SOMETIMES a man is important to history because of what he was; sometimes because of what he accomplished; and sometimes because of his position in life. David E. Blain was not one of the famous men in Methodism because of what he was, nor because of his position in life. David Blain was not famous at all in the sense that Asbury, Cartwright, or Dempster were famous since he was not an outstanding bishop, a fiery evangelist, or a great educator. He was an ordinary minister who saw a need and took upon himself the responsibility of helping fulfill the need. He brought religion to an area that was being carved out of virgin lands in a part of the American continent that was as foreign to the people of the East as any foreign mission in Africa. He is famous, not so much for what he did, but for the time and place to which he went, namely Seattle, Washington, in 1853 when that city had less than 150 residents and the whole Territory less than 4,000 inhabitants. Thus, this minister, though having no more ability than any other minister of his day, nor being of any more worth than any other minister, is important to the overall picture of Methodist Church history in that he founded Methodism in one of the busiest and largest cities in the United States and gave to that city an influence which is still strong today. Outside of this he is unimportant. Therefore, in this paper, I shall treat his life prior to his going to the Northwest lightly and center the paper around his life and work in the Northwest. But since he leaves the Northwest after ten years and returns to the East, he becomes unimportant and I shall treat this part lightly. In summary, then, this man is only important as he is related to the work in the Pacific Northwest since he was one of the first three ministers in the Territory of Washington and the first in Seattle.

David Blain was born March 5, 1824, in a log house in the town of Varrick, New York. It was here that he spent his boyhood attending the district school, as he could, until he was graduated from it in 1841, at the age of 17. From here he went to the select

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1 Missionary Advocate of April 1854, Vol. X, No. 1, page 5, quotes the population of the Washington Territory as 3,965 inhabitants. This was five months after Blain’s arrival.

2 Ben Close was appointed to Olympia and J. Devore to Steilacoom a couple months before Blain arrived in Seattle.
school for one year, the Seneca Falls Academy and the Waterloo Academy (the father of Kenneth Latourette was a schoolmate here) and completed his preparation for college. In 1845, aged 21, he entered Hamilton College and completed his liberal arts training in 1849. At the age of 25 he began his theological education at Lima, New York, and then entered the Auburn (New York) Theological Seminary where he finished in 1852. It is interesting to note that during this time he had the same problem that all students going through seminary have, namely money. In a letter to his parents dated October 12, 1849, he says:

“I have hired board, room and have wood and lights found and other conveniences except washing, for $2.00 per week. . . . Now it costs me $2.12½ to get here and will cost me the same to get home. That will leave me not quite $17.00 and if I purchased what books I need and must have before a great while, it would take every cent of that. . . . If you could stand in my position and look from the same point of view you might then be able to appreciate my feelings. . . . Now it is very plain that I cannot remain here long unless I have some prospect of some more money from some quarter for I do not wish to get in debt without some prospect of paying up at the proper time. I shall need about $25.00 more to make me good till Christmas as matters stand now. This amount I would be very happy to have you send me. . . .”

Fortunately his parents did help and he was graduated.

The period between the time David Blain was born and the time he graduated from seminary is very important and the events that took place during these years influenced his decision to go to that little known area called Oregon. During this time a letter was written from Wm. Walker to G. P. Disoway, concerning the Flathead Indians of the Northwest, and published in the Christian Advocate and Journal along with the reply of Mr. Disoway. This letter was to influence the Mission Board of the M.E. Church to the point that they sent Jason and Daniel Lee to the mission field of the Northwest. Jason Lee became associated with Dr. John McLaughlin, factor of Fort Vancouver, and established the first Protestant mission in the Oregon Country. Daniel went to The Dalles on the Columbia and worked with the Indians of that area. When Jason Lee returned to the States he was replaced by a temporary superintendent by the name of G. Gary. It was during this time, also, that Dr. Marcus Whitman and party went to the Walla Walla country to establish a mission at Wailatpu for the Presbyterian Board concerned with Indians and incoming emigrants. They were,
except for the woman (with the exception of Mrs. Whitman), massacred in 1847 when the Indians rose up, some say, at the instigation of Jesuit priests working north of Wailatpu. It was during this time that “brother” George Abernathy, a Methodist local preacher, led the people of Oregon into statehood and became the first governor in 1853. It was during these years that the gold rush began in California and moved north into Oregon, Washington, and the Coeur d’Alene country of Idaho. Thus, reading the Christian Advocate and Journal, the Missionary Advocate, the Northern Christian Advocate, and other papers, David Blain was impressed and influenced by the need of ministers to go to the new land where men were trying to make their fortunes.

