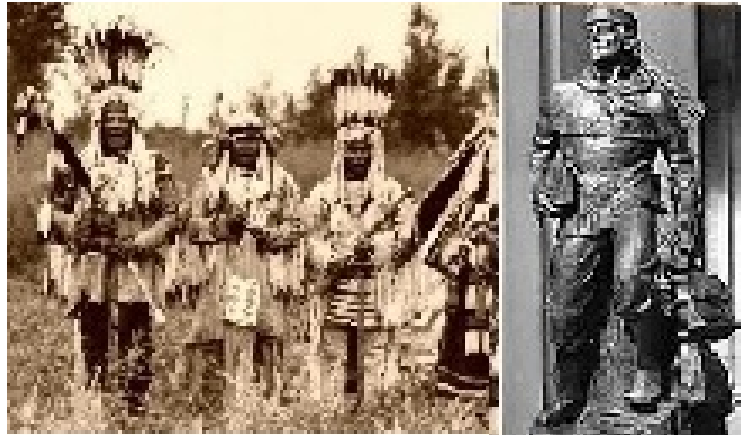


## American Minute with Bill Federer Nez Perce & Flathead Indians, Missionary Dr. Marcus Whitman, & the Oregon Trail

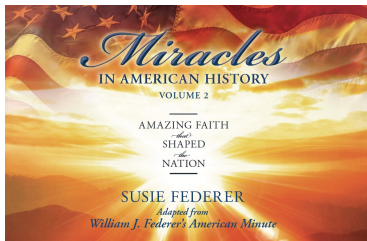
### [Read American Minute](#)

After the  
**Louisiana  
Purchase** from  
**France** in 1803,  
**Jefferson** sent  
**Lewis and Clark**  
to explore the  
**Northwest** from  
May 1804 to



September 1806, meeting natives tribes along the way ...  
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### [Miracles in American History-Vol. TWO: Amazing Faith that Shaped the Nation](#)

Several years later, in 1831, three **Nez Perce Indians** and one **Flathead Indian**, traveled 2,000 miles, all the way from the **Oregon Territory** to **St. Louis, Missouri**, looking for the "**Book to Heaven.**"

The **Bishop of St. Louis** was **Rev. Joseph Rosati** (1789-1843), who later sent **Pierre De Smet** as one of the "**Black robe**" missionaries to the Indians.

**Bishop Rosati** wrote in the *Annals of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith*, December 31, 1831:

"Some three months ago **four Indians** who live **across the Rocky Mountains** near the **Columbia River** (Clark's Fork of the Columbia) arrived at **St. Louis** ...

... After visiting **General Clark** who, in his celebrated travels, has visited their country ... they came to see **our church** and appeared to be exceedingly well pleased with it ...

Two of our priests visited them ... **They made the sign of the Cross** and other signs which appeared to have some relation to baptism. The sacrament was administered to them."

**A monument of two eagle feathers**, standing over eight feet tall, in **Calvary Cemetery** in **St. Louis, Missouri**, commemorates the visit of the **Indians**.

Wyandot Indian chief, **William Walker** (1800-1874), who had become a Methodist, met the same Indians at the **home of Territorial Governor William Clark**, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1805-1806).

Though modern-day revisionists attempt to discredit the spiritual aspect of the Indians' quest, **William Walker**, who was the **first provisional governor of the Nebraska-Kansas Territory**, gave an eye-witness account.

His account was printed, March 1, 1833, in the ***Christian Advocate & Journal and Zion's Herald of New York***, a Methodist Episcopal publication which **at the time had the largest circulation of any periodical in the world:**

"Immediately after we landed in **St. Louis**, on our way to the west, I proceeded to **Gen. Clark's**, superintendent of Indian affairs ...

... While in his office ... he informed me that three chiefs from the **Flat-Head nation** were in his house, and were

quite sick, and that one (the fourth) had died a few days ago.

They were from the **west of the Rocky Mountains ...**

... Curiosity prompted me to step into the adjoining room to see them, having never seen any, but often heard of them. I was struck by their appearance ...

The distance they had traveled on foot was nearly three thousand miles to see **Gen. Clarke**, their great father, as they called him, he being the first American officer they ever became acquainted with ..."

**Walker** continued:

"**Gen. Clark** related to me the object of their mission, and, my dear friend, it is impossible for me to describe to you my feelings while listening to his narrative ...

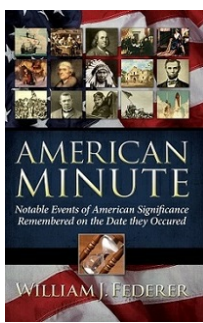
(They had heard) the white people away toward the rising of the sun had been put in possession of **the true mode of worshiping the great Spirit.**

They had **a book** containing directions how to conduct themselves in order to enjoy his favor and hold converse with him;

... and with this guide, no one need go astray, but every one that would follow the directions laid down there, could enjoy, in this life, his favor; and after death would be received into the country where **the great Spirit** resides, and live for ever with him ...

