

Report from the Field:
Material Culture

Desperately Seeking Mary:
Materializing Mary Richardson
Walker, Missionary

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Abstract: Documenting a historian's first foray into public history, this essay argues for the importance of material culture in the practice of history. As an assistant professor of history at Washington State University, Jennifer Thigpen embarked on a search for a number of mislaid archival materials belonging to the university's Elkanah and Mary Richardson Walker collection. She quickly found herself not only caught up in the search, but convinced of the interpretive value of the artifacts she ultimately located.

Key words: Mary Richardson Walker (1811–1897), Tshimakain, women in missionary work, missionaries—West—U.S., Elkanah and Mary Richardson Walker Collection

I MADE MY FIRST FORAY into the world of public historical exhibition with an unlikely partner: missionary wife Mary Richardson Walker. I curated an exhibit entitled *Baskets, Bonnets & Pincushions: Interpreting the Life and Work of Mary Richardson Walker* at Washington State University's Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC). The exhibit drew the community, school children, and regional tour groups as well as a university audience to the exhibition space. I had not set out, originally, to create an exhibit until a serendipitous archival find as part of ongoing research on missionary

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wives who had lived and worked in the nineteenth-century North American West and in the Hawai'ian Islands presented a mystery and a possibility. Piqued by what I found of Walker as well as the question of how material encounter might illuminate and complicate her, I began to feel remarkably like the hapless housewife, Roberta Glass, played by Rosanna Arquette in the 1980s film *Desperately Seeking Susan*. In the film, Glass gets caught up in another woman's life—partly through possessing the woman's coat—while seeking adventure. Glass voyeuristically follows Susan through a series of personal ads, mistakenly believing that she knows and understands Susan. The closer Glass comes to Susan, in the flesh rather than merely on the page, however, the more complex she becomes. This proved true of my pursuit and exhibition of Mary Richardson Walker.

As a young woman, Mary Richardson nursed grand ambitions for her life. She entertained a variety of career ambitions including medicine, teaching, and missionary work. In her late twenties, Mary wed a man, Elkanah Walker—a virtual stranger—for the sole purpose of embarking upon a missionary's life. She departed for the Oregon Territory from her hometown of Baldwin, Maine, on her wedding day.¹ Despite a series of disappointments and surprises, she lived the remainder of her life in the Pacific Northwest. Encountered through her writings, Mary seemed to me quite sure of herself. Like Susan, however, she became much more complicated when viewed up close.

My quest for Mary began not with a “personals” ad, but with a memo presenting a research mystery that had gone unsolved a generation earlier. As I was working with MASC's “Elkanah and Mary Richardson Walker Papers,” Trevor Bond, the director of MASC, slid a piece of paper across the table, saying only that he thought I might find it “interesting.” The paper turned out to be a memo written by WSU Professor and Dean of the College of Home Economics Alberta Hill in 1975 on the subject of “Objects Belonging to Elkanah and Mary Walker.” Detailing her attempt to catalog the university's holdings and to identify the location of the Walker family artifacts, Hill's investigations led her to two related discoveries, both unsettling. First, Hill found the cataloging system “most informal.” Second, and probably related to the first, Hill indicated that some of the Walker items could not be located. As far as Trevor Bond knew, the items had never been located. He wondered aloud if I might be interested in finding these items and creating an exhibit around them.²

It was exciting to think that the university had—or at least potentially had—some of Walker's belongings. As someone researching the material culture of nineteenth-century missionary-Hawaiian interaction, I was eager to

1. On her wedding day, Mary wrote: “Called on Aunt Pierce. Came home and looked around a little. Dressed and at eleven was married.” Mary Richardson Walker, journal, March 5, 1838. Elkanah and Mary Richardson Walker Papers 1830–1938, Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries, Pullman, WA (hereafter MASC, WSU).