On August 11, 1853, David Blain and Catherine Paine were married in the M.E. Church in Seneca Falls, New York. On October 5, 1853, they sailed from New York for Panama after much deliberation as to how they would travel. They crossed the Panama on horseback, with more than one interesting experience, and boarded another steamer for San Francisco. Upon arriving in San Francisco they met the Methodist minister, went to the book concern, preached and helped organize a Chinese church. It took exactly one month to go from New York to San Francisco. They sojourned in San Francisco only three days and then boarded the ship that was to take them to Puget Sound and a very uncertain future. Finally on November 22, 1853, they arrived at Olympia where they met Ben Close and were assigned to Seattle, about fifty miles away. It is at this point that the influence of Blain begins.

On November 26, 1853, the year Washington was created a Territory separate from Oregon, the Blains arrived at Alki Point, a little place six miles across the bay from Seattle, where they were very kindly received and hospitably entertained at a Mr. Russell’s, the only white family in the place, which contained some 8 or 9 houses and a sawmill (the houses were used as stores and houses for bachelors). Mr. Blain preached there in the afternoon and evening. During the evening service a young man took his hat, of his

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6 Letters concerning this event were written by W. Roberts to the Christian Advocate and Journal dated 19 Dec. 1847 and Dec. 24, 1847. (Both found in Vol. IV, No. 4, pages 28-29.)
7 Brother Abernathy was among the party of Jason Lee and is mentioned many times in the Blain letters.
8 Northern Christian Advocate of August 24, 1853, Vol. XIII, Number 34, page 135.
9 Unpublished letter dated Steamer, Ohio, Oct. 5, 1853. Deliberations in earlier letters as they prepared to leave.
10 Christian Advocate and Journal of Jan. 5, 1854, Vol. XXIX, Number 1, page 2, has a letter relating this experience. In a letter dated Nov. 4, 1853, a good account is given.
11 Data concerning separation of Oregon and Washington Territories found in the Christian Advocate and Journal dated March 24, 1853, Vol. XXVIII, Number 12, page 46.
own accord, and passed among the people, who numbered about 30. He turned the contents out on the table and then turned the money over to Mr. Blain, a sum of $12.50. This was the first time this group had had a minister in their midst. The next day the Blains traveled to Seattle in an Indian canoe, the only mode of travel, where their long journey came to an end.

Of his arrival in Seattle Mr. Blain says:

"My first impression of our village was received on a rainy day. . . . We came to Mr. Denny's a member of the M.E. Church, and were kindly received. Here we are yet. His house contains two rooms. . . . Our village contains only about 30 houses and I think 26 of them have been built within the last six months. But as it is mostly in the woods. . . . There are emigrants coming in every now and then and augmenting our numbers. . . . The prices for lots vary from $25.00 to $100.00. . . . We shall be very happily situated here I think, and could we see you now and then, be very happy." 12

Thus the work began in Seattle.

Organization of the M.E. Church in Seattle

The M.E. church in Seattle was the first church of any sort in town. As stated in the quote above there were only about thirty houses in the village and twenty-six of those had been built in the six months prior to Blain's arrival. The Denny family 13 pleaded with William Roberts, P.E. of Salem, Oregon, when he was on a trip to the Puget Sound country in June of 1852 to explore the area for possible church locations, to send them a Methodist preacher. As a result of this trip Ben Close was assigned to Olympia in April of 1853 as P.E. of the Puget Sound District (see appendix C under appointments for 1854); J. F. Devore was assigned to Steilacoom in September of 1853; and D. E. Blain to Seattle. 14

As soon as Mr. Blain arrived in Seattle he organized the M.E. Church. Services were held the last Sunday in December, 1853, and continued every Sunday from that time on. The Church met at first in a small 16x24 foot house owned by Wm. Latimer who let them use it rent free. The pews were made by placing planks on blocks or boxes. The pulpit consisted of a book board with its ends resting upon standards, the lower ends of which were nailed to the front corners of a low platform. Shortly, however, Dr. D. S. Maynard replaced the book board with a good pulpit. Of the actual founding of the Church Mr. Blain writes:

12 Unpublished letters—Letter written to Mr. Blain's parents on December 6, 1853.
13 The Denny family is still a very prominent family in Seattle and very faithful members of First Methodist Church.
14 For an account of this trip see the Christian Advocate and Journal dated March 31, 1853, Vol. XXVIII, No. 10, page 50. Also the one dated April 7, 1853.
"Last Sabbath I preached two sermons and organized a church of four members, of whom Catherine (his wife) was one. It rained all day. . . ."  

