Diary of James Clark (1765-1852)

James Clark traveled from Virginia (Southampton County) to Newtown, Anderson Township, Hamilton, Ohio in 1797.

A major portion of the original diary has survived and is in the files of The Cincinnati Historical Society, Museum Center at Union Terminal, 1301 Western Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45203.

The journey began on 28 February 1797 and lasted to 14 April 1797. His family included his wife, who was 6 months pregnant at beginning of journey, a female child age 10 and two boys ages 8 and 5.

The Diary:

"... until we came to the Coal.

Tuesday 28 Feb We came within sight of the Mountains and at the same time entered on the red land. The growth of which was oak. Wednesday March 1 Having lost sight of the Mountains yesterday morning we came in sight of them this afternoon at Cumberland Courthouse.

Thursday March 2nd We travelled about 7 or 8 miles when it began to snow very fast which clog'd our horses feet. We encamped about 9 o'clock in the morning on the wood where staid until night and then moved one mile forward thro the snow and took up at a vacant house belonging to Mr Thomas Johns, who was a kind man to us. Saturday March 4th We left our station and travelled about 22 miles.

Tuesday March 7th Early in the morning I was beat by a villian who seemed would beat me wheather or not, his plea against me was for not catching his horse, and yet he never asked me to do it. I was very sick this day we pafsed (passed) now London which is about 130 miles above Richmond.

Wednesday March 8th I took a ... it operated very well and on Thursday 9th we betook ourselves to our journey - and came to a Mr Camels here our horses got away and we could not find them until Friday night when Mr Camel found them for us. Mr Camel and his wife were ...'... agreeable and good nature in my life.

On Tuesday the 14th We came to a parcel of mountains and I still continued very poorly. I was glad to hire a driver and a man offered himself and horse to help me up for a Dollar which I freely gave him.

Wednesday 15 we crofsed (crossed) a creek called Pattersons Creek 5 times some places of it was very dangerous yet our children drove over very well. Friday 17th we had a rainy Morning and then we had ... drive eleven miles of very bad road it took us until dark to get there.

Saturday 18th we crofsed (crossed) a creek called Howards Creek several times until we came to a place of it so deep that it floated a cart from the wheels and left them in the creek here all our beds and cloaths got wet and we were glad to quit travelling for this day.

Sunday 19 We started late because we could not find our horses early we finished crofsing (crossing) Howards Creek and came to Greenbrier River where my horse fell down in the deepest of the water. Broke a shafe and ... me all over in the water. This day we pafsed (passed) Greenbrier Courthouse.

Monday 20th We purchased grain for the remainder of our journey because we understood it was not to be had on the road and then travelled 3 miles to ... William ... where we hired two men viz Jacob Johnson and John Fault with 3 horses to help us on the the remainder of the mountains for the sum of eleven pounds two shilling.

Tuesday 21st March we went on our journey and travelled until some time in the night when our ... drivers continued to break both my waggon shafes.

Wednesday 22nd they made new shafes and drove on until about 3 o'clock PM. When they broke Wm Milners forehounds of his waggon.

Thursday 23 having made new hounds to the waggon. We proceeded on our journey and traveled on Suel Mountains which was very bad road.

Friday 24 We still continued travelling on Suny Mountains and had several heavy showers of rain until we crofsed (crossed) Mans Creek, here we got our beds wet again, one of my horses could not take his loadout of the creek and we were obliged to ... in another to help him out.

Saturday 25 we finished our journey over Suel Mountains and came within four miles of Gauley Mountain.

Sunday 26 we crofsed (crossed) Gauley Mountain and parted from our drivers and crofsed (crossed) Gauley River which took us until dark here we had to pay ... Here I must remark that our drivers would always start their horses by the word chip. This evening there came up a heavy shower of rain which raised the water in the creeks so high that we stayed here until Monday afternoon and the travelled two miles and encamped for the night.

water and

Tuesday 28th we started and were conducted over several creeks by a couple of gentlemen one by the name of Johnson and the other by the name of James. These gentlemen were at abundance of trouble for us which hindered them in their journey a considerable time and yet they would take no pay from us. May the Lord reward them for their kindnefs (kindness) to us! They parted from us about 11 o'clock AM and we travelled on until night and came to the Kanawa (Kanawha) River travelled this day 16 miles.

(Note: The following section has been crossed out.) "This day I thought ... Milner got angry with me yet I could not blame him for he had abundance of trouble with me. I had been sick four weeks and one day part of the time out of my senses nor had I as yet gained my hearing which caused one to misunderstand him in his directions coming down a mountain. I was sorry for this misunderstanding."

Wednesday 29th we travelled about 3 miles and came to Mr William Morriss Esq. whom we had sent to for a boat. He directed us to a Mr David Milbern who had a boat ready we went to him and bought it for eleven pounds. Here we had to stay for company until Sunday afternoon.

Sunday April 2 about 4 o'clockP.M. we left the land and went down the river about 12 miles in company with some men going to Kanawa court which was held Monday at Elk River.

Monday April 3rd I sold a horse for L7"10 and a watch which I valued at L3. Monday afternoon we left Elk in company with a Mr John Stars and arrived at the mouth of Kanawa on Wedesday afternoon here we stayed for company until Sunday morning and got the company of the same fine gentlemen who assisted us on the road vis Mr Johnson and Mr James who were going to big Quiondott River in order to survey land. We were exceeding glad of their company.

We were also accompanied by a Mr Fry and Mr Upton who were going to Limestone.

