

JOURNAL OF A TOUR FROM PHILADELPHIA THRO
THE WESTERN COUNTIES OF PENNSYLVANIA
IN THE MONTHS OF SEPTEMBER AND
OCTOBER, 1809.

(Continued from page 78.)

After crossing the river we came on by a road now making into Turnpike from Wrights landing, opposite Columbia to York, luckily the Turnpike was not so far finished as to deprive us of the natural road on its side, which is a very fine one, at this season & proved a most grateful relief from the roughness of those we have hitherto had.

We continue with the same excellent soil, limestone, strata, & cultivated country to York evidently in a continuation of the same vale that we had passed thro' beyond the river tho it now became much narrower being bounded by a ridge of hills on each side—those on the North the Chickasalungo—& on the South probably the copper mines are hills of moderate elevation but altogether wooded—the valley is $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 miles wide & exhibits the same feature of improvement we have already remarked—in all this country both yesterday & to day the plough is every at work ploughing for the ensuing crop—& in general all the lands not ploughed are covered with clover & other rich grasses even on the hills—this is the effect of the late improvement in tillage which by the use of plaster of Paris has converted the sides of the hills into as rich pasturage as the low grounds; clover & frequently buckwheat being often sown on the winter crops so as to give pasturage after they are cut & then to be kept in grass until they are again put into grain.

Yesterday & to day we met large droves of cattle, chiefly as fine in point of form & size as any I have ever seen a few of the very largest breeds excepted—

these are purchased in the western country where they are raised in the woods among the new settlements, & sold at a small price to herdsmen who drive them into the fine countries of York, Lancaster & Chester where they are purchased by the farmers & fattened on their rich lands—in passing the Susquehanna at seasons when the water is low as at present—the herds are driven at once into the river & followed by boats who keep them from rambling leaving the cattle to find their way across which they do with ease, partly by swimming & partly by wading.

The town of York which is the capital of the country of the same name stands in a high open situation surrounded on every side by a rich country; it is built of brick & consists of one long street with several others crossing it—the court house which is a brick building stands in the centre of this street, & of the town—on entering it we remarked it had the appearance of an English town—not being so new as most others & the buildings more compact—many of them are also timber frames filled with brick as is frequent in England—the footways are paved & many of the houses are very neat—the Town was founded in 1750 & contains 500 houses & 3000 Inhabitants; besides Taverns, shops, stores & it is also the residence of many genteel & wealthy families.

I called on Mr. Ralph Bowie a lawyer of eminence with whom I have been intimate many years he is a Scotsman & was Secretary to the celebrated Protestant association in Scotland, but quitted England about the time of the London riots & came to Philadelphia where he remained some years & afterwards removed here—where he married—Mr. & Mrs. Bowie called on me at the Inn & pressed us to make some stay in York—but as our getting to the westward speedily was our great object; we were obliged to proceed tho sorry to part from them & also from the very nice Inn we found here

kept by Spangler—so soon as our horses were baited we set out for Kings an Inn 11 miles distant.

We remained in the same valley & with the same scenery for abt 8 or 9 miles when we left the limestone & found ourselves on strata of rock composed of a mixture of pebbles connected by a mass of reddish colored sand stone—the soil also changes to a reddish piabile earth occasioned by a crumbling slate stone which on the surface soon moulders into dust—we presume that we have either left the valley by the course of road being different or that we approach the sides of the western hills—we have however still a fine country & the price of Lands little reduced.

At Kings we found a neat house but a disagreeable Landlord being a German who would not hurry himself & it was not without difficulty we got an ordinary dinner.

Our next stage was 8 Miles to Oxford where we found an excellent Inn kept by Herch a German also, but both him & his wife were very civil.

The country becomes more hilly, & our road tho good was intersected by a continued succession of small hills we have now evidently left the valley & mounted on a high open country over which we have a fine prospect for 20 Miles westward bounded by the long fast ridge of the South mountain.