Upon receiving this information, they called a national council to take this subject into consideration ...

... They accordingly deputed **four of their chiefs** to proceed to **St. Louis** to see their great father, **Gen. Clarke**, to inquire of him."



## [American Minute-Notable Events of American Significance Remembered on the Date They Occurred](#)

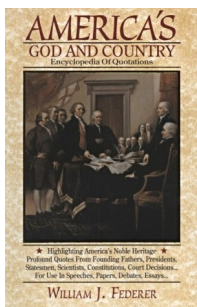
Interestingly enough, a similar event occurred on the **other side of the world in Burma.**

The **Karen people** had an ancient prophecy that the all-powerful Creator would someday send white foreigners with a **sacred parchment roll** which would show them **the way to heaven.**

In 1813, **Adoniram Judson** and his wife **Ann** became **America's first foreign missionaries to Burma.** There they were assisted by a native interpreter named **Ko Tha Byu.**

When **Ko Tha Byu** realized he was actually interpreting **the promised book**, he was **baptized** in 1828, and became a tireless **Christian evangelist** to his tribe, **leading to thousands convert.**

**Ko Tha Byu** then served as the **first native Burmese pastor** at a church in **Rangoon.**



## [America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)

**William Walker** wrote further of being at **William Clark's home** in **St. Louis, Missouri**, in 1831 and meeting the **Nez Perce and Flathead Indians:**

"They arrived at **St. Louis**, and presented themselves to **Gen. Clark** the latter was somewhat puzzled being

sensible of the responsibility that rested on him;

he however proceeded by informing them that what they had been told by the white man in their own country, was true.

... Then went into a succinct history of man, from his creation down to the advent of the **Savior**; explained to them all the moral precepts contained in the **Bible**, expounded to them the decalogue (ten commandments).

Informed them of the advent of the **Savior**, his life, precepts, his death, resurrection, ascension, and the relation he now stands to man as a mediator-that he will judge the world, & c."

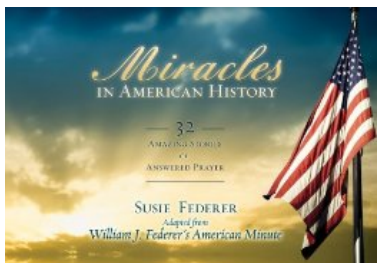
The published account of the **Nez Perce** and **Flathead Indians** visiting St. Louis inspired **Dr. Marcus Whitman**.

In 1835, he went with missionary **Samuel Parker** to northwest **Montana** and **Idaho** to minister to **Nez Perce** and **Flathead Indians**.

The next year, **Marcus** and his newly-wed wife, **Narcissa**, left **Massachusetts** and become missionaries to the **Indians of Oregon and Washington**.

Accompanying them were **Presbyterian missionaries Henry and Eliza Spalding**.

This made **Narcissa** and **Eliza** the **first white women** to cross the Rocky Mountains.



[Miracles in American History-  
Amazing Stories of Answered Prayer](#)

**President Warren G. Harding**, in dedicating the **Oregon Trail Monument**, July 3, 1923, recounted how **Dr.**

**Marcus Whitman** traveled, clad in buckskin breeches, fur leggings and moccasins,

"(An) episode ... took place within these walls ... Seated at his desk ... **John Tyler, tenth President of the United States**. Facing him ... was the lion-visaged **Daniel Webster, Secretary of State**.

... The door opened and there appeared before the amazed statesmen a strange and astonishing figure.

It was that of a man of medium height and sturdy build, deep chested, broad shouldered, yet lithe in movement and soft in step.

He was clad in a coarse fur coat, buckskin breeches, fur leggings, and boot moccasins, looking much worse for the wear ...

... It was that of a religious enthusiast, tenaciously earnest yet revealing no suggestion of fanaticism, bronzed from exposure to pitiless elements and seamed with deep lines of physical suffering, a rare combination of determination and gentleness - obviously a man of God, but no less a man among men.

... Such was **Marcus Whitman**, the missionary hero of the vast, unsettled, unexplored **Oregon country**, who had come out of the West **to plead that the state should acquire for civilization the empire that the churches were gaining for Christianity ..."**

**Harding** continued:

"The magnificence of **Marcus Whitman's** glorious deed has yet to find adequate recognition in any form.

Here was a man who, with a single companion, **in the dead of winter (1842)**, struggled through pathless drifts and blinding storms, **four thousand miles**, with the sole

aim to serve **his country and his God** ...

