



Account of a Journey to the Indian Country

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DATE: 1797
LOCATION: Swarthmore College
AUTHOR: Joseph Clark (1745-1833)
SUMMARY: Accompanied Oneida and Tuscarora girls from New York to the Philadelphia area to learn domestic skills.

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delphia, inculcated the duties of humanity; the numerous and valuable little works, issued by Samuel Wood & Sons, of New York, furnished amusement and valuable instruction to the youthful mind, and supplanted the taste for such unprofitable romances as Tom Thumb, Giles Gingerbread, Gulliver's Travels, and Robinson Crusoe.

Less than a hundred years ago, our ancestors were urged to furnish their children with an opportunity to learn to read and write; and where circumstances would admit, some further useful learning. Under a prospect of the advancement of the present day, we may be ready to marvel that the extent of their wishes in 1746, was so limited.

We rejoice that the human mind is advancing in the proper application of its powers, to the study of truth, and the knowledge of natural science. We also rejoice in the improved order observable in schools; that teachers, more generally than formerly, are "careful," as our worthy Friends of 1746 express it, "in a spirit of meekness, to bring their scholars to the knowledge of their duty to God, and one to another."



Joseph Clark's Account of a Journey to the Indian Country.

In the year 1797, John Parrish, a friend and father in the church, suggested the advantage that might arise to the Indian natives, by bringing a few of their young females into this part of the country, in order to instruct them in the useful arts of domestic economy, by placing them in the families

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This being a very weighty matter, claimed my serious attention, and was laid before the committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting, for promoting the improvement and gradual civilization of the Indian natives. The proposal was acceded to by the committee, who furnished me with a certificate, expressive of their unity therewith, and addressed to the Indians, as follows:

“BROTHERS,—

We received by our friend, Henry Simmons, a few lines from you. We were glad to hear from you, and that your young men were encouraged to walk in the good path, we recommended to you. It did our hearts good, when he told us that you had raised corn, wheat, and other grain, to supply yourselves till next crop. We wish you all to be sober and industrious, and learn to be good farmers.

Brothers, we understand that you are desirous a few of your girls should be placed in the families of some of our friends, and be taught what our daughters are. We rejoice at it, and are willing to take three of them; and our friend, Joseph Clark, has agreed to assist in bringing them safe down. They (H. Simmons and J. Clark,) will deliver you this. We also have agreed to take two girls from Oneida, and two from the Tuscaroras.

Brothers, we expect the girls you send us, will remain till they are eighteen years of age, as our daughters are placed by their parents or friends to learn what we want your daughters should know; that is, spinning, weaving, how to make butter, and

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such other things as are useful on a farm. We shall place them in such families as will use them kindly, and instruct them in what is needful.

We remain your friends and brothers,

JOHN DRINKER,
H. DRINKER,
JOHN PARRISH,
THOS. STEWARDSON,
THOMAS WISTER,
JOHN BIDDLE."

Having laid the subject before my family, after about two weeks' consideration and preparation, I took an affectionate leave of them on the 16th of the 10th month, 1797, and went to Bristol, in Bucks county, where I met with my friend, Henry Simmons, jun. who was to be my companion in the journey, which was very satisfactory. But he was taken unwell, after travelling about twenty miles, and continued so during all the journey.

When we arrived at New York, a number of articles were purchased for clothing for the girls; and we prosecuted our journey, till, in due season, we arrived at Oneida, in the state of New York, where we were received with marks of affection by the Indians. I was taken to the house of one of the Chiefs, his wife having been informed concerning my coming.

On the 29th, Nicholas Cusick, Chief of the Tuscaroras, with his wife, made us a visit. He is an orderly and sensible man.

We also had a conference with the Stockbridge and Tuscarora Indians; at which we produced our certificates, and they were read, not only by paragraphs, but by sentences and words. Hendrick Apaumut was interpreter for the Stockbridge, and Nicholas

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Cusick for the Tuscaroras. Some warriors from Niagara, were also present. At this conference, the Indians seemed fully satisfied with the proposals made to them. We informed them that Friends had nothing but love for them and their children; and as it was their desire that we should take their children, we would do it at Friends' expense. On which information, they acknowledged Friends' love for them.

