ACT I

The House that Marsh Built

1840s - 1890
Clearing the Ground: Harvey Clark and Tabitha Brown

So many motives exist in the minds of missionaries for saying great and good things concerning their labors, and prospects, that it is difficult to know the whole truth. Perhaps only two classes of missionaries can be found. One says too much and one not enough. — REV. HARVEY CLARK, 1844

The whole of Oregon is delightful, especially the plains, of which there are many. But this West Tualatin is the most beautiful of all. — TABITHA MOFFATT BROWN, 1847

WEST TUALATIN PLAINS, or what is now Forest Grove, may have been beautiful when Tabitha Brown made the above observation, but in 1847 neither she nor anyone else envisioned it as a site for a university. In a sense, Pacific University was not envisioned at all; it happened, like those improbable flowers that burst unbeckoned through miserly cracks in the concrete of old sidewalks. As late as September 1847, just a year before the board of trustees for Tualatin Academy was formed, the three people now officially recognized as the school’s “founders” were total strangers to one another, and two of them—Reverend Harvey Clark and Tabitha Moffatt Brown—had no intention of starting a college preparatory school, let alone a college. How all of this changed in the short span of a year is where the story of Pacific University begins.

UNLIKELY FORCES

OREGON CITY, April 6, 1848.
To Stephen Prentiss, Esq., and Mrs. Prentiss, the Father and Mother of the late Mrs. Whitman of the Oregon Mission.

My Dear Father and Mother in Christ:
Through the wonderful interposition of God in delivering me from the hand of the murderer, it has become my painful duty to apprise you of the death of your beloved daughter, Narcissa, and her worthy and appreciated husband, your honored son-in-law, Dr. Whitman. ... They were inhumanly butchered by their own, up to the last moment, beloved Indians, for whom their warm Christian hearts had prayed for eleven years, and their unwearied hands had administered to their every want in sickness and in distress. ...

The massacre took place on the fatal 29th of November last [1847], commencing at half past one. Fourteen persons were murdered first and last. Nine men the first day. Five men escaped from the Station, three in a most wonderful manner, one of whom was the trembling writer, with whom I know you will unite in praising God for delivering even one. ...

The Lord has transferred us from one field of labor to another. Through the kindness of Rev. Mr. Clark ... we have been brought to this place, “Tualatin Plains.”

...Yours in deep water of affliction,
H. H. Spalding

The event to which Rev. Henry Spalding refers above is, of course, what has come to be known as “The Whitman Massacre.” Why the story of Pacific University begins here will become clear soon enough, but the incident it-
The site of the Whitman Mission today. The Nez Perce name for the mission, founded in 1836, was Wailatpu — place of the rye grass.

Cushing Eells, the founder of Whitman College, was among the surviving missionaries who took refuge in the “Tualatin Plains.”

Whatever triggered the tragic events of November 29, 1847, it was a turning point in Pacific Northwest history. After the “massacre,” angry and frightened White settlers clamored for the posting of federal troops to the region and demanded recognition of the Northwest as a U.S. territory. Ensuing battles led to treaties that stripped the Cayuse and other tribes of much of their land and confined them to reservations.

A more immediate—and for the present story, more relevant—outcome of the Whitman Massacre was that the surviving missionaries in what is now eastern Washington and western Idaho were forced to remove themselves, under military escort, to safer ground. Like Spalding and his family, they took refuge in that portion of Oregon Country called the “Tualatin Plains,” an area that included present-day Forest Grove (West Tualatin Plains) and Hillsboro (East Tualatin Plains). The party included—besides Henry and Eliza Spalding—Cushing and Myra Eells, Elkanah and Mary Walker, Asa and Sarah Smith, and Alanson Hinman. All of these refugees intended to return to their missions in what would soon become the Washington Territory, but as fate and army regulations would have it, they ended up staying in the Tualatin Plains considerably longer than planned and playing various roles in the subsequent history of Pacific University. (Alanson Hinman, the only layman in the group, would stay on to become the longest-serving trustee in the history of the university.) And all of them initially depended to some degree on “the kindness of Rev. Mr. Clark,” who is the more proper object of our attention.

“REv. Mr. CLArk”

Harvey Clark, a native Vermonter who had been educated at Oberlin College, had arrived in the Oregon Country with his young bride, Emeline Cadwell, in 1840. Their overland journey on horseback had occurred three years before Marcus Whitman led the Great Migration Wagon Train of 1843—an exodus recog-
Harvey Clark

organized as the beginning of the westward movement along the Oregon Trail. Moreover, unlike the Whitmans, Clark had come west without official support from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (the Oregon Country was still “foreign” at the time)—support that he had solicited and been denied.

As an independent missionary, then, Harvey Clark was something of a second-class citizen, and probably would have remained so had the Whitmans’ sudden demise not landed so many prominent clergymen in his back yard. Conversely, had the newcomers—among whom was Cushing Eells, the future founder of Whitman College—not fled to the Tualatin Plains and been exposed to subsequent happenings in Forest Grove, chances are that starting an academy, and later a college, in Walla Walla would not have seemed feasible; the Whitmans, certainly, had no such intentions. Thus the Whitman Massacre played a significant part in the founding of at least two institutions of higher learning.

A Critical Vote Sets the Course for Statehood

The dramatic story of the May 2, 1843 meeting at Champoeg, on the edge of French Prairie, is familiar to many Oregonians. Two earlier meetings had been called by the settlers in February and March of that year. They were called “Wolf Meetings” because their purpose was to discuss how to protect livestock from wolves, as well as from bears and cougars. It was during the second “Wolf Meeting” that a committee was appointed “to take into consideration the propriety of taking measures for the civil and military protection of the colony.”

When 102 settlers of the northern Willamette Valley—Americans and French Canadians primarily—assembled at Champoeg to vote on their collective future under either British or American control, it shifted the balance toward U.S. occupation and set the course for statehood in 1859. Especially memorable are the decisive words of mountain man Joe Meek: “Who’s for divide? All for the report of the committee and an organization, follow me!”

The fact that it was such a slim majority that made the difference—with 52 voting for the provisional government and 50 voting against it—rendered the action even more legendary.

The significance of the Champoeg event is that the vote created the first government by Americans on the Pacific Coast. Coupled with the start of the Oregon Trail era, 1843 was indeed pivotal in the long historical record of the Pacific Northwest.

Four of the participants (three missionaries and a mountain man) would later come together as board members for Tualatin Academy—Harvey Clark, A. T. Smith, William H. Gray, and Osborne Russell. Each voted for the new provisional government, and each was elected to important leadership roles in the nascent enterprise.

The site of this famous meeting was preserved at Champoeg State Park—known originally as Provisional Government Park—in 1901. During the previous year, the Oregon Historical Society had worked with the last living participant, Francois Xavier Matthieu, to locate the actual gathering spot. A granite obelisk, bearing the names of the 52 pro-American voters, marks the location. Harvey W. Scott, Pacific University’s first graduate and the founding president of the Oregon Historical Society, gave the dedication address.
If West Tualatin Plains, little more than an outpost in 1848, was an unlikely place to start such an institution, Harvey Clark was an even less likely candidate to start one. Ironically, his chief qualification for laying the foundation for Pacific University might well have been that he had begun his career as a stonemason. By all accounts, Clark was a good stonemason; an early biographer notes that many of Clark's friends, on learning that he had decided instead to study for the ministry, "were inclined to oppose him, fearing that a good mason would be spoiled in the making of an indifferent minister." A more recent observer, Steven Richardson, commenting on the tendency to mythologize early pioneers, complains of the process by which "a weak-willed Harvey Clark has become someone to name grade schools after in Forest Grove." The point is well taken, though "weak-willed" seems an incongruent epithet for someone who could cross a frontier on horseback to pursue a mission that most of his friends discouraged him from undertaking and that his own church was unwilling to support.

Still, Clark was neither a forceful nor a practical man, having little interest in money, no head for business, and a downright aversion to organizational and legal formalities. This latter trait would often land him in hot water with his more fastidious colleagues in Christ. When, as we shall see shortly, they were jointly entertaining the proposition of starting a school, Clark attempted to skirt the issue of establishing a board of trustees, saying, "If the thing does well we will have trustees. It may soon drop, though." His Congregationalist and Presbyterian brethren were aghast at this lackadaisical approach and insisted on establishing a board, a demand to which Clark good-naturedly agreed. Even more appalling was his suggestion that the Bible not be used in the school—this on the grounds that other books were more suitable for children and that much of the Bible was ungrammatical. Such attitudes go far toward explaining why, as Carolyn Buan in her book *A Changing Mission* notes, "The newcomers [from the Whitman party] initial gratitude to Harvey Clark for taking them in and helping them rebuild their lives was soon replaced by suspicion and resentment."