Tho the cultivation continues good & the soil also, there is an evident decline from that of yesterday & to day—our Landlord informs us that the price of land here is abt. \$30 to \$40 per acre in the neighborhood of York it is abt. \$80.

Our expenses to day

Last nights bill at Columbia	3.95
Ferrage of Susquehanna	1.
Servants25
Bait at York & Servnts40
Dinner at Kings	1.37
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	\$6.97

Sept. 18th. Our journey was from Oxford across the South mountain to Chambersburg 32 miles.

We had nice lodgings & slept better than we have done since we left home—we were therefore up early, our horses were fed before daybreak, and we breakfasted, dressed &c. & were on the road by 7 O'clock.

The country continues to decrease in goodness; the same reddish argillaceous soil continuing, yet is well settled and improved, at abt. 4 Miles we passed the Conewango Creek a beautiful stream of abt. 30 yards wide over which is a high stone bridge and near it the usual accompaniment of every stream in this country, a large stone mill with an excellent house no doubt of the millers—we soon lost our reddish soil & entered upon a light earth colored soil with dark argillaceous substrata crumbling where exposed to the air—we now have the mountain direct before us being a long high steep ridge covered with wood—at 12 miles we halted to bait at Blacks, an Inn which appears to have large custom for waggoners—it is an old & ordinary frame or log house—but there is one tolerably neat room for the accommodation of Travellers—we here saw in the outer room the largest iron stove we had ever beheld it was about 6 feet long 3 high & 2½ wide: it is made thus large not because smaller ones will not give heat enough, but they require the wood to be cut into smaller lengths, which is too troublesome & will not consume fast enough the fuel which is superabundant. We saw here a team of horses in which there were some as fine as I ever saw in any country—one in particular tho not so prodigiously large as the Dray horses in England was as strong and the best made large horse I ever saw—he cost \$200 & this price is not uncommon in the teams of this country for the severe service they undergo which is as much so as can be found perhaps in any country more lightness & activity being neces-

sary than on the Turnpike roads and in the cooler climate of England.

Black tells me he gave \$70 per acre for this farm, & says these lands produce wheat excellently, tho not so rich as some we have past.

Leaving Blacks we immediately enter on the roots of the mountain, our road for 3 Miles being not very steep, but very stony, the country here seems to form a flat area of some extent evidently the base of the mountain which rises steep before us—we were now near enough to see that its sides were composed of nothing but huge rocks & precipices—we soon began to ascend it & were accompanied at first by some rude settlements & houses; one of them unites a Tavern & sadlers shop—where our harness wanting some repair we stopped half an hour—all now becomes rude solitary, the roughest wilderness composed of high hills covered with forests, except where a few settlements are thinly scattered among them—the last house we found on the ascent was a decent log house & saw mill turned by a small stream from the mountain whose timbers it manufactures into boards—from hence for 3 miles we had the road all to ourselves, as rough & steep as possible being a continued clamber over stones, ruts & rocks sometimes with the ascent easy enough but for these impedements, at others extremely steep, and rendered uncommonly difficult for the horses, by the rough points & stones over which they were obliged to pull the carriage by main force—we were often obliged to alight and indeed should have gladly walked the whole distance but for a sun severely hot & penetrating, which broke out after a misty morning—this sun rendered it so sultry there not being a breath of air that we could not bear the fatigue of walking.

Three miles of this road & nearly two hours brought us to the top, where we caught a glimpse of the vast expanse of prospect westward bounded by the next

range of mountains nearly at 30 miles distance, but the prospect was but momentary as the Trees stand so thick—that it is soon shut out.

At the summit of the mountain we reached an Inn kept by Newman—a Dutch man but we found the house a very clean one, & we soon got the landlady to provide us with a beef steak not such an one as we should have thought a fine one in England as the beef had been corned—however it was very good & with good potatoes, bread & butter made a decent dinner, being anxious to get one as we have a bad road to descend.

