pleasure in beautifying these wild regions, I said to myself while gazing upon places so lovely, that she must smile to

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herself that man has so late discovered some of her most beautiful creations. During the afternoon we meet two waggons loaded with furs¹² on their way to St. Louis.

28th May

[15th Camp]

Sunday. We celebrate the Holy Mass in our tent. We are still travelling through enchanting country. At noon we meet a party of fur traders. Three young Créoles¹³ speak very good French. One of our men kills a wild turkey.

29th May

[16th Camp]

A poor camp, very wet. I find a prickly pear called Cactus.¹⁴ We travel twenty-five miles without finding a single drop of water. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, having reached the top of a hill, I began to notice different scenery, in the distance some lovely mountains came into view. Oh! How this sight delighted me. For nearly three weeks we are travelling in the endless plain, how monotonous this is! I had gone on too far ahead, so I turned back in order to find our people who were camped three miles away.

30th May

[17th Camp]

We leave at 7 o'clock in the morning, being forced to quit our camp site due to lack of water, our animals are dying of thirst. I go on ahead so as to get to the lovely spot that I [can] see. I come to a little valley on each side of which are lovely hills. I come across a number of deer and I baptised this place, "Deer Hill." Having reached the summit

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at 9 o'clock in the morning I dismounted so that I could contemplate at leisure one of the most beautiful panoramas I have seen in my life. With the help of my spyglass I discerned the lovely banks of the River Platte. At one o'clock I am still absolutely alone in this lovely spot, the caravan is late. We suffer from lack of water. At last we are all reunited. We go down the hill so that we can reach the Platte River. It is half past three and we are going to camp six miles higher up.