2. Alberta Hill, memorandum to Albert W. Thompson, December 19, 1975. Clifford M. Drury Papers, 1932–1983. Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, WA.

learn how the practices I observed in the Pacific played out in the Pacific Northwest. The opportunity to connect with the material worlds of my historical subjects was all the more intriguing. I was thus deeply disappointed that many of the items had been mislaid and wondered about the possibility of locating them. As someone new to the institution, however, I had to consider whose toes I might step on in the process. Moreover, I had to ask myself if this bit of sleuthing was really worth my time. Would the search prove professionally useful? Would the product of my labors ultimately “count” professionally? I also wondered about the *importance* of finding these items. I considered what we might learn from material artifacts that we couldn’t from diaries and letters. Was the recovery of these items vital to recovering the life and experience of Mary Richardson Walker?

Although I lacked immediate and easy answers to these questions, I jumped in. Naively, perhaps, I was convinced that I could locate these items. I was less naïve in recognizing their real historical value. Having worked with Mary’s diaries, I knew that she had led an interesting and historically important life. I began to consider the search as a rare opportunity to “discover” this already fascinating historical subject anew, and engagingly present that discovery to the public. I was not sufficiently aware that I would learn new lessons about my own discipline and the practice of history along the way.

Desperately Seeking Artifacts

It quickly became apparent that this was a bigger project than I could undertake alone, so I sought the collaboration of graduate public history student Rachael Johnson, and we launched in. Fortunately, Hill’s memo provided a list of Walker items that the university had acquired over the years, including a “dark green wool cape,” “a black taffeta dress,” and a “homespun counterpane.”³ We thought to begin the search in Home Economics, but given that the college had long ago merged with another, we looked to the next likely place: the department of Apparel, Merchandising, Design and Textiles. Professor Linda Arthur Bradley, a member of that department, readily located the wool cloak and a few of Walker’s bonnets, along with some foundational garments.

Although this early success thrilled us, the items in the memo with more ambiguous descriptions posed a problem in terms of their recovery. I quickly appropriated Hill’s vexation at the memo’s reference to “some clothing” and “other objects.”⁴ I worried whether—without greater description—we would ever find these items. There were a number of other tantalizing and sometimes troubling references outlined in the memo: the counterpane, a table-

3. Alberta Hill, memorandum to Albert W. Thompson, December 19, 1975. Clifford M. Drury Papers, 1932–1983. Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, Spokane, WA.

4. *Ibid.*



Mary Richardson Walker's green wool cloak. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

cloth, pincushions, “A number of Indian baskets,” and “A pair of tiny moccasins.” All of these items were either donated to the university by the Walker family or purchased to add to a growing university collection of items relating to the history of the Pacific Northwest.⁵ The Walker collection included very personal items; some preserved over many years by Mary and her family. Although each promised to contribute to an interesting exhibit, we took the responsibility for recovering and reassembling these items as a personal matter as well. While we hoped to bring these items back together to share with audiences who might be unfamiliar with Mary’s life and legacy, we also wanted to preserve them in the way her family (and perhaps Mary herself) envisioned.

While Bradley continued to scour her departmental collections for the remaining articles of clothing and apparel, Johnson and I renewed our search for the remaining pieces. Because it seemed likely that WSU’s Museum of Anthropology might have acquired both the baskets and the moccasins, we inquired with the museum’s current director, Professor Mary Collins. Though she felt certain that the baskets weren’t in their collection, Collins assured us

5. See Clifford Drury’s correspondence, especially C. M. Drury, letter to E. O. Holland, March 27, 1936. Clifford Merrill Drury Papers 1932–1958. MASC, WSU.

that she would embark upon a thorough search. Moreover, she promised that she would assist us in identifying the baskets' cultural provenance once we located them.

In the meantime, Johnson and I continued to work with the available materials to piece together an accurate picture of Mary's life. A devoted diarist and letter-writer, Mary kept a more or less running narrative of her life. Although she seemed certain that she wanted to do work that "mattered," Mary was not always sure what that work would consist of, and constantly grappled with her faith. Nonetheless, by 1836 she appeared ready to commit herself to the missionary cause. Mary wrote to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), indicating her willingness to serve. The ABCFM, however, was reluctant to send "unmarried females" into the mission field and rejected her application.⁶ Mary appeared undeterred. Quite simply, she understood that her missionary ambitions hinged on her ability to attach herself to a full-fledged missionary. She would need to find a husband.