The work of organizing a new church in a new country was not hard, it seems, since the people, for the most part, were anxious to have a minister and a church in their midst. In the case of Seattle, as in every frontier situation, there were people connected with every denomination and yet all helped with the work and attended the services until their own churches could be organized.

After the church was organized on that last Sunday in December things moved quickly toward a well-rounded program for the spiritual benefit of all ages. Mr. Blain organized, with the help of Mrs. Blain, a Sunday school for the children and weekly prayer meetings and class meetings for the adults. Camp meetings were held at regular intervals. Of these Mr. Blain says:

"A camp meeting was held that year at Scatter Creek on Mound Prairie, (about 50 miles from Seattle) which, at that time was considered a success. It was well attended."  

These were District wide and the going was rough all the way. Mr. Blain tells us that he started from Seattle in the morning on a ship with his canoe in tow. Then he took his canoe, paddled out into the channel, raised a blanket for a sail and made good progress. At 10 in the evening he anchored his canoe offshore and slept for two hours before he started off again. In crossing the channel from McNeil's Island to the mainland a strong south wind raised big waves that beat the canoe off course until he took his seat in the prow and paddled sidewise. He came out all right and went on to the camp meeting where he arrived just in time to go out with the wagon load from Olympia.

Mrs. Blain, with the help of Mr. Blain, organized the first seminary in the whole Territory. The land was donated and subscriptions started. On this Mr. Blain states:

"I suppose Catherine will take the school here for the next three months at about $65.00 per month (Mr. B's salary that first year was $460.00). A subscription was started yesterday. One man who has only two children to send has signed for $100.00. We have a few generous hearted men here. One man has donated 30 acres of land for a seminary just outside the village survey. Another is to give me a lot for a church and parsonage. I intend to have them surveyed next Friday; have a bond made out obligating them to make good their deed as soon as they obtain the titles."  

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15 Unpublished letter dated December 6, 1853, to Mr. Blain's parents.
16 Quotation from a speech given in the 1890's by Mr. Blain.
17 Unpublished letter of December 6, 1853.
Mrs. Blain received her training in Seneca Falls.

Besides the regular services held in Seattle Mr. Blain established regular preaching appointments five miles up the Duwamish River at the house of Mr. Collins, and also at a school house near the early home of Mr. B. I. Jones. At both points the congregations were small in numbers but not small in importance. Again Mr. Blain says:

"Whilst this work may seem to have been the day of small things it was by no means an unimportant work, nor did the pastor have a mere sinecure. It was such work that unless he had been sustained by divine grace, he would have become faint and discouraged. Here were immortal souls to care for, waste places to cultivate and foundations to lay for others who came after to build upon. It is a joyous privilege to live long enough to see the germ of the mustard seed grown into a great tree and the birds of the air sheltered in its branches." 18

With the church organized and having a temporary place to meet Mr. Blain rolled up his sleeves and went to work to help the church grow, build a parsonage, church, and seminary. The lots, though donated, had to be cleared of heavy timber and gotten ready for building purposes along with a garden. The money to pay for such work was not abundant but the settlers did what they could in contributions and labor. They helped clear the lots, raft the logs to the mill to make lumber for the church, and work on the construction. They visited every ship that came into the harbor and solicited funds. The ship’s captains and crews gave generously to the cause. The first money contributed, in fact, was given by Captain Howard of the brig Leoness who contributed $40.00. Aside from the ships the whole area around Seattle was this “finance campaign” that the church was built and dedicated by May 1855, seventeen months after the minister’s arrival. It was free of debt at that time. On February 22, 1855, the following item appeared in the Christian Advocate and Journal:

"Seattle and Duwamish River. D. E. Blain is pastor, 10 members, 1 Sunday School, 4 officers and teachers, and 16 scholars. There is an excellent church here in course of erection." 19

Existing Conditions and the Way They Were Met

The Washington Territory in 1853 was new to the white man. That is to say new to his settlement. There were missions in this

18 Quotation taken from a speech by Mr. Blain to a gathering in the 1890’s, many years after he left the Northwest and then returned. He located voluntarily in 1860 and then returned to the Northwest as a Supernaught in 1890 where he lived out the remaining years of his life.