... He was pushing grimly and painfully through this very pass on his way from **Walla Walla** to **Fort Hall**,

thence, abandoning the established northern route as impassable, **off to the South through unknown, untrodden lands**, past the **Great Salt Lake**,

to **Santa Fe**, then hurriedly on to **St. Louis** and finally, after a few days, again on the home-stretch to his destination, taking as many months as it now takes days to go from **Walla Walla** to **Washington** ..."

**Harding** continued:

"It was more than a desperate and perilous trip that **Marcus Whitman** undertook.

It was a race against time.

Public opinion was rapidly crystallizing into a judgment that the **Oregon country** was not worth claiming, much less worth fighting for; that, even though it could be acquired against the insistence of **Great Britain**, it would prove to be a liability rather than an asset ...

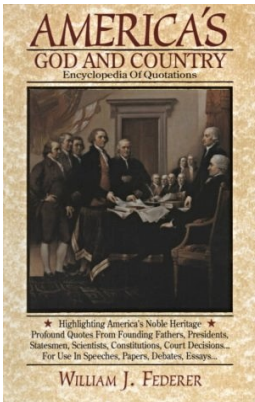
**Webster** ... years before ... had pronounced **Oregon** 'a barren, worthless country, fit only for wild beasts and wild men' ...

**Whitman** ... turning to the **President Tyler** ... added ... beseechingly:

'All I ask is that you will not barter away **Oregon** or allow English interference until I can lead a **band of stalwart American settlers across the plains**. For this I shall try to do!' ...

The just and considerate **Tyler** could not refuse. **'Doctor**

**Whitman,** he rejoined sympathetically, 'your long ride and frozen limbs testify to your courage and your patriotism. Your credentials establish your character. **Your request is granted!"**



## [America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)

**Harding** added:

**"Whitman** ... a few months later (1843) ... had completed an organization of eager souls, and led the first movement by wagon train across plains and mountains along this unblazed trail.

... What a sight that **caravan** must have appeared to the roaming savages! And what an experience for the intrepid pioneers!

More that **two hundred wagons**, bearing well-nigh a **thousand emigrants**, made up the party.

... They traveled by substantially the same route that **Whitman** had taken when he first went out to **Oregon**;

from a rendezvous near what is now **Kansas City** they moved due northwest across **northeast Kansas** and southeast **Nebraska** to the **Platte River**;

... followed the **Platte** to the middle of what is now **Wyoming**,

thence crossing the mountains by way of the **Sweetwater Valley** and the **South Platte**;



and from **Fort Hall**, following the well-known route, roughly paralleling the **Snake River**, into **Oregon**.

... The difficulties of the trip, involving beside the **two hundred wagons**, the care of women and children, and of considerable herds of live stock, were such that **its successful accomplishment seems almost miraculous**.

... But stern determination triumphed and the result was conclusive. Americans had settled the country ... and in the end the boundary settlement was made on the line of the forty-ninth parallel, your **great Northwest was saved**, and a veritable Empire was merged in the young Republic.

... **Never in the history of the world** has there been a **finer example of civilization following Christianity**.

The **missionaries** led under the **banner of the cross**, and the **settlers** moved close behind under the **star-spangled symbol of the nation**."

**Harding** acknowledged the missionaries by name:

"Among all the records of the **evangelizing efforts** as the **forerunner of human advancement**, there is none so impressive as this of the **early Oregon mission** and its marvelous consequences.

... To the men and women of that early day whose first thought was to carry the gospel to the Indians

-to the **Lees**, the **Spauldings**, the **Grays**, the **Walkers**, the **Leslies**, to **Fathers DeSmet** and **Blanchet** and **DeMars**, and to all the others of that glorious company who found that in **serving God** they were also **serving their country** and **their fellowmen**

-to them we pay today our tribute; to them we owe a debt

of gratitude, which we can never pay, save partially through recognition such as you and I have accorded today."

Unfortunately, when an outbreak of measles occurred, several **Cayuse Indians** died.

The mission was blamed and the **Whitmans**, along with 11 others, **were massacred**.

**President Harding** concluded his **Oregon Trail** tribute by acknowledging:

"... my appreciation both as **President of the United States** and as one who honestly tries to be a **Christian** soldier, of the signal service of the **martyred Whitman**."

The **State of Washington** placed the statue of **Dr. Marcus Whitman** in the **U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall**.

In 1833, missionary **Jason Lee** went to **Oregon**, founding missions along the Willamette River near Salem.

He was instrumental in petitioning the United States government to recognize **Oregon** as a territory.

The **State of Oregon** placed a statue of **Jason Lee** in the U.S. Capital.

