DIARY OF ANNE POWELL OF HER VOYAGE FROM MONTREAL TO DETROIT WITH HER BROTHER W.D. POWELL IN THE YEAR 1789
When I talked of keeping a journal from Montreal to Detroit I was not aware of the difficulties attending the journey. I expected it would be tedious and thought writing would be a very pleasant employment, and so it might have proved had it been more enjoyable but the opportunities of writing were few that I found it would be impossible to keep a journal with any degree of regularity so left it wholly alone. I trusted to my memory (which never deserved such a compliment) for recollecting whatever was worth communication.

Left Montreal on the 11th of May with a large party of our friends who paid us the compliment of seeing us the first stage where we took a farewell dinner & all the party, except Mr. Clarke, left us. It was a melancholy parting scene, I was the person most interested in it, I felt it more from sympathy than any real sorrow I felt all whom I was much attached to were going with me but on these occasions trying to catch I took the infection & I felt melancholy for the I have no particular friends & had received many civilities from the people of Montreal & I felt a general regret at bidding them adieu. Mr. Clarke stole off in the morning before me.
were up, but an honest German lad, whom my son had discharged, followed us to do himself a think. I put a tray at parting the, I cannot say exactly from what sentiment it flow'd, with his eyes full of tears he came into the room and kissed all the children round him, dashing away his tears, he attempted to thank Master for past kindness, but the poor fellow's voice, as he caught his brother's hand and kissed it to his lips, at a look at my sister & me, I suppose he said no sentence in our face, he too our extended hands & wear on each & with blessing that I am convalescent, poor from his heart bad no advice.