19 Christian Advocate and Journal dated February 22, 1855, Vol. XXX, Number 8, page 30. This was part of a report sent by Rev. Wm. Roberts, P.E. of the Puget Sound District, on November 15, 1854. (See appendix C)
area for a while but they were abandoned around 1841 and no Protestant work was done until Upper Oregon became the Washington Territory in 1853. The Roman Catholics had a nunnery at Olympia and some missions in the northwest corner of the Territory (these were the missionaries, supposedly, that help rouse the Indians that attacked Whitman at Wailatpu in 1847), around Colville. On his trip to the Puget Sound Country Rev. Wm. Roberts made the following observations. He found coal to be plentiful for the use of ships and, if it went through, a railroad; enough families at the headwaters of the Chehalis River to justify a preaching appointment; a colored farmer who had lived a good life for four years in the area around Olympia; a Roman Catholic mission and a Roman Catholic nunnery; ten thousand Indians in the Puget Sound vicinity that needed a minister; and a new route across the Cascades (the route is now known as Snoqualmie Pass).

The three churches in the Puget Sound area, all of which were Methodist, were established in 1853 within a few months of each other and of the founding of the Washington Territory. The ministers, when assigned to a charge, had to build their own house and church. Circuits, as such, were impractical due to the terrain and in the Conference minutes there are no circuits larger than three churches. Travel was by one of three methods: Horseback, canoe, or by foot. Society was, according to the ministers, at its worst. And Indians were a constant threat.

We shall now consider the conditions as they were seen by Mr. and Mrs. Blain and the way in which they met them.

Travel

Seattle is on the Puget Sound and the Duwamish River is not very far away. Therefore, Mr. Blain did not have very much traveling to do, other than when he went to camp meetings, quarterly meetings, annual conferences, and other meetings which called him away to a great distance. He did most of his traveling either by canoe or on foot. During the time he was in Seattle he never had, to my knowledge, a horse.

We mentioned above that when the Blains went from Alki Point to Seattle they went by Indian canoe across the Sound a distance of six miles.20 These waters, at times, are very dangerous and a person must know what he is doing if he goes out on them. The Indians knew the waters well and they knew when they could travel and when they could not. Mrs. Blain in a letter to her parents tells of an incident when men did not heed the warning of the Indians. She says:

20 Page 5.
“Last Thursday Capt. Barstow together with Colonel McConaha, were coming down from Olympia in a canoe, manned by six Indians. The Sound was rough when they started and the Indians were unwilling to start, but were overruled by the men. They managed to get within a few miles of this place when a violent squall of wind struck them as they were in the middle of the Sound, upset the canoe and drowned the men. They clung to the canoe as long as they could but at last were obliged to let go. Two Indians were drowned and the other four managed to right the canoe and get into it and so came ashore, but were almost perished. The trunk and hat of Col. McC., the cap of Capt. Barstow came ashore, but nothing can be found of their bodies.”  

The first minister to die in the Oregon Conference was Rev. M. S. McAllister whose death occurred when he was on his way to his out-point across the Sound.  

Mr. Blain apparently heeded the warnings of the Indians and learned how to travel in a canoe the right way. He was able to make a sailboat out of it on his way to camp meeting and save some hard paddling. But he did not use the canoe on the Sound exclusively for there were rivers to travel on also.  

Sometimes the people on the Sound were able to “hitchhike” on one of the steamers. One day Mr. and Mrs. Blain went together to Steilacoom to see Rev. Devore and of their return trip she says:

“We had not designed to start home until Thursday morning, but just at night Wednesday a vessel that had been loading with lumber started down the Sound and as she had a fair wind we thought it would save the men some work if we could come down in her. So we started after her in our canoe. It was dark and the water had that phosphorescent appearance of which I had often heard (something that is very beautiful at night). It was beautiful, every stroke of the paddle was as if it had been in liquid gold, and the drops thrown into the air shone splendidly. We went two or three miles before reaching the vessel, but were kindly welcomed on board by the master. We were furnished with a good stateroom and took breakfast on board. We got home about noon.”

Thus the canoe was indispensable to the work of the preachers on the Sound since they used it more than anything else for transportation.  

There was a small steamer on the Sound but its trips were not frequent and the fares were so high that a pioneer preacher could not afford it.  

Though Mr. Blain did not travel by horseback it is worth mention-
ing here that horses were used a great deal. One method mentioned by Rev. Wm. Roberts on his trip of 1852 was the ride and tie method. This is used when there are two men and only one horse and is applied as follows:

“One man takes the horse and baggage as fast as convenient some two or three miles, and ties him upon the road, immediately walking on as fast as possible. The footman coming up takes the horse, and, after passing his fellow a suitable distance, again proceeds on foot. In this manner we traveled goodly distances in one day.”

The preachers, or anybody for that matter, had a lot of trouble with horses in this country since food was scarce and the going rough. Most of the time it was better to do without a horse than to have to be bothered.

