

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.

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'clock P.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 Wednesday 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 as 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 25lb 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 Virginia 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.

1800

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

Remaining pages are missing.

until we came to the Coal
Tuesday 28 Feb? we came with
in 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 af-
ternoon at Cumberland Butthouse.

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 Morn-
ing in the Wood where we staid until
night and then moved one Mile for-
ward thro' the snow and took in
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 beset by a
Villain who earned

he would beat me wheather or
not, his plea against me was
for not catching his horse, and
yet he had never asked me to
do it I was also very sick
this Day we passed new London
which is about 130 Miles above
Richmond

Wednesday March 8th I took
a Purge 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 the
most agreeable and good natured People
I ever saw in my Life

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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 crossed
a Creek called Pattersons
Creek 5 Times some pla-
ces of it was very dangerous
yet our Children drove
over very well

Friday 17th we had a rainy
Morning and then we had
to drive eleven Miles on
very bad road it took us un-
till dark to get there

Saturday 18th we crossed a
Creek called Stowards 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
cloaks got wet and we were
glad to quit travelling for
this day.

Sunday 19th We started late
because we could not find
out how early we finished.
Crossing Stowards Creek -
and came to Greenbrier -
where my horse fell
down in the deepest of the
water. Broke a shaft and
threw me all over in the
water. This day we pass-
ed Greenbrier townhouse -

When they broke W. Milners
fore hounds of his Waggon
Thursday 23. having made
new Hounds to the Waggon
we proceeded on our Journey
and traveled on Suel Moun-
tains which was very bad
Road.

Friday 24 We still continued
travelling on Suly Moun-
tains and had several
Heavy Showers of Rain
until we crossed Mans
Creek, here we got our Hads
wet again, one of my Hor-
ses could not take his Load
out of the Creek and we
were obliged to fix in another
to help him out.

Saturday 25 we finished our Jour-
ney over the Suel Mountains

and came within two Miles
of Gauley Mountain

Sunday 26 we crossed Gauley
Mountain and put out
our Drivers, and crossed Gauley
river which took us until Dark
here we had to pay Ferrage

Here I must remark that our
Drivers would always start
their Horses by the Word Chif

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 then travelled two Miles
and encamped for the Night.

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 ~~John~~
Tames

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 Kindness to us! They started from us about 11 O'clock AM. and we travelled on until night and came to the Kanawa River travelled this Day 16 Miles.

~~This Day I thought that Mr. Milnes got angry with me, yet I could not blame him for he had had abundance of Trouble with me. I had been sick four Weeks and one Day Part of the Time out of my senses not had I as yet gained my Hearing which caused me to misunderstand him in his Directions coming down a Mountain I was sorry for this Misunderstanding.~~

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Wednesday 29 we travelled about
3 Miles and came to Mr. William
Morris's Boat, whom we had sent
to for a Boat, — He directed us to
a Mr. David Milburn 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 2nd about 4 O'clock
P.M. we left the Land and went
down the River about 12 Miles
in company with some Men going
to Hanover Court which was held
on Monday at Elk River

Monday April 3rd I sold a Horse
for £7.10 and a Watch which I
valued at £3.

Monday Afternoon we left Elk River
Company with a Mr. John [unclear]
and arrived at the Mouth of Hanover
on Wednesday Afternoon here we stayed
for Company until Sunday Morning
and got the Company of the same time.

Gentlemen who assisted us on the
Road vizt Mr Johnson and Mr James
who were going to Big Quicksdott
River in order to survey Land.
We were exceedingly glad of their Compa-
ny

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

Sunday April 9 we set out for Colum-
bia and floated about 2 Miles to Galliapolis
where we were stopped by a Head Wind
until Monday Morning ~~starting~~ about
3 O'Clock when we let loose and arrived
at Columbia Wednesday Morning 8
O'Clock - Distance 212 Miles
Our journey amounted to 789 Miles
We were at much trouble to get
us Cabins until Friday 11th when
we bought the Improvements on
a Couple of Settlements 5 Miles up
the little Miami River on Land
which was ~~located~~ located by
a Person unknown to the Inha-
bitants and lying contiguous to
Newtown

Tuesday 18th we entered our Cabins
Monday evening May 24th We were visit-
ed by Rev. David Barron and M^r
Joseph Moore from Virginia. They parted
from us on Wednesday 26th in the Morn-
ing, and I then bought 50 Acres of
Land (on Cluff Creek) for 75 Dollars

Monday May 1st I began to Plow
and 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 spell
of the Yellow Jaundice. I continu-
ed 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 suffer amongst the best of my Neighbors.

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 White oak Creek. I return'd home very weary on Monday 17th. My Horse was lame and fallen off in flesh and shew'd some sign of the Poll-evil.

August 18th I sold my Horse for 30 Dollars.

August 20th I applied to a Smith at Cincinnati and had my Watch Cleaned and

repaired for $1\frac{1}{2}$ Dollars, I also
got my Land recorded and re-
ceived my Deed which cost me
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ Dollars - The same Day
I employed Mr. George Tho-
bertson to build me a Cabin
for the sum of thirteen Doll-
he allowed me eleven Dollars
for my Cart wheels -

This Summer we have lived
chiefly 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 a Dollar a Day
the Price of Bacon was $7\frac{1}{2}$ for a Dollar
but Bacon was so scarce I could sel-
dom find it.

Septem^r 9th I erected a Hand Mill
on which I ground my Bread as
long as I lived at Newtown.

February 1st 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 sever-
al Letters from my Friends
in Virginia which imported
that they raised good Crops
the last year.

About this Time I began
the building of a Mill.

March 31st I bought a Tr.
being furnished with ^{by} ~~me~~ ^{John Smith}
key the weight whereof
was 25^{lb} for $\frac{1}{4}$ of a Dollar.

April 18th I quit building my
Mill and returned with my Da-
ughter to Newtown on the 21st
and began School-keeping on the 2^d
at the Meeting house.

May 10th Mr. John Beerley made
me a Present of a Bushel of
Potatoes.

June 26. 1798 I received several
Letters from my Friends in Virgi-
nia,

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

July 2^d there fell a most violent shower
of rain on the Head of east fork and
Head of Bull skin creek which produ-
ced such a Torrent on the creek that
it carried off a couple of Cobins 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 first of September.

Thursday 25 October I again quit
Newtown and went to my own
Land having before me settled my
Improvements to Mr. Mearns

Millner for one year at the Price
of ten Dollars

November 6th I finished teach-
ing school and again returned
to my Mill and reassured
building it—

1799 January 18th I finished
the Mill and ground corn to
expectation.

March 18th some of M^r Tho^s
Wilcox's little Children came
running to my House in
a fright, and told me that
M^r Wilcox's King had driven
them out of the House and
was then throwing their
clothes about. I went thither
and found them so doing.

M. Frolock and his wife
not at home

Thursday 23rd of May there
fell a heavy shower of
rain and surprised se-
veral of the Inhabitants on
Clough Creek &c. it also took
away my Mill-Dam.

July 15th I again began schoolkeeping

August 10th M^r. Edmund John-
son a Virginian came from

Kentucky and informed me that
my sister Judith had married

Nathan Barron and moved
from Virginia to Kentucky

and had a son whom they
named Augustine

Wednesday September 1st I attended
the annual School Meeting

in military service on
account of my inability, &
particularly on acc^t of a sore-
ness in my Breast which has
continued for about two years
past

1800
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 stran-
gled - he lay out of his Senses
about 8 Hours -

June 15 another heavy shower
raised the Water and spoiled my
milk race.

1801 May 25th
A violent Storm
of Hail fell in different
Parts of the Country and