Mary Conoin traveled across the state in the 1840s. She saw settlers’ wagons giving way to rail car and steamboat, providing new views of the landscape by a new social class of Americans.
The overland trip across Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh and into the Ohio Valley was a common one for eastern travellers through most of the nineteenth century. Diaries and narrative accounts written by travellers heading for the Ohio Valley along this route have long been recognized as important sources for historians of Western Pennsylvania, providing valuable eyewitness descriptions of the region as it was transformed from a frontier area to a settled and increasingly prosperous part of the country. One such record, never before available to historians, is the diary kept by Mary Ann Corwin, a 23-year-old New Jersey woman, on a trip to Ohio in 1842-1843.

Travelling west with her father in a horse-drawn wagon, Mary crossed Pennsylvania, passing through Easton, Allentown, Harrisburg, Chambersburg, and Pittsburgh before moving on into Ohio. There she visited friends and relatives in and around Mount Vernon, Greenville, Cincinnati, and Dayton before returning home alone by steamboat, canal boat, train, and carriage. On her way home, Mary passed through Pittsburgh a second time and travelled the entire length of the Pennsylvania Canal. Much of what


Left: Thomas Birch, Conestoga Wagon on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, 1816. (Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt.)
“Picturesque” travel first became popular in England, as *Paddington Passage*, c. 1800, vividly shows. Canal boats and well-to-do English riders fill out this rare landscape painting by the American Benjamin West, best known for his many famous portraits. (Detroit Institute of Arts)

Mary saw was new to her; apparently she had never journeyed farther than New York or Philadelphia. During her trip to Ohio, as well as on her way back, she made entries in her diary almost every day describing the countryside and towns through which she passed and the people she encountered. Although her spelling and grammar are not always perfect, her diary offers a valuable illustration of the experience of travel in Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when the region was undergoing the revolution in transportation brought by canal, steamboat, and rail.

The importance of Mary Corwin’s diary lies in the richness of its descriptive imagery. She wrote much more about the unfamiliar scenery of the Pennsylvania and Ohio mountains and farm land through which she passed than about the people she met or her own activities. This was certainly not due to a lack of new acquaintances or interesting events, some of which she mentioned in the diary. Instead, Corwin’s response to the new experiences of travel — and consequently her diary — were shaped by the ideas in writings about the picturesque American landscape that dominated the travel literature of her day.

These ideas were first enunciated at the end of the eighteenth century by the Rev. William Gilpin in *An Essay on Picturesque Travel*, published in London in 1792. According to Gilpin, the purpose of picturesque travel was the discovery of beauty in “the scenery of nature” and he advised travellers to attend chiefly to “the ingredients of landscape — trees — rocks — broken-grounds — woods — rivers — lakes — plains — vallies — mountains — and distances.” Gilpin directed travellers to view the scenes of nature as if in a frame, so that the eye was led from the foreground into the distance, in accordance with the principles laid down by landscape artists. He instructed picturesque travellers to
observe the interplay of color and light in natural scenery, and suggested that they describe the landscape as a way to order it. Gilpin's aesthetic ideas were directed chiefly at artists and elite travellers in England, but they also circulated widely in the United States, where they had a tremendous impact on American writers and landscape painters and helped shape the growing popularity of scenic travel. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century the idea of the picturesque, having passed from books to newspapers and mass-circulation magazines, had begun to shape the way ordinary Americans like Mary Corwin thought about the landscape. Although Corwin did not undertake her trip to Ohio as a scenic tour and had probably never heard of William Gilpin, she thought of travel mainly as an opportunity to take in unfamiliar scenes. Soon after setting out she wrote that she thought it "worth a summer of hard labour to travel in the Fall and see the country. I think if I were a young man I would not grudge my wages for one summer at least from traveling, it is indeed very pleasing."

Travelling for pleasure in this way was almost unheard of in the United States before the 1790s, and those who did travel for pleasure or instruction concerned themselves mainly with the people they encountered or with the man-made environment. Travelling long distances was difficult and dangerous, and few who recorded their impressions of the landscape had occasion to extol the beauties of nature. Early American travellers were understandably more interested in the progress of settlement and "improvement" than with natural scenery. Indeed colonial writers were often defensive about the unimproved character of the American wilderness, and eighteenth-century American landscape artists focused their energy on portraying scenes — of towns and carefully tended farms and country estates — that most nearly approximated the settled European ideal.

With the Revolution, however, Americans took increasing interest in the distinctive, untamed character of the natural landscape that so clearly distinguished the new nation from a decayed and degenerate Europe. Pride in America's natural landscape, so long considered inferior to the settled and improved landscape of Europe, became a central theme of American national identity. Writers celebrated the majesty of American Nature, seeing it as a symbol of America's national destiny. "God has promised us a renowned existence, if we will but deserve it," a New York writer asserted in 1835. "He speaks this promise in the sublimity of Nature. It resounds all along the crags of the Alleghenies. It is uttered in the thunder of Niagara."

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, picturesque travellers began touring the United States in search of the most beautiful scenes of unspoiled nature. These travellers made the Hudson, the Catskills, and the falls of the Passaic, the Genessee, and Niagara rivers some of the most famous tourist attractions in the United States. In Pennsylvania, picturesque tourists extolled the natural beauty of the Delaware Water Gap and the falls of the Schuylkill. At first this kind of picturesque travel was restricted largely to elite tourists, writers, and painters, but an appreciation of the picturesque character of the American landscape soon spread to ordinary Americans. Paintings of picturesque scenes celebrating the beauty of the American nature by artists like Thomas Cole — frequently reproduced as engravings — helped shape the way ordinary Americans thought about the natural landscape. Published travellers' accounts describing picturesque scenes were among the most popular literature of the early nineteenth century and provided everyday travellers with a vocabulary for describing their own impressions of the American landscape.

The conventions of picturesque description had little discernible effect on travellers passing through Western Pennsylvania before the second quarter of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, travel through the region was slow and conditions were generally primitive. Under such circumstances few travellers passing through the area were inclined to record glowing impressions of the natural scene. Those who did mention the landscape generally restricted their comments to practical descriptions concerned with the potential of the land for development, but most travellers focused their attention on man-made improvements and the hardships of travel. The idea of the picturesque had little impact on travellers in Western Pennsylvania as long as travel remained arduous and nature presented more of an obstacle than an attraction.

As transportation improved, however, an appreciation of the natural landscape gradually began to appear in travellers' writings. The impressions of Uriah Brown, who travelled through the Alleghenies in 1816, are typical of this trend. In his diary Brown concerned himself mainly with the condition of the roads, the character of the taverns and houses, and the impediments to travel along his route. He noted the high quality of the workmanship on the Cumberland Road — "far superior" to the turnpikes near Baltimore — but further along he complained that the "people are too abominably Lazy" to keep the roads in good repair. Despite these complaints, Brown had more appreciation for the Western Pennsylvania landscape than many of his contemporaries. He recorded that the top of Laurel Hill "affords a delightful prospect" of Uniontown and the "surrounding Neighbor Hood," and wrote appreciatively of the "natural & official Magnificence" of the "Great Masterly forests" of the Alleghenies.