The last method of travel mentioned was by foot. Mr. Blain had an appointment five miles up the Duwamish River once in three weeks. To meet that appointment he walked both ways. The road to the appointment, if one could call it a road, had stumps, logs, holes, and hills so that a walk of ten miles over it and two sermons together with the care of a Sunday School was no small day’s work.

Once in a while when he could go up the river to preach Mrs. Blain would become bold and venture forth with him. Of this she writes:

“The last time Mr. Blain went up the river to preach I went with him. We did not start until after supper Saturday night, and on the way called on some people who just moved from Oregon here. There were two families, consisting of five men, three women and five children, thirteen in all, all living together in a small log cabin of one room, 16 or 18 feet square. They had three large beds besides the trundle beds and other things they must necessarily have, so that they had not much room to spare. The cabin was built by piling the logs up without anything for chinking yet, and the fire place was a large effect in one end of the room, built of logs on the outside about half way up. Whilst we were there it was already beginning to grow dark and we had four miles yet to walk through the woods. They strongly urged us to remain all night, but we declined and started on. Before we reached Mr. Collins’ it had become quite dark and they were in bed. Mrs. Collins got up and showed us where we were to sleep. It was in the loft of the milk house. We got up to it by a ladder and through a hole in the floor so small that I bumped my head. The roof is made by putting boards on logs which serve the place of rafters, and then logs on the outside to hold them down. There were three beds in the room. They were made by resting one end of boards on the logs of the house and the other on half barrel kegs. On these boards the beds were

placed. And O! such beds! You should have seen them, the sheets of thick unbleached drilling which looked as if they had been used for years without washing, the pillowcases of dark calico, notched on the ends and so thick with dirt we could almost rub it off with our hands; the bed covers, blankets that might have been used for we know not what, and how they smelt! We knew not what to do, but after a consultation we decided to cover our skin as carefully as possible, and got in. We were almost afraid of taking some disease as we knew in these beds those filthy, vile men who cohabit with the diseased squaws had slept. But keeping on our drawers and stockings, we took my petticoat and put it on to both of us, completely covering our necks, hands, etc. Mr. Blain tied a pocket handkerchief on his head and our arrangements were complete. We managed to pass the night and I think escaped pollution. I think I shall not go up there again to stay all night.”

As stated, when she became bold she ventured forth with him.

Since the Oregon Conference always met south of the Columbia River it was necessary for the ministers of the Puget Sound District to travel a great distance. But even here, for the most part, the preachers walked. The Annual Conference of 1855 was held in Oregon City, Oregon, in the middle of August. In order to get to the conference Mr. Blain paddled his canoe to Steilacoom where he met Wm. B. Morse. From here they paddled to Olympia and walked from there to the mouth of the Cowlitz River. A friend set them across the Columbia River to Ranie and they walked on to Portland on a trail which took them over very high hills and very rough places, a distance of some 200 miles from Seattle. From Portland they were able to take the steamer, Jennie Clark, to Oregon City. It cost them $16.00 to get to the Conference and $30.00 to get back (his salary that year was $237.00). There were 26 preachers in full connection and some 10 or 15 admitted on trial at the report of the Conference. These men, 36 in all, covered all of Oregon and Washington and even went into Idaho!

Thus, travel in Washington in the 1850’s was done by canoe, horseback, or foot. There were no roads and no carriages like those in the East. Seattle was carved out of the virgin forests along the Puget Sound and the only way to get out was by boat, river, or Indian trail. Oregon, south of the Columbia River, was civilized but Washington was wilderness.

Society

Though many people in the village helped with the Church and attended the services, class meetings, prayer meetings, camp meet-

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24 This account is taken from a letter dated September 4, 1854. It shows the conditions under which these people labored and also that the West was much the same as the Mid-West.
ings, etc., society on the whole was rough and unshod (out of a population of 150 people only 4 were church members). The people in the Northwest, for the most part, went there to get rich as quickly as possible. To secure the riches they sought they violated every moral principle with the utmost recklessness and professed all kinds of infidelity to quiet their consciences and palliate and excuse their wickedness. Many of these people were highly intelligent people who moved in refined society before they went to the Northwest but lost all regard for religion and morals when they arrived so that they lived like savages when Mr. and Mrs. Blain came into contact with them. Thus, Mrs. Blain is able to write:

"The state of society is such as to demand prompt action on the part of those who feel to oppose wickedness. Quite a number of our neighbors were in the states members of churches but are now universalists or infidels in theory and in practice not better. The intercourse the whites have with the Indians is such as to debase both."  