"Suspicion and resentment," however, must be taken in context, and in this case the context included a plethora of shepherds and a dearth of sheep. The whole of the Oregon Country boasted only a few thousand souls of European ancestry at the time, and at least a tenth of the adult population in the Tualatin Plains settlement consisted of ordained ministers and their wives. Clark, while he often found himself in the thick of old rivalries, new grievances, and petty in-fighting, was not inclined by temperament to join in. For one thing, he lacked the requisite righteousness, being both aware of his own shortcomings and generally tolerant of failings in others. He was, in a word, likeable, and his popularity with the mountain men, their Indian wives, and children of mixed ancestry was itself a cause for resentment. (When, on one occasion, Clark agreed to marry a young couple who had run away from home, he was straightway chastised for pandering to public sentiment.) He was remembered by many of his contemporaries as a kind man who had a ready smile and a joke for everyone. His gifts seem to have been those of the less-than-strong-willed—an understanding of human frailty coupled with an innate generosity, of which we shall see more later.

In many ways, Harvey Clark was a vessel waiting to be filled, and fate, against all the odds, seemed bent on filling it. Among the circumstances that conspired to turn this unexceptional man into "The Father of Forest Grove," none was more fortuitous than his encountering the exceptional woman whom the Oregon State Legislature, in 1987, would officially recognize as "The Mother of Oregon."
In October of 1847, just a month before the Whitman Massacre, Harvey Clark was sitting in his modest log cabin conversing with one Tabitha Moffatt Brown, who was a house guest of the Clarks at the time. Grandma Brown, as she would come to be known to her younger contemporaries, had been born in 1780 in Brimfield, Massachusetts, the daughter of a physician. She had married Rev. Clark Brown, an Episcopal minister, who died in 1817, leaving his wife to raise their three children. After teaching school in both Maryland and Virginia, she moved to Missouri, from whence her son, Orus, traveled west with the Great Migration Wagon Train to Oregon in 1843. When Orus returned three years later to relocate his family to Oregon, Tabitha Brown decided to join them. She came west along the Oregon Trail in 1846 with her son and his family, her married daughter Pherne, and her 77-year-old brother-in-law, Captain John Brown.

The account of their journey, preserved in Tabitha Brown's now-famous “Brimfield Heroine Letter,” has become the stuff of legend—most notably the encounter with “a rascally fellow” who lured them off course with the promise of a “new cut off” that would get them to the settlement in Oregon City long before those who had gone down the Columbia River. The error in judgment was costly, resulting in “sufferings from that time no tongue can tell.” The sufferings they endured on the South Road (Applegate Trail) included being bounced along on poor and dangerous roads, losing most of their worldly belongings, barely surviving an early winter storm (the same storm that stranded the famous Donner Party in California), and fighting off starvation when their food supplies ran out. The “shortcut” ended when Tabitha Brown walked into the settlement of Salem, some 50 miles south of Oregon City, on Christmas Day, 1846.

Such anecdotes, however, merely feed the impulse to reduce Tabitha Brown to a caricature, whereas the factual record, including her letters, reveals a bright, resourceful woman with an uncommon share of common sense and a buoyancy of spirit that, a century-and-a-half later, remains contagious. If her pluck has become legendary, it is largely because she was indeed plucky. Before taking up temporary residence in the Clark’s cabin, she had, in her own words, “Spent the summer visiting and bathing in the ocean” off Astoria. She was 67 at the time.

On her way back from Astoria to her home in Salem, Tabitha Brown stopped in to see her son Orus, from whom Harvey Clark had acquired land and who introduced her to the Clarks. She recounts the outcome of this introduction in a letter:

[The Clarks] invited me to spend a few days. Winter set in. They pressed me hard to spend the winter with them. I accepted their invitation. Our intimacy ever since has been more like mother and children than that of strangers. They are about the same age as my own children, and look to me for counsel and advice equally as much.

It is from the same letter that we learn of her conversation with Harvey Clark in October of 1847:

I said to Mr. Clark one day, “Why has Providence frowned on me and left me poor in this world? Had he blessed me with riches, as he has many others, I know right what I would do.” “What would
The Oregon Trail

The tension between Great Britain and the United States over future sovereignty of the Pacific Northwest region caused Americans to push for settlement, reasoning that a strong population base would tip the balance. To many, it was “Manifest Destiny” that the country should spread to the Pacific coast. Before Oregon could even declare itself a Territory of the United States, it needed settlers.

Americans anxious to acquire free land in Oregon began crossing the Plains in large wagon trains in the 1840s, enduring physical hardships and emotional trauma along the 2000-mile route from Independence, Missouri to the Willamette Valley. A family, traveling in a wagon pulled by oxen, could expect a six-month journey, while a man going solo could ride horseback and make it in half the time. Thousands of people used the Oregon Trail for overland migration during the next 20 years.

The Great Migration of 1843—involving nearly 900 men, women, and children—is considered the start of the mass movement to the Oregon Country. Dr. Marcus Whitman, missionary-turned-patriot, led the train from Independence to Oregon. Orus Brown, oldest son of Tabitha and Clark Brown, was among the travelers, venturing alone in order to test the trip’s difficulty and benefits before taking his wife and children out into the frontier. Orus Brown searched the Willamette Valley for suitable farmland and eventually decided on West Tualatin Plains as the best location. With help from A.T. Smith, Orus claimed land and constructed a cabin. When he went back to Missouri in 1846 to get his wife and children, Orus allowed Rev. Harvey Clark to acquire his claim.

Many Oregon Trail immigrants were later affiliated with Tualatin Academy and Pacific University. Tabitha Brown’s heart-wrenching story of nearly perishing on the South Road, or Applegate Trail, in 1846 is well known. J. Quinn Thornton, another member of that disastrous trip, became a trustee and suggested the name “Forest Grove” for the new town. Harvey W. Scott, Pacific’s first graduate, came in 1852 at age 14 with his family, including older sister Abigail. During their difficult trip, Harvey and Abigail lost their mother to cholera.

It was no coincidence that Oregon’s provisional government was created in 1843, just as migration to the region increased. In 1846 Great Britain and the United States signed a treaty establishing the northern border of Oregon (now the border between Washington and Canada) at the 49th parallel. Two years later, in 1848, Oregon became a U.S. territory.

you do?" "I would establish myself in a comfortable house and receive all the poor children, and be a mother to them." He fixed his keen eyes on me to see if I was candid in what I said. "Yes, I am," said I. "If so, I will try," said he, "to help you."

The "poor children" of whom Tabitha Brown speaks here were mainly those who had lost their parents to hardship or disease along the Oregon Trail. The need for an orphan school, however, would soon become aggravated by yet another historic event. On the morning of January 24, 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill on the American River in the Sierra foothills of Northern California. By the time the orphan school would become a reality, the Gold Rush would be in full force, luring more than 100,000 fortune-seekers in 1848 alone. In the diaries and minutes of those who chose to stick it out in Forest Grove, the loss of able-bodied men to the gold fields of California would become a recurrent theme, and many of these men who were widowers would leave their children in the care of "Grandma" Brown.

The fruit of Tabitha Brown and Harvey Clark's conversation in 1847 was the "Orphan Asylum," which officially opened in an old log meeting house in the spring of 1848. Neighbors contributed what eating utensils, pans, and dishes they could part with; parents who could afford to pay were charged a dollar a week for board and tuition; and Tabitha Brown agreed to work as teacher, manager, and housekeeper for the first year without pay. After a trip back to Salem to get her belongings, Grandma Brown returned to the plains in late April and, as she puts it, "Found everything prepared for me to go into the meeting house and cluck up my chickens the next morning."

By the summer of 1848, as James R. Robertson reports in 1905:

the orphan asylum was more than an idea; it was an institution. Something tangible had started. Something had come into being where before there was nothing. It was only a forerunner of what was to follow, but it served its purpose and it had its distinct bearing on subsequent events.

Neither Tabitha Brown nor Harvey Clark could have imagined that subsequent events would include the founding of a university on the site of their orphans' refuge. Nor could they have known that the person who would initiate that unlikely metamorphosis was, at this very moment, waiting for passage to Oregon on a remote island in the South Pacific.

One of the stories responsible for Tabitha Brown's place on the Honor Roll of Oregon Trail characters illustrates her uncanny ability to survive and prosper. In the famous "Brimfield Heroine Letter" she wrote: "For two or three weeks of my journey down the Willamette I had felt something in the end of my glove finger which I supposed to be a button. On examination at my new home in Salem, I found it to be a 6 1/4 cent piece. This was the whole of my cash capital to commence business with in Oregon. With it I purchased three needles. I traded off some of my old clothes to the squaws for buckskins, worked them into gloves for the Oregon ladies and gentlemen, which cleared me upwards of $30 extra of boarding."