Like earlier travellers, Mary Corwin found that the trip across Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio could be difficult, particularly when bad weather turned the roads to mud. Corwin and her father had few problems coming through the mountains, but when they reached Ohio, snow and rain slowed their progress considerably. Corwin described the last 40 miles before Cincinnati as
"mud, mud, mud." The whole overland trip, exclusive of stops to visit friends and relatives, consumed 24 days of hard travel.8 By the early 1840s, however, overland travel through Western Pennsylvania was much easier than it had been in the first years of the nineteenth century. Better roads and more frequent accommodations along heavily travelled routes made it possible for ordinary travellers like Mary Corwin to pay less attention to the hazards of travel and more attention to the picturesque qualities of the landscape. On her trip, Corwin wrote that she had seen "some fine views of fine country." In describing what she saw, Corwin frequently drew on the conventions of picturesque description, carefully sketching word pictures of unfamiliar scenes. In the mountains of central Pennsylvania, for example, she wrote that "we could look up I cannot tell how far and see nothing but stones & rocks with a few trees growing between them and we could look down upon the tops of the trees beneath us, and then farther on we could see the fields handsomely cultivated with here and there a house which gave it a very handsome appearance."9 Corwin was not just interested in the natural landscape. On her overland trip across Pennsylvania and Ohio, she recorded her impressions of the man-made environment with equal care, describing many of the towns through which she passed, sometimes in interesting detail. As with her impressions of the natural landscape, these descriptions are characteristically scenic. She was impressed, for example, by "the grandeur beauty and comfort of a log house" in central Pennsylvania and when she arrived in Ohio she carefully described the interior of the first one she visited: "two beds which look very nice, two tables two looking glasses, a beaurow and cubboard, a map of the U.S.A. with some other pictures . . . two Bibles lying upon the window which are shaded with white curtains with fringe at the bottom . . . a clock and some pots of flowers."10 Corwin's account of her return home from Cincinnati by steamboat, canal, and rail offers a valuable illustration of how these innovations in transportation changed the way travellers responded to the landscape of the region. Steamboats, canals, and railroads made travel much more affordable, much easier, more pleasant and faster than it had ever been. In contrast to the long overland trip across Pennsylvania and Ohio, the entire trip from Cincinnati to Succasunna by steamboat, canal, and rail took only 12 days. The trip from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh took six days, but this was an unusually long run; normally this trip took only three days. Corwin's boat was delayed when it stopped to take the passengers off a grounded steamboat and later when it ran aground itself. Steamboats, canals, and railroads did much more, however, than make travel faster. They made it possible for travellers to envision the landscape in new ways. Steamboat and canal travel captured the popular imagination, and Corwin's diary makes it easy to understand the attraction. Travelling by boat, she could not collect the kinds of detailed impressions of towns, houses, and people that she recorded during her trip by wagon to Ohio, but the boat deck proved an ideal vantage point for enjoying the scenery. Boat travel offered a constantly changing panorama of picturesque scenes, and the relative ease and comfort of travel by steamboat and canal gave Corwin the leisure to comment at length on the beauty of the passing landscape. In contrast to the enthusiastic but restrained descriptions of mountain scenery she recorded on her overland journey, Corwin's descriptions of the scenery along the Ohio River suggest that travel by boat encouraged a much more romantic vision of the landscape. "Plunging up the majestic Ohio," Corwin wrote after leaving Cincinnati, she could look out "upon the free and noble independent industrious Ohio and the dependent idle slave holding state of Kentucky all at the same time." She was fascinated by the Indian mounds near Moundsville, Ohio; Steubenville, she thought, had "the most romantic situation" of any town on the river. "Oh! tell me not of Italian skies while I have American ones before me," she wrote after watching the sun set over the Ohio. "Sky, pink with rays of the sun Earth covered with her green carpet and burden of trees and vegetation, and water reflecting the brilliant rays of a setting sun high hills rising far above the river covered with green, what more need we to form a lovely scene."11 Travelling along the Pennsylvania Canal east from Pittsburgh presented Corwin with equally impressive scenic views. In 1843 the Pennsylvania Canal was only 10 years old and was celebrated as one of the engineering marvels of the day, although within another decade the railroad would make it obsolete. From Pittsburgh, the canal carried passengers and freight through a series of locks and tunnels to Johnstown. There, canal boats were loaded onto railway flat cars which were pulled by cables drawn by steam engines up the 2,500-foot crest of the Allegheny Ridge and then lowered down the other side. The canal boats were unloaded on the east side of the mountain at Hollidaysburg and then hauled down the Juniata River to the Susquehanna, passing through 108 locks along the way. Corwin was fascinated by the canal, and most of all by the portage railway, but she marveled mostly at the picturesque qualities of the mountain landscape. The scenery, Corwin wrote, "is as fine as every there is." The "mountains exceed any I ever saw," she noted while passing through the Alleghenies, and at one point she noted with pleasure the "contrast in colorer" between the green trees and the "beds of stone of different coulers."12 On the one-day trip by train from Harrisburg to Philadelphia, Corwin's fascination with the engineering achievements along the rail line almost completely eclipsed her interest in the natural scene. "I thought the canal passed over rivers and roads enough," she wrote, "but the rail road passes over rivers, roads, and canals oftener than I can tell. it goes over roads in some places
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Joshua Shaw, *Landscape with Cattle*, 1816. Shaw was a central figure in landscape art, and his portfolio, *Picturesque Views of American Scenery* (1820-1821), was a painter's counterpart to popular travel books in wide circulation by the time Mary Corwin made her journey. (Butler Institute of Art, Youngstown)

and under them in others, through hills in some places and under them in others. It goes under a hill which is cultivated, on the hill is a field and in it a rail way that's a fact.” The entry contains only a brief comment about the landscape. Perhaps Corwin found the rolling countryside of eastern Pennsylvania — much like the landscape of northern New Jersey — too familiar to describe. From Philadelphia, she took another train across New Jersey, a boat to New York, and another boat back to Jersey City. The next day she took a train from Newark to Morristown and a stage for Succasunna. She arrived home on August 10, 1843.13

Mary Corwin’s diary illustrates the interest in travel and the appreciation for picturesque scenery that developed in the United States during the early nineteenth century as Americans gradually extended their mastery over nature. By making travel less arduous, improvements and innovations in transportation made it possible for ordinary Americans to travel and “see the country.” Corwin’s diary further illustrates the attractiveness of travel by steamboat, canal, and rail, and suggests how these new modes of transportation transformed the experience of travel, not just by making it faster, easier, and cheaper, but also by making it possible to envision the country in new ways.