This was the case of many of the people, in fact most, but on the other hand, there were many who came to the Northwest seeking a new life. Not far from Olympia Rev. Wm. Roberts, in 1852, found a colored farmer by the name of Bush who had a large family and who had come to the Northwest in 1848 to start farming. Rev. Roberts said that he had seen but few better managed farms in the Territory. Mr. Bush had built, by himself, a very respectable barn and was in the process of building a house. He had five head of cattle and a good orchard including apple and peach trees. So not all the people were seeking to get rich by any way they could, though again it must be realized that this was the prime motive of most.

To many of the people of Seattle and the surrounding vicinity the church did no good whatsoever since they had only one thing in mind. Therefore, Mr. Blain, though he tried hard, was, at times, very discouraged with the work. He worked hard to get the people to observe Sunday and leave their work and drinking at least one day a week. Even when it came to building the church Mr. Blain had a hard time since the proprietors were so jealous of each other that they looked upon the building of the church as a boon to either their business or their competitors’ business and they were careful to make sure it was the former.

The condition of society was not good. But in the overall picture let us look at the way Mr. Blain helped that society to grow spiritually. First of all was the church. This stood for something, though most people didn’t know what. When it was built the

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25 This account is taken from a letter by Mrs. Blain to her parents in December 1853, shortly after their arrival.
people could see it as a symbol in their midst that they were not doing what was right and it became a conscience to them. Second, was the Sunday School where the children of the next generation were taught the ways of God. This benefitted the whole town, but again, the Sunday school, though open to all, was only helping a few since a lot of the people did not send their children. Third, the church established a seminary in Seattle for the education of all the children. This helped curb illiteracy and at the same time allowed the teachers to give the children a little religion. Thus, the church's influence was felt by the whole community.

Indians

The Indians of this region were Flatheads. They were a poor degraded group of people who were lazy and lacked the independence of feeling possessed by those east of the Rocky Mountains. But they were human beings and had all the feelings of any other group of humans, though many of the whites thought them ignorant savages. An example of this is seen in a letter by Mrs. Blain:

"Yesterday afternoon while Mr. B. was preaching I happened to look up at one of the windows and I saw an Indian woman standing there with a baby in her arms. It is so common to see the Indians looking in at the window during meeting that I should not have observed this one but from the remarkable flatness of the child's head. I thought then what would you think to see such a sight out of your church windows. The head came up almost to a sharp peak on top, and even at the ears I do not think it could have been three inches thick. This is the very height of beauty in their estimation, and is also a mark of superior rank, as they do not press the heads of their slaves. This child must have belonged to some of their chief men. It had two holes in each ear, one on top and the other in the usual place, in each of which was a double string of heavy beads, about a finger long. The head and face were painted about the color of dried blood from a wound. Notwithstanding the (to us) disgusting appearance of the child, I never saw a white mother seem more proud or anxious to exhibit her 'little angel' than its mother was. She perched it high up on her shoulder that all might have a fair view of its surpassing loveliness. These Indians are not a strong argument in favor of phrenology for those heads which are not pressed at all are very flat, no intellectual development whatsoever, and they have no intellect."

When the white men first moved into the Washington Territory, they were either exploring or trapping. The explorers did not stay and they were no menace to the Indians. But the trappers "married" the Indian squaws and lived with them until they moved on. This,

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26 This account is given in a letter by Mrs. Blain to her parents on June 26, 1854. Six months after their arrival.
in many instances, contaminated the Indians with disease, venereal, smallpox, etc., so that many of them died off quickly. Mrs. Blain, above, told of sleeping in the beds where these trappers slept and was afraid of getting some kind of disease. So I do not feel we can blame the Indians entirely for their actions or feelings toward the whites.

Again it must be remembered that it was a group of Flathead chiefs that went to St. Louis to see General Clark about getting missionaries for their people since they did not have the true religion and desired to have it. It was this initiative that led Jason Lee and the rest of the missionaries of 1833 to Oregon. It was this initiative that opened up the whole Northwest—for better or for worse.

The Indians of that region were not organized or united. They fought among themselves a great deal. Mr. Blain says that if they ever did unite they would be able to drive the "Bostons" out and there would be massacres on every hand. But since the Indians were not united and were cowardly the white man could dictate to them.

Mr. Blain did not work with the Indians very much and it is very seldom that we read where he has any intercourse with them at all. The only exception to this is when he hires an Indian to paddle a canoe (which is very seldom) and when Mrs. Blain uses the Indian women to help her with housework. But Mr. Blain worked primarily with the white population of Seattle. That is not to say that there were not men assigned to work with the Indians from the Conference for there was Rev. Morse assigned to Indian mission work across the bay from Seattle.