The small coin she discovered was a Spanish half-real, like the one pictured here. Called a "picayune" in those days and valued at 1/16 of a dollar, it was the smallest silver coin in circulation. Prior to the Legal Tender Law of 1857, the coins of Spain, Mexico, Columbia, Bolivia, Central America, Peru, Portugal, and Brazil were legal currency in the United States. Most people, especially on the frontier, were very happy to get paid in any kind of silver.
Laying the Foundation: George Atkinson

*He* [Harvey Clark] last spring commenced what is called an orphan school. It had about forty scholars. *... It is a good site and it may grow to some importance. — George Atkinson, 1848*

**Reverend George Atkinson** is the only one of Pacific University’s three “founders” who is not remembered on the campus with a building in his name—this despite the fact that he conceived the idea of starting an academy that should have a “collegiate department” and that he outlived both Harvey Clark and Tabitha Brown by over 30 years. One reason for this injustice of history, perhaps, was that, for all of his dedication, Atkinson was not a particularly colorful man. To serve as secretary on a college board of trustees for 41 years requires extraordinary qualities, but great imagination is not one of them. Having once put his hand to the plow, however, Atkinson was not a man to look back. He was a by-the-book, nose-to-the-grindstone Congregationalist who had his marching orders to start a college somewhere in Oregon, and nothing was going to stop him.

**Catalyst for a College**

News of the Whitman Massacre traveled fast—as fast as anything traveled in the mid-1800s. Out in Honolulu, Oahu (then one of the Sandwich Islands), a 28-year-old missionary named George Atkinson and his wife, Nancy, were waiting for passage to the Oregon Country when news of the event reached them.

Atkinson, a graduate of Dartmouth College and Andover Theological Seminary, had originally intended to serve the Zulu Mission in South Africa, but a delay in his ordination forced him and his bride to miss the ship bound for Africa, a turn of fate that led them to the Oregon Country. They were sent there by the American Home Missionary Society, which, in 1846, inherited responsibility for the western missions from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the group that had sponsored the Whitman party. While visiting New York in May of 1847 to receive instructions about his work, Atkinson was introduced to Dr. Theron Baldwin, secretary of the newly formed American College Society, whose goal it was to establish a Congregational college in every new state. It was from Baldwin that he received his orders to “build an academy that shall grow into a college.”

Departing from New York on October 23, 1847, Atkinson and his wife had sailed around the “The Horn” to Honolulu aboard the bark *Samoset*, bound for China, a voyage of 125 days, and would spend three months in Honolulu awaiting another vessel, the *Cowlitz*,...
George Atkinson and his family (Forest Grove United Church of Christ Archives)

Below, right: George Atkinson's diploma from Dartmouth College (1843)

to take them to the Pacific Northwest. Atkinson's Honolulu diary for February 26, 1848, includes this entry:

Here, we first learned ... of the horrible massacre of Dr. Whitman, his wife and nine others, by the Cayuse Indians, among whom he had labored twelve years. The natives were suffering from sickness, and supposed the doctor had been poisoning them to possess their lands. They kill their own doctors on the same suspicion. It will not affect the lower country where we are going.

As we have seen, however, the Whitman Massacre did affect the lower country, which, when Atkinson finally arrived in Oregon City in June of 1848, was teeming with by-now-disgruntled ministers. Determined to start an "academy that shall grow into a college," Atkinson's first task was to create some order out of the sectarian chaos. Hearing of Harvey Clark's venture in West Tualatin Plains, he traveled there by horseback and, in July of 1848, only a month after his arrival, arranged a meeting in Clark's log cabin that included, along with Clark, Reverends Henry Spalding, Elkanah Walker, and Lewis Thompson. Besides discussing the prospects for starting an academy, they decided to join forces by forming the Oregon Association of Congregational and New School Presbyterian Ministers, later shortened to the Oregon Association of Churches and Ministers, which held its first annual meeting in Oregon City on September 21 of the same year. Harvey Clark, probably because of his seniority in the region, became the association's president and Atkinson himself became secretary.

It was at this meeting, then, that the newly-formed association determined to start an academy, and to locate it at the site of the Orphan Asylum operated by Rev. Clark and Tabitha Brown. Grandma Brown contributed $500 to the project, and Harvey Clark generously deeded 200 acres of land, a gift that went far toward ensuring the success of the enterprise. Clark and Atkinson drafted a charter for the proposed institution, and on September 26, 1849, the group became legally incorporated, an act that represented the first charter ever granted by the civil government of Oregon.

Both the religious nature and the ultimate purpose of the institution are embedded in
An Act to establish an Academy in Tualatin County

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oregon: That there shall be established in Tualatin County, a seminary of learning, for the instruction of persons of both sexes in science and literature, to be called the Tualatin Academy; and that George H. Atkinson, Harvey Blake, James Moore, Peter W. Hatch, David Thompson, William H. Gray, Henry Clarke, O. C. Smith and J. D. Hovington, and their successors, are hereby declared to be a body politic and corporate in law by the name and style of "The President and Trustees of the Tualatin Academy."

this original charter, which included a provision for establishing a collegiate department as soon as possible. Robertson notes:

In this provision for collegiate education [Tualatin Academy] preceded all educational institutions on the Pacific Coast. It may be regarded as one of the acts of splendid audacity with which the student of western history becomes familiar.

"SPLENDID AUDACITY" MEETS STARK REALITY

Securing a charter was one thing; securing a faculty for the academy was another. The first teacher, a young man named D. C. L. Latourette, lasted only six months before he "was unable to resist the allurements of the gold fields of California." The trustees then appointed Whitman-Massacre-refugee Cushing Eells, who lasted only a little longer before leaving in a huff over the school's policy regarding tobacco. Atkinson, with typical lack of affect, reports in his diary:

Bro. E. has left us unpleasantly situated. He wishes us to prohibit the attendance of all scholars who use tobacco. We prohibited its use in and about the school house. He leaves the school somewhat disaffected with us, we have reason to suppose.

Eells would later manage to overcome his disaffection and rejoin the academy for a longer stay before resigning permanently in 1860 to return to Walla Walla, and found the future
Whitman College, whose original tobacco policy is not a matter of public record. By the end of 1851, however, it was clear to the trustees that they would have to send someone east to find a president for the "collegiate department." Atkinson was assigned that task, the outcome of which would prove to be perhaps his most significant contribution to the future of Pacific University.

In the meantime, however, there was the matter of buildings. Originally, classes were held in the log building used by Harvey Clark as the Congregational Church. Plans for a new building began in earnest almost immediately, and the trustees managed to raise the considerable sum of $7,000 to begin construction. The raising of the frame in July 1850 was the occasion for all-out celebration, drawing settlers from near and far to camp out on the campus in tents and join in the festivities. Tabitha Brown, who was in charge of food, wrote in her diary, "Quite a number of the ladies met and we had a social time." Among the "ladies" was Elkanah Walker's wife, Mary Walker, whose own diary entry on the occasion was less than enthusiastic; she described the new building as "A splendid monument to the folly of somebody," and mused: "Wonder who will live to see it completed and filled with students."

Despite Mary Walker's not unwarranted skepticism, the first classes were held in the new building in October of 1851. The Academy Building, now "Old College Hall," would be moved and renamed more than once, but it remains the oldest building on Pacific University's campus and one of the oldest educational structures in the western United States. Fittingly, its original location is the current site of Marsh Memorial Hall, the most imposing structure on the modern campus, and one whose name serves to introduce us to the man who justifies our referring to Pacific University as "The House that Marsh Built."
The Settlement Gets a Name

The City now called "Forest Grove" lies in an area once known as "West Tualatin Plains." After Tualatin Academy received its charter in 1849, the Board of Trustees decided to create an adjoining town site, selling lots platted on land donated by Rev. Harvey and Emeline Clark. The downtown business district immediately located to the west of campus was part of this new development.

The matter of naming the new town finally came up during two meetings of the Academy’s Board of Trustees, held in Oregon City on January 9 and 10, 1851. Original meeting minutes in the Pacific University Archives recorded that on the first day the name “Vernon” was proposed, followed by the question, “Ought [this matter] not to be at once settled?” Apparently the Trustees decided to sleep on it, making a decision the next day. The minutes show the following action taken by the Board:

Moved by Mr. [George] Atkinson and seconded to call the town, “Vernon.” Rejected.

Moved by Mr. [J. Quinn] Thornton and seconded that the name of the town be “Forest Grove.” Passed.

J. Quinn Thornton had arrived in the Willamette Valley in November 1846 following an arduous overland trip on the “damnable Applegate Trail.” The Thorntons had already named their land claim “Forest Grove,” so it was simply a matter of proposing this favored name for the new town. Thornton had joined the Board of Trustees when mountain man Osborne Russell headed south to the California gold fields.

From the beginning, some recognized the name “Forest Grove” as an oxymoron. Sidney Harper Marsh, for example, insisted on referring to the town simply as “The Grove,” perhaps recognizing that a forest can be only so small and a grove only so large before suffering the arboreal equivalent of an identity crisis. In some ways, the contradiction about size implicit in the name “Forest Grove” parallels the conflict about whether the Trustees were starting a college or a university, and foreshadows other recurrent identity issues that would plague the school throughout its history.