Mary Ann Corwin was born on December 24, 1819 in Chester, Morris County, New Jersey. Her parents were Presbyterians. At the time of Corwin’s trip, her family lived on a farm near Succasunna, a small town about 10 miles from Morristown. Mary apparently received a grammar school education; the penmanship in the diary is neat and serviceable, but generally a bit awkward, and the spelling is irregular and lapses badly at times. Nonetheless the diary leaves the impression of a bright young woman whose chief reading was probably
newspapers, magazines, and the Bible, but who had a broader acquaintance with books than most of her peers. In 1842, at age 23, she was unmarried. About her physical appearance we know nothing, except the fact that she weighed about 110 pounds, which she recorded in her diary on January 23, 1843. Little more is known about her life before the diary commences in the fall of 1842.14

The reason for Corwin’s trip to Ohio is not entirely clear. Her father does not seem to have conducted any business while in the state, although he may have invested in land or purchased horses to sell in New Jersey. His departure from Cincinnati on January 23, just five days after he and his daughter arrived, suggests that his main purpose (after visiting with New Jersey friends and relations) was to deliver Mary to her uncle and aunt for an extended stay in Cincinnati. Since she was of marriageable age, perhaps he hoped she would find a husband in the West. If so, his hopes were dashed. Although quick to make friends and plainly not shy around men, she did not form any special attachments on her trip.

A fair amount is known about Corwin’s later life, thanks in part to a second diary she kept in 1845. On January 23, 1845, less than 18 months after Mary’s return home, she married Francis Theodore Byram, a stone mason from Morristown. Frank Byram was related to the Byrams that Mary and her father visited in Darke County, Ohio, in January 1843. In April 1845 the couple left New Jersey for Ohio, settling briefly near Dayton, not far from members of the Byram clan. They intended to purchase a farm, but for some reason did not, and in early 1847, the couple returned to New Jersey. A few years later they tried their luck in the West again, moving to Logan County on the Illinois prairie, where they purchased a farm. When that farm failed, they moved west again, settling on a farm in Bremer County, Iowa, in 1855. Their luck in Iowa was apparently no better; in 1863 they sold the farm and moved to Janesville, Iowa and the next spring they returned to Morris County, New Jersey, where Frank found work as a railroad agent in Drakesville. Their family grew throughout this odyssey; between 1846 and 1860 Mary bore seven children: five girls and two boys. Frank Byram died on October 22, 1870. After his death Mary returned to Succasunna, where she lived for 29 years. She died on November 24, 1899, a month before her 80th birthday.15

Mary Corwin’s diary consists of 64 pages sewn into a paper cover; the diary entries fill 46 pages. The diary contains 117 entries. The version presented here is faithful to the original, preserving Corwin’s erratic spelling, grammar and punctuation. Corwin generally neglected to begin sentences with capital letters. She also rarely used periods to end sentences; occasionally she indicated full stops by leaving a long space at the end of a passage, but usually she just ran one sentence into another. This makes understanding the diary sometimes difficult. Equally difficult, however, is trying to decide, as an editor, where and how to emend the text; to avoid seeming arbitrary, emendations would be needed in nearly every line of the diary, and lots of bracketed editorial insertions would mar the readability of the text. Such disruptions would make the diary entries unattractive on the page, and cut against Corwin’s flowing, “on-the-road” style. So, the reader’s patience is requested.

Words that Corwin crossed out in her entries are shown in cancelled type (e.g., Mary Corwin). Her occasional interlineations have been inserted into the main body of the text, generally without comment. Other forms of editorial intervention in the text have been kept to a minimum. Illegible words are indicated by braces {}; where possible, the editor interpolated such passages, which are indicated with a question mark (e.g., [Mary Corwin?]). Brackets [ ] have been used to indicate other material supplied by the editor (e.g., [August] 20). Sixty-six of the 68 entries Corwin made between January 19 and June 24 while in Cincinnati and Dayton have been edited out. Although these constitute more than half the total entries, they make up less than one-fourth of the entire text, since most of them are a sentence or less. With few exceptions, these entries are sparse and unrevealing. Three poems that Corwin found in Ohio newspapers and copied into the back of the diary have also been omitted.

I bought the diary of Mary Ann Corwin, together with the 1845 diary of Francis Theodore Byram and Mary Ann Corwin Byram and a few related documents from a private collector in 1989. Transcripts of the entire collection are now in the Archives of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

A Diary kept by Mary Ann Corwin (aged 24) on a trip from Succasunna New Jersey to Cincinnati Ohio from November 2nd 1842 to August 10th 1843.16

Nov 2 started

November 3 We are indeed started for the West we have come through Flanders German Valley, Pennville and Anderson town for we started yesterday and have slept at Mr Wolsons.17

[November] 3 Portcolden, Newvillage both small, Washington, Broadway and Newvillage. I forgot Now we leave New Jersey cross the Delaware and enter Easton in entering which you come down a hillside road from which if you should fall you would go down perhaps 90 or 100 feet as if falling from a house cros a bridge under cover a long, long, one I assure you now in Easton, which has quite a cityfied air, it reminded me of market st in Newark, then
Joshua Shaw, *View in the Pennsylvania Countryside*, 1823. This is an example of his work said to be influenced by his travels in Western Pennsylvania, and, undoubtedly, by the romanticism of contemporary travel literature. The English-born Shaw had emigrated to Philadelphia in 1817. (High Museum of Art, Atlanta)

Butzville, very small then Allentown which is quite large resembling a city set on a hill you come in at the foot and go up hill all the way and the best of it is at the top or nearly so here Father got out at the foot and walked up the hill, he got a head of me, I lost sight of him for he went into a store and I knew it not, I past him and went on about 3 miles up hill and down expecting to see him every moment until I thought I had gone far enough and then I stopen and went into a hotel and inquired for but found him not, I stood at the door a few moments when a waggon drove up with two young gentlemen in it they said they had seen him and he inquired for me, but he was going into Allentown whence I had just came out, one said, he said, I must stay till he came up, the other said, he sd, I mus come back to Altn, he said he came out of the store walked about a mile, and turned back to Altn saw a carriage got into it and came and met me, and put up for the night at the house at which I inquired so we are both safe

4th Traveled through Hagelsville and Pagelsville, and crossed Pocanoe Mt traveled about 40 miles and stopen at a dutch public house Behersburg the land lady cannot speak or understand English her daughter either but her son can and I have chated away untill it is quite late with one of them and one of his acquaintances