The Indians were the cause of the Blains leaving Seattle, however, for in the winter of 1855-6 they united and tried to drive the whites out. Mr. Blain sums up the situation in a letter to The Christian Advocate and Journal:

"In regard to the church and her institutions in this place, we are holding steadily on in the good old way, and while we are praying for greater prosperity, we are fully expecting it to come.

"Financial embarrassments in our territory are at present very great, having been vastly augmented by the breaking out of Indian hostilities. The Indians have committed in this vicinity some of the most barbarous murders ever recorded in the annals of Indian warfare. Peaceable and unoffending citizens have been shot down with scarce a moment’s warning, dragged from their houses, their bodies stripped, and left most shockingly mangled. There was great consternation in our community for some time, because of the suddenness of the blow and our defenseless condition. But at present there is a breathing spell of quiet. Meanwhile, government has been making extensive preparations for punishing the savage miscreants, and it is to be hoped that a successful prosecution of the war may soon remove from us all cause
of apprehension. The Indians that are hostile have fled to their mountain hiding places, and will probably remain there for some time, unless they should be hunted out. Should they be left unmolested very long, however, we may expect other and more barbarous atrocities when they shall sally forth for other attacks. It is their declared purpose to exterminate all the 'Bostons' as they call the Americans. . . ."

When the Indians attacked, the men of the town formed into a company of volunteers. The navy sent several ships to the scene and the governor came up from Olympia. The Church which Mr. Blain built was by this time six months old. The governor asked if it could be used as a blockhouse and Mr. Blain gave him permission to use it as such. With this done Mr. Blain turned to packing all their belongings so that if the house was fired they would not lose their personal items. Then the people were placed on board the sloop "Decatur" for protection. On February 1st, 1856 Mr. Blain thought his ministry in the Northwest was ended and fully intended to leave the Northwest and return to the east coast. The Indians, as I have said, banded together and then brought in other tribes from British Columbia and Washington to help drive the whites out. Mr. Blain makes the statement that it was possible that the Hudson's Bay Company was helping the Indians at this time since the British were still angry over the land north of the Columbia River. On March 19th there were only two farmer's houses left outside Seattle that were not burned. Apparently the church was not burned since there are records of it after the war and in 1856 Rev. Morse, who like Mr. Blain had become discouraged and was planning to return to the East, was assigned to Seattle where there was a recorded membership of eight persons. Mr. Blain sold all his cattle and prepared to leave for Portland or the East. He was sent to Portland, however, and assigned the responsibility of filling Rev. Wm. Roberts' pulpit while that man went to General Conference.

In summing up the ministry of Mr. Blain in Seattle it might be said that he was working under the most difficult of conditions. Most of the people in the town, indeed in the territory, were from western states. Mr. and Mrs. Blain were both from the Genesee Conference in New York. Neither one of them had ever lived in the open in an unsheltered manner. Thus, though they went happily about their work in Seattle, they were existing in conditions that were completely foreign to them and they were "homesick" a great deal of the time. They were used to the religious mores of the East and not the rough slipshod religion of the West. But

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27 Mr. Blain wrote this letter to the Christian Advocate and Journal sometime in December. It bears no date but was published in the Journal on January 24, 1856, Vol. XXX, No. 4, page 13.
I feel that it is to their complete credit that they “stuck it out” and made the best of the conditions they lived in. As stated above the Oregon country was civilized by this time while the Washington country was still in the very roughest conditions of development. The church was founded in Seattle and that church has grown to be one of the largest Methodist churches in the United States today. As stated at the beginning of this paper Mr. Blain was not famous, nor could he ever be, for what he was or did, but rather for where he was sent at the time he was sent there. His, and Mrs. Blain’s, influence is still strongly felt today in Seattle in educational and religious circles.

Portland

The Blains removed to Portland in February of 1856 to take over the pulpit of Rev. Roberts. The pulpit in Seattle was left vacant until Conference time when Rev. Morse was assigned to the church which still listed eight members. By May 23, 1856 the Indian trouble was over and the people were once again settling in the area. The trouble at this time centered around the white people and not the Indians so that Governor Stevens had to declare martial law. When a judge kept on holding court he was arrested and marched off to a fort where he was kept for some time.

But in Portland, where civilization flourished in a town of about four thousand people, the Blains were quite happy. They carried on life as they had in the East and weren’t quite so homesick, even though they still desired to return to the East as soon as possible.