Portions of three Donation Land Claims (DLC) were combined to form the original campus.
Raising the Walls: Sidney Harper Marsh

Forest Grove was in one corner of the settlement, and was almost inaccessible by reason of bad mountain roads. Within a radius of ten miles there were scarcely fifty voters. . . . Forest Grove could hardly have been called a village. —Sidney Harper Marsh, 1878

Tabitha Brown, Harvey Clark, and George Henry Atkinson: that Pacific University came into existence at all was largely due to the efforts of these three pioneers who are formally acknowledged as its “founders.” That it came to be what it is, however, is largely due to the vision of one man, Sidney Harper Marsh. Myron Eells, writing of Marsh after his death, said that he was “a man of one idea.” That one idea, in Marsh’s own words, was “To realize the very special purpose of a liberal education—not merely to develop the powers needed to make a living, but all the powers, physical, intellectual and spiritual, preparing the man to do his part of God’s work in the world.” To a remarkable degree, Marsh’s idea—modified by the exigencies of place, people, and economic pressures—is embodied in the present-day institution that we know as Pacific University.

Heeding the Call

New York City, November, 1852: huge crowds daily throng the streets to watch a colossal edifice of glass and iron—arched, columned, turreted, and topped with the largest dome America has ever seen—springing up as if by magic not far from the future site of the New York Public Library. The entire city is in the throes of preparing for a great international event, the World’s Fair of 1853. Within earshot of the construction, in Union Theological Seminary at University Place, a 27-year-old seminarian named Sidney Harper Marsh has received an invitation to meet with George Atkinson of Forest Grove, Oregon, to discuss an educational venture in the wilds of the Pacific Northwest.

The young man whom George Atkinson was about to interview was no stranger to adversity. A Southerner by birth—he had been born at Hampden-Sidney College, Virginia in...
James Marsh, Father of Pacific’s First President

James Marsh, father of Sidney Harper Marsh and a key figure in American Transcendentalism, was born on July 19, 1794 in Hartford, Vermont. James was intended to follow in his father’s footsteps and manage the large family farm, while his brother, Roswell, had been elected to go to Dartmouth. But Roswell balked at the indignity of carrying a leg of mutton off to college in partial payment of his board and ran away from home, leaving the way to Dartmouth open for James.

It was at Dartmouth, which in 1813 was still awash in the eddies of the Second Great Awakening, that Marsh converted to Congregationalism. He began his studies for the ministry at Andover Theological Seminary in 1817 and, after returning to Dartmouth for two years as a tutor, graduated from Andover in 1822. In the following year, he went to Hampton-Sidney, Virginia to teach oriental languages, and in 1824 married Lucia Wheelock, granddaughter of Eleazer Wheelock, the founder of Dartmouth College, and a niece of John Wheelock, a former president of Dartmouth. Their only child, Sidney Harper Marsh, was born on August 29, 1825. A mere three years later, Lucia Wheelock Marsh died of tuberculosis, leaving James a widower until 1830, when he married Lucia’s sister, Laura Wheelock. Laura became the mother of Joseph Walker Marsh before she too succumbed to tuberculosis in 1838. Strictly speaking, then, Sidney Harper Marsh and Joseph Walker Marsh, pivotal players in Pacific University’s early days, were both half-brothers (three-quarter brothers?) and cousins.

Chroniclers of Pacific’s early years routinely note that James Marsh served as president of the University of Vermont (1826–1833). None of them seems aware, however, that he was also a major influence on the thinking of such giants in American literature as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In 1829 Marsh edited Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *Aids to Reflection*, thus becoming the link between English Romanticism and what would become American Transcendentalism. Marsh’s introduction to the book fired Emerson’s imagination and became a touchstone of his thought. Robert Richardson in his biography *Emerson, The Mind on Fire*, notes of Marsh’s introduction: “Here was a sober, modern, defensible, intellectually rigorous account of the nature of the power that resides in each individual soul. Marsh’s formulation became over the next few years a conviction Emerson would hold for the rest of his life.”

(For more on James Marsh’s influence on Transcendentalism, see Peter Carafiol’s *Transcendent Reason: James Marsh and the Forms of Romantic Thought.*)
1825—and a New Englander by education, Sidney Marsh had lost his mother when he was three, then his stepmother (his mother's sister) shortly after turning 13, and finally his father at the age of 17, when the elder Marsh was president of the University of Vermont and Sidney was already a student there. The Reverend James Marsh had been only 48 when he died of lung disease. He had passed on to his son not only an abiding dedication to the ideals of liberal education, but also a lifelong pulmonary condition, which, at the time of Atkinson's invitation, was weighing heavily on young Sidney's mind.

The two men met in Brooklyn in that November of 1852, and we know little of what transpired at the meeting. Was Atkinson, a graduate of Dartmouth College, aware that he was interviewing the great-grandson of Dartmouth's founder and first president, Eleazer Wheelock? What we do know, however, is that a letter from Atkinson formally offering a position was waiting for the young Marsh when he arrived back at Union Theological Seminary. He responded immediately:

"My lungs are proving themselves too sensitive for this climate, and for a few days especially I have been thinking that migration to Florida or some warmer climate would be better than remaining here. Under such circumstances ... your letter seemed almost Providential, and I feel like assenting at once to what I understand you to propose.

Never mind that neither man could have fully understood what was being proposed (Marsh was formally hired as an instructor for an academy; within a year he would be appointed first president of a new college). Never mind that Oregon's climate was a far cry from Florida's. The voice of Providence had spoken, and Sidney Marsh had heard the call.

With characteristic enthusiasm and industry, Marsh spent the following winter and spring rounding up a library of over 1,000 books for the prospective college. He even managed to attract the notice of the New York Times, which, mistakenly identifying him as the nephew (actually cousin) of the U.S. Ambassador to Constantinople, commended his efforts and wished the new enterprise well.

On May 1, 1853, Sidney Marsh was ordained in the Church of the Pilgrims in Brooklyn, New York. He would set out by sea on his own pilgrimage to the West a month later, shortly after the grand opening of the World's Academy Hall, which can be distinguished from Old College Hall by its four chimneys, was built in 1864 and destroyed by fire in 1910. This "twin" building to Old College Hall stood on the site of the Harvey W. Scott Memorial Library.
S IDNEY HARPER
M ARSH ' S human side emerges in the correspondence with his family, especially his children. Below, left, his daughter Mary displays her penmanship for her father at age five; in a letter to Mary when she is 10, Marsh has some fun with a new-fangled machine called a "typewriter" (the "Wheelock" referred to is Marsh's son, James Wheelock Marsh); two years later, he writes to Mary from Hood River on the occasion of her 13th birthday. The text reads: "Dear Mary
This is your birth-day. You are 1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 years old! How soon you will be a woman! I want you to be a good scholar, but not to the detriment of your health and your knowledge of household affairs. I want you to be a good linguist, to study Mathematics through Geometry, to study the natural sciences enough to know what they are.[] [B]ut literature & arts are the first department for you to study. So when you are 18 I hope you will have read Virgil in Latin & Homer in Greek, and have studied the best English and French authors. I wish I could send you to the Smith Female College at Northampton, Mass." Marsh died two years after this letter was written, and his daughter Mary died a year after that. She was 16.
Fair. He could hardly have missed it: cannons roared, bells pealed, an inaugural chorus sang, and President Franklin Pierce himself, on his steed Black Warrior, led the procession past the exhibitions of intricate machinery, wood carvings, musical instruments, paintings by European masters, and the grand centerpiece—a life-size marble statue of Christopher Columbus, his left hand resting on a globe of the world, and his right hand pointing to a remote spot on that globe—probably not Forest Grove.

THE "AMERICAN SCHOLAR" GOES WEST

To-day, Pacific University ... assumes a position from which there is no honorable retreat. After five years of preparation, of painful and strenuous effort, this institution takes a step in advance; the idea of education has taken a higher form of development; the Academy has become the College.

Thus begins the inaugural address of Pacific University's first president, Sidney Marsh, whose "idea of education" at the age of 28 would guide the new college for the next quarter of a century. To understand that idea, and how it must have struck many of those who listened to these words, we need to place it in the context of the New England soil from which it sprang.

In 1853, the year that Sidney Marsh arrived in Forest Grove, Ralph Waldo Emerson was at the height of his career as an essayist and lecturer, and Henry David Thoreau had just finished reading Darwin's recently published *Voyage of the Beagle*, and was busy writing the fourth draft of *Walden*. It is unlikely that Marsh had heard of Thoreau, who, even after *Walden* was published, remained relatively obscure. But he would certainly have known of Emerson and, like many another young man of the time, had probably read and been fired up by the great man's essays, including the famous "The American Scholar." Originally delivered as a Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard in 1837, "The American Scholar" is a paean to the practical adequacy of the individual, the imperative of self-reliance, and the superiority of the whole person to the specialist: "If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him." Ironically, many of Emerson's central ideas here derived from his reading of an introduction to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* that had been written in 1829 by James Marsh, Sidney Marsh's father. Consequently, the younger Marsh, whether or not he had read Emerson, had probably been exposed to these transcendentalist notions from his earliest years.