5th [near Pine grove] Saturday night traveled 42 M'ls today through Millersburg crossed the blue Mountains twice because we got out of our way in going over the Mts we could look up up I cannot tell how far and see nothing but stones & rocks with a few trees growing between them and we could look down uppon the tops of the trees beneath us, and
then farther on we could see the fields handsomely cultivated with here and there a house which gave it a very handsome appearance and almost repaid us for climbing two miles up the Mountains, then 2 miles down, but not quite 2 miles up and down the second one, one was enough through Stumptown Oh ho! what a name and Jonesontown which is quite a village with at least one fourth of the houses built of logs, you have no idea of the grandeur beauty and comfort of a log house they look as if they would laugh at our house they are built two story and have a very proud appearance

6th Sabbath day, we stayed 6 miles from Harrisburg last night, got up and came on to it this morning and put up for the day went to a Presbyterian Church this morning, had a sermon from first J’n 5.12 the Ch is a new one and very handsome and large they have a base viol and have very good singing in the afternoon went to a dutch church their manners I think are very much like ours, but I could not understand anything

7th Left Harrisburg this morning crossing the Susquehanna river over two bridges (covered) near half a mile long proved through mechanicsburg, quite a handsome and large burg, Carlisle which is a more handsome town than Newark but not quite as large, the streets are wider than N’s Centerville which is a small ville, and Shippenburg more than a mile long, on our road we met a drove containing more than 3 hund cattle, and saw one man so much intoxicated that he fell down on the walk near us we find it is very fashionable for women to ride on horse back

8th Came through Greenville and Chambersburg, quite a burg, crossed the Blew Mt, Cambelsburg, which I think should be called Logtown for I think it contains near two hundred houses and all but one dozen are made of logs, then Louden, then we crossed the Mt called the Cove Mt which exceeds any Mt by far that I ever saw it is 4 miles up and 4 miles down it we were so fortunate as to be overtaken by a Carriage with an old lady and her son which we shall probably keep in company with through the Mts

9th crossed the Mt called Sideling hill the road runs along base of the Mt with the rocks running perpendicularly higher than the trees on our right side and Junietti river on our left, some of the hills are covered with rocks and others with pines, which gives a beautiful appearance, in coming up the Mt it was so warm that I had my shawl off but when we got on the top, it began to rain and soon it began to hail and then to snow and I was obliged to put my shawl and two cloaks on and then I was cold but after a while it cleared away and the sun came out and it was quite pleasant, came through bloody run, from an Indian battle which was fought, Bedford which is built between the Mts, and now we have crossed the Junietti 5 times over covered bridges, now we are put up on the top of Dryridge at a widow’s tavern, traveled 37 mls

10 Traveled over the Mt called the backbone of America from its dividing the waters, came through a village called Somerset the only village we have come thro to day, for we have been coming through the Mts all day 37 miles overtook at noon a wagon with a young newly married couple in it, she had run away with him, her parents being displeased with him, traveled the after noon in company put up together his name is Wm Armstrong

11 Traveled over Laurel hill from its being covered with Laurel and Chestnut ridge, we had a fine view of the surrounding country the roads and hills are covered with snow, but since we have got down from the Mts we have not any snow, we have come through Dengaul, and Mt Pleasant a fine village situated on the face of a hill, from the Village they have a fine view of the contry for some distance, we left Armstrong and his wife at Mt P, fro [for] his horse (although a very large fat one) could not keep up with Old sorrel, then through Madison a small ville, here we left parted from our traveling companions who have been with for four days Mrs Fuller and her son Robert B and really I feel very much lost indeed without them, she and I have slept together and become very much attached, she seemed a very kind lady, and he appears to be a very affectionate son and truely we are sorry to part with them we have put up for the night at a small tavern where there is four of the most noisly children that I ever wish to see, and we have no one to help us make sport and it is bad, sad enough traveled 36 mls we have passed some of the most wretched looking
hovels that I ever saw, but we have also come over seen some of the most beatiful country, the fields are land is hilly, and it presents a very handsome appearance. (I some times think the dutch do not know what to do with their rails and so pile them on the fence in some places they have 9 and some 8 rails)¹⁹

12th We have traveled over some most beatiful land, had some fine views of fine country to travel through but I think it is too hilly for me to live upon, we are now in Pittsburg the very dirtiest city that I ever saw in all my life, and as noisy as it can well be it is saturday near evening perhaps that makes some difference but I hope it will be more quiet tomorrow it is said to be two miles long and two miles wide the houses mostly built of bricks some four stories high, the fires (I believe all made of coal which smokes most teribly and blases like wood the buildings are allmost as black as our chimneys back

13th Sabath went to church morning and evening in the ev’n heard D‡ Hering from the words “Thou shalt not kill” a very good sermon

14th staid all day in Pts took a walk down to the wharf with Father I think it is the pleasantest part of the town Pitts is situated in a kind of basin surrounded by hills and rocks or nearly so but no one can have any idea of it untill they see it, have spent the day rather pleasantly, become quite acquainted with Mary Eicher and her brother Henry, they seem very pleasant and agreeable companions. I am now siting alone in a very nice little room with a fire in it made of coal which makes a cheerfull fire. P is surrounded by villages I think

15th Tuesday crossed the Alegany river on a covered bridge very long came into Alegany town one the opposite side of the river from P. I think A is pleasanter than P, not quite as black. we have traviled by the side of the Ohio river for miles, with the ri[ver] on our left hand and the hill at our right in some places the rocks rose perpendicularly to the hights of from fifty to sixty feet and then trees on the top of them they rose like a breastwork for battle preparation, it was a most imposing sight indeed, I think it is worth a summer of hard labour to travil in the Fall and see the country. I think if I were a young man I would not grudge my wages for one summer at least from traveling, it is indeed very pleasing take half that sum spend foolishly in cloths and about home and spend it in traveling. came throug Sewickleyville a small ville, have been very much amused with some of the fields and houses along the river on this side, the hous of logs, clapboard roof [stake?] and [ridered?] with chimney’s made of sticks and clay, their fields not half as large as our garden, but there are some very large and beatiful houses and first rate farmers, and farms along the river side and on the other too we have followed Ohio river all day since we started, come throu Freedom a village called Economy it is owned (I think) by one Dutchman and the whole village is subject to him, they are all Dutch it is as large as Dover, the houses some built infront of the road but no door to front the st, many of them are built gable end to the st even the public house (which is larger than two common Churches) must not have its door from the st, emagine a large village without a single door fronting the st and then perhaps you wil have something like it, but no one can think how odd it looks till they see it, next is Freedom quite a village, then Bridgewater, at which we crossed the Beaver river over a covered bridge and came on to the village called Beaver half mile from the river, 28 miles to day for the roads are very muddy, and we started from P at 9 oclock, we saw a church built of logs one story high, door in the end, one windo in the front, were very much gratifyed by seeing the steam boats coming up the river, they sounded like a forge hammer in a still morning, going between the Mt’s it resounded from hill to hill I enjoyed it very much. We saw a man diging potatoes

