NOTES OF A JOURNEY FROM PHILADELPHIA TO NEW MADRID, TENNESSEE, 1790.

CONTRIBUTED BY JOHN W. JORDAN.

There has recently been added to the Manuscript Division of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, many of the papers of the firm of Reed and Forde (composed of John Reed and Standish Forde), well known in their day as enterprising merchants of Philadelphia, both in the foreign and domestic trade. These papers, which date from just after the close of the Revolution to the end of the second war with England, are interesting and valuable, for they cover a period when the merchants of this city were striving to regain their export trade, largely suspended during the Revolution, and developing an extensive trade in the territories dependent on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

Many accounts of "Adventures," in which this firm were interested have been preserved. The following "Notes of a Journey from Philadelphia to New Madrid," in the Winter of 1790-91, made by a member of the firm (in connection with the account in the firm Ledger, under the caption "Adventure to the Mississippi"), describes the difficulties of navigation of both the Ohio and Mississippi, and the delays and expenses connected therewith, over a century ago. Flour formed the chief part of this "Adventure," and was exchanged for furs at the following prices, per skin: Bear, $1; Wild Cat, 65c; Otter, $3; Beaver, $1; Buffalo, $10, and Cash.

JOURNAL.

Wednesday, 27 October 1790, started from Philada at 9 o'clock, stop'd at the 6 mile tavern and wrote to R & F. [Reed & Forde] by a negro wagoner. Fed at Unicorn Vol. xxxvi.—14
Tavern, 16 miles, a good house; went on to the 37 mile stone, Sheaf of Wheat Tavern; good house excellent food for man and horse.—Breakfasted at — 12 ½ miles then to Lancaster 18 miles, to Weavers and Cross Roads, and to Middletown, lodged at Mores', tolerable house; to Chamber's Ferry on Susquehanna, crossed and went 8 miles to Pollock's. Breakfasted and went on to Carlisle put up and fed at Postlethwaits; then to W — 12 ½ miles, a private house. Lodged and started at daylight. Breakfasted at Sheriff Leipers, 15 miles; lodged at Capt. Burds, 24 miles. Breakfasted at foot of Sideling Hill, 9 miles, fed at Morgan's 13 miles, lodged at Todd's, 14 miles. Breakfasted at Medsker's, 9 ½ miles; fed at Spykers, 11 miles; lodged at Coldpenny's, 11 miles. Breakfasted at Jones Mill, 7 miles; fed at Woodrufs, 14 miles; lodged at — 9 miles; to the Broad Ford 2 miles. Breakfasted at an Irishmans, 5 miles, bad house; then to Redstone 12 miles; arrived at one — on Wednesday, the 3d of November.

Nov. 4th. At Redstone, met with John Hayden.
Nov. 5th. To the mill on Ten mile by Virgin Ferry.
Nov. 6th. To Clayres.
Nov. 7–8th. At Morgantown.
Nov. 9th. Set out Early for Tyger Valley Falls with Major Hanway Haidly & Mr. Hickman.
Nov. 11th. To Laidly's Mill, on White Clay.
Nov. 12th. To the Ore Bank, 5 miles from Morgantown and return.

Nov. 13–15th. At Morgantown and the Mill.
Nov. 16th. In the morning to Redstone.
Nov. 17–18th. Waiting for the wagons.
Nov. 19th. This evening the wagons arrived at Redstone.

Nov. 20th. Loaded the boat in part.
Nov. 21st. Finished loading and left Jackson's Mill at 2 p.m.

Nov. 22d. At 3 o'clock a.m. run on Pierce's mill-dam;
hired a flat boat and carried the bags on shore; reloaded and started at 6 p.m.¹

Nov. 23d—24th. Got to Pittsburg on 23d at 12 o’clock, employed in building chimney, pump &c. Left Pittsburg 9 o’clock in the morning; was obliged to come to, high wind till 10 o’clock—35 miles from Pitt.

Nov. 25th. At one o’clock got on a gravel bank running from the point of a low island, about 30 miles above Wheeling & 70 below Pitt, the river being very low—got all hands out to push off, but no success.

