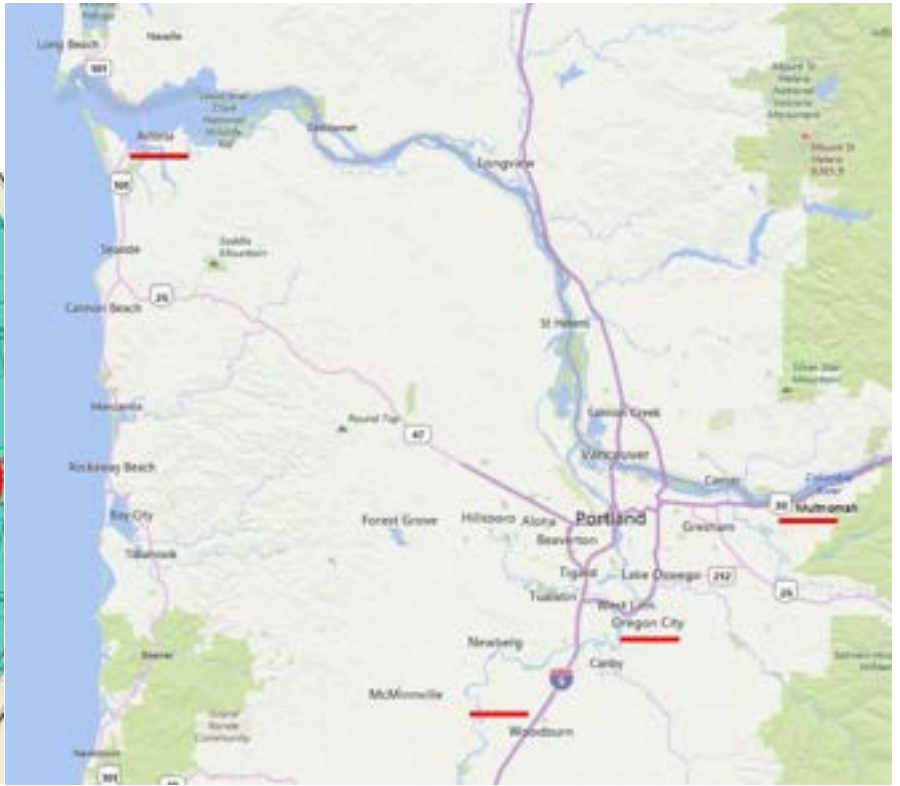


## INSTITUTE HISTORY WORKSHEET

### Mission to Willamette

#### Places:

- Antwerp Harbor (87 nautical miles to English Channel)
- The *Infatigable*
- Valparaíso, Chile: The *Infatigable* arrived there 12 April, 1844 – Loyola writes to Mère Constantine & asks her to make a foundation there
- Lima, Peru: ship finally fumigated; 25 congregations, not 1 teaching children
- Mouth of Columbia River (today the border between Oregon & Washington), notoriously dangerous
- Astoria: 1<sup>st</sup> landfall in Oregon Territory
- Fort Vancouver: arrive August 5, 1844
- St. Paul's, Willamette: Sisters arrive in late August, 1844 (Loyola buys land in Portland and Multnomah)
- Oregon City
- San Jose, California



#### People & Relationships between them:

- Mère Constantine – sends Sisters to Oregon
- Bishop Francis Norbert Blanchet of Oregon – never wanted the job; no resources; worrier, not strong of will but very good heart
- Father DeSmet S.J. – on the *Infatigable*; chooses boat and captain; not good at confrontation
- Other Jesuits on the *Infatigable* (at least 5)
- S. J. Moller – captain of the *Infatigable*, bad decisions, gloomy (depressed) and dying of TB
- Bishop Alemany of San Francisco – suggests San Jose for foundation
- 1<sup>st</sup> group of Sisters:
  - Sister Albine (Mary Albine) Gobert: infirmation & maker of vestments, Thuin community
  - Sister Norbertine Verreux: 44, physically strong, blessed with green thumb, Ghent community