11th mo. 1st. Had a conference with the principal Chief of the Oneidas, about the girls. He remarked, that those of the young Indians who go out, often learn wrong habits; and mentioned some instances in the neighbourhood. He further observed, that they would rather the sons of Onas, (meaning of William Penn,) should have their people or children, than any other people; but their judgment was, for our women to come and instruct them; which would better preserve their morals, and be of far greater utility amongst the Indians, and which they always understood would be the case, from the first proposal made by the committee. In answer to all this, I replied, "Great trees grow slow;" meaning, great matters take time to accomplish.

He called upon me twice after this, to write a piece for their nation. At first, I declined; but, upon the second application, I complied, well knowing that what they requested was the mind of Friends, and also of Government. When it was written, they conferred together about its contents; and next day I was informed by their Chief that they approved thereof. The purport of it was to warn off some bad tenants, who had settled on their land contrary to law. The Chief gave me a name, Onas, signifying the man who

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uses a pen, which I thought no way suitable for my small abilities.

Being frequently in company with the Stockbridge Indians, I was induced to believe they are superior, especially the women, to many under our name, who make a high profession of religion.

3d. Travelling through this settlement, I beheld the pleasant situation of the houses of the natives on a rising ground, near a clear, running stream, surrounded with trees which are evergreen;—my mind was considerably humbled on seeing the manner in which they lived, and how free they were from those cares and wants, that luxury and pride have introduced. Their composure and serenity are remarkable. After a long absence of an Indian, they do not show that ecstasy on his return, that we do in meeting a friend in such a case; but, when a suitable time offers, he says, “Satandoxry gawchee!” that is, “So, friend, art thou still in the valley of tears?”

About this time, I was informed of an interesting circumstance, which occurred among the Wyandot nation of Indians, with a deputation from Congress. It appears that in consequence of some encroachments of the white people upon the borders of their land, a demur or dissatisfaction arose among the Indians, and the affair demanded the attention of Congress, who appointed a certain number of judicious men, of their body, to investigate the grievance. The Indians being informed, a council was called; and at a time appointed, the deputies met them, and requested to be furnished with information of the boundaries of their territory. When, to their great surprise, a young Indian stepped forth, and on behalf of the council, in a solemn manner, spoke thus: “He who causes the

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sun to rise beyond the top of the eastern hills, and set below the brow of the western mountains,—that hath clothed the wilderness with leaves in the spring, and disrobed it again, in the fall,—it is He alone who hath set bounds to our country.” This speech so surprised the auditory, though men of great abilities, that they knew not what reply or answer to make.

5th. Favoured with health, though my companion, H. Simmons, jun. labours under the affliction of the ague. John Tuhi and George Crosby came to see us. These men are of another tribe, and appear superior in respect to sobriety and understanding, to many of us, who are of a fairer complexion. Their remarks on divers matters were edifying. Speaking of a schoolmaster's qualifications, one of them observed that the sort of master they wanted, or required amongst them was, not only one who was qualified to teach children, and keep the school in order, but one who would be an example to their parents.

These men offered us their horses to ride to their nation, and they would go on foot, being about seventeen computed miles, through a country almost impassable at this season: but I could not accede to their kind proposal.

Had a meeting this morning. A number of Indians came to see us, notwithstanding it was very stormy. I thought this a day of refreshment, both in our little sitting, and in some remarks made by the natives.

6th. A cold morning;—the wind north-east, and the waters high in the creeks, from the thaw of snow that had occurred. We intended to set out for Stock-bridge on foot, but as my companion was much reduced by having the ague, together with some baggage we had to take, it seemed a little difficult. But

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A man, called a Baptist minister, was at Stockbridge. The Indians showed him our certificate; at which he expressed his approbation, and offered us the use of his horse for a few days.

Here we were informed that the Oneida's conclusion not to send their girls from their nation, had such an effect upon the Tuscaroras, that notwithstanding we had delivered clothing for their children, we had to recommend them to deliver it to those who offered voluntarily. We could have had many more of the Stockbridge children, than were specified in our certificate; but to keep as near as possible to what was therein contained, was our earnest desire.

My companion was so ill as we travelled along, that he entreated me to permit him to lie down on the wet logs; which I could not suffer; and whether he would be able to reach the house intended was uncertain,—the road being so very miry. His illness was a considerable exercise to me, not only at this time, but many others. At length, we arrived at our Indian brother's, where we were treated with great kindness, and much hospitality.

7th. A fine morning. My mind often felt the sweet influences of Divine Goodness; and I could behold its salutary effects among some of these inhabitants of the wilderness. Their penetration and judgment in religious matters, are very evident and striking, as may appear in the following narrative.