She found a potential match in Elkanah Walker, another missionary hopeful. Elkanah had also been advised by the ABCFM to find a suitable mate. He arrived in Baldwin, Maine (where Mary lived with her family) in spring 1837 with a letter of introduction from a mutual friend.⁷ During their first private meeting, Elkanah did little to dispel Mary's impression of him as an "awkward" man. He clumsily revealed his plan to "surprise" her. He informed Mary that he was "missionary destined" and confessed: "as I have no one engaged to go with me I have come with the intention of offering myself to you." Unworried about romance, Elkanah forged ahead: "You have been recommended to me by Mr. Armstrong, & here is another letter by Thayer." Mary confessed in her journal that she was uncertain of the match, noting that she was ready to "throw the bargain off onto some one else." Pragmatism got the better of her, however, and she accepted his proposal. Upon his departure, Elkanah "stepped up and shook hands rather affectionately." The deal, it seems, was sealed.⁸

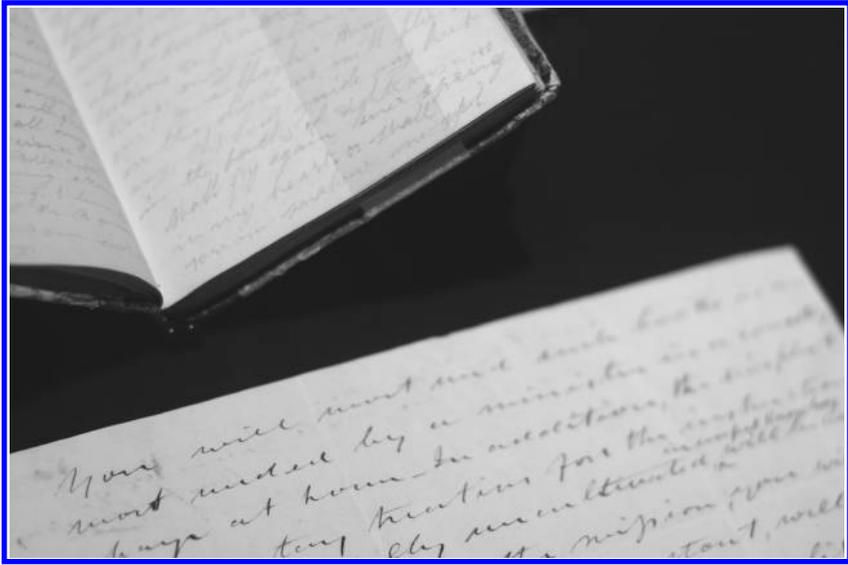
The two carried on a long-distance correspondence for nearly a year, but the wedding itself was hastily arranged, prompted by the timing of Elkanah's appointment to a mission in the Oregon territory. The two departed immediately after their marriage in March.⁹ After her marriage, Mary wrote regularly to her mother and to her sister, keeping them apprised of events on the trail and in the mission field. These documents—among others—allowed us

6. William J. Armstrong, letter to Mary Richardson, March 2, 1837. MASC, WSU.

7. William J. Armstrong, letter to Elkanah Walker, March 20, 1837. Mary Richardson (Walker), journal, April 23–25, 1837. "Letter to Mary Richardson from William Thayer," April, 17, 1837. MASC, WSU.

8. Mary Richardson (Walker), journal, April 23 and 25, 1837. Errors appear in the original.

9. Elkanah's first missionary appointment (to Africa) did not come to fruition. The ABCFM, in fact, "broke up" this mission. His relatively long engagement to Mary spoke of their wait for another appointment. His reappointment to a mission "west of the Rocky Mountains" came late in 1837. William J. Armstrong, letter to Elkanah Walker, December 6, 1837. Mary Richardson Walker, journal, March 5, 1838.



Two pages from Mary's diary and a piece of a letter. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

to piece together a sort of sequence of events of her life and to construct an interpretation of Mary as a woman who was both practical and ambitious.