We now went to our boat; one was filled up with an order to protect us from the weather. I had the family. Bedding was well filled, eighteen persons in all, I imagined, since we had not much room, as it happened. That was no consequence, it was cold on the water & we were glad to cut close. This mode of travelling was very tedious, for we were obliged to keep close along shore and go on very slow. The first night we stopped at the house of a Halibut, and I turned out with his family to give us the best room where we spread our beds & slept in peace, contented in our path looking at the Canadian family who were eating their supper, saying their prayers. Carnivals all at the same time. The next day we worked hard the whole day, the boats are obliged to be very busy when the salt, the horses being too strong to pass, there were the first rapids, of any consequence. We had seen, perhaps, not understand what I mean by a Rapid, it is where the waters fall swiftly over large rocks, one of which forms a raised land half a bed of hair, there is no descent. The grandeur of the water when thrown into agitation after a tempest so smooth to it, we breakfasted at the house of a man who kept the lock & dispatched us, whom a message to a W. Beane who lived at the distance of a few miles with whom we had promised to dine. I believe I have never mentioned MP, before, he is to be our fellow traveller, I will now let you who he is. W. MP was a Clerk of my brothers, a sensible, well disposed young man, who lost his parents early, and was wards of his little fortune by his guardian, when my brother gave up business, he had no further occasion for a Clerk. W. MP was himself without friends or pretension, he preferred following the fortune of his own friends to being left at Montreal & readily embraced an offer of making one of our party to Detroit. As soon as W. Beane heard of our arrival, a coach was dispatched for the ladies, a saddle horse for MP, and a wagon for the children and servants, W. MP was unwilling to trust the little girls out of his sight, so we each took one on our dogs, but went only a little way, when the coach broke down, fortunately none of us were hurt, my brother had rode on, and we were a good deal displeased how to do, I proposed getting into the wagon, but my sister would not suffer her or not the infant in it, there was no other alternative, than walking and letting the servants carry the baby till the man could go home for another coach, the sun had set, the road dirty, our carriages, to me, was just the same as another so up I mounted and a very pleasant ride I had, with a fine view of the country. W. MP was heartily satisfied before the coach met him, the Captain welcomed the goods we got at 90. We set all to rights in the evening, we went on ten miles farther to a public house where we were tormented with Fleas & Dirt. We then resolved not to stop.
good flow of spirits keeps me up above the common vibrations of life, for people, believe, bear them with more temper but are not too great for the strength of my mind would soon come to the grave. — The night following that which we passed on board, as we reached the house of an old servant of Mr. Wheelwright, the children were delighted to see her, as I was well pleased with the opportunity of observing a new scene of domestic life. Nancy it seems had married a seabeck soldier who had a small lot of land where they immediately went to live and cultivated it with such success that in a few years they were off. In each farm house to which they were sent, and were obliged to live some time in a small temporary log house with consisted of only one room, in which was a very neat bed where a lovely infant of 3 months old lay crowing and laughing; a half a large door was on one side, on the other all the necessary articles for a family everything perfectly clean. Nancy went to the door and brought in two more fine children. V presented them to her the mistress, we asked her if she was happy, she said yes perfectly so, she worked hard, but it was for herself and her children, her husband took care of the farm and she of the family, and at their leisure hours she wove cloth and made little shirts for their neighbours for work well paid. Every year they expected to do better and better, small as this place was chose to stay all night. Still, in P. was giving orders for arranging the kids, by brother, I walked out to enjoy a very fine evening, the bank of the river was very high and woody, the moon shone bright. The trees, some Indians were on the water taking fish with harpoons, a mode of fishing I had never seen before. They made small fires in their canoes which attract the fish to the surface of the water. When they can, by the light of the fire to strike them.
that we ventured to stop out and I liked it so well that I regretted we had ever gone into a house. It is the pleasantest vagabond life you can imagine. We slept above this when a large fire was instantly made & we were prepared, while we were taking it the man erected a tent and the sails of the boats were seen for the fire with blankets for two and round the sides, in a few minutes they made a place large enough to spread all our beds in, where we slept with as much comfort as I ever did in any chambers in my life. It was our own fault if we did not cheer a fine situation to entertain, you can clearly conceive a more beautiful scene than was one night exhibited, the moon had piled up thoughts of rice for a fire before our tent till they had made a bonfire, in the course of the evening it spread more than had a smile, the ground was covered with dry grass that wasn't like so many lamps, with the fire running up high. trees, the whole represents the most beautiful illumination you can possibly form an idea of, the children were all in scarves running about like so many roaches, and the sailors were in a state near enough for us to hear them singing & laughing. We had heard just before we left Major General's recovery, so, if you please, you may set down all this as rejoicing on that account. The doubt whether it one occurred to our minds, yet we are very loyal people. On the tenth day we reach Kingston in a small hug, town stands in a beautiful bay at the foot of lake Ontario, the moment we reached a whole number of people came down to welcome us, a gentleman in his hurry to hand out the ladies bowed one of the children into the boat he was instantly taken out, but that did not save his mother from a severe fright. we went to the house of Mr. Gower, a young bachelor who
when very politely begged we would consider it as our own, here we
staid 7 days & then sailed with a fair wind for Niagara. At that
place we were overtaken by two officers going to Niagara & the officer to Detroit.
Mr. McCallum has been introduced to us at Montreal. We called on him soon
after, he both expressed himself pleased with joining our party.
Mr. & Mrs. Hamilton & Mr. & Mrs. M'Nab, also called. The latter
proposed to go with us. They then went to Montreal. Mr. M'Nab had
promised his brother to make him to visit the lake, but in a little time
pointed to another place, not to visit. My brother had also given a package to another
Nanaimo lady. Mr. & Mrs. Harrow who commanded a ship on the lake were
visited in a small cabin where there were only 4 Bibles. When the beds were put down, at night, everyone removed
in the spot they slept in, for there was no moving
but by general consent, one night after we woke
all laid down and began to be composed.
Mr. P. saw one of her maids standing where she
had made the children's bed. I asked her why
she stood there? The poor girl, who speaks
Spanish English, answered, "I am making a
Mam.", sure enough she was busy in
beyond a possibility of getting out without
assistance.

I heard a laugh amongst the gentle
men, who were divided from us by a blanket
shadow, I suppose they were graced too.