- Sister Mary Aloysia Chevy: frail, artistic, musician, poet, tackles any difficulty, 1<sup>st</sup> teacher & dearly loved by students, annalist of group
- Sister Reine: Flemish, nervous breakdown while stuck in river, Mère Constantine takes her off ship
- Sister Mary Catherine Cabareaux: 30, exuberant, organized, problem solver, mystic (finds ocean great vestibule to union with God), loved science, volunteered for Cincinnati 1<sup>st</sup>, loved the poor
- Sister Mary Cornelia (Marie-Cornélie) Neujean: 28, 2<sup>nd</sup> superior at Willamette, long-time superior of San Jose, held as a baby by St. Julie; reluctant leader, genuinely loved, decisions based on consultation, unusual gift of judgement, Fleurus community
- Sister Loyola Duchesne: 32, superior, builder, domineering, quick initiative, adaptability, gets things done, suave speech tipped with finality, unemotional, meets difficulties with optimism, exemption for training/preparation because finishing building school in Ixelles - unfortunate for leader of the band-missed not just knowledge of courses but chance to build relationships/get to know one another, Brussels community

### **Dates & Events:**

- 1843 December 12: Sisters depart for Oregon, 30 days stuck in river
- 1844 October 16: Sisters move into convent at Willamette; 20 boarders by Christmas, 31 at Easter
- 1846 Spring: Willamette economically secure
- 1847 Spring/Summer: 2<sup>nd</sup> band arrives from Belgium, fire destroys supplies
- 1848 Boarding school in Oregon City opens & gold discovered in California
- 1849: able bodied men abandon Oregon for gold fields, many die of disease leaving orphans in Oregon
- 1850 typhoid/cholera epidemic: Loyola talks of building a hospital
- 1851: fewer boarders but small balance & Sisters hold land purchased in Portland & Multnomah; problems incorporating schools at Willamette & Oregon City – January Loyola takes Mary Catherine and heads to San Francisco to meet 3<sup>rd</sup> band (planning to investigate possibilities there as well)
- 1851 August 4: opens Academy in San Jose
- 1852: Willamette closed; Sisters Mary Cornelia, Norbertine & 1 other taken to San Jose – Mary Cornelia named superior
- 1853 February 1: Loyola closes Oregon City; returns in March to hold auction, informs bishop, hands him bill for \$2500, takes rest of Sisters to San Jose arriving in April with \$3200.00.
- 1853 November/December: letter from Mère Constantine sends Loyola to Cincinnati IMMEDIATELY – by that time in debt to tune of \$54,000.00

### **Impact of War/Political Unrest:**

- Some of the troubles in Oregon relate to three counties fighting over territory (England, Russia, U.S.)
- The Gold Rush emptied Oregon Territory of men of working age (white men)
- Protestant/Catholic tensions stemming from very different ways of treating indigenous people – Sisters and other Catholics blamed for death of Whitmans at Walla Walla (Oregon Trail started in 1830)

### **Relationship with Hierarchy & Clergy:**

- Mère Constantine: collaborative; supportive of Bishop Blanchet; disagrees with Sister Loyola's treatment of him

- Loyola: not good with Bishop Blanchet; seems capable of challenging, manipulating, if a priest gets her ear-she listens to him over Bishop (Jesuits are a good example); doesn't even tell Bishop SNDdeN are leaving Oregon

### **Primitive Spirit:**

- Courage! – fear of shipwreck as they are approaching the horn; De Smet offers the Sisters final absolution; Sisters say they're fine - "I do believe the Reverend Fathers are easily alarmed"; peace of soul in dangerous moments
- Mère Constantine really tried to listen to and work with Loyola: sending Sisters trained in areas she requests, sending double supplies with 2<sup>nd</sup> band so Oregon City can be started
- "Preparing Sisters" for Oregon, generosity of Belgian houses in supplying things & personnel
- Loyola has none of Julie's spirit of "I'm like a little blind woman" – or her patience to wait until God's will is clear
- Equality – Loyola 1<sup>st</sup> cook and she can't make bread
- Obedience – direct order for Loyola to go to Cincinnati comes and she goes immediately
- Unity – Sisters and finances sent from Cincinnati
- Sisters realizing there is nothing of their work in San Jose that is for the poor