Some of her other writings were much more private and were intended solely for her own contemplation. In an early diary, Mary made a plea that—should she be “taken away suddenly this book may not be seen except by a sister, or some near and intimate friend.” Barring that, she hoped that the finder would burn the diary “immediately.”¹⁰ These writings were often quite revealing. From them, we gained a sense of Mary as a complicated and often conflicted woman. Nearly equally balanced between narrative and emotional content, these documents served as the foundation of the exhibit. Yet, we knew we couldn't hang an exhibit on the documents. As fascinating as they are to *read*, they are not quite so interesting to *look at*.

Despite Bradley's early success at locating Mary's garments, subsequent finds were more infrequent. By January, I was beginning to despair. Johnson, Bond, and I collectively worried that we would have only a few pieces on display at the exhibit. In short, we fretted that we wouldn't have much of an exhibit at all. On top of the real sense of failure associated with my inability to reassemble the pieces of this collection, I worried that I'd wasted valuable professional time—time that might have been spent on other research endeavors. I worried in particular about the professional penalties that would almost certainly accrue to me. Johnson and I feverishly—and sometimes compulsively—checked our e-mails, hoping for word from Linda Bradley or

10. Journal of Mary Richardson (Walker). Introductory pages, MASC, WSU.

Mary Collins, indicating that they'd found even a small piece of the collection. Bradley was successful in locating important pieces of the collection. We lived vicariously through her "Eureka!" moments and relished the opportunity to view the newly recovered objects. First she found ribbons, then the "counter pane" and a brooch. These were exciting discoveries, but we still did not have quite enough for an exhibit. Moreover, important and valuable items missing from the collection were still unaccounted for.

Our spirits were buoyed in mid-January, when Bradley e-mailed to tell us that she'd hit the jackpot. In desperation, Bradley had elected to upend their collection, looking (as one might look for one's keys) in every conceivable location for the missing garments. In the process, she pulled boxes off shelves and opened every one. She even opened one cryptically labeled "ethnic shoes." Bradley guessed that the box might contain pairs of clogs. Instead, upon removing the lid, she was surprised to discover what appeared to be a wooden box. The "box" turned out to be Mary's writing desk, also named in the memo. Bradley was perhaps more surprised when, upon opening the desk, she discovered an assortment of woven baskets and a pair of tiny moccasins. She also uncovered a wooden paddle, a number of pincushions, and a variety of other domestic and personal items, all of which had been catalogued in Hill's 1975 memo. We'd finally found Mary. It was then that we knew we had our show. We breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Discovering Mary

By this time, I'd spent months imagining the everyday items of Mary's world and I'd thought long and hard about how they fit in with what I knew both about the life of a nineteenth-century missionary wife and about Mary herself. Seeing the items, however, forced me to reconsider my conclusions. Mary's material items complicated the portrait I had painted of her. Her diaries and letters gave voice to an opinionated, ambitious, and frequently cantankerous woman who often defied cultural conventions. In her private diary in particular, Mary said what she meant. Moreover, she expressed herself with such clarity and force that she left the reader little doubt that she also meant what she said. On the page, Mary felt like a force to be reckoned with. The *things* she left behind, however, prompted me to revisit these initial interpretations.

When I first examined her clothing, I was simultaneously struck by two things. First, I was taken aback by her size. Photographs convey Mary's small stature, but her clothing—viewed up close—really underscores this fact. Mary was just about five feet tall and had a very slight build—from her clothing we can deduce that she weighed approximately one hundred pounds. Visitors to the exhibit consistently expressed surprise upon seeing a mannequin dressed in her cape, remarking that she appeared "no bigger than a child." Her small size—made suddenly real—at first seemed at odds with her much larger personality. Second, her garments seemed totally inappropriate for the environ-



Two of Mary's bonnets. The white bonnet was likely worn as a sleeping cap; the black one might have been used for mourning. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

ment she encountered in the West and for the tasks she certainly undertook there.¹¹ The garments required us to imagine Mary gardening, washing, ironing, tending to children, all while dressed neck to ankle, head covered, sometimes in the heat of a Pacific Northwest summer.