There is nothing really outstanding in the ministry of Mr. Blain at Portland since it was a settled and civilized area that carried on all the church functions of a city church at that time. But, it was during this time that the civil war was building up and it had its repercussions in the Northwest for there were fears that Oregon would become a slave state. The whole Church was concerned about this and Mr. Blain did a considerable amount of studying and talking on this subject from the pulpit and from places where he came into contact with politicians.

The Blains remained at Portland until the annual conference in September. When the appointments were read his name came up for Oregon City, one of the oldest towns in the area.

Oregon City

Oregon City is the town that Jason Lee founded when he arrived in 1833. Some of those original people were still there and it was to these people that Mr. Blain went. One of the most important men in the state, Brother George Abernathy, the ex-governor of Oregon (the first governor of the state), was one of the people who
was listed in the first list of people to the area with Jason Lee. He is listed as a missionary steward in the listing.

When Mr. Blain arrived in Oregon City he found the church in a very depressed state. Finances were good and the Blains did not have to worry about food or housing. But the spiritual condition of the people was poor. The minister who was assigned to the church the previous year, Rev. G. Hines, had some mining interests away from the city and was on the claim more than he was at the church. Therefore the church, as could be expected, was run down. Mrs. Blain feared that Mr. Blain was not up to bringing the church around but these thoughts proved false in the next two years.

Again Mr. Blain faced the issue of slavery. There were very strong pro-slavery groups in Oregon as well as strong anti-slavery groups. This turned into a bitter contest but when it was all over the anti-slavery group won and Oregon became a free state.

Travel in this area was either by foot or by carriage. Mr. Blain still did a lot of walking but he now was privileged to own a carriage so that he could go by that if he chose. He no longer used a canoe because this was not necessary since steamers were in operation all along the Willamette River.

Unlike his church in Seattle, Mr. Blain had an older frame church that was in very good condition. But the house needed a lot of repairs and it took both of them some time before it was fixed up. When it was finished it was very nice inside and a great deal of company was entertained.

The Oregon City situation gave Mr. Blain an opportunity to be with other ministers also. In the town were an Episcopal Church, a Baptist Church, a Congregational Church, and a Roman Catholic Church. Unlike many situations today where the ministers are in strong competition, the situation at Oregon City proved very good. The ministers, according to a letter of December 23, 1856, got along very well together and would help each other out when it was needed.

The ministry here, also, was more or less uneventful and did not deviate from the normal routine of church life in the East or elsewhere.

**Corvallis**

When the 1858 appointments were read the Blains moved to Corvallis, a rather new area south of Oregon City. But again, according to all the available material, there were no eventful occurrences that year.

**Principal of Santiam Academy**

In 1859 Mr. Blain, because of his experience as a tutor at Hamilton College in New York, was assigned to be principal of Santiam
Academy, an appointment he did not want and tried to get out of. However, he had to take it and he did the best job he could with it.

Albany and Lebanon

In 1860 Mr. Blain was appointed to Albany and Lebanon, the city where the Santiam Academy is located. There was nothing unusual about this appointment and both seemed to enjoy the location but were longing to go back to the East Coast. The next year, 1861, he was appointed by the bishop to be the Presiding Elder of the Upper Willamette District. At the end of 1861 he requested a year's leave of absence and it was granted. During this leave they finally were able to return to Seneca Falls.

Life in the East

During 1863-4 Mr. and Mrs. Blain spent time renewing old acquaintances and visiting with their relatives. But due to the failing health of Mrs. Blain's parents they did not return to the Pacific. In 1865 Mr. Blain joined his brother-in-law in caring for a farm. They remained in the East until 1882 when they once again moved to Seattle and the Oregon Conference to live out their lives in the land they helped pioneer. He passed away on November 26, 1900 and she passed away March 9, 1908.

Summary

In summing up the life of David Blain I would like to say that his ministry in Seattle, due to his being the first minister in that city, was the most important part of his life. If we could look forward and see what our destiny is I am sure we would, at times, try to change it. Mr. Blain was held in the Northwest by a strong sense of duty, a duty he would not relinquish even at the expense of his health which at times was not good. He was taken away from an environment that he loved and placed in an environment that was completely foreign to him. He overcame the hardships and helped to give moral and spiritual life to a group of people who had been away from any kind of religious life for many years and who had grown corrupt in their thinking and actions. It must be said that outside of his ministry in Seattle, both in 1853-6 and again after 1882, he was unimportant and assumed unimportant positions in a civilized area. But to leave this man out of the history of the Pacific Northwest would be to leave a chapter of very interesting material and experiences out of a life that grew out of wilderness experience.