Newman tells us that he has a farm of 300 acres here—it appears very rough—it cost him £5—or \$13.33 per acre—however he says he can make a good deal of meadow & it is astonishing how the perseverance of these Germans, can clear a rough soil & turn every drop of water to profit—he says the stage passes here 3 times a week from Baltimore to Chambersburgh—tho the roots of the mountain are cleared—the main part of it remains in its original wilderness—Deer & wild Turkeys are plenty & just beginning to be killed—there are also bears—one family last winter killed 9—there are some wolves & plenty of Rattlesnakes & Pheasants but few Patridges.

We left Newmans at 3 O Clock & had a bad road to the bottom of the mountain, without a solitary settlement—it was literally tumbling from rock to rock—often with a steep descent or precipice on our side—at 4 miles we reach the bottom, & find a rough Inn—a very pretty stream also winds down the hills—after reaching the bottom we had 4 miles more of road not so steep but little less rough before we get over the roots of the mountain—here there are a number of new settlers, log houses, burnt timber, meadows just getting into order—all shewing that the clearness of the fine lands on each side of the mountain prompts to occupy all the parts of its rugged sides which are capa-

ble of cultivation—the main mass of the mountain is composed of vast masses of hard rocks we perceived views of limestone occur here & there as we ascend—the west side however as we descend is chiefly composed of a soft whitish or grey sand stone & much of the soil is derived from it being often sandy among the rocks—we soon found the usual accompaniment of sand, viz—the dark pitch pine or fir—in fact a great proportion of the timber on this side the ridge is of that kind but very little on the east side—which appears to have the best soil—the timber consists of Chestnut, Oak, & every variety with which the other hills abound—the underwood & roots were so thick added to the fear of snakes that we did not chose to stray any distance from our road.

All our route to day was nearly parrallel to the dividing line between Pennsylvania & Maryland about 25 Miles northward of it & the roads from Baltimore are numerous so that the whole produce of this country goes direct to that town & not to Philadelphia—our Turnpike road is nearly compleated from Baltimore to Chambersburgh & such is the zeal with which the Marylanders are improving the carriage from this state that the produce of this part of it will undoubtedly center in Baltimore.

As we descend the mountain we have fine views over the vale below us bounded by the North mountain at abt 25 Miles distance—it is a long high ridge, the top scarcely indented but perfectly even for a vast distance.

Soon after reaching the foot of the mountain we enter the vale which is called by distinction the Great valley & one of the finest in the world extending in a N. E. & S. W. direction thro almost the whole of the U. States bounded by these two ridges of hills which are here called the North & South mountain but take various names as they extend thro the United States, we soon

come again to limestone, the stratum of all the middle of this vale—near Chambersburgh we cross a pretty stream—the east branch of the Conococheague which winds thro the valley & empties about 20 miles to the South into the Potomack—notwithstanding all our exertions we did not reach Chambersburgh till after dark—as we have wished much not to hazard a ride over these roads to which we are strangers & which at best are rough & uneven after sunset—we found ourselves at a most comfortable Inn (Davis's) tho extremely fatigued as we had now found something of the labor of crossing these Pennsylvania hills & experienced the difficulty of accomplishing even 30 miles Pr. day without great exertion.

Our reflections on the South Mountain are that bad as it is at present; an excellent Turnpike might be made over it & then the ride would be a matter of no difficulty nor should we have found it near so laborious if we had not unfortunately had a very hot day, which prevented our walking, as this would have been far easier than our jolting ride.

Our expenses to day were

Last nights bill at Oxford & Servts	4.12½
Bait at Blacks37½
Dinner at Newmanns	1.40
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	\$5.90

Sept. 19. We spent the early part of the day at Chambersburgh in refitting our carriage, one of our horses being lame, & finding that both they, and the driver, suffer'd much from their being unaccustomed to such roads, we hired a pair of strong active young horses of the country and a young lad to drive them—leaving one of our horses to be refitted against we came back.