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It appears that two young men were prepared at Princeton college, to be sent as missionaries among the Indians. And in order to habituate themselves to the hardships that awaited them, they lodged upon boards. When they set out upon their mission, several persons of respectability accompanied them to the Creek Nation. When arrived, the Chiefs were called,—a conference was held with them, and it was proposed to call a Council; which being met, the visitors informed them that they had brought two ministers of the gospel to preach salvation to them; and also a number of books, which would lead them the way to heaven. The Indians received the information, without apparent emotion; and said they would consider the subject; which should occupy the space of fourteen days. Meanwhile the young ministers proposed preaching; but the Indians would not suffer them, until their own conclusions were made. At the expiration of the fourteen days, the Indians made inquiry, whether they had any dark-coloured people among them, and whether they preached the gospel of salvation to them: whether they gave them those good books, which would show them the way to heaven; and whether they treated them as slaves, or as brothers. Being answered accordingly, the Indians again spoke, “Go home, and preach the gospel of salvation to them; give them those good books, that will learn them the way to heaven;—treat them as brethren, and not as slaves; then come and preach to us.” In consequence of this refusal, the whole missionary company returned; and one of them who was in the station of a congress-man, was so effected with the circumstance, that he emancipated all his slaves. When I came home, I called upon the person, and

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I never experienced greater kindness than from the Indians. I had not only their horses to ride, but a guide from place to place. The natives would not permit me even to carry my portmanteau, nor scarcely to go over a bridge that was dangerous, but offered to carry me over in their arms; though I would not suffer them. When I lodged with the Indians, they would build a large fire at bed-time, in the room that I occupied, and always renewed it at midnight;—the family being remarkably still, whether up or a-bed.

8th. A hard frost. This morning set out for Brothertown, having the Chief's horse to ride, with one of their principal men for a guide. We travelled through a most fertile country, over logs, and thro' bushes, at the rate of about a mile, and sometimes two, in an hour. Arrived at Brothertown in the evening, and were treated with all the kindness we could ask. Having comfortably lodged here one night, the next day we set out for Fort Schuyler, being still accommodated with horses and a guide. The roads were beyond description, bad; but we were favoured to reach Fort Schuyler, in the evening,—having previously agreed to meet our family of female Indians at this place.

10th. This morning our Indian girls came, each one accompanied by her parent or guardian. The business of parting was conducted with great seriousness, for the Indians delivered their children to us with the utmost confidence and quietude: which brought over my mind a considerable weight of concern and care, that nothing on my part, might obstruct this great and important work. The girls ma-

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nifested much stillness and composure, at taking leave of their parents, to go a long journey, with perfect strangers, to reside in a distant land. So we went to the Mohawk river, and they stepped into the boat, wrapped their faces in their blankets, and I do not remember that they uttered a word. We now had to pass down this river about one hundred miles, but got on very well the first day's voyage.

11th. Very cold this morning, especially on the Mohawk. We arrived at the Falls about breakfast-time. These wonderful works of Providence are very striking to every rational beholder. The waterfall is fifty-one feet between the tremendous rocks, which form a perfect stone wall for the space of twenty miles along the river. This river receives the fewest creeks of any I know of; consequently it keeps nearly the same height, and is not affected by any tide. Travellers often stop, kindle a fire on its banks, and dress their meal.

My companion continues ill, increasingly so, by being much exposed to the cold in an almost open boat, while the hills and fields are covered with snow. About four o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at Schenectady, and procured comfortable lodgings, which could not be obtained at every place.

12th. A rainy morning. I felt well in health, through favour, tho' my companion, H. Simmons, was still affected with the ague. Being first-day, early in the morning, we were taken about fourteen miles in a carriage to Albany, where we tarried at the house of our kind friend, Peter Field, during the remainder of this day, which I spent chiefly in reading the Book of Martyrs. There are but three families of Friends in this place, who are not thought

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It would be wisdom for parents carefully to weigh every difficulty, in removing with their tender offspring, to settle far from meeting, and not let the perishing things of this world have too much sway. He who is rich in mercy, can mar abundance, and bless a little; for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

13th. A fine mild morning. The wind being favourable, we took passage in a sloop for New York. I felt a degree of thankfulness that the Lord had thus far preserved us, and our family of girls.