Speculation aside, the Emersonian spirit permeates Marsh's inaugural address as Presi-
Moving Left and Moving West: Congregationalism in the 19th Century

The Congregational Church's origins lay with those Puritans who crossed the ocean in the seventeenth century to create what their leader, John Winthrop, called a "city upon a hill." In the seventeenth century, Puritans achieved a powerful synthesis of religion and government, one that was grounded in human weakness and depravity, and an inability to influence God's decision in the great drama of the soul's eternal destiny. Dealing with a disagreeable humanity, these New Englanders stressed social cohesion above individual liberty, and devised community and familial controls to ensure that the former was not destroyed by the latter. By the nineteenth century, this synthesis faced a number of threats.

One came from within. By 1805, the "Unitarian" wing of the church had captured Harvard Divinity School for those who rejected Divine predestination and placed their faith in human reason and will. This, in turn, led Rev. Jedediah Morse, (father of inventor Samuel Morse) to gather a contingent of like-minded conservatives, whom he advised to "guard against the insidious encroachment of innovation," and establish Andover Theological Seminary, a bastion of Congregationalist orthodoxy from which George Atkinson and others of Pacific University's early leaders were to come.

Thomas Jefferson's election as President provided another challenge to the Puritan synthesis. Jefferson carried Enlightenment principles to their logical conclusion and celebrated the ability of common men to command their own destinies. For orthodox Congregationalists, this threatened to destroy community and open the floodgates of licentious behavior. Economic change reinforced political change as urbanization led to the breakdown of village controls on personal behavior. In this new context, these latter-day Puritans concluded that preserving their moral mission would require Morse's dreaded "innovation." They responded with a burst of energy that would have an important impact on the Northwest and, ultimately, Pacific University.

Out of these conflicting forces a more liberal doctrine emerged, one that stressed human choice over the drama of salvation and even over the very existence of sin itself. Whereas Puritans had believed that sin and corruption were inherent in human life and needed to be controlled, the more liberal Congregationalists of the second quarter of the nineteenth century told their converts that their own salvation was not enough; converts now had to work to eradicate sin from American society. More consistent with the Jeffersonian emphasis on freedom of choice, this revision in the New England way would have a powerful impact on American culture; it would even make inroads at Andover Seminary. In the wake of countless revivals, societies sprang up that were dedicated to temperance, the eradication of prostitution, and the abolition of slavery. One of the leading revivalists, Charles Finney, would help turn the newly formed Oberlin College, alma mater of Pacific
founder, Harvey Clark, into a hotbed of antislavery sentiment.

Moreover, Finney and other preachers fostered a vision of female moral superiority, urging women to become active in moral reform. One of these women, Catharine Beecher, sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, argued that the best way to instill morality in the wide-open American environment, especially in the West, was to educate women as mothers and teachers. As she put it: “The proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman, and the interests of a whole family are secured.” In keeping with these principles, Oberlin College would break with the practices of American men’s colleges and admit female students—a practice that was carried over by the founders of Pacific University.

This highly-charged reform Protestantism spread with the Congregationalist and Presbyterian churches. Under the so-called “Plan of Union” (1801), adherents of the two churches united in their efforts to bring religion and civilization to the West, and they established an organizational infrastructure that included the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810), the American Bible Society (1816), and the American Tract Society (1825). A roadblock to their efforts appeared when Presbyterian conservatives—those who had recommitted themselves to predestinarian theology as it was taught at Princeton Theological Seminary—seized control of the General Assembly and dissolved the Plan of Union. However, the New England reformers of both churches continued to cooperate, jointly establishing Union Theological Seminary in New York City, from whence Pacific’s first president would come.

Many Congregationalists, no matter how liberal or orthodox their theology was, considered clerical and missionary activity in the West a patriotic as well as a religious duty. For some—like Samuel F. B. Morse, the son of the founder of Andover Seminary—the West was the stage on which the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century would be refought, and a religiously-inspired democracy was best able to win the victory. Morse considered “the Bible, the Tract, the Infant school, the Sunday school, the common school for all classes, the college and university” as the “weapons of Protestantism, weapons unknown to Popery.” In 1835 he called on right thinkers to make “an immediate, a vigorous, a united, a persevering effort to spread religious and intellectual cultivation through every part of the country.” And he argued that the Northwest in particular would be fertile soil, since the Indians in the area had “noble traits of mind.” To ensure a bountiful harvest, Morse argued that the church had to take the lead in stopping the “extermination process,” and become involved in raising “the oppressed Indian to the comforts and happiness of civilized life.”

Thus, by the time the Whitmans and the Spaldings traversed the continent to establish their missions, Congregationalists and liberal Presbyterians had wedded an assertive and benevolent Protestantism to democratic purpose. Despite the tragedy of the Whitman Massacre, these religious reformers would continue their efforts to teach individuals to choose salvation and civilization. At Pacific, their legacy would be felt for decades, in strictures against alcohol and tobacco, in the advocacy of female education, in the continuing emphasis on service, especially in the preparation of students for missionary work, and in the tragic, but well-intentioned attempt of the Indian school to turn young Native Americans into individuals bereft of their cultural inheritance.
Top: Elisee Meresse (right), instructor in French, with his Tualatin Academy class (ca. 1900) on the steps of Marsh Hall.
Above: Pacific University tent at Chautauqua in 1898
Right: Tualatin Academy graduating class in 1888
dent of Pacific University in 1854. He speaks of "a wisdom that we all have, that we cannot understand":

... living ideas, those strong convictions of what is best, derived from former generations, from the race to which we belong ... ideas and convictions, whether imbibed with our mothers' milk or developed by external influences, that we feel to be obligatory upon us ... that we should be unnatural not to acknowledge.

Marsh's defense of learning—for that is what his inaugural address amounts to—is that "an undeniable impulse has driven man to seek it, and there is an innate respect for it":

These studies are indeed valuable for other ends, but chiefly because they tend to satisfy the craving thirst for knowledge, which our souls demand, not for their pleasure, or temporary happiness, but for their permanent well-being.

All of this, with the possible exception of the respectful nod to "former generations," echoes the basic tenets of American Transcendentalism, of which Emerson, "The Sage of Concord," was the chief spokesman.

But this was not Concord, and one wonders how these lofty phrases, these paeanos to "knowledge as its own reward" must have fallen on the ears of the necessarily practical-minded folk of Forest Grove. Myron Eells, writing in 1881, sums it up: "The educational atmosphere was not in sympathy with a thorough education ... the great majority of the people had come from the frontiers and mines, people who were good-hearted and kind, but whose early training and want of advantages had been such that they could not appreciate its benefits." Marsh himself, recalling his inauguration a quarter of a century later, admits that he must have "seemed as one that theorized."

The simple fact is that Sidney Marsh was more than George Atkinson, or anyone else in Forest Grove, had bargained for. Atkinson had foreseen a small college, and a Congregationalist one at that; Marsh, ever the visionary, insisted on calling the new institution a "university," and would spend a good part of his tenure fighting tooth and nail to avoid Congregationalist control. To many of the Forest Grove Congregationalists, the chief enemy was religious in nature—rival denominations, Roman Catholics, and, above all, the Jesuits; to Marsh it was decidedly secular—the rising spectre of scientific materialism that would receive such a boost from the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859, just five years after Marsh's inauguration. Marsh was not anti-science, but as the son of a beloved father who had served for many years...
In 1876 Pacific became one of the first colleges in the United States to grant degrees to students from Japan. During the mid-nineteenth century, the Japanese emperor Mutsuhito came to power, ending the military rule enjoyed by the Shoguns for about 700 years. The restored emperor, known by his reign name “Meiji,” urged his people to seek knowledge in all parts of the world to help make Japan strong.

By 1870 Pacific University had enrolled one Japanese student—Hatsutara Tamura—and was actively recruiting others. Three graduates—Hatsutara Tamura, Agero Nosei, and Kin Saito—completed their residency in “The Grove” in 1876 but maintained contact with their primary mentor, President Sidney Harper Marsh, until his death three years later. The following excerpts from their letters to Marsh bear witness to the difficulties they encountered upon leaving Pacific, and to the affection they bore their Alma Mater and its first president.

Hatsutara Tamura to President Marsh

[San Francisco, June 15, 1876]
Sir.... Just before our parting, I wanted to give fully my thanks to you & Mrs. Marsh, but when I shook hands with you, I felt so badly that I could hardly speak a word to you, which no doubt you noticed there. I believe, my silent tears which filled my eyes expressed the feelings within my heart more loudly & forcibly than any audible language would.