Nov. 26th. Hired 4 men from the shore and at 11 o’clock, with handspikes, every man in the water, attempted to pry her off, but could not effect it. Afterwards tried to carry the Flour on shore in our canoe, but it would not do. Sent the men off at 1 o’clock, 4 miles, to hire a flat, which came along side at 9 o’clock, with three hands, two of them very indifferent.

Nov. 27th. At 2 o’clock in the morning, it being moonlight, began to unload the boat every hand employed, landed the Flour about a mile below, and after taking out 4 loads (100 Bbls.) by getting into the water, with handspikes and shifting the remaining part of cargo back & forward, got the boat off the bar at noon.² Loaded the Flour and left the shore at 3 o’clock. Struck a bar in the middle of the river, (running from the head of an island on the Virginia shore) two or three times; got off and attempted to make the shore at 6 o’clock but found the water too shallow. At 7 o’clock put in good harbor on the Indian shore. The whole day found the water so low that we were fearful of proceeding.

Nov. 28th. Started at daylight, passed Buffalo Creek at 10 o’clock; sent the canoe ashore; while there McFarlain, the principal inhabitant of the place shot himself with pistol—no cause could be assigned. Got within 4 miles of Wheeling.

¹It cost £4.2.6., to get the boat afloat.
²The expenses were £3.
Nov. 29th. Got up at daylight; stop'd at Wheeling at 8 o'clock for half an hour. Rowed hard all day to within 2 miles of Fish Creek.

Nov. 30th. Set out at moon-rise, the water being somewhat deeper and swifter passed by Muskingum at 2 o'clock and Little Kenahwa at daylight.

Dec. 1st. At 10 o'clock, 17 miles below the Little Kenahwa stop'd with the canoe. At 11 o'clock (night) passed the Little Falls. Thirty miles below Belleville there are two islands which must be left on the left hand so as to pass the Falls close to the Indian shore.

Dec. 2d. At 10 o'clock went on shore with the canoe at the Great Kenahwa; at noon stop'd with the boat at the French Settlement, 4 miles lower down, purchased excellent bread and good venison. Set out at 2 o'clock, very windy all night.

Dec. 3d. Floated all day and

Dec. 4th, passed the Scioto and arrived at Lewistown.

Dec. 5th. Staid there until 3 p.m., and arrived at Head Quarters.

Dec. 6th. At 7 o'clock breakfasted with Gen. Harmar, and set out at 1 p.m. Stop'd at Simm's settlement at the Miami; at 3 o'clock started and floated all night.

Dec. 7th. Passed the mouth of the Kentucky at 8 o'clock—floated all day and put in 8 miles above the 18 mile island at 5 p.m. This being a remarkable place for Indians, we ty'd out as far as possible and kept up a double guard.

Dec. 8th. Set off one hour before day and arrived at the Falls at 10 o'clock.

Dec. 9th. Kept the boat above the Falls.

Dec. 10th. Found the water falling very fast, moved the boat over the Falls at 2 o'clock and got safely moored at the lower landing. Continued at the Falls during the time, purchased a flat boat and a small Kentucky boat; loaded them with rations & 39 bbls Flour.
Dec. 20th. Started from the lower landing at 5 a.m., passed Salt River at night.

Dec. 21st. Came within sight of two islands about noon 2 miles above the island, sent a canoe ashore with three hands to get plank for the Kentucky boat. They saw a fresh camp of Indians. The wind and swell raised in an unaccountable manner in a few minutes, and with great difficulty we made the shore, all safe after one and a half hours rowing. During this time a person on the Indian shore continued calling to us, and before night we sent the canoe and brought him on board. He had been taken the Saturday before, within 4 miles of Clarksville with about £400. cash, the proceeds of a load of whiskey he had taken to the Post. He made his escape on Wednesday 15th., and had lived on nuts until he came on board; was near perishing from cold and hunger. This was the third time he had been taken by the savages and made his escape; he lives near Winchester, in Virginia. The wind and swell continuing high, and ahead, we were compelled to continue near shore until midnight, and floated all night.

Dec. 22d. Passed an island on the right hand at 8 a.m., and continued floating; a light wind ahead all day, abated in the evening.

Dec. 23d. High wind with a considerable swell until 10 a.m.,—wind still ahead but moderate. Passed a small island on the left, then a long island, and later passed another island and then one off the mouth of Green River.