Lake Ontario is 200 miles over, we were 4 days
rowing it we were certainly a very good humor a
lot of people for no one complained. I even rejoiced
to arrive at Niagara, the fort is by no means pleasantly
situated, it is built close upon the lake which gains upon
it so fast that in a few years more they must be overflowed.
There however, we passed some days very agreeably at the
house of Mr. Hamilton a sensible worthy & agreeable
man. Mr. H. is an amiable sweet little woman. I
regretted very much she did not live at Detroit instead
of Niagara. He received the most polite attention from
Col. Hunter the commanding officer & all his officers.
Mr. P. Fitzgerald had been some time at Niagara.
Before us, I was making excursions among the Indians
whom society he seems particularly fond. Joseph Brant
a celebrated Indian chief lives in that neighborhood.
Edward had spent some days at his house & seemed glad
to with his visit. Brant returned to Niagara with his order.
He was the host & indeed the only, savage I ever heard about.
with, as the party was very large he was at too great a distance
for me to hear his conversation & was by no means pleased
with his books. These people pay great respect to rank with
them it is only obtained by service. they all received
for the house of one Chief to that of another. I entertained him
in dancing which is the greatest compliment they can pay.
Shout on our way was at Niagara we made so many agreeable
acquaintances we were sorry to leave them. Several gen-
lemen offered to escort us to Fort Erie, which made the
journey very chearful. Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Hamilton of the En-
gineers, Mr. Robertson of the 60, Mr. M'Nab with Capt.
Harrow Mr. Smith & my brother, we was in the boat with us.
To the landing which is 8 miles from the Fort. There the
Kips
comes impossible, & all the luggage is drawn up a steep hill in a carriage, a machine I never saw before. We walked up the hill and were conducted to a good garden with a

of the river runs out into a point. It seems to divide the

cell, which would otherwise be quite across the river, into

of a great extent, I believe no mind can form an idea of

university of the Body of Water or the rapidity with

it hurried down, of the height you may which to

foot, the water has all appearance of a glistening

on it reaches the bottom, the spray rose like light

summer clouds, when the rays of the sun are refracted

and they form innumerable rainbows, but the sun was

not in a situation to show this effect when we were there.

one thing I could get no one to explain to me which to the

willows of the river at the bottom of the fall it is smooth as

lake for half a mile, deep & narrow, the banks very high

with trees hanging over them. I was never before sensible

of the full power of scenery, nor did I suppose the eye could

carry to the mind such strong emotions of pleasure,

wonder & solemnity. For a time every other impression

erased from my memory, had I been left to myself I am con-

vinced I should not have thought of moving whilst there

was light to distinguish objects. With reluctance I at-

last attended to the proposal of going on, determining how-

ever, in my own mind, that when Fort Storer I would

spend of my time I stay here a day or two at least.

As we reached Fort Storer I was only at the distance of a pleasant walk, we all chose to go on foot; we were received there by Mr. For-

ter of the fort, one of the most elegant young men I ever

saw, here we were extremely well accommodated. I much

pleased with the house & gardens, I never saw a situation

where retirement so many charms. The next day we went in a Batheau to Fort Erie, where we arrived when we found the commanding officer, Mr. Boyd was gone in a

party.
party with Mr. Edward W. Brisbane to the other side of the river where the Indians were holding a council. The gentlemen all returned in the evening very much pleased with the entertainment that they proposed our going over with them the next day we very readily agreed to it.

I thought it a peculiar piece of good fortune having an opportunity of seeing a member of the most respectable of the people collect together, we reached the spot before the council was met, and as we went to it past several of the chief at their toilet, they sat upon the ground with the most profound gravity, helping themselves by a small looking-glass, for they are very exact in hanging on their ornaments, and not a little whimiscal, I am told that one of these fellows will be an hour or two painting his face when any one else would think it sufficiently done. If some new coat will strike him, he will put it all off again. The women dress with more simplicity at least all that I have seen, but at this meeting there were not many of the fair sex, only some Squaws who sat in council & a few young ones to dress their provisions for their great men, like those of our world, like regal cows with a good dinner after spreading their carpers for the good of their country. Some women we saw employed in taking small frogs out of the river in a basket a gentleman of our party took the basket from one of them & attempted to take the fish as she did, but failing they laughed heartily at his want of dexterity, one young Squaw set in a tent wearing a kind of worsted garter over it, said with pride, I suppose she was a lady of distinction, for her ears were bored in four different places with earrings in them all, she would not speak English but seemed to understand what we said to her, a gentle introduced MELYS to her as White Squaw, begging she would go on with her work as we wish'd to see her, it was done, she complied immediately with great dignity, taking no more notice of us than if we were Peoos, a proof of her good breeding. We then went up a steep bank to a very beautiful spot, the tall trees were in full leaf & the ground was covered with wild flowers, we were seated on a log in the centre where we could see all that passed.