[Ellicott City, MD, Sept. 28, 1876]
I have so many things to write that I am almost at a loss as to what to select to begin with. At first I intended to stop in California & attend the State University, but this year the institution made a new regulation requiring new students to pay the tuition of $75.00 for the first year. This change in the in-
stitution together with the Grand Fair at Philadelphia induced me to change my mind & go East. Accordingly I left San Francisco on the 28th of July & after a tiresome journey of seven days & nights arrived in Phil. ...

From Phil. I went to New York & had the pleasures of visiting & seeing different parts of the city. I called on all of your friends whose names you have written in my memorandum. ... While I was in New York I became acquainted with the Head Master of an institution called St. Clement's Hall. He offered me a position in his school. Though the school is not so high as I desire it to be, yet being as yet a stranger here I do not expect to get any better place than this & so accepted the position. ...

I suppose your school has already been opened & prospering as ever. ... I wish you to tell Mary [Marsh's daughter] that I passed through Cleveland, O. within a short distance from the place where Martha [Mary's cousin] lives.

I expect that I will be kept busy hereafter & unable to write as often as I desire to do....

Your Friend

AGERO NOSEI TO PRESIDENT MARSH

[San Francisco, June 27, 1876]

Dear Sir

I should have written to you soon after our arrival, but my place being unsettled, I delayed it ever so long. Since I left the Grove, I have been wandering around without doing anything. ... I could not find any employment. If I stay in this city and get some work, and attend the university at the same time, I might accomplish what I want, but if I do so, it will spend time, and cost. ... City living costs so much. I have already spent about $100 since I left the Grove. I think it is better to go home once, and get some position there, and after storing some money, I will come back to this country. I can make money easier in Japan than in this country. I think I can make $100 per month without much difficulty. So now I decided to go home on the next steamer which will leave this city on the 1st of July. ...

All three of Pacific's first Japanese graduates eventually returned to Japan and followed careers in education.
Missionary-turned-geologist Rev. Thomas Condon served the University as a Trustee (see letter) and professor from 1873 to 1876, before joining the faculty of the new State University in Eugene. His discovery of the John Day Fossil Beds, and other pioneering work in geology, established him as a leading figure in Oregon's emerging scientific community.

Members of the Marsh family under the "Bee Tree" (said to be Tabitha Brown's source for honey) in 1910. The oak stood between Marsh and Carnegie Halls and was felled in the late 1940s for safety reasons.

as professor of moral and intellectual philosophy, he deplored the idea of scientists assuming the mantle of moral authority.

Mainly, both by temperament and training, Marsh detested narrow thinking of all kinds, and one of his greatest challenges as president would be learning to understand provincialism at least to the point of being able to deal with it effectively. That he never entirely succeeded in this is evident from a speech that he gave to the Board of Trustees of Pacific University in 1878, the year before his death and 25 years after his inaugural address.

Placed side by side, these two documents speak volumes about the first quarter-century of Pacific University. In Marsh's later address, the original vision remains intact, but the idealism of youth has been tempered at the forge of administrative duties. Marsh speaks of how "Spirits and energy were frittered away by unnecessary cares and anxieties which yet I could not avoid," and calls it "the greatest event of my life" that, "At last, after 25 years ... the community among whom I had lived so long had come to see what I was 'driving at' and what was meant by a College."

But he spends the greater portion of his 1878 address discussing the two matters that had plagued him from the start and that he would most liked to have rid himself entirely: the financial security and the "denominational relations" of the institution. As we shall see, the two issues were not unrelated.

"MISERABLE BUSINESS"

From the beginning, Pacific University had been heavily dependent on Congregationalist support, most notably on the American College Society, for the salaries of the president and the instructors—$600 in 1853 and $1,200 for the following five years. By 1858, the same year that founders Tabitha Brown and Harvey Clark died, it had become clear that a more secure endowment was needed, and R. T. Baldwin, secretary of the College Society, sent President Marsh a free pass to New York on what would be the first of four protracted trips east to...
solicit funds. This was one of the duties of a president that Sidney Marsh did not “fully understand,” and that he never fully resigned himself to.

That he was good at it, however, is clear from the record. On his first trip east, which kept him away from the college for almost three years, Marsh managed to raise $22,000 in subscriptions and $1,200 in books. He also met and wed Eliza Haskell, by whom he would have eight children, three of whom died before their father.

Five years later we find Marsh back in the East again for a full year, this time returning with over $25,000 for the general endowment. Marsh hated the work. Writing home to his wife during this trip, he notes: “I can get ten thousand here without much doubt. But this is miserable business. I despise the reputation that I am getting by it.” Or again:

Have got one subscription of one hundred dollars, and two of fifty. Notwithstanding, am miserable. One cannot butt his head against a stone wall twenty times a day without getting a headache, even though once in a while he knocks down a few stones. I have $23,500 done—want to get $1,500 more. So long as I make progress I shall stick to it.

“So long as I make progress I shall stick to it”—this might well have been Sidney Marsh’s epitaph. The progress that he made during his tenure as president of Pacific University is summarized in a small memorial pamphlet published on the occasion of his death in 1879:

President Marsh found Pacific University as a small academy, with scholars not much if any further advanced than those in common school ought to be; with a single building, nothing of a library ... and not a dollar of endowment except that the interest on ten thousand dollars had been pledged by the College Society, through the efforts of Dr. Atkinson. He left it with two buildings, and funds partially pledged for a third, with about...
five thousand volumes and eight hundred pamphlets in the library ... while the institution was worth $91,086.38, and forty-nine persons had graduated from the University.

LEGACY OF A LEADER

Despite Sidney Marsh's arduous work and impressive successes on behalf of the college, he was not universally popular as a president. When, at the age of 53, he finally lost his long battle with tuberculosis on February 2, 1879, the memorial reviews from the faculty were mixed. "Not everyone was able to understand his objects," one mourner observed, "nor did they always commend themselves when understood." And another: "He had the nerve to do right as he saw the right, and the man who does so will have enemies." Still a third put his finger on what was unquestionably the sore spot of Marsh's administration: "Dr. Marsh was a Congregationalist, and while he subscribed to the Congregational faith, yet he ever strove to make Pacific University an unsectarian, Christian school."

These last, at the time of Marsh's death, were fighting words to some in the audience who counted themselves as Marsh's enemies, at least on the sectarian issue. While President Marsh held the administrative reins, few of them had entertained any serious hope of overriding his commitment to the ideal of a liberal arts university free from the narrow bounds of sectarianism. He had never pulled any punches on that matter, as this passage from one of his letters to the Board illustrates:

I do not expect support from a good many Congregationalist ministers, and repudiate the interference of such in what is not their affair, when they talk and act as if they had some authority above the constituted authority of the Board of Trustees. We want friends, but intelligent friends if possible. I would welcome the co-operation of any one, so he did not assume to dictate. But to Roman Catholics and Congregationalists alike I say the same thing. I invite their inspection. If the Roman Catholic likes it, I am glad of it, and am sorry if either he or the Congregationalist does not, and in the case of the latter, cannot help being disappointed and grieved. My position repels no one.

But, of course, such a position had repelled many. And when Sidney Marsh died in 1879, many of those who favored a strong Congregationalist bent to the college emerged from the proverbial woodwork. The final irony of Marsh's presidency was that for all of the original resistance to calling the prospective institution a "university," the more dubious word in the school's name at the time of his death might well have been "Pacific."

Left to right: John Bailey, a trustee of Pacific, Clara White Cooley, director of conservatory, Mrs. John Bailey, and Robert S. McClelland, student and nephew of Rev. Thomas McClelland, Pacific's president from 1891 to 1900
Harvey W. Scott: Pacific's First Graduate

Pacific University was singularly fortunate in having Harvey Whitefield Scott as its first graduate in 1863. Scott's subsequent career at the Portland Oregonian newspaper—he was editor there for 40 years— influenced attitudes and shaped the development of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. His professional stature gave the university prestige and notoriety among Oregon colleges.

Scott's life reads like a dime-store novel about the self-made man. He travelled to the Northwest when he was only 14 years old, moving overland on the Oregon Trail with his family. Along the way, young Harvey lost his mother and a younger brother. Shortly after arriving on the frontier, he enrolled in Pacific University and took classes between odd jobs, eventually graduating as a class of one (earning the first baccalaureate degree awarded in the entire region). During his time on campus, Scott gained the respect of Sidney Harper Marsh and the trustees, who went so far as to appoint him principal of Tualatin Academy for a short time before he had finished his full course.

As he witnessed the evolution of Portland into a small metropolitan area with industrial and commercial strength, Scott led the move to host the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in 1905, serving as president of the Exposition board in 1903-04. Always interested in Oregon history and cultural development, he was elected to serve as founding president of the Oregon Historical Society from 1898-1901. Harvey Scott has also been remembered as the younger brother of Abigail Scott Duniway, Oregon's leader in the fight for women's rights. Their differing opinions and journalistic feuds became one of the most well-known sibling rivalries in the nation.