We had sufficient leisure to walk thro the town which we found a very neat one, it is built in the form of a cross with a square in the center in which is the market

court house & other public buildings all of neat brick, the houses extend for some distance along the four streets from whence the roads diverge into the country—most of the buildings are substantial ones of stone or brick, & some of them very large—some with court yards before them which gives the town a very neat appearance more so indeed than any country town we had yet seen the houses are chiefly inhabited by Storekeepers, Tradesmen Inns &c. it is a place of very great resort—Land in the neighborhood sells for abt \$60 to 80 per acre—the town contains about 250 houses & about 15000 inhabitants—it was laid out about 50 years ago by a person of the name of Chambers who took up & first settled the land—Captn. Chambers one of the family still lives in the town and owns the property around it.

The Conogocheague runs thro the town and is joined also by another creek called Falling Creek, which is a beautiful stream & has a number of mills upon it—in the town there are 2 corn mills—I Paper Mill—2 mills for carding cotton & wool for the domestic manufactures of the country which they do at 9 cents per lb. & 1 fulling mill for dressing the country cloths.

We remained to dine & soon after left Chambersburgh with our new driver & horses who we find very expert in these roads—our ride for the afternoon was to Loudon 16 Miles. The road is generally a good one, that is, a soft natural road—but stony in many places & with a great many small steep hills which being much worn by the waggons have many places requiring great care; tho it runs in the valley, the eminences are considerable we have however in front the broad high ridge of the mountain before us, and looking back the South Mountain we crossed yesterday—these mark the boundaries of the valley which tho of an unequal surface exhibits from the eminences the appearance of an immense flat plain.

After leaving Chambers town we soon lost the limestone soil & have a crumbling argillaceous earth by no means rich and in some places sandy, producing firs and small stunted oaks, this ridge however does not continue far, & we have again a considerable variety of soil in some places very fine in others indifferent with limestone very frequently scattered thro it, & in general it is of a more mixed character both in soil and improvement than the other vallies we have described or than the middle parts of this vale—some of the improvements are equal to any we have seen.

We soon begin to discover the uneven surface of the mountain, which tho at a distance it exhibits the appearance of a high flat ridge, here shews its numerous inequalities—about 8 miles from Chambersburgh we evidently enter among its roots, as the soil becomes more stony & hilly: within 3 or 4 miles we have ascended considerably from the vale so that the country has the appearance of a flat vase with the mountain rising from it as regular as the ramparts of a fortification—when we come nearer we wind among its glens & hollows and were Surrounded by a number of bold hills—some of them as pointed as if they were volcanic—the west branch of the Conocheague winds close at the foot of the mountain, & on its banks we found a very rough town in which, and in the neighborhood are several forges, furnaces & mills—this town consists of the rudest kind of houses & takes its name from a Fort near it built in 1755 & named after Lord Loudon, it was then an Indian frontier built to curb there excursions—we found a miserable looking log house for an Inn—however things looked better after a while, —there was but one room below and a troop of waggoners &c—our landlady therefore put us up stairs in a decent kind of loft, where we soon had a tolerable supper.

Our host tells us that land here is about 30 to \$40—

that is the best quality with more or less improvements on it—it seems all the mountain has been taken up, but it is thought dear at 25 cents pr. acre—there are in it Deer, Bear, Turkies, a few wolves & Rattlesnakes.