The collection of remaining clothing is extensive and varied. While the taffeta gown likely disintegrated long ago, her green wool cloak is in surprisingly good condition. The velvet trim is frayed and there are sections that show wear and decay. Nevertheless, it has retained its shape and color. The collection also includes a variety of decorative ribbons and a cotton capelet. These show little sign of wear and indeed appear nearly new. Mary's belongings also include a fan made of Birdseye maple and a pair of delicate "mitts." Bradley deduced that the fan had been repaired at least once, suggesting that it was put to use; yet the condition of the mitts indicates that Mary rarely—if ever—wore them. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of an occasion at the mission requiring such attire.

We consulted with Bradley to gain a picture of what a woman like Mary would have worn and what kind of clothes she would have considered ap-

11. The Walkers resided at Waiilatpu before forming a new mission near present-day Spokane.



Mary's fan and her lace mitts. A close look at the fan reveals that it has been repaired, using different wood than the original. A delicate linen baby shirt is visible in the background. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

appropriate for her social position and station in life. Bradley reminded us that in the middle part of the nineteenth century, a fully dressed woman wore considerably more clothing than a woman today (roughly ten pounds to less than one, respectively). Mary would not have been an exception to this rule—nor would she have shed layers of clothing for reasons of practicality or comfort (or in deference to her small frame). Moreover, there were certain items of clothing a lady owned, regardless of whether she actually wore them or not. This offered an important reminder of the power of culture and the almost irresistible pull of convention. Although Mary felt very *unconventional* on the page, she appeared somewhat different to us when we considered the clothing she wore and the kinds of clothing she thought to bring with her. That is, in viewing her garments, we came to understand that at least some part of Mary cared very deeply about appearances.

Mary also brought all kinds of tools to the mission. Those she couldn't bring, she had sent to her by ship after she arrived. She wrote home frequently, requesting additional items.¹² Her diaries tell us what she did with the tools. In a typical week, Mary dipped candles, baked, sewed, gardened, and ironed. On one particularly long day, Mary “rose about five [and] had early break-

12. For more perishable and pressing items, the Walkers made use of a more local supplier. See typescript of “Letters Concerning Elkanah and Mary Richardson Walker and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1836–1859,” 87a-d. MASC, WSU.



Some of Mary Richardson Walker's thimbles and, in the background, her pincushions. At the very top is the one her mother made of uncles' wartime uniforms. Below and to the left is Mary's "everyday" pincushion. To the right is the more elaborate beaded pincushion. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

fast." Before noon, Mary finished her housework and baked half a dozen loaves of bread. Moreover, she explained, [I]"made a kettle of mush and have now a suet pudding and beef boiling . . . I have managed to put my clothes away and set my house in order." Mary concludes: "nine o'clock P.M., was delivered of another son."¹³ Even during labor, Mary's work continued.

The artifacts in this collection not only reflect but amplify the disproportionate place of domestic labor in her life. The collection includes a fine cotton baby shirt, which would have been laced up with delicate ribbon. It also contains a wooden paddle, which Mary would have used for bread making and other kitchen tasks. The paddle itself has been worn smooth from use and there are grooves and indentations in the handle from Mary's frequent handling. There are a number of thimbles and pincushions in the collection, which indicates the place that sewing surely occupied in her life. The three pincushions belonging to the Walker collection are each designed for a different use and may have had different meanings to Mary. Her mother made one pincushion from the uniforms of her uncles who had battled on opposite sides of the Revolutionary war, perhaps as means to "mend" the family together after the conflict. Another is much more delicate; it is a soft blue and features intricate beadwork. The last appears to be a much more "everyday" pincushion, meant to be pinned to the bodice of a dress for ready access. Pocked with pinpricks, this was likely put to more regular use than the other two.

13. For a discussion of women's labor, see Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's *A Midwife's Tale* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 75–84. Mary Richardson Walker, journal, March 16, 1842.