16th Wensday, traveled through mud enough, thr 9 miles down the river then crossed the Little Beaver then up a long hill now we are in Ohio, the far famed Ohio the farms look like liveing, the houses too, for really I have seen some of the wildest and most broken land that I ever saw, came through a little ville called Calcuta, one New Lisbon a very smart handsome town, it has a market and part is paved, have seen some most beautiful farms and houses, and fine buck eys, boys and girls, 32 miles put up at a farmers house first time we have staid at a private house since we left our native state, every thing looks like prosperity about them

17th When we started the lady brought me a pail of apples and told me to put them in the waggon to eat, did so, came thanked her and started, came through Hanover, a fine village, Augusta Pekin, Lodi, Troy, and Waynesburg and now we are put up at Magnolia a beatiful name sure we traviled through the most

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levil contry today we have since we have started and it is the most beaufull than I ever saw that is certain Our waggon has been honoured with high names, in Penn, it was called a Barouch in Ohio it has been called a buggy

18th came through Sandyville, crossed Sandy creek, or rather forded it is quite a large stream, Boliver quite a village Sugarcrick falls a small vill Winesberg a very handsome village, now in Berlin 30 mls it has been very cold, some say as cold as it was last winter, it certainly has been cold enough

19th came through Millersburg the county town of Holms Co and Danville in Knox County and put up in a log house which presents all the comforts and many of the elegancies of life we are now sitting in a large room with a large fire on the hearth which is very pleasant as it is quite cold, it has two beds which look very nice, two tables two looking glasses, a beaurow and cubboard, a map of the U.S.A. with some other pictures, three very pretty behaved children, and more than all I have seen two Bibles lying upon the window which are shaded with white curtains with fringe at the bottom, and altogether I think it is a comfortable and happy abode. It is saturday evening, in the log house, the first one I ever ate in, it has also a clock and some pots of flowers

20th Sabbath morning rode eleven miles to Mont Vernon, found L. Nicolas and family all well, M.V. is most beautifully situated, on a little rising ground, is the county seat of Knok and is a beautiful town, saw Moses Drake and a George a nephew of his

21 left Mr. V. came 6 miles to Mr Wolfs took dinner and came 10 miles to Mf Yauger’s a near neighbor of Fithen’s, we staid at Y’s and came hear and spent the evening I guess we had an old fashioned time of it.

Tuesday 29 can not afoord to write every day, now I have got here and find so much to talk about, Stephen has been here, have spent the time very pleasant went to Mahlon Rinnan’s Wm Woodruf Mrs Yauger and Father myself

Wednesday 30th went to the funeral of Old Mr Reinhart, took Leydid Rein with us, found we were in the midst of N.J. folks, saw the Loveridges and many others. if they hear the word N J all eys turn to the spot from whence it comes and when they find we are fresh from there we are their friends and they ours immediately. It is some times rather confusing to be the centre of all eys, we all know how strangers are gazed at in many places but more especially here where many are from N.J they look at us as friends and their buckey neighbors wish to see the Jersey neighbors Jersey friends

[Friday, December 2?] I think if Susan P Crane were here we should be too full of fun Came from M Rinnans on Thurs

The next evening after our arrival Stephen came in with a young man from Mt Olive NJ, by the name of McWilliams, although we had never seen each other we were soon acquainted, found him very pleasant.

Saturday Decemb 3rd McWms left here (Fithen’s in Hiliar township) with the intention of starting for NJ on Monday, he carries a letter for me to my home

Sabbath 4th went to meeting in a logbo[use] the minister’s name was Frey, now for his dress (his sermon was quite good) his coat was made of the coarsest kind of English sarcension but if it had been whole it would have done well enough but it was not only shabby according to our defination of the word, but it was ragged, and patched, the fringes hung three inches from the sleeves (I think) I thought of my Brothers as I sat and looked at him, I thought if they had as ragged a coat to were they would have good reason to complain of it, and I also thought if they could only see him they would never complain of their clothes again unless they have more season than they have ever had yet he had an old fashioned stock on with out a collar, his pantaloons were of Enlish fustian they looked fady enough they look far worse than Wms that he wore last winter to school

Monday 5th very stormy rains all the time allmost, I do not think McWms will start today.

I think the young people do not pride themselves upon their dress much here, some go to meeting with their red warmer on, this you will not understand untill it is explain but some dress very well, but I think they are not respected by the quality of their clothes.

24th was invited to Mf Boners to eat roast turkey, have been at Mf Loveridges and in that neighborhood for three weeks, have been out to parties and visiting and to Church nearly every day or evening29 have had fine times

went to the Methodist Church last Sabbath to love feast Class meeting and Communion, was quite interested, in the evening went to prayr meeing to Mf Evanses, had a good meeting thought if Brother F were here he would like it, there were three young men that took part in it, they have some fine young people in this place

Monday Jan 2nd Father and I came from Mf Loveridges to Fithens we rode 16 miles on horse
Thomas Cole, *Landscape*, 1825. Cole came from England to Philadelphia in 1818 and also lived in Steubenville, Ohio. This painting, perhaps the last he made on the frontier, helped establish Cole as a visionary who was among the first to celebrate America’s disappearing wild beauty. (Minneapolis Institute of Arts)

I have one of the prettiest riding colts that I ever rode she is 3 years old and is a first rate traveler. Father got her of M^F^ Evans.

I got quite an extensive acquaintance in that neighborhood I think the state of cultivation is much like ours, it is about three miles from Mount Vernon I think the manners of the young people are very much like ours, and I felt quite at home amongst them they see to pay a good deal of respect to strangers I have been to singing school and literary school with them

We are now at Fithens and are going to start for Dark County in an hour or two.