Thirty-eight years after graduation, Scott returned as a member of Pacific University's Board of Trustees in 1901. Only four years later, in 1905, he assumed the position of board president and remained in this role until his death in 1910.

Scott's legacy lives on in the form of the Harvey W. Scott Memorial Library, constructed in 1967. A large portion of the funding for this capital project came from the bequest made by his deceased daughter, Judith Scott Walter (she was also responsible for Walter Hall, a women's residence hall).

Throughout the course of his long life, Scott was a persistent reader and collector of books. His extensive personal library was donated to Pacific University in 1943 and is now part of the Harvey W. Scott Memorial Library collection.

Scott's death in August, 1910, elicited an outpouring of recognition and praise from the nation's major newspapers, of which the excerpts at right are a few examples.

Mr. Scott was an editor who put his personality into the journal which he directed and made it a force to be reckoned with in Oregon life. He was a builder and a counsellor whose services will be greatly missed.

—New York Tribune

He left a splendid legacy of ideals to the profession of journalism. He made the Portland Oregonian one of the great newspapers of the nation.

—New York Editor and Publisher

He was one of the big men of the West. The esteem in which he was held, the character of the paper he built up, amply testify to the fact that he fully measured up to the occasion.

—Baltimore News

Harvey W. Scott was one of America's great editors and one of its leading citizens. By sheer force of his personality and his powerful pen he made himself the leading figure of the Pacific Coast.

—Providence Journal
Raising the Roof: Sectarian or Non-sectarian?

The controversy between the churches and the Institution has an ugly look & I wish some means might be devised to do away with it entirely. — THOMAS McCLELLAND, 1891

EXCEPT FOR THE PRACTICAL MATTER of adequate funding to keep the enterprise afloat, the single most important issue that President Marsh and his immediate successors had to deal with was the question of whether the college would fall under Congregationalist control or remain non-sectarian. Until that issue was settled, the future direction—indeed, the very nature—of the college would remain in question.

A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW: PRESIDENT HERRICK

James Rood Robertson, principal of Tualatin Academy from 1890–93 and professor of history at the university from 1893–1906, noted with not-too-distant hindsight in 1905, that "The selection of a successor to President Marsh was not an easy matter and considerable time elapsed before the choice was finally made." And considerable in-fighting. Significantly, while the trustees were busy lobbying for various candidates sympathetic to their individual views, the role of acting president fell to Marsh's half-brother, Joseph Marsh, who, as Robertson notes, "was familiar with the policies of his brother."

Joseph Walker Marsh, 10 years younger than his brother and a 12-year veteran faculty member in classical languages at the time of Marsh's death, was not only familiar with his brother's "policies," but shared his views. Moreover, his assuming the role of acting president at this crucial juncture in the college's history was somewhat unusual. That function, during the several periods when Sidney Marsh had been off in the East trying to drum up funds, had consistently fallen to Rev. Horace Lyman, who had seniority over Joseph Marsh, having served as chair of mathematics since 1857. Lyman was, by all reports, an excellent, even an inspiring, teacher; but he was also a scientist. Science, as we have noted, was not a field of endeavor dear to the heart of Sidney Harper Marsh; the scientific equipment available to students during his tenure consisted of a spyglass for looking at the stars and a galvanic battery that Professor Lyman owned and used mainly as a curative for rheumatism.

In addition, Lyman was a close personal friend of George Atkinson, having, like Atkinson, attended Andover Theological Seminary and having come to the West largely through Atkinson's influence; and Atkinson was strongly in favor of Congregationalist control. We have no way of knowing how much influence Sidney Marsh had in seeing that the acting presidency at the time of his death went to his brother the classicist, who favored non-denominational control, rather than to Lyman the scientist, who favored Congregationalist control, but both the choice and the ultimate outcome of that choice would have pleased him.

When the smoke cleared—or, as the trustees' minutes put it, "after prolonged review..."
John Russell Herrick, Pacific’s second president, had the unenviable position of trying to fill Sidney Marsh’s shoes. Though his tenure lasted only four years, Herrick accomplished a good deal, including raising the $16,000 required to erect “Ladies Hall,” (1884) Pacific University’s first dormitory for women (top), which would later bear his name (1887). At the opening ceremonies, Herrick delivered an address entitled “The Higher Education of Woman, the Last Chapter in the History of Liberty.”

with very full and free discussion of the interests involved”—the man who emerged as Pacific’s new president was Rev. John Herrick, who, as Robertson notes, “was even more opposed than President Marsh to anything that might be regarded as sectarian.” Herrick—who, like Joseph Marsh and so many others associated with Pacific’s early years, hailed from Vermont—was what we would today call an “ecumenical” Christian. One of his most ambitious and cherished goals as president of Pacific was to merge all of the Christian schools in the State of Oregon, regardless of denomination, into a single, large State University. The trustees, however, vigorously opposed such a radical concept, and Herrick would stay at Pacific for only four years, hardly long enough to bring them around.

Moreover, Herrick, like Marsh before him, was forced to spend much of his time in the East seeking patronage and funding—so much so that he never even managed to establish a home in Oregon. In spite of his short term and his enforced absenteeism, Herrick accomplished a good deal during his tenure, including the construction of “Ladies Hall,” a new building that would later be renamed “Herrick Hall” (not to be confused with a still later building that would bear the same name). It was during Herrick’s short reign as well, that Pacific, in collaboration with Captain M. C. Wilkinson of the U.S. Army, established an industrial school for Indians. But when John Herrick left Pacific in 1883 to return to the East for good, the issue of sectarian control was still as hot as when he had assumed office four years earlier. It was about to get hotter.

STACKING THE DECK: PRESIDENT ELLIS

In contrast to the period following President Marsh’s demise, the trustees, on Herrick’s departure, acted swiftly. Instead of appointing a new president, however, they took the unprecedented step of creating the position of vice president and then offering it to Rev. Jacob Ellis, a native of Ohio and a graduate of Wheaton College. Though Ellis is routinely listed as president of Pacific University from 1883 to 1891, the minutes of the board clearly state that he served in the newly created position of vice president for the first three years, during which time, apparently, the institution was without a president. The reasons for this are not clear, but the tenor of the minutes suggests that it stemmed from divisiveness among the board members on the issue of “denominational relations.”

Reverend Ellis arrived at Pacific University in 1883, the same year that the first transcontinental railroad arrived in Oregon, and for those loyal to Sidney Harper Marsh’s vision of a non-sectarian college, the coincidence of these two events might well have seemed symbolic. Besides not being a New Englander, Ellis differed from his two predecessors in that his background was largely pastoral rather than pedagogical: he had come to Oregon as pastor of the Congregational Church at Forest Grove in 1875 and had left to take up a pastorate in Seattle before being called back to serve as vice president of Pacific.

Also, in contrast to either Sidney Marsh or John Herrick, Ellis seems to have had considerable sympathy with the sciences: he attempted, unsuccessfully, to establish an affiliation with a medical school in Portland, and he made significant changes in faculty and curriculum, including the addition of courses in such practical fields as applied chemistry and
Help From the Morse Brothers

WHEN SIDNEY HARPER MARSH needed to raise funds for Tualatin Academy and Pacific University, he relied heavily on assistance from faithful Congregationalists in New England. Among these loyal friends from the Atlantic seaboard were brothers Sidney and Samuel Morse. Their gifts to the fledgling college provided crucial operating support.

Samuel F. B. Morse is, of course, famous for his invention of the telegraph and Morse Code; his brother Sidney is less well known. Their father, Rev. Jedidiah Morse, was a Congregationalist pastor and an early American geographer—sometimes called the “Father of American Geography” because he authored the first geographical texts published in the United States at the start of the nineteenth century. When Sidney Morse donated 400 titles from his father’s library—including many rare volumes from Europe—Pacific’s library was the largest of any Oregon college. In 1880 the collection of 5,000 titles was twice as large as that of the closest rival, Willamette University in Salem.

In the 1870s, the famous inventor donated four telegraph instruments—two transmitters and two receivers—to the college, probably to be used as scientific apparatus. For many years these instruments were displayed in the library, but eventually went to the Pacific University Museum in Old College Hall.

In 1860, Samuel Morse lent his illustrious name to the following letter of introduction for President Marsh, leading to more support among Morse’s friends and colleagues.

No. 5 West 22. 1860
My dear Sir,
Permit me to introduce to you President Marsh of the Pacific University, at Forest Grove near Portland, Oregon.
Mr. Marsh will give you details in regard to this most important institution.
I have myself so strong a belief that no benevolent funds could be so well bestowed with the prospect of more widespread benefits not merely in that locality but also throughout the Pacific coast that I have most cheerfully given my mite to help build up this promising University.
Please think of this plan and if you can, in the enlarged benevolence of your nature, so ready to diffuse your wealth for great & good objects, encourage him by a donation, I feel assured you will. I know of no object at present, which promises a greater return in good fruit than the one here commended to your attention.
In haste but with Sincere esteem....
Sam. F. B. Morse
During the administration of President Ellis, courses in applied chemistry and assaying were added to the curriculum. Right: A chemistry laboratory in Science Hall (now Old College Hall) in the 1890s. This room is now an exhibit gallery in the Pacific University Museum. The original blackboard was discovered in the wall during extensive restoration in the 1970s and is visible in the gallery.