Sunday April 9 we set out for Columbia and floated about 4 miles to Galliapolis where we stoped by a head wind until Monday morning about 3 o'clock when we let loose and arrived at Columbia Wednesday morning 8 o'clock - distance 212 miles. Our journey amounts to 700 miles. We were at much trouble to get us cabins until Friday 14th when we bought the improvements ona couple of settlements 5 miles up the little Miami River on land which was located by a person unknown to the ... and lying contiguous to Newtown.

Tuesday 18th we entered our cabins.

Monday evening Mar 24, we were visited by Rev David Barron and Mr Jesse(?) Moore from Virginia, they parted from us on Wednesday 26 in the morning, and I then bought 50 acres of land (on Cluff Creek) for 75 Dollars.

> Note: On 19 April 1797, he purchased land "Rec'd of James Clark ten dollars in full for the use and improvement of four acres of ground belonging to an unknown Proprietor and lying near Newtown, Hamilton County. s/James McKinney," from "The Edward Clark Genealogy, 1676-1988," by Walter Burges Smith II, pg 100.

> > On 29 May 1797 his wife, Susanna Johnson Clark gave birth to their fifth child named Nancy Clark, from above book, pg 107.

Monday May 1st, I began to plow and on Tuesday my horse ran away.

Monday 8th, I was taken with a violent fit of the Cholic which lasted about twelve days and then terminated in a severe ... of the Yellow Jaundice. I continued very poorly until about the 1st of June. In this time I rented out about three fourths of my ground and the remainder was broken and planted for me by the adjacent neighbours who were very kind to me.

This spring has been very remarkable for wet weather and the pigeons pull'd up the corn at a surprising rate. I suffered amongst the rest of my neighbours.

July 13. I wrote to Rev David Barron in Virginia and then set out in search of my horse and found him on the 16th about 44 miles above the mouth of the little Miami and about 16 below Limestone on Whit Oak Creek. I returned home very weary on Monday 17th. My horse was lame and fallen off in flesh and showed some sign of the Mc ...-...

August 18th I sold my horse for 30 dollars.

August 20th I applied to a ... at Cincinnati and had my watch cleaned and repaired doe 1 1/2 dollars. I also got my land recorded and received my Deed which cost me 1 1/2 dollars. The same day I employed Mr George ... to build me a cabin for the sum of thirteen dollars, he allowed me eleven dollars for my cart wheels. This summer we have lived nicely on coarse corn bread and the milk of one sorry cow - some times we could get a bit of meat which I earned for my labour at the rates of half dollar (a day ?). The price of bacon was 7 1/2 lb for a dollar but bacon was so scarce I could seldom find it.

... 9th I erected a hand mill on which I ground my bread as long a I lived at Newtown.

February 1, 1798 I left Newtown and entered on my own land when I began to make sugar - what I made was exceeding good tho I made but little of it.

February 22nd I received several letters from my friend in Virginia which imparted that they raised good crops the last year. About this time I began the building of a mill being furnished with iron by Rev John Smith.

March 31 I bought a ... the weight where of was 251b for 1/4 dollar.

April 18th I quit building my mill and returned with my family to Newtown on the 21st and began school-keeping on the 23rd at the meetinghouse.

May ... Mr John Beesley made me a present of a bushel of potatoes.

June 26 1798 I received several letters from my friends in Virginia.

June 29 I went to the miami and saw some fo the neighbouring men fishing; they caught 99 large fishes at a single hawl with a small sein. They made me a compliment to 12 very good ones.

July 2nd ther fell a most violent storm of rain on the head of east fork and head of Bull skin creek which precedeed such a torrent on the creek that it, carried off a couple of cabins on the said creek.

This summer has been exceeding dry so that the soil has not been wet with rain the depth of three inches from the first of May until the frost of September.

Thursday 25 October I again quit Newtown and went to my own land having rented my improvements to Mr William Milner for one year at the price of ten dollars.

November 6th I finished teaching school and again returned to my Mill and reafsumied (reassumed) building it. 1799 January 18th I finished the Mill and ground corn to expectation.

March 18th some of Mr Tho's ...locks little children came running to my house infright and told me that Mr Alexander King had driven them out of the house and was then throwing their ... I went ... and found him so doing. Mr ...lock and his wife ... not at home.

Thursday 23rd of March there fell a heavy showers of rain and surprised several of the inhabitants on Clough Creek. ... also led away my Mill dam.

July 15th I again began schoolkeeping

August 10th Mr Edmund Johnson a Virginian came from Kentucky and informed me that my sister Judith had married Nathan Barron and moved from Vinginia to Kentucky and had a son whom they named Augustine.

Thursday September ... (10-15 words not legible) service on account of my inability ... on .. of a sore ... in my breast which has continued for about two years past.

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Friday 30th of May a shower of rain raised the creek and my son Orson fell into it and was carried away in the water and bruised and almost strangled, he was out of his senses about 8 hours June 15 another heavy shower raised the water and spoiled my ...

1801 May 25th A violent storm of hail fell in different parts of the county and

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Remaining pages are missing.

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Tary service account of my individe, as ticularte brace of a sove ne sin my Breast much the continues for about hos your Juday 30 of May a shower of Rain-raised the Creek and on Son Orson fell into it and was & Carried arvay in the Water and bruised and almost stran gled he day out of his Senses about 8 Hours une 15 another heavy show reided the Mater and shoiled my numarce 1801 Alay 25 Martin A Violent Stores of Hail fell in different Sarts of the Country and