Upward of 200 Chiefs were soon assembled & seated on proper stools, they were the delegates of six nations.

Each tribe formed a circle of trees, their faces towards each other, they never changed their places but sat only on the grass old as they liked. The speaker of each tribe stood with his back against the tree. The women walked only one with great solemnity & seated themselves behind the men they were wholly covered with their blankets & I caught not by the sight of ornaments either to attract or frighten the other sex, for I cannot determine whether the men mean to make themselves charming or horrible by the pains they take with their persons. On seeing the respectable band of that nation I struck with the different opinions of mankind in England when a man grows envious his talents are obscured by age the wise decide upon his character by calling him an old woman; on the banks of Lake Erie a woman becomes respectable as she grows old, I suppose the best compliment you can pay a young girl is saying she is as wise as an old woman, a good trait of savage understanding, these ladies preserve a modest silence in the debates of fear.
of Indian ladies whose figure, as they approached us, they are remarkably tall and finely made and walk with a degree of grace and dignity that you can have no idea of. I declare our ladies look'd quite insignificant by them. One man call'd to my mind some of Homer's poet heroes, one of the gentlemen told me he was a chief of great distinction, but he spoke English. If I pleased he would be introduced to me, and some curiosity to see how the chief of the sea otters would pay his compliments but little expected the elegance with which he addressed me, the grace of his walk, nor their more graceful than the chief of the village. We spoke English with all the compliments that were paid him in very polite manners. He was not only the handsomest but the best dressed man I saw. I will endeavor to describe him. His person is tall, fine, not so to imagine his features regular and handsome, with a countenance of much softness, his complexion not disagreeably dark. I really believe he was a man at ease, as it appeared perfectly calm without pain, his head was shaved off except a little on the top of his head to fasten his ornaments to. The head was painted a bright glowing red, round his forehead was fastened a fillet of highly polished ornamented silver, from the last temple hung two large strips of black velvet, covered with silver brooches. On top of his head was tied a long white boa tail feather, which bow'd to the wind as did a black one in each ear, a pair of immense ear-rings that hung below his shoulders, in my opinion very handsome. I must confess somewhat fantastical. His dress was a skirt of colored calico, the neck and shoulders covered with silver brooches, placed so thick as to have the appearance of a very rich net, his sleeves much like those the ladies wore when I left England. Judging about the arm with a broad bracelet of silver, highly polished and engraved with the arms of England, four smaller bracelets of the same kind about his wrists and arms, round his waist was a handkerchief of very dark colored stuff lined with scarlet, which fell almost to his knees. One part of it he generally drew over his left arm, which had a very graceful effect when he moved his legs were covered with blue cloth hose that met neatly with an ornamented garter bound below the knee. I know not what kind of a being your imagination will represent to your mind, I sincerely declare that all the Indians I ever saw in my life, do not suppose they were all dresses in the same taste. Their clothes are not all cut to the same pattern like the women of England. Our Indian dresses according to their own fancy, you see no two alike, their faces are all differently painted, some of them wear their hair cut in a strange manner, others shave it entirely off. One old man described me extremely, he was dreid in a feathered coat richly embroidered that must have been made at least half a century, with a waistcoat of the same that reach'd halfway down his thigh, no vest or breeches, but blue cloth stockings, as he stated about more.
more than the rest, I conclude he was particularly pleased with himself; they told me he was a Chief of distinction, we only stood to hear two speakers, this made with great gravity, no action, making frequent pauses for a hum of applause. Lord Edward, the Brisbane & Mr. McMurphy remained with them all night. We were entertained with dancing, an amusement not calculated for women to see. We were detained several days in Niagara by a contrary wind, on the fourth of June, while we were drinking the things health, the good loyal subjects, the wind changed, and we were hurried on board, we were better accommodated than when we crossed Lake Ontario, for the weather was so fine that the gente all slept upon deck. Lake Erie is 580 miles over, we were five days on our passage, the River Detroit divides Lake Erie from Lake St. Clair, which is again divided by a small river, from Lake Huron, the Head of Lake Erie. The entrance unto the river Detroit is unanimously beautiful, whilst we were making up the river, a perfect storm of rain, thunders drove us all into the cabin & gave us a thorough wetting afterward when we went on shore.