General Oliver Otis Howard (1830-1909), sometimes called the “One-armed Christian Soldier” because of his Civil War injury and strong religious convictions, commanded U.S. Army troops in the Pacific Northwest (Department of the Columbia) from 1874-1879. Based at Ft. Vancouver on the Columbia River, Gen. Howard led the expedition against the Nez Perce Indians when Chief Joseph retreated to Canada in 1877. Howard’s connections to the Congregational Church influenced the decision to establish an Indian Training School in Forest Grove, with ties to Pacific University. The school’s first Superintendent, Lt. Melville Wilkinson, was Gen. Howard’s personal assistant before assuming that role. Both men were active in the Portland YMCA.

Howard University, opened in Washington, D.C., in 1867 to educate freed slaves after the Civil War, was started by the First Congregational Society. They named the school for Gen. Howard because he was in charge of the post-war Freedman’s Bureau.

Assaying. That he uncompromisingly saw Pacific University as a religious institution, however, is clear from the motto that he selected for the college: “Pro Christo et Regno Eius”— “For Christ and His Kingdom.” And Christ’s kingdom, in Ellis’ view, was decidedly Congregational.

In 1889, George Atkinson died, and it was perhaps in memory of the former founder that Ellis judged the time to be ripe for affecting a change to strict Congregationalist control of the university—a miscalculation as it turned out. By now Ellis was president and had replaced many of the faculty who opposed him; he probably also had a hand in replacing Alanson Hinman, who had served as chair of the Board of Trustees since Sidney Harper Marsh’s death, with George Shindler, who, unlike Hinman, shared Ellis’ views.

On June 6, 1890, Shindler appointed a committee of the board to resolve “Denominational Relations.” At the board meeting of June 20, the committee came back with a majority report, laced with quotes from the late George Atkinson, favoring Congregationalist control, and a minority report, with quotes
from Sidney Harper Marsh, opposing it. On both reports, to Ellis' chagrin, the board split right down the middle—five for and five against—and the issue was tabled. Perhaps most surprising and galling to Ellis was the fact that among those opposing him was George Atkinson's son, Edward, who apparently placed personal convictions above loyalty to the memory of his father.

Before the June 20th meeting was over, George Shindler had resigned as chair of the board and Alanson Hinman was reappointed. Thwarted, Rev. Jacob Ellis straightway resigned as president and left Pacific, taking with him the larger part of the instructors whom he had recruited over his eight-year tenure. When the dust settled, only Joseph Marsh and William Ferrin—another native of Vermont, who would later serve as president for 13 years—remained of the original corps of instructors from Sidney Marsh's day. More to the point, the issue of sectarian control had still not been resolved.

**A Kind of Solution: President McClelland**

On Ellis' departure, Joseph Marsh was once again appointed acting president until the board could find a replacement. It was probably clear to Marsh and everyone else by now that the only position to take on the thorny matter of sectarian control was one of compromise. What they needed was an able negotiator, and they found just that in the person of Rev. Thomas McClelland, a native of Ireland who had come to America as a child. As we shall see, McClelland would ably man the helm of the university up to the turn of the century. His immediate task, however, was to ride out the waves of divisiveness that followed in the wake of Ellis' departure. Drawing on his considerable talents as an administrator, he led a movement to amend the charter so that two-thirds of the board should be Congregationalists, but elected by the board as the original charter had provided.

As Robertson reports: "Thus the institution was enabled to retain the broad nonsectarian character which had been in the past emphasized, and at the same time secure the patronage of a denomination closely identified with educational institutions in the West." A further stipulation of the new charter was that Pacific University should never be removed from Forest Grove, a proposition that had been seriously entertained during the stormy Ellis years.

With the last founder gone and the question of the non-sectarian nature of the university more or less settled, the "pioneer" period of Pacific University comes to a close. Against tremendous odds and outright opposition, Sidney Harper Marsh's "one idea" had prevailed, an idea commemorated in the quotation from Marsh that graces the west wall of present-day Jefferson Hall: "It is intended that the study and instruction here given shall cultivate the power of right thinking, and ground the student in the principles of right action." For now at least, the "house that Marsh built" was standing firm.
FOREST GROVE INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL

In 1879, during the administration of President John Herrick and largely through the efforts of Rev. George Atkinson, Pacific University set about to administer the only off-reservation boarding school for Indian children in the western United States. The Forest Grove Indian Training School was established a few blocks from the main university campus, roughly occupying the residential block now surrounded by 22nd and 23rd Avenues and C and D Streets. The first group of 18 students, from the Puyallup Indian Reservation near Tacoma, Washington, arrived in Forest Grove on February 25, 1880. For the next five years over 300 Indian students from Washington Territory, Oregon, Northern California, and Alaska attended the school. Relocated to Salem and renamed in early 1885, the Chemawa Indian School still operates the oldest off-reservation boarding school in the nation.

U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes, during a trip to Portland, made a visit to Forest Grove in 1880 specifically to see the Indian Training School (the only time a sitting U.S. President ever came to town). The school, considered an innovative experiment at the time, also attracted the attention of the national press. At right is an excerpt from an article entitled “Indian Schools in Oregon,” which appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1882. While the attitudes expressed may grate on our modern, and presumably more enlightened, sensibilities, the article is presented here without comment as an accurate record of how “thinking men” in the late nineteenth century struggled to come to grips with “The Indian Question.”

The Forest Grove Indian Training School was home to over 300 Indian students between 1880 and 1885 before the school relocated to Salem and became the Chemawa Indian School. Photographer Isaac Davidson took a series of photographs at the school including these “before and after” images. The photo on the left bears the caption, “New recruits—Spokane Indians,” and the one on the right, “New Recruits—after seven months at school.” One student died in the interim.
justly holds that the government can with benefit to all parties expend its money in their education and training. They ought to be taught various trades and handicrafts, so that when they return to their homes they may be properly fitted for life’s struggles, and will infuse new ambitions into future generations, and be missionaries of the higher life of order, labor, and civilization.

In the training school at Forest Grove one hundred young Indians between the ages of five and twenty are kept, well fed, well clothed, and happy, and, as far as can be judged from appearances, quite as intelligent as a similar number of white youths. They came to the school from the prairies and the mountains, dressed in blankets and moccasins, with uncut and unkempt hair, as wild as young coyotes. They have already learned to sing like nightingales and work like beavers. It is remarkable that these young children of the forest are perfectly amenable to discipline, and never break a rule. The boys learn how to make boots and shoes, build houses, shoe horses, and how to perform the various operations of agriculture. The girls learn to sew, darn, wash, cook, churn, iron, wash dishes, and keep their rooms in order. Both sexes learn their lessons promptly, and retain what they learn tenaciously. The common school games and amusements, playing ball, running races, and the like, are indulged in by the boys, while the little girls play with their dolls. They attend religious meetings and lectures, and sing and pray. The singing, indeed, is of remarkable excellence.

Captain Wilkinson last fall conducted his dusky pupils on a visit to Portland to attend the Young Men’s Christian Association meeting, and the sight of these young red-skins excited general admiration. Captain Wilkinson gave some details of the organization of the school. The United States government for the first year appropriated only $5000 for him to start a school of twenty-five pupils, furnish transportation for them, teach, board, and house them. The boys built the houses themselves, the government only furnishing the materials. The four acres assigned to the institution were cultivated by the boys, who grubbed up the stumps, and planted potatoes and vegetables for their table. The school is thus partly self-supporting. The boys are attired in a regular uniform, and have their regular officers, as in our military schools. Every advantage placed in their way is eagerly seized on by these pupils, and it is worthy of notice by those who talk of the incorrigible character of the Indians that the parents, many of them chiefs, willingly and thankfully surrendered their sons and daughters in order that they might be taught the arts and learning of the white man.

We agree with Captain Wilkinson that this is the best solution of the difficulty which confronts us in our dealings with the Indians. The present race, demoralized by our vacillating and inconsistent Indian policy, may perhaps deserve the reputation of being incorrigible; let us then take the rising generation away from the evil influences which have surrounded their progenitors, and train them up to be useful and orderly members of society.

The top photograph has the caption: “One of the Main Buildings, erected entirely by Indian Boys; Dormer Windows, Rustic and Painting on all.—Their work without aid.”

The lower photograph is captioned “Shoemaking” and was used as the basis for an illustration accompanying the Harper’s Weekly article reprinted here. The instructor, Samuel Walker, is the father of Charles Walker (‘06), for whom Walker Hall was named.

Left: A button from an Indian School uniform. The button was designed by Dr. Henry Minthorn, superintendent after Captain Wilkinson, in 1883.