I was immediately impressed by the number of sewing implements in the collection. Yet, their scale in relation to her other belongings began to make sense when I saw some of the other items Mary owned. Mending was an important skill that likely occupied much of her time. For example, the counterpane Hill referenced in her memo is quite beautiful when viewed in full. Upon closer inspection, it is also clear that the blanket was mended time and time again. Like all critical supplies in the mission field, the blanket simply had to last. Mary's mending skills were surely in high demand. Though Mary believed that she was made for bigger and "better" things than domestic life and went all the way to the Oregon Territory to do work that she deemed important, her objects made clear that she never quite escaped the duties and obligations that came with being a woman in the nineteenth century. The things Mary left behind reminded us of this fact and proved vital to our understanding and representation of her. They also offered a richer understanding of the peoples and place she encountered.

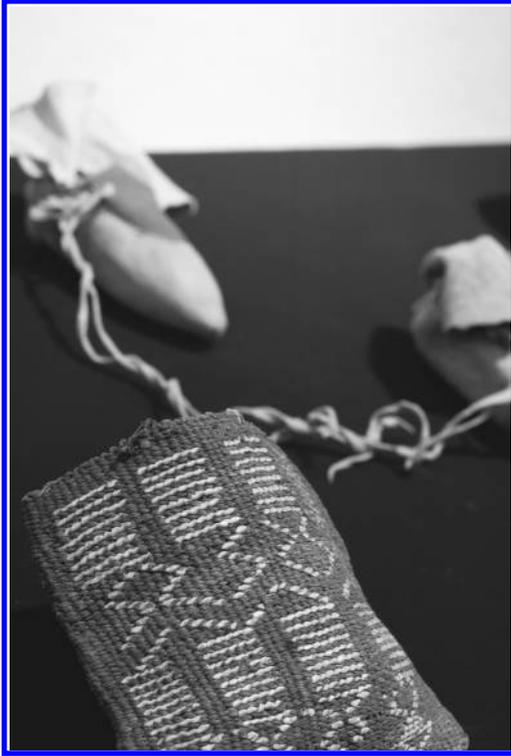
Although the Indian baskets proved nearly the hardest items to locate, they were important for a number of reasons. First, they provided real insight into her relationships to native peoples in the region. Even though Mary could sometimes be harsh in her assessment of natives, the presence of the baskets in her collection suggests a much more complicated relationship than might otherwise be interpreted if we had relied on her diaries alone. Some of her baskets and "pouches" might have been obtained in trade, but at least some were given as gifts.¹⁴ According to Mary Schlick, one of the baskets in the collection is characteristic of those made by Interior Salish weavers located around the Thompson and Fraser rivers in British Columbia and other groups north of the Spokane. Other of the twined baskets contained in the collection were likely used for root digging and storage bags by the Sahaptian speakers of the Columbia Plateau. One of the smaller bags, made from Indian hemp and Bear Grass, appear to have come from a Plateau tribe.¹⁵ These items not only suggest the Walkers' contact with natives in the region; they suggest a long-term connection to those relationships. Mary collected these items and kept them in good condition for years, passing them along to her children. We can surmise that these items had meaning for her far beyond mere utility.¹⁶

The moccasins tell us a similar story. The pair belonging to the collection has not been worn or used; their condition suggests that Mary held onto them for reasons of her own. Mary's private journal is peppered with references to the work she did "cutting shoes." On their own, those notations are lost in a sea of other tasks; in the presence of the moccasins, however, they took on new meaning. Indeed, we pondered whether she'd kept the moccasins as a

14. Mary Richardson Walker, journal, November 18, 1842 and December 3, 1842.

15. Hall's memo indicates that Mary used the baskets in her home. Each basket arrived at the University tagged and labeled, "telling the purpose for which it was used."

16. Schlick is a noted expert on Indian textile art. See her book, *Columbia River Basketry: Gift of the Ancestors, Gift of the Earth* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).



