

Object ID: *MG0828_SeriesA_F02*

Document: *"Memorandum of the travels of Thomas Welsh," by Thomas Welsh*

Transcription:

Memorandum of the travels of Thomas Welsh

May 15th Wed^{ns} left Washington City at 6 o'clock [sic] arrived in Baltimore at 8 by the railroad at 10 engaged passage to Pittsburg by Bingham's line fare and baggage \$6.00. seen Slicer also seen Parkerson and staid [sic] with him at Mrs. Chambers boarding house opposite the New Market Engine house fare 37 ½ cents.

May 16th Thurs^d left Baltimore at 9 o'clock arrived in Columbia at 2 o'clock by railroad visited my friends until half past six, then started for Pittsburg by the boat Princeton Cap Hawn run all night had a pleasant sleep

May 17th Fri^d reached Harrisburg at 5 o'clock in the morning left at 6 after having purchased a Ham at 52 cents 2 plates and bowl 18 ½. 2 dozen eggs. 7 bread 12 ½ cooked and eat our breakfast on the boat a pleasant ride this day

May 18th Sat^{ur} passed Lewistown in the morning a pleasant ride to day run untill [sic] 12 o'clock then tied up at Mill Creek 5 miles below huntingdon

May 19th Sunday passed the day at Mill. [Creek] swimming and fishing all day

May 20th Moⁿ left M at 12 o'clock night nothing of importance to day arrived in Hollidayburg at 10 o'clock night

May 21st Tuesday detained in H. all day seen Major Johnson and Napoleon Wolf

May 22nd Wed^{nes} left H. at 9 o'clock in the express car near run off the track on the summit level seen J Lewis and N Wolf. arrived in Johnstown at three o'clock distance 36 miles left Johnstown at 6 o'clock in boat Thomas Bingham. Cap J Wyman run untill [sic] one o'clock then tied up built a fire in the woods and watched it till day

May 23th Thursday started at daylight run all day passed through a tunnel 940 feet long 43 miles from Johnstown run 10 miles further and tied up for the night passed the night by a fire in the woods

May 24th Friday started at daylight crossed an aqueduct about 300 yds long 29 miles from Pittsburg where the Alleghany and Hiskimitas [sic Kiskiminetas] rivers unite

May 25th Sa^t arrived in Pittsburg at 6 o'clock in the morning walked round the City and tried for work without success seen the Militia parade and engaged passage to Cincinnatti [sic] passage and boarding (cabin) \$4.00

May 26th Sunday visited Alleghany city in the afternoon

“ 27th Mon^{day} started from Pittsburg at 2 o'clock in the afternoon arrived in Wheeling at 11 o'clock at night pleasant trip so far

May 28th Tuesday. left Wheeling half past 9 o'clock in morning



May 29th pleasant riding on the river Ohio

May 30th Thursday arrived in Cincinnati [sic] early in the morning tried for work but without success ----- and took boarding at Mr. Cake's on 4th street between Elm and Plum streets at 2 dollars per week

June 1st Friday passed the day looking for work Herbert started to day

“ 2nd Sat. passed the day with the brick layer looking for a job – both got work to commence on Monday

June 3^d Sunday loaf'd about the wharf heard the Jew preach. in the evening I went to the Episcopal church and went to sleep and didn't hear the preacher

June 4th commenced Work for Greenawalt and Bonsall at Chambers Mill

June 9th Saturday got up and took a walk for my health

June 18th quit work with a swelled ankle [sic] and was not able to walk for a week and was taken sick at the same time

June 20th Wm Herbert called to see me on his way home. I was in bed was sick and had a swelled ankle [sic]

June 24th Monday left Mr. Cake's and went to board with Mr. Sonders on the N. West corner of Broadway and 6th streets

July 12th Sunday 1845. left Cincinnati for Fort Smith

July 20th – arrived at Little Rock. sick with the fever

August 14th arrived at Fort Smith -----

August 17th commenced work for U. S. at making sash

[Page 4 contains line drawings of geometric shapes and various notations]

Miss Catherine

Miss Miss Miss

Th Thom Thomas

Please pass me on at a rapid rate

A La Dudle Dorkle

To Columbia pennsylvania

Analysis: Wiggin

The detail through arrival in Cincinnati suggests it was kept up faithfully each day. But then he skips May 31st and after he begins work on June 4th, his notations become sketchy. Nevertheless, the narrative holds together through June 24, and the incredible detail suggests it was kept on a



current basis. June 18th through 24th were probably added at one time (see note on June 18 about not walking for a week).

Through May 30, the dates conform to the 1844 calendar. From June 1 to June 20, the dates conform to 1849, but this is probably just a careless error (skipping May 31), because June 24 returns to conformity with 1844.

July 12 conforms to the 1846 calendar, but since he was in the Gulf of Mexico on his way to war on July 12, 1846 (see Document TW-B-01), his designation 1845 must be correct. Document TW-C-01 indicates he was in Cincinnati in the fall of 1844, so he would have to have returned to Cincinnati shortly after arriving in Fort Smith if this were to be interpreted as 1844.

His difficulty keeping the calendar straight is an intriguing puzzle, and suggests that this document may have been written from notes at a later date, possibly after his return from Mexico with new found status as a War Hero. However, if that were the case, then we must ask where and why had he kept his notes, and why does he not include his return from Fort Smith to Cincinnati?

Whatever the case, this appears to be an interesting chronicle of a 20 and 21 year old itinerant laborer. Why was he in Washington? How did he have sufficient money in his pocket to make this trip? Why did he not visit any of his family on his way through Columbia? Why and for whom did he keep this memorandum? What more can we learn about his year in Cincinnati, what prompted him to go to Fort Smith, and how might his experience at Fort Smith have influenced him to enlist in the Mexican War?

Scope and Content:

Memorandum of Thomas Welsh which details his travel from Washington to Pittsburgh to Cincinnati in 1844 and to Fort Smith in 1845. Mentions William Herbert, Major Johnson, J. Lewis, Mr. Parkerson, Mr. Slicer, and Napoleon Wolf.

