

Doctor himself had a wagon in Oregon which he took through the mountains in 1836.

President Tyler showed how his credulity was taxed by his reply: "Your long ride and frozen limbs bespeak your sincerity. Your missionary credentials vouch for your character." The President evidently thought his statements needed the support of his missionary credentials. Dr. Whitman simply asked that no farther action should be taken in regard to the boundary west of the Rocky Mountains until he could lead a band of emigrants over and prove that the passage was open, the climate mild, and the soil rich.

Whether or not Webster distrusted Dr. Whitman we cannot now fully settle. From all the accounts we are inclined to think that the great Secretary believed he was in contact with a half crazy western land agent, though he knew that Whitman had no title to a foot of land in all Oregon. But Tyler gave his personal pledge that he would not sign a treaty until Dr. Whitman had time to lead a colony to Oregon. Nor was the effect of Whitman's visit lost on Mr. Webster. In a letter to Edward Everett, then Minister to Great Britain, in 1840, Mr. Webster had said: "The ownership of the whole country is very likely to follow the greater settlement and larger amount of population." So he was in hearty sympathy with the effort Jason Lee had already made, and with Dr. Whitman's proposal to take emigrants to Oregon. In his next letter to our Minister to England, after Dr. Whitman's visit, Mr. Webster is careful to claim the territory which the Doctor had described in such glowing colors: "The Government of the U. S. has never offered any line south of forty-nine, and never will. It behooves all concerned to regard this as a settled point." Again, near the close of the letter, he says: "England must not expect anything south of the forty-ninth degree." England was expecting territory south of the forty-ninth parallel larger than New England, and would probably have secured it had it not been for the missionaries. Mr. Webster leaves no doubt as to the importance of the missionary occupation of Oregon, in a remark which he later made to a friend: "It is safe to assert that our country owes it to Dr. Whitman and his associate missionaries that all its territory west of the Rocky Mountains and south as far as the Columbia River is not owned by Great Britain."

Meanwhile Gen. Lovejoy was not idle. He was spreading reports of the soil and climate of Oregon. Whitman had a brief circular printed in St. Louis announcing that he would lead without charge a colony to Oregon. Dr. Whitman in June 1843 met Gen. Lovejoy at a point on the Missouri, not far from the present site of Kansas City. Over two hundred families of emigrants had been collected by their joint efforts. Dr. Whitman piloted the company safely across, and when in September 1843 his long line of 200 wagons with 870 American settlers filed through the Blue Mountains into the valley of the Columbia,