One of the many baskets in the Walker collection. This small basket might have been used for gathering herbs or small berries. One of the “tiny moccasins” referenced in Hill’s memo can be seen in the background. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

sort of testament that she had done “real” work in and for the mission rather than being subsumed by her domestic obligations.¹⁷

Although Mary had come to the West to engage in meaningful work, she appears to have been disappointed by many of the events of her life. She married a man whom she hardly knew, and though she grew to love him, he was not what she had at first hoped he would be. By his own admission, Elkanah frequently fell victim to what he termed the “Blue Devils.” Mary’s descriptions paint a portrait of a figuratively and literally absent man. He was sometimes away from the mission for weeks at a time. When he was home, Mary described her husband as often despondent and moody. This pattern spanned the whole of their marriage.

Mary was also quite isolated. The Tshimakain mission was located near present-day Spokane, Washington. The nearest mission was Waiilatpu, where the Whitmans and the Spaldings were stationed.¹⁸ By today’s standards, the

17. Mary’s journal provides evidence that she and her “girls” cut—as well as sewed—shoes. Mary Richardson Walker, journal, December 29, 1841; February 23, 1842; February 21, 1843.

18. See the map in Julie Roy Jeffrey’s, *Converting the West: A Biography of Narcissa Whitman* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 112–13.



Mary Walker likely received these baskets in trade from the native peoples with whom she interacted during her time at the Tshimakain Mission. (Photograph courtesy of James Seckington)

distance (just under 200 miles) is quite short and easily traversable. Yet Mary's journal reveals that the journey took considerable time and pulled her husband away frequently. Adding to her sense of isolation, Mary's missionary neighbor at Tshimakain, Myra Eells, was frequently sick and required Mary's constant assistance. Mary arrived at the mission with a new baby; she gave birth on average every other year throughout her remaining years there.¹⁹ Even if she had wanted to accompany her husband on his frequent sojourns, her duties made this impossible. These facts proved easy enough to chart out and to acknowledge intellectually, but her isolation took on new meanings as we sifted through her belongings.

Though she wore a brave face, Mary was lonely. We get a sense of her isolation from her autograph book. Begun well before she arrived in the West, the book changed in tone over the years. The earliest entries include an acrostic penned by her mother and an ode from her friend Mary Kinney. While later entries lacked the affection of earlier notes, Mary continued to attempt to make human connections. She made it a point to get the autographs of travelers passing through or by the mission. The entries include thanks for

19. Mary gave birth to children in 1838, 1840, 1842, 1844, 1846, and 1848.

the Walkers' hospitality and notes from regular visitors.²⁰ Mary made other attempts to express her loneliness. Particularly haunting is a reproduction of a somewhat common nineteenth-century image of a woman weeping by a fountain. Upon viewing it, I wondered if she'd intended it as a self-portrait. Taken in the context of the surprising news of the death of her mother in 1844, her geographic isolation, the realities of her husband's emotional state, and what she perceived to be the burdens of domesticity, the portrait offered a more poignant comment on Mary's life than even her carefully chosen words provided on their own.

Considering the whole of the collection, I began to feel that I was no longer simply "seeking" Mary, but that I come to grasp some of most essential aspects of her person and of her life. Representing and managing her own life on the page, Mary had told future readers one version of her life—one in which she was often bold, strong, and ambitious. Though she occasionally hinted at another version, her *things* fill in the details to reveal a more complicated story. Like the rebellious Susan, Mary was more complex—and sometimes much more vulnerable and conventional—than she let on. It was this Mary Richardson Walker that our exhibition could now present to the public. Yet, in the absence of her things, I might have overlooked this important contradiction. If Roberta Glass learned something about herself as she searched for the elusive Susan, my quest for Mary reminded me of the integral importance of material culture to the practice as well as presentation of history.

Jennifer Thigpen is an assistant professor of history at Washington State University. Her current research explores the interactions among Hawai'i's queens and American missionary wives in the nineteenth-century Hawaiian Islands. Her exhibit, *Baskets, Bonnets and Pincushions: Interpreting the Life and Work of Mary Richardson Walker*, represents her first foray into public history.

20. Mary Richardson Walker Autograph Album, MASC, WSU. The album also includes a somewhat chilling reference to the "unfortunate situation" related to the Whitman killings. Cayuse Indians killed the Whitmans and eleven others in fall, 1847.