

# Journal of Ebenezer Mattoon Chamberlain 1832-5

A diary of a journey from Maine to Indiana, together with a description of the villages and cities, flora and fauna of the country, manners and customs of the pioneers.<sup>1</sup>—L. F.

The bar rules of Maine being such as to require me to read law three years longer before I could here obtain admission to practice, on the 19th day of June, 1832, I put into execution the resolution I had formed of going to Indiana where the facilities for admission to the practice of law were such that in addition to the advantages of traveling, I could save one or two years' practice in the profession.

Whoever has torn himself from those scenes and associations of youth, sacred to friendship and kindred and home, and without experience and but limited means, launched forth upon the ocean of adventure, can faintly conceive the feeling with which I met the crisis which called for the exercise of whatever I possessed of sensibility and resolution. Oh my mother! the painful emotions with which I caught the last sad expression of thy anguished heart—but the hour, the moment had come, a feeling of desperation nerved my bosom while I snatched an embrace and bade adieu to my parents, brothers and friends. I have only one dear sister—I stepped into the chaise and as I rapidly hastened onward to bid her farewell, a feeling of sadness settled upon me as I cast a lingering look on each familiar object. In a few moments we

<sup>1</sup> Born at Orrington, Me., August 20, 1805.

Commenced work in the shipyard at the age of 16 and followed the employment till December, 1826.

May 11, 1829, commenced reading law with Elisha H. Allen, Esq., of Bangor, Me.

August 20, 1829, twenty-four years of age.

June 13, 1832, closed reading with Esq. Allen.

June 19, 1832, 10 o'clock A.M. sailed from Bucksport on the Penobscot river for New York on a tour to the Western States. This JOURNAL is edited by Louise Fogle, Bourbon, Indiana.

crossed a little streamlet—shall I ever again hear its familiar murmurs? Here on the right and left are little thickets where I have often lingered mornings and evenings listening to the music of the robin, the thrush and the cuckoo while warbling their morning anthem, or chanting their mellow vespers at eventide, succeeded later by the witching melody of the whip-poor-will. We hurried to overtake the vessel at Bucksport where it was to stop for its papers. Arriving at my sisters, I found that the passing of the vessel in which she knew I was to embark, had warned her of my approach; conversing one moment upon ordinary topics and taking a fond adieu, we hurried onward, and as we wound along the summit of the last hill over which the road passes in sight of my sisters abode, I gazed on this last object of endearment and breathed a last farewell to all I was leaving and in a moment it disappeared as we descended the hill. We arrived at Bucksport at the moment the vessel was spreading the canvas to the northern breeze. I hastened on board, and was borne away as on the wings of the wind, straining my sight which clung to the last to whatever I had seen before—till at length all things hallowed to childhood, all things to the memory of home, in a moment vanished. Feeling that in my present situation to brood over tender recollections seemed but to disarm me of that resolution which the occasion demanded, I mechanically set my face to the west, nerving my heart, mentally pronounced my motto “Onward”.

Passed Owshead at four and Whitehead at five o'clock, Monhegan at eight o'clock. Soon we were borne away where to mortal ken naught but the waste of ocean was around us. When twilight shed a pensive gloom around our little bark, I committed myself to that God in whose Hands was my Destiny.

June 20th 9 A.M. made Cape Cod,—becalmed. The white sand banks of Cape Cod even appeared familiar so often had I heard its legendary tales. “Captain”, said I, “is this the place where the girls roll down for pastime”? “The very spot”, he replied. Our captain was a descendant of a Cape Codman and my inquiry seemed to open an inexhaustible storehouse of anecdote which offered us a change from that monotony which had only been disturbed by an occasional sail, or some monster of the deep booming along in his native element.

June 22 saw the sun rise at sea. I had heard much said of the beauty of the rising of the sun at sea, I hastened on deck in the morning and turned to the glowing east, and soon in matchless splendor, as if emerging from his liquid bed, the king of day appeared, robed in light effulgent, and shed his radiance on the waste of ocean.

June 25 9 A.M. arrived at New York. This I considered but the starting point of my pilgrimage.

June 26 I devoted to visiting the various ports of this immense and busy city. I found all impressed with a "fearful looking for" of a visitation by "that dreadful pestilence, which walketh in darkness"—the cholera.<sup>2</sup>

June 27, left New York and in a brief space was propelled by the mighty energies of steam to Albany and took passage on the railroad to Schenectady. There is something truly noble in the wild and grand scenery along the Hudson. Among other objects of interest, I caught a glimpse of West Point, and thought of Arnold and Washington, and my country.

June 28 arrived at Schenectady. Among the astonishing inventions of man, surely that of the locomotive steam engine hath no secondary rank. By this matchless exercise of skill, we fly with a smooth and even course along once impassable barriers, the valleys are filled, the mountains laid low, and distance seems annihilated. I took my seat as near as possible to the car containing the engine, in order to examine more minutely the operation of this, to me, novel and stupendous specimen of human skill. Having thus, as if by some invisible agency flown the distance of 16 miles in 40 minutes, at Schenectady I took passage on the Hudson and Erie canal for Buffalo. Here again I was amazed with the novel mode

<sup>2</sup> "During the summer of 1832, the