Our bill to day was altogether at Chambersburgh as we had none on the road.

for Supper, lodging, breakfast, dinner, horses and Servants
it wasDrs, 5.-6

Sept. 20. We rose early to day having a rough ride before us, but our landlady who seemed to take more airs in proportion to the indifference of her Inn would not hurry herself in getting our breakfast, so that it was 8 OClock before we got away. I found our Landlord more civil, who having found out my name soon made an acquaintance—he came from the neighborhood of the head of Chester 37 years ago, of course beyond my memory, but he knew my father, he also knew our lands in Indiana having brought up, one George Rayne the son of a man who had been my fathers tenant in Maryland, & whom I sent out to settle our Indiana lands in 1786—had the acquaintance with Mr. Whitesides commenced last evening it would probably have produced us better accommodation.

As Loudon is immediately at the foot of the North Mountain we prepared to climb it, & soon found the advantage of being on the post or main road as it is so much improved beyond any other, that it lightens the difficulty of ascending the hills—the road for some distance winds up and down a number of short & steep hills evidently the lower spurrs of the mountain. The road itself is well made winding along their sides & in general is free from stone or rock, all these being removed, & in fact it wants nothing but being laid with stone to make it a good Turnpike: at this season however it was infinitely better as it was soft & smooth—the general ascent is great but not in many places very steep, we soon found ourselves environed in steep &

bold hills all ideas of the ridge which at a distance appeared so even, vanishing; as we undoubtedly ascend in a winding direction and penetrate the mountain, by what is called a Gap or pass instead of mounting directly up the steepest part of its side—the road is formed by being dug from the highest side and thrown into the lower, which is made even by a battery or wall of stones—of course the lower side forms a steep or precipice mostly of some feet & often of considerable depth according to the steepness of the hill—in general the sides of the hills are an angle of abt 25 degrees from perpendicular but they are covered with rocks of every size & form, exhibiting the most rude & inaccessible surface—often in huge masses of precipice—the trees are not so thick but the face of the hills can be easily discerned—the surface along the road is every where so rough, and so entangled with stones & underwood that we cannot leave the road for a foot—the trees are of every kind usually growing on American hills—Oaks & chestnut being predominant particularly the latter, which seems to delight in this rough soil—there are also many vines of which the grapes are now ripe, but they are very small and sour—the stones of which the hills are composed seem to be varieties of grey sandstone, & in many places a dark compact stone resembling basaltes, it is not easy to say whether these are not veins of limestone, but certainly it is no where predominant—towards & on the top there are no trees but the dark pitch pine & these are but thinly scattered, their tops all ragged & beaten by the winds: it appears indeed as if the tops of the hills had been burnt, the Chestnut, Oaks &c. being mere underwood which can scarcely grow for the violence of the wind.

There are no houses or settlements whatever from the foot of the mountain to the top, We then meet a solitary log house or two, with a little land badly cleared around it—the families deriving their chief

support from the cakes, beer, & whiskey—which they sell to the numerous waggoners who cross the hills.

From the top we have noble & extensive views—backward over all the vast plain of Chambersburgh, bounded by the South mountain—westward we have the ridge of the Sideling hill direct before us & the numberless spurrs of both this parent mountain & that interlocking with each other so as to give every variety of form with which mountain prospect abounds.

We were about 2 hours ascending the mountain which is called 3 Miles—perhaps 4 from where we started—the top is not broad & the descent is infinitely more steep than the ascent—almost as soon as we begin to descend we have the valley below us completely at our feet like a carpet or map: in which all the different masses of cultivation & wood are distinctly marked like the different shades of a carpet—M Connells town with its white houses & road winding thro it is as distinctly seen as from an air balloon. We have nothing to guide us in judging of the height of this hill but I presume it from having often mounted hills in many countries to be 15 or 1700 feet from its base—we had a delightful cool air on the top, & undoubtedly it is far colder here than in the vallies, but nearly the same plants grow here as below & there does not appear any circumstance materially sensible to our feelings to determine any thing respecting the height.

The road downward is well made & in the manner that all roads down so steep a hill ought to be—that is by a zig zag course—the lower side banked up—it is sufficiently wide every where for two carriages—but the precipice on the lower side is often considerable—& the flat valley below, appearing foreshortened & diminished adds to the idea we have of its height.