The fort lies about half way up the river, which is 18 miles in length, in drawing the lines between the British & American possessions, this fort was left within these lines, a new town is now to be built on the other side of the river, where the courts are held and where my Brother reside. As soon as we reached the shore several gentlemen came on board, they had agreed upon a house for us, till my Brother could meet one that would suit them. So we found ourselves at home immediately. We were several weeks at the Fort which gave us an opportunity of making a little acquaintance with the inhabitants, the ladies invited us on July 15th. The weather was boiling hot, what do you think of walking, when when the thermometer is above 90, it was as high as 95 the morning we were returning on visits, Mr. P. B. spent the chief part of our time in one chamber with no other covering than a sheet & a nightcap. We found all the people extremely civil and obliging, in point of society we could not exact much, it depends altogether on the Military, an agreeable regiment makes the place gay, the boys, which we found then on our arrival was a corps that would improve almost every society, the loss of it has made the place extremely dull. We got the present key in a disadvantageous light, which it cannot bear. While we were in the Fort several parties were made for us, one very agreeable one by the boys, to an island a little way up the river. Our party was divided into five boats, one held the music, in each of the others were five ladies & as many gentlemen as it could hold, Lord Edward & his friend arrived at time enough to join us, they went round the lake.
Lake by land to see some Indian settlements, we were highly pleased with their paint, &c. Eew. spekn in raptures of the Indian hospitality. He told me one instance of it which is so refined that I would reflect honor on the most polished people. By some means or other the gentlemen lost their provisions and were entirely without bread in a place where they could get none. Some Indaw travelled with them and had one loaf which they offered his ship, but he would not accept it. The Indians gave them to understand that they could do without it, it was of no consequence to them, the gentlemen still refused, the Indians then disappeared and left the loaf of bread in the road where the travellers must pass if they were seen no more. Our party at the island proved very pleasant, which kind of parties Aborn do, the day was fine, the company cheerful, the band delightful, we walked some time in a shady part of the island, then we were led to a bowser where the table was spread for dinner, everything here is upon a grand scale, do not suppose we dined on little bits of bread. This was made of forest trees, the grove in a circle & it was closed by filling up the space with small trees & bushes which being fresh out you could not see where they were put together. The bowser was the whole height of the trees. The closed grove to which the boat was placed without played while we were at dinner. We were bidden home in the evening by the appearance of a Thunder Storm, it was the most beautiful sight ever I remember to have seen, the clouds & collected about the setting sun & the vivid lightning was dazzling in a thousand directions from it, you can form no idea from anything you have seen of what the lightning is in this country. These ladies I believe are the nurseries of Thunder Storms, what you see are only stragglers that lose their strength before they reach you. I had the pleasure of being on the water in one & getting very completely wet. My clothes were so heavy when I got out of the boat that I was very much wet. As we were a very large company going up the common way called a party of pleasure, most of the dainties were do well as myself, we could get no dry clothes so we were obliged to get our own dried as well as we could, a plenty of spirits we were taken out to dance, which on these occasions is customary before dinner. I had resolved against it for the day was very warm, the party large & the room small, I was prevailed upon to alter my mind by their offering me that exercise would prevent my feeling any ill effects from my writing. I found it so, some good ought to.
Hemen would not suffer that, Capt. Blacker of the 6th, seated himself at our feet, with his legs on the skates to drive, Mr. Spire of the artillery got up behind the carriage; they were laughing and asking me what I would take to be seen going into London in that way, before I could answer we heard a loud crack; I recollect no more till I was on my feet in the road. I then saw Mr. H. on the ground beside the calash. Capt. B. endeavoring to disengage his feet from the shafts which were broken entirely off and separated from the carriage. I shall never forget the horror as look in his countenance, he was not hurt himself, but he expected all our bones were broken. Poor Mr. H. had tumbled upon his head into the cart we thrown from and was stunned with the blow. When we found that no mischief was done, we all fell a laughing, which added to the fright threw Mr. H. into Hysterics, and discomposed us all again. By the time she recovered, I found out that I was very much bruised, I had broken a tooth, however we had no right to complain, we were highly fortunate to be no more hurt. I hope never to be pressed into any party of the kind, unless I am made one. Nearing near going down the river, we heard a man of distress which continued we were out of hearing with us, said they had lost in at any time of the day a cry, it was made by a poor man, for six years he ...