Thursday 5th left Fithens at 12 o’clock and traveled 25 miles on horse back, we came through Centerburg, a small burg, next Sunbury in Deaware Co, this is quite a village the buildings are new and handsome many of them, then Berkshire a small village with a Church and Schoolhouse in it, then we came to Delaware town the County town of Delaware and put up for the night

Again I have bid adieu to all my friends (my Father excepted) and now we are with entire strangers that we have never heard of before, but what of that, they are human beings as well as ourselves

Lady Lightfoot (that is my horse) is a first rate traveler, she rides very easy, she carries me along nicely Deaware is a beautiful town, the buildings are handsome and large

[January] 6th we left Delaware traveled through Marysville the Co seat of Union it is a new village but quite large, then through Lewisburg a small
Russell Smith, *Looking Up River from Coal Hill over Ormsby's Farm*, 1833-1834. On her return across Pennsylvania, Corwin traveled by steamboat, making travel easier and more “picturesque.” Russell Smith spent much of his life in the Pittsburgh area, and his painting suggests a stylistic bridge to awe-inspiring yet more realistic images of the mid-century, especially those by Joseph Woodwell and cohorts in Western Pennsylvania. (Carnegie Museum of Art)

burg, and so on near to Urbana the County seat of Champaign, we came to David Trimmer's and put up, Lightfoot has done well, & traveled well, only she wanted to lay down when she went into the water to drink, she did lie down once and I had no whip, and would not get off and I thought she would role over and I scampered off and Father made her get up, and I got a whip and got on her again, I think she will not serve me that trick again, for I will carry a whip hereafter, I think she has done very well considering her age, she is not four years old yet, we have traveled about 40 miles today

Saturday 7th it is raining and we are stayin, at Mr Trimmers

The land we traveled over yesterday, and day before was very level, more so than any I have ever been over for the distance

8th Sunday the rain has turned to snow, and has continued nearly all day the snow is several inches deep, the Sleights might run nicely

9th we left D Trimmer's and came through Urbana, it is a very pretty town, then Westville a small ville the roads are very bad, it haveing snowed on the mud they both tread up together about half frozen, traveled 30 miles, and put up at a private house two miles from Troy

10th Tuesday came through Troy, the county seat of Miami, a pretty town, and New Harrison a small ville, and came to Greenville the Co seat of Dark, found
Harrison's folks traveled 27 miles, the Towns in this Western World are quite handsome. I believe the County seat is the only town in the Co, the vilages are very small.

13 Friday went from Hs to H. Byrums 9 miles and stayed until Monday then came to Harrison's again attended Church in a log Church preachers name is Springer the house crowded to a jam.

17 Tuesday left Hs and traveled 34 miles came through Eaton and stoped at Camden, I rode Father's horse 20 miles it does not ride as easily as mine.

18 came through Somerville quite a Western Ville, and Hamilton a very beautiful town, Father thinks it is larger than Morris Town, arrived at Uncle D's in Cincinnati about dusk muddy enough and tired enough too for we came 40 miles through the mud, mud, mud.

Mary stayed with her uncle and aunt in Cincinnati from January 18 to July 30, 1843, except for a brief excursion to Dayton in late June. She continued making daily entries in her diary during her first several days in Cincinnati, but as the novelty of her surroundings wore off, the entries became shorter and less frequent. As she settled into a routine, she wrote in her diary only once or twice a week. Usually she made an entry on Sunday, after returning home from church.

Church-going was apparently Mary's main social activity while in Cincinnati. A devout Presbyterian, she frequently heard sermons from Lyman Beecher, minister in the Second Presbyterian Church, one of the most influential Presbyterian clergymen in the West, and father of the famous Henry Ward Beecher. On Sundays, Mary often went to church twice a day, and during her stay she attended the services of several Protestant denominations, including the Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist. She even attended a Jewish service; although the ceremony was profoundly alien to her, she watched and reported what she saw with rather more detachment than she might expect.

Saturday Feb 4th went this morning to the Jews meeting I cannot tell what the services were except reading from parchment, for I could not understand anything as it was all in Hebrew, there was so little solemnity manifested I could not think much prayer or worship, the Synagogue is what we would call a small Church with a gallery across one end (the ladies all sitting in it while the gentlemen sit below stairs) where we would have the pulpit they have a closet for their parchments they have several roles each in a separate cover made for the purpose, there is a door or rather two doors drawn together before the closet and a damask curtain drawn in front of that, they ascend 3 steps to get to it and then all is surrounded by a low kind of fence with door or gates to open and shut, when we went in the priest was reading from parchment, he read a while and finally it was put into its cover of damask, the priest took it in his arms and started to the closet to deposit it, followed by the others singing (I believe) as they went, they would take one step and the stand awhile and then step again and soon, as they went the men nearest it would touch it, some with their hand and some with their scarfs and then kiss them, one kissed the cover instead of his hand, then men have scarfs on drawn over their sholders, some had them drawn into a string about their necks, and others had them reach down to their heels, some were silk, some delain, and I believe some were woolen, the priest was drest in a black silk dress made like a ladies houdress with a yoak and bishops sleeves, had gater boots on his feet a low crowned hat on his head, the men all keep their hats on during service there was a man came in and took his hat off but they told him to put it on, he did so, he was not a Jew. Imagine a Church full of men with their hats on and scarfs over their sholders.

While in Dayton, Mary attended a Roman Catholic mass. Her response to the service, as we might expect, was hostile. That she made the visit at all is nonetheless remarkable, since the early 1840s were peak years of anti-Catholic sentiment throughout the United States.

[July] 24th Sunday went to the Roman church this morning. the first of the priests performances was to come from a room behind the pulpit accompanied by 2 boys of (perhaps) fourteen and kneel before the pulpit and then (I believe) he went back when he came out again one of the boys carried a little bucket of holy water and the priest had a something resembling a child's rattle I suppos it full of holes, he dipped it into the water and sprinkled the whole congregation with the water then they went back and came again with four boys and six young men I suppose they are all intended for priests. there was such a multiplicity of kneeling and bowing I think too tedious and senseless to mention. then he lectured a short time from a passage in Math. but the sum and substance was "do good works" and "the church teaches what they are" "attend mass on the Sabbath and on the holy days fast days &c &c &c do good to their neighbors when they are sick and so on." after he was done with that came a multiplicity of kneelings again the organ going the while then the priest took the sacrament after flourishing his hands over the cup and making maniac like motions over it he drank all there was in the cup and had it filled twice and drank it all yet. then he wiped the cup out and covered it up and said something (I suppose in latin) I could not understand and then the meeting was broken up I believe they had black dresses on and white ones over them the priests white dres was
July 30th Left Cincinatti in a steam bot for home passed some pretty little villages and some beautfull scenery. the everlasting wood crowned hills of Ohio on the one side interspersed with cultivated vales and hillocks, with here and there a white house peeping from behind the trees, and on the other the dark green foliage of the wood covered hills of Kentucky interspersed with here and there a field or farm of cultivated land, presents all together a most beautiful picture of rural scenery. hundreds of miles from home no friend near surrounded by strange faces plunging up the majestic Ohio, looking upon the free and noble independent industrious Ohio and the dependent idle slave holding state of Kentuck all at the same time: is it not enough to fill one’s mind for a time so that it cannot feel altogether lonely or dissolate! I guess so. Oh! tell me not of Italian skies while I have American ones before me, Sky, pink with rays of the sun Earth covered with her green carpet and burden of trees and vegetation, and water reflecting the brilliant rays if a setting sun high hills rising far above the river covered with green, what more need we to forme a lovely scene

31st this morning just after sunrise we stoped a short time at Portsmouth, it is situated on the rivers bank which rises pretty high just there, it presents a beautiful view to the river! on the other side of the river which is Kentuck, the hills rise very high above the river, so we have a beautiful town on the one side and noble hills on the other; we have met several boats today which look very fine. left Kentucky shore for Virginia just before noon

August 1st the scenery is very much as it was yesterday which is fine. about noon today we overtook a boat which started the day before we did, she was aground on a shoal and we took her passengers on board about 6 & left her. I believe she is going back to Cin. this boat does not draw as much water as she does. we passed an island about sunset called Blannerhasset’s Island: on which Blannerhasset made a settlement many years ago, the Island contains 400 acres of land it is said; he was suspected of treachery to his country, and was arrested and his house burned. there is two on it now.