This valley appears well settled & cultivated—about $\frac{1}{3}$ of it is cleared.

The north termination of the hill direct into the val-

ley without any spurrs or knot's marks its termination with precision—it is reckoned 6 miles from Loudon to McConnells town—& perhaps 5 may be said to comprize all the mountain properly so called—having before remarked that yesterday we found ourselves among some of its eastern spurrs or base which on the eastern side appear of considerable extent.

We reached McConnells town in 3 hours from Loudon—which time we were told was usually taken—McConnells town is a neat thriving little place of about 100 houses with 3 Corn 1 Oil, 1 fulling & several other mills it was founded about 14 years since, & consists of stores taverns &c. for the accommodation of the country—the valley is of limestone & rich, but as yet improvements are by no means so extensive as in others—the lands rate at abt \$30 per acre; that is the improved lands.

We found our landlord Mr. Dillon a civil & obliging man, he expected us last night having heard of our being on the road & we were as sorry as himself that we had not reached his house.

The distance from the foot of the north mountain which we had now passed to the Sideling hill which is direct before us is at least 9 miles—but a very small part of this however is valley ground—the Vale of McConnells town thro which runs Licking Creek or Back run which passes Southward to the Potomac—being not more than a mile wide—the remainder of this space between the two mountains is filled up by a ridge or rather by several ridges of hills of less height than the mountains themselves—leaving McConnellstown therefore we came over these ridges, our road winding up and down a number of hills the road pretty good except where the heights are abrupt—however there are few stones, the hills appearing composed, chiefly of a soft crumbling slate stone, of red, yellow and slate color by turns, but no where rich—the timber not being

large—there are also few settlements, which is the best proof that the soil is not very fertile.

At 9 miles we came to a tavern called the running pump—a tolerable house but as we had the formidable object of the Sideling hill to encounter and the afternoon was advancing, we were anxious to get on, for tho our new driver & horses prove excellent, we do not wish to encounter these hills, with their woods, rocks & precepices, after night.

We found the Sideling road as well made as the former, but infinitely more stony owing to the difference of soil—it is not steeper than the last, but by no means so winding, owing to this, we were not more than an hour ascending it, which is called two miles, & we judge that from the directness of the road the ascent was more considerable—the stones, wood, and soil of this hill are so near those of the North mountain that it is needless to describe them again—there is no appearance of any minerals;—on the top are the same blighted appearance of the trees, either from fire or tempest, or both—the prospect & features of this mountain are however grander than the former & certainly more elevated—the top of this hill is also far broader than the other—as we rode between 2 & 3 Miles on what may be called the top which is a kind of rough plain, winding up & down rugged knolls of rocks, by far the worst part of the whole road—on the top are many rude houses & as rude improvements, the soil appearing covered with a barren white sand stone unfit for cultivation.

The view from the top of this hill is indeed very fine as we now discern the number & form of the several ridges, all of them being distinctly seen, the main ridges extending long—mostly regular but broken in many places & the spurrs or offsets interlocking in every shape or direction from the pointed cone to flat, blunt, & angular terminations—the prospect is im-

mense every way but particularly westward where the vast body of the allegany at abt 20 Miles distant seems to preponderate over all others in point of height, but the Laurel hill beyond it is also seen frequently peeping in some places above it.

Our descent from the top was by a very good road, less zig, zag, than that of the former mountain & like the ascent more direct, but the precipice is much greater & the sun having set the whole expanse below seemed to float in shade so that scarce any objects were distinct but a confused mass of mountain, wood & cultivation the allegany & hills beyond it towering above all were yet illuminated by the sun—the moon having risen early, assisted us with its light & our road proving excellent we reached Mauns Inn—near the Juniata river in good time where we found decent accommodation.

Our bill last night	\$4.10
Bait at McConnells25
Dinner	1.70

Drs 6. 5

(To be continued.)