In 1856, **Mother Joseph** led five missionaries to the Pacific Northwest where they founded

- 11 hospitals,
- 7 academies,
- 5 Indian schools, and
- 2 orphanages.

The **State of Washington** placed a statue of **Mother Joseph** in the U.S. Capital.

Relations with Indians exhibited a recurring theme in history, namely, the **competing motivations** of the human heart, **Greed** and the **Gospel**.

- On one hand, **Missionaries** and **virtuous settlers motivated by the Gospel** genuinely wanted to be a **blessing** to native tribes, setting up schools, orphanages, and medical clinics.
- On the other hand, **opportunistic politicians and settlers motivated by greed** took advantage of Indians, traded alcohol, killed buffalo, and broke treaties to **drive tribes off** their lands.

These differences would later be manipulated by another ideology appearing on the other side of the world in Germany, namely **socialist Marxism**.

**Marx's Communist Manifesto of 1848** advanced a **divide and conquer tactic**, where **grievances of minorities** would be **fanned to hostility**, bringing **violent internal unrest** which would allow a **dictator to seize power**.

Some Indian chiefs successfully discerned through these challenging times, such as **Chief Moses** of the **Sinkiuse-Columbia tribe**, and **Chief Joseph** of the **Nez Perce tribe**.

They gave up land to avoid war, and in the process, **successfully preserved their tribes' existence**.

**Chief Moses** befriended **Missionary Henry Spalding** and was educated at a **Presbyterian mission school**.

**Chief Moses** traveled to **Washington, D.C.**, where he met with **President Rutherford Hayes**.

In the Wind River area of Wyoming, **Shoshone Chief Washakie** (whose father was a Flathead), **learned to**

**speak French, English, and numerous native languages.**

Around 1840, he united the Shoshone tribes.

He became friends with fur trappers and explorers, such as **Kit Carson, John Fremont, and Jim Bridger.**

At the urging of **Jim Bridger**, who became his son-in-law, **Chief Washakie** attended councils and signed treaties with the U.S. Government, preserving the existence of the **Shoshone.**

In 1885, **Chief Washakie's** son was killed by a white man in a dispute over alcohol.

The Chief vowed revenge against all white men, but when **Episcopal missionary John Robert offered his life in exchange**, the Chief relented.

**Missionary John Robert** translated the **Bible** into **Shoshone** and **Arapahoe**, and with the help of **Chief Washakie**, founded a **Christian boarding school.**

In 1897, **Chief Washakie** was baptized as a **Christian** in the Episcopal faith. **His statue is in the U.S. Capital.**

The unavoidable fact in that century was **global colonial powers** sought control of the **northwest area of America:**

- **Spanish**, who had claimed California for two centuries;
- **France**, that had claims from the Louisiana Territory;
- **Russia**, that had control of Alaska;
- **Britain**, that had control of Canada; or

- **United States.**

After treaties were negotiated, the **Oregon Territory** of **286,541 square miles** became **U.S. property**, being incorporated into the states of

- **Oregon,**
- **Montana,**
- **Washington,**
- **Idaho,**
- **parts of Wyoming.**

In 1859, **Oregon** became the **33rd state** to join the Union. The original **Oregon State Constitution** stated:

"Bill of Rights, Article I, Section 2. All men shall be secure in the **Natural right, to worship Almighty God** according to the **dictates of their consciences.**"

In 1889, **Montana** became the **41st state** to join the Union. The original **Montana Constitution** stated:

"Preamble. We, the **people of Montana**, grateful to **Almighty God** for the **blessings of liberty** ... establish this Constitution."

In 1889, **Washington** became the **42 state** to join the Union. The original **Washington State Constitution** stated:

"Preamble. We, the **people of the State of Washington**, grateful to the **Supreme Ruler of the Universe** for our **liberties**, do ordain this Constitution."

In 1890, **Idaho** became the **43rd state** to join the Union. The original **Idaho State Constitution** stated:

"Preamble. We, the **people of the State of Idaho**, grateful to **Almighty God** for our freedom, to secure its blessings and promote our common welfare do establish this Constitution."

In 1890, **Wyoming** became the **44th state** to join the Union. The original **Wyoming Constitution** stated:

"Preamble. We, the **people of the State of Wyoming**, grateful to **God** for our civil, political, and **religious liberties** ... establish this Constitution."

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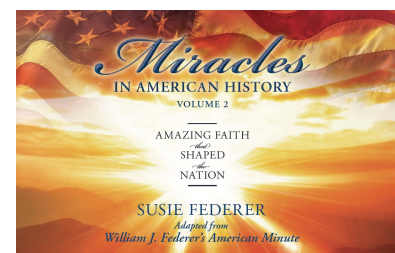
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