2nd I believe the passengers of the Martha were not as moral as those on the Clayton, for before they came we heard no profane language saw no card playing and were not offended by the fumes of alcohol, or segars; but since they came on we have had enough of all. I have heard so much of the immorality of a steamboat that I expected to see and hear more and worse than I had, it is thought that we have an excelent set of officers and hands, and a very good boat, and we have a very good company of passengers with a few exceptions, we see something of affectation in some of them but we let them go for what they will fetch.

we have got aground and have not moved since daylight [9 oclolck] but we are surrounded with fine scenery; they have sent all the gentlemen on shore in a flat boat and have got one by the side of the steam boat, on which they have put the frieght, (consisting of flower) and the ladies, nearly all, went onto it and now we go and now we have stoped to take the gentlemen on board, ho! ho! see them run, near a hundred of them scampering down the shore, now we are over the bar I think we shall go it. about sunset we passed a very pretty little village by the name of Moundsville, so named for the Indian mounds near it, one of which we saw as we passed, it was very high and regularly formed, a perfect mound there is just enough trees on it beautiful, we were on deck looking at it and the captain came up very kindly, to give us all the information he could about it; he said there were many curious things in it, there has been a passage dug through it and arched over, and there has been an entrance dug from the top (I believe) to the bottom and a cupolow built on the top of it and a pair of winding stairs from top to bottom. I think it a great curiosity. We arrived at Wheeling about nine oclocr at night where we disposed of most of our passengers, but have a very pleasant kind of family circle left yet

3rd this morning we passed by Steubenville which is (I think) the most romantic situation of any town we have passed, it is on the bank of the river with the mountains rising high behind it in different forms and hights, the tops of some of which are cultivated and built upon, and others are covered with a thick groth of trees, which makes a fine contrast. on the other side of the river the hills are very near the river in some places reaching to it, in others barely leaving room for a house and yard between them and the river, which space is very nicely filled with a pretty with a pretty white cottages with the high hills covered with their green trees, rising directly behind them. the scenery grows more and more grand as we ascend the river some times the hills come down to the river, and some times they seem to recede a little; only a very few rods, and sometimes they leave room for a small farms, if they are crowded and shaved very closely in some places where one would think there was scarce room for a farm there is a ville we have left Oo intirely for Penn.
In George Innes's *Lackawanna Valley*, 1854 — Corwin would have had such views on her train ride home — the pastoral ideal blends with the smoke and steel of industrialization. Trains and boats transformed the way people perceived the landscape, in some cases merging appreciation for the “pretty” with an increasing confidence in man's mastery of the environment.

4th last night about sunset we passed Freedom a village on the river surrounded by beautiful cultivated and uncultivated hills, which present a very beautiful appearance; they had a boat on the blocks which we had the pleasure of seeing launched, after dark we passed Raps town, which is call Economy; I wished to see it by day light, from the river, but did not, they cast anchor in the night and started in the morning, and we had a fine opportunity to see the scenery around Pittsburg as we came to it. I think it is the grandest sight we have had. the town with the surrounding hills and subberbs, the roads winding up the hills, and houses up the sides of the hills, and on the top of some of them, look fine, especially as it is a clear day. distance from Cin to Pitts 500 miles.

5th we spent yesterday in town & left at nine oclock last evening on a canal boat, and traveled all night. this morning we have a fine view of high craggy hills, deep declivities, cultivated knowls and ripling streams; what more do we want now this afternoon. we came through the tunnel it is about half a mil long and (is perhaps) two hundred feet under ground. now we are passing through the mountains, which I regret to lose sight of by dark. we have come through the rivers called Kiskiminetes, Honeywater and Boyalannah.

6th we arived at the foot of the mountains about five this morning, where we leave the canal bot and take the cars to cross the mountains in, Johnstown is at the foot where we start from in the car; we go 36 miles with rail roard half way up and half way down; there is five incline plains up and five down, where we
are drawn up and let down by ropes and pulley's one
is 32 hundred feet long. there is a tunnel where we
pass under the mountain

we took breakfast on the Mts one of the ropes to the
plain is made of wire twisted; it is nearly so large as
my wrist. the mountains [east of the mountains][24]

exceed any I every saw. one I observed covered with
stones so the trees could not find room to grow only
in some places; and from another I saw two rocks
running from top to bottom, standing high above the
earth all the way up, they were very thin, apparantly
but a few inches thick, they present a strange
appearance, in some places I see a very pretty farm
entirely surrounded with mountains, I[t] seems as
though it could never have been found until the

canal was surveyed. it appears astonishing how they
ever found the way for the canal between the Mts as
they have at this foot of the Mts[8] this side is a pretty
town called Holidaysburg where we leave the car and
take the canal again. this afternoon as we were sitting
on deck (as our custom is when the sun gets low) we
were coming through the Juniata river, the
mountains rose on either side, high, towering far up
in the air, in some places covered with stones so thick
that trees could find no footing, it made a contrast in
colarer the trees green and the beds of stone of
different coulers, after being surrounded by most
stupendous mountains for a time we emerged into a
roling space of country cultivated and settled upon it
was most beautiful in some places we will look ahead of
us and see two mountains slopeing down to a
point as if to make room for us, but an other will
stand at the gap raising it proud head as high as its
companions, but we get ahead of them by dodgeing and
going around them.

7th the scenery is as fine as ever there is more
cultivation as we go farther East that is the land is
more cultivated.