Dec. 24th. At 7 o’clock passed on the right bank of one island, and three hours later a small one lying near the Indian shore. After leaving it a mile, the river makes quite a bend on the Indian shore, the boat therefore was headed for the opposite shore. Ten minutes after passing a long narrow island, we were hailed by the boats astern that they were aground, and quickly went to their assistance in a canoe. They were fast on an island of rocks with a few willows on it; got into the water with handspikes and
made an effort, without success, to get the boats off, they having gone on when all hands were hard at work with the oars. There was no chance of getting them off until the water raised and their position dangerous, being near the Indian trail. We thought it advisable to put off, which we did at one o'clock.

Dec. 25th. After floating an hour or more, the wind began to rise, blowing from the right hand shore. Passed the mouth of the Wabash near 3 p.m. The wind continuing to rise with very severe squalls, attempted to land on an island, but found the shore full of fallen timbers.

Dec. 26th. Passed an island at noon & two others in sight; the wind brisk ahead and continued thro' the night.

Dec. 27th. Wind ahead with considerable floating ice, which we were required to break through. At 11.30 passed an island that is 15 miles above the mouth of the Ohio, and at 2.10 p.m. got into the Mississippi, keeping hard over to the opposite shore to prevent getting into a large bend full of sawyers. We found the water of the Mississippi excessive low, and grounded on a Sand beach. All employed to make land on an island, and after rowing excessive hard, grounded 60 yards from the shore, and as it was quite dark and we saw no prospect of getting off, we lay there until morning. At 6.30 a.m. grounded again. The wind was excessive high, so kept a double watch all night.

Dec. 28th. At daylight the water had nearly left us, having fallen 18 inches; made two attempts with handspikes to get off, but in vain; sent two hands in the canoe to obtain assistance, 40 miles distant, and 6 miles below the mouth of the Ohio. We had to find water to float the canoe, and as the squalls nearly filled it with water, encamped on an island.

Dec. 29th. Set out in the canoe at daylight, the weather excessive cold. Lodged on the bank just above the head of an island above New Madrid.

Dec. 30th. Started at daylight and arrived at New
Madrid at 9 a.m.; found the Commandant very polite and ready to render every assistance in his power. Employed the day in procuring a Perogue and hands to go up the river.

Dec. 31st. Cutting away the logs to get the Perogue out of the Bayou; started with 9 hired men at 3 o'clock & lay at the head of New Madrid Island.

Jany. 1, 1791. Set out very early, the weather excessive cold, made but little way, there being much ice in the river. Encamped — miles from N. Madrid.

Jany. 2d. Started at daylight, but more ice obliged us to camp; made but a few miles this day.

Jany. 3d. Set out at daylight; the weather pleasant but still so much ice, could make but little progress.

Jany. 4th. Could not start until 10 a.m., owing to the ice, and only made about — miles.

Jany. 5th. Set out very early, obliged to stop at hunting camp two miles higher up, being entirely out of provisions. Encamped within 3 miles of the boat.

Jany. 6th. Set out and at 10 a.m. reached the boat; employed to 3 p.m. in cutting roller skids & handspikes; then began at the boat to try with rollers to get her off, she being about 70 yards from the water.

Jany. 7th. Found the rollers would not do. Sent the Perogue off early for poles of Slippery Elm, and about 10 o'clock got them under and had the boat in the water before sundown. A fall of rain compelled us to put part of the loading on board.³

Jany. 8th. The weather very cold, the men suffered, being obliged to wade in the water to load. Set out with the Flat at 2 o'clock into the bend below, the wind being high were fearful of being again drove on the sand beach, and did not wait to take in the whole of our cargo, had it brought after us in the Perogue.

Jany. 9th. Set out at daylight, rowed very hard all

³ The cost of getting the boat afloat; hire of 9 men and the perogue (or dug out) for ten days, with their board, £99.4.8 cy.
day and got to within 20 miles of New Madrid. As we were rowing to make the shore, got in a sawyer lying under water, obliged to unload part of the cargo. Weather cold with snow; finally made the shore.

Jany. 10th Set out at daylight and got without any accident within 4 miles of ——, the wind very light part of the day.

Jany. 11th. Arrived at New Madrid at 9 o'clock all safe; the small boat we left on the island in company, having overtaken us the evening of the 8th., ——