14th. A rainy morning, though mild. Our girls conduct themselves with so much propriety, that they are remarked by persons of respectability. My mind was frequently exercised, so as not to suffer me to sleep; hoping nothing might befall my tender children, that would obstruct this good work, which the Lord is about to carry on from sea to sea, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

We left Albany about four o'clock in the afternoon, and came to Hudson that night, about thirty miles; notwithstanding we were aground, and laid at anchor till the tide floated us off. Next day we had a head wind; but our family appeared cheerful, which is a considerable satisfaction, and cause of thankfulness unto Him who is a present helper in every needful time.

16th. A clear, cold morning. Run aground by means of a strong wind from the western shore, about

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16th. ytf A clear, cold morning. Run aground by

means of a strong wind from theytf western shore, about ytf

nine miles above New York. When the tide was in favour, we carried out our anchor, but all endeavours at this time, proved in vain; and we were obliged to remain in the cold, until the tide should rise again. In the evening, we renewed our efforts, and were favoured to effect our design. We arrived opposite New York about nine o'clock in the evening, but the tide run so strong that the captain said he could not bring the vessel to shore. Being desirous of moving forward as fast as practicable, we engaged the boat to take us ashore; which being covered with ice on every part, and tossing so much, that it was with difficulty we could get in. At length we arrived safely in New York, and were kindly received by our friend Edmund Pryor; and may truly say, from the tenderness that was shown to us, and to the Indian girls, it was "like a brook by the way."

17th. A snowy morning. Friends manifested much kindness towards us, particularly Joseph Delaplaine, who accompanied us to the vessel, and presented to each of the girls a piece of silver. We arrived safely at Brunswick about seven o'clock in the evening. There was here, at this time, a certain great man from Poland, who had never seen an Indian, and was desirous of being introduced to the girls. They being in a private room at supper, he walked in to take a view of them. When he beheld their orderly deportment, he seemed much surprised; and after walking round the table where they were sitting, he said, "These are almost civilized already." I informed him that the father of one of them would not drink wine.

The same evening, the Poland general and his company came into the room, where my companion

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yt f ytf

17th. ytf A snowy morning. Friends

and I were sitting. In the course of the conversation, the word *thou* was used, which attracted the attention of a young man, who remarked in French to the general, that we, as a people, had a very uncouth way of speaking thou;—he apprehended, as I suppose, that we should not understand what he said in that language. However, I informed him, that it was the language of the Almighty to the first man, Adam; therefore bid him not reflect upon the people for using the language which the Lord had taught them. He looked confused; and the Polander, who understood English, appeared to favour the observation.

18th. Set out before day, and reached Princeton by breakfast-time. Through the continuance of Divine favour, my family continue well, except Henry, whose ague remains with him. Passing on, we arrived safely at Bristol in Pennsylvania, where we parted. Henry took charge of the children, and went to his home in that neighbourhood, where it was concluded the girls should remain until I should return from Philadelphia. Accordingly I took passage in the stage, and reached home about nine o'clock in the evening; where, through the favour of a kind, preserving Providence, I found my family well, and we were mutually rejoiced to see each other.

19th. A few Friends were called together, in order to be informed of my proceedings, and to consider what necessary step should be taken next.—They expressed their satisfaction with my communication, and concluded that I should return the next day to Henry Simmons's, and bring the girls down to Philadelphia.

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20th. Rode to Bristol, and next morning to Henry Simmons's, where the girls remained during my absence. Being equipped, we again set out, and arrived at my house about sun-set. The girls continued with us for three days; during which time, they conducted themselves in an orderly manner; and occasionally read the Scriptures. Many Friends called to see them, and gave them a number of small presents.

The next concern was, to find suitable places for them. We accordingly set out for James Emlen's, in Delaware county, where we arrived safely, and were kindly treated.

On first-day, the 26th, we had them all taken to meeting, where they behaved in a becoming manner. In the course of a few days, we had them stationed at the Friends' houses, who were willing to take charge of them, and instruct them in the business of housewifery. Two of the girls were placed with Nathan Coope and son;—one, with a woman Friend, who had a concern to take charge of one of the Indians;—one was placed with the family of William Jackson, and the remaining two with Isaac Jackson. At my taking leave of them, they wept considerably; and I felt much tenderness toward them, when I reflected upon the confidence which their parents had placed in me. On looking over this journey, I may thankfully acknowledge, that through adorable mercy, I have witnessed preservation; and may the great Preserver of men have the praise.

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