A little before tea we were on deck when Howard
Tucker brother of Mrs Cooper fell over board in the
lock, but Dr North being near at the time drew him
out without injury, we crossed the Susquehanna just
after sundown, the scene at the juncture of it and the
Juniata is more than can be described the moon was

shining brightly over us, a broad expance of water
around us, surrounded by high mountains at the foot
of which lay a prety vilage from which arose the fires
of a furnace for the manufactory of iron

the Susquehanna runs around a piece of land forming
an island containing three hund acres, of Duncans
Island is its name because it is owned by one by that
name, there is a house situated on the point of the
Island above the bridge which I think has the
prefference of any situations I ever saw, it has the river
in full view from two sides, then the bridge which is
near half a mile long, then the mountains across the
river towering high up into the air

8th last night we got into Harrisburg between ten
and eleven o'clock we staid on dock till after nine, the
canal run along side of the Susquehanna which is very
wide and shallow with high mountains on each side
on our right hand we had the river and beyond it the
mountains, on our left we had the road with high
towering mountains over it

this morning we took breakfast on the boat and left in
the cars for Philadelphia at seven where we arrived
about three, we came through several very pretty
towns, one was Mountjoy, one Enterprise another
Parkshugh and still another Peoli near where Gen
Wain fought once

last of all we arrived at P. tired enough, I think we
have seen some as pretty farms as need be

I thought the canal passed over rivers and roads
enough but the rail road passes over rivers, roads, and
canals oftener than I can tell. it goes over roads in
some places and under them in others, through hills in
some places and under them in others. it goes under a
hill which is cultivated, on the hill is a field and in it is
a rail way that's a fact

9th left Pa this morning crossed the Delaware in a
steam boat and took the cars, came through
Burlington, a very handsome town, with the river on
one side of it and the rail road through it.

Bordentown Snowhill, a little ville, and took the
steambot

came past Amboy, Elizabethport and Newbriton to
New York where I left all my company after one of
them had seen me safe on the boat for Jersey City. I
arrived safe in Newark just after sunset. the skie was
tinged with the hues of the setting sun most
beautifully this morning it rained very hard. it cleared
away in the after noon I thought if the skie did frown
upon us this morning it smiled this evening. I have
been told that in coming from Pa to N.J. or N.Y. we
cross the poorest part of N.J. but and perhaps we do,
but they can raise melons and peaches at all events,
A Young Woman's Vision of Western Pennsylvania

and it is a pretty place to travel through. we could see the peach orchards and the melon patches which looked very tempting to us, and some beautiful buildings.

the distance from Pittsburg to Philadelphia is said to be four hundred miles, and from Pa to N.Y. ninety five

10th left N in the cars for home came to Morristown where I took the stage and arrived at home in safety

1 The diary of Mary Corwin, 1842-1843, along with the diary of Francis Theodore Byram and Mary Ann Corwin Byram, 1845, was recently discovered by the editor. The diaries and related documents (see notes 15 and 16 below) are currently in his possession. Copies are in the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania; for accounts of others travelling this route, see the “Selective Bibliography of Travel and Description in Western Pennsylvania, 1748-1830,” in John W. Harpster, ed., Crossroads: Descriptions of Western Pennsylvania, 1720-1829 [originally published as Pen Pictures of Early Western Pennsylvania, (Pittsburgh, 1938)], 299-327.

2 Comparable accounts of travel in Ohio in this period available in print include William C. Armstrong, ed., A Journey from New Jersey to Ohio (Morrison, Ill., 1929), which is the diary of Elizabeth Lundy Willson, a Quaker woman who travelled with her family by wagon; The Diary of Lucy Ann Highbee (privately printed, Cleveland, 1924), the journal of a trip from Trenton, New Jersey, to Ohio via Saratoga and Niagara; and Le Roy P. Graf, ed., “The Journal of a Vermont Man in Ohio,” Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly60 (1951), 175-199, which covers the period 1836-1842.

3 William Gilpin, An Essay on Picturesque Travel (London, 1792); Gilpin’s aesthetic ideas were not the only ones to influence the American response to the natural landscape. Americans were also influenced by the aesthetic of romanticism, a theory that emphasized the association of ideas or experiences with an object as the principle basis of aesthetic judgment, popularized by the Scottish writer Archibald Alison in his Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1790); on the influence of Alison, see Ralph N. Miller, “Thomas Cole and Alison’s Essay on Taste,” New York History 37 (1956), 281-299; Americans were also profoundly influenced by the older aesthetic of the sublime, which was most fully formulated in Edmund Burke’s A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757). The latter most clearly shaped American perceptions of what contemporaries viewed as the most “awesome” spectacles of nature like Niagara Falls and Virginia’s Natural Bridge.

4 For examples of eighteenth-century travellers’ concern with settlement and improvement, see Harpster, ed., Crossroads; the best brief treatment of Americans’ view of nature in the 1830s and ’40s is Perry Miller, “Nature and the National Ego,” in Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 204-216; on the rise of the picturesque tour, see Bruce Robertson, “The Picturesque Traveler in America,” in Edward J. Nygren, ed., Views and Visions: American Landscape before 1830 (Washington, D.C., 1986), 189-211.


7 For other examples of the gradual awakening of interest in the natural landscape of Western Pennsylvania, see the travel accounts of Thaddeus M. Harris (1803), Joshua Gilpin (1809), John Melish (1810), and Sarah Hastings (1811), collected in Harpster, ed., Crossroads, 234-258.

8 Diary, Jan. 18, 1843.

9 Diary, Nov. 12, Nov. 5, 1842.

10 Diary, Nov. 15, Nov. 5, 1842.

11 Diary, Aug. 3, 1843; July 30, 1843.

12 Diary, Aug. 6-7, 1843.

13 Diary, Aug. 8, 1843.

14 Helen Byram Bray, Memorandum on the Diary of Mary Ann Corwin, c. 1935.

15 The Diary of Mary Ann Corwin Byram and Francis Theodore Byram, April 22-May 27, 1845, kept jointly, is a record of their trip from Succasunna to Dayton, almost all by boat on the Hudson, the Erie Canal, Lake Erie, and by canal up the Maumee River to Fort Wayne, the St. Mary’s River to St. Mary’s, and from St. Mary’s to Dayton.

16 This title, which is in Mary’s hand, was probably added months or years later. Mary was actually 22 when she began her trip.

17 This entry describes the events of Nov. 2.

18 The words “near Pine grove” are written vertically in the margin beside this paragraph.

19 This sentence is written between the lines in the middle of the entry for Nov. 11. Since it appears to have been an afterthought with no connection to any other part of the day’s entry, it has been placed at the end.

20 Dec. 24, 1842 was Mary’s 23rd birthday.

21 This entry was apparently written on Jan. 16 or 17.

22 Another traveller’s account that illustrates anti-Catholic sentiment in Ohio and the Old Northwest during this period is James Leander Scott, A Journey of a Missionary Tour through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan (Providence, R.I., 1843), the memoir of a Seventh-Day Baptist missionary who sought to convert Catholics; on the other side, see “Bishop Purcell’s Journal,” Catholic Historical Review 5 (1919-1920), 239-258, the diary kept by John Baptist Purcell, Catholic bishop of Ohio, on a trip through his diocese, commenting on the anti-Catholic bigotry of the day.

23 The time is written in above “daylight,” apparently as a correction. It has been inserted into the text for clarity.

24 Written in above “mountains” in the text. It has been inserted into the text for clarity.