### **Spirituality underpinning everything:**

- Simplicity
- Great trust in the power of prayer

### **What touched your heart?**

- Mère Constantine trying to follow the bouncing ball of Loyola's never ending ideas.
- How terribly long communication took at 1<sup>st</sup> – 2 years until people and mail started crossing Central America
- Horrible way Bishop Blanchet is treated (Loyola in Oregon and turned away from Namur by portress)
- Sister Mary Aloysia – so frail physically and so very strong in every other way
- Sr. Loyola did not give up dream for Oregon City when fire destroyed so much of what 2<sup>nd</sup> band brought
- The Bishop & others all horrified at the extra physical labor the Sisters have to do
- Even with "preparation", they had no clue how to work with peoples of other cultures
- Seeing the goodness of God in one another: disagreements/differences did not overwhelm charity

### **New insights?**

- Preparation: speakers who have BEEN to Oregon are brought in to help the Sisters prepare
- How flighty De Smet was – leaves Oregon in 1845
- Implicit bias on part of Sisters towards Irish/Germans of Cincinnati, and indigenous people/people of mixed blood in Oregon; Hispanics, and "burly blacks" in Guatemala
- Loyola was not the person to have in charge of a mission on the other side of the globe – but she was an excellent 2<sup>nd</sup> person to help Louise in Cincinnati – expanding 6<sup>th</sup> Street, building Mt. Notre Dame
- Comparison between Cincinnati & Oregon:

<b>Cincinnati</b>	<b>Oregon</b>
Voyage: Sept. 3 – Oct. 31, relatively smooth, no rats, adequate space	Voyage: 7 months around the horn, fraught w/difficulty; Columbia River – sleeping on floor, 1500 rats, supplies running out
Captain supportive	Captain depressed, dying; crew coarse & wants to throw them overboard
8 Sisters sent, solid leadership	Only 6 Sisters; Loyola doesn't have preparation others have
City environment, money a problem	Rural environment, physical labor of Sisters is immense – building own house and growing own food – heavy labor
Louis prepares Louise for leadership and pushes her forward	Loyola doesn't get it when Mary Cornelia made superior of San Jose
<b>Bishop doesn't have things ready</b>	
No Indians – immigrants instead	Begin working with Indians immediately then Canadians
Additional Sisters come straight to Cincy	3 <sup>rd</sup> group goes to San Francisco – 3 day journey & months of waiting
Strong Bishop – good relationship	Bishop not as strong, struggling for resources, shrinking mission after 1848 – damaged relationship from 1 <sup>st</sup> with Loyola's insistence on deeding over land
Sisters adapt curriculum almost immediately	Sisters do not adapt curriculum until they are in San Jose
Except 1 <sup>st</sup> candidate 3 months after arrival	Do not accept any candidate until they are in San Jose
Growing population to serve	Shrinking population due to California gold rush
1 <sup>st</sup> fund raiser to build Sixth Street/cost of supplies not as high	Even with property given to them – they struggle – Loyola spends money quite freely; building materials horribly expensive & other supplies very costly
Do not expand beyond Cincinnati for 5 years – within Cincinnati not until 1846	Expand to another location less than 3 years after arrival; more land purchased in at least 2 other locations besides that
Namur directs: Louis & Louise do not move w/o confirmation from Namur	Loyola moves when chance presents itself;
Unity: Two heads in one bonnet	United in surviving but divided sense of mission, Mary Cornelia & Mary Catherine do not support all Loyola's decisions – especially to build so extravagantly in San Jose
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> foundations close	1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> foundations close
<b>Anti-catholic bigotry (try to blame death of protestant missionaries on Sisters in Oregon)</b>	
<b>Sickness and death of early Sisters; problems w/mosquitos!</b>	
Louis & Louise write so Mère Constantine feels she is there;	Loyola writes, but Mère Constantine may well feel like she is not listened to; communication gap; yo-yo effect trying to follow ideas
Cincinnati is in the United States	Oregon Territory contested by England, US and Russia



Sister Loyola and other Belgian Sisters – photo taken at 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Cincinnati.

Sister Rosine (one of 1<sup>st</sup> 8 to come to Cincinnati in 1840) is on the far right of the 2<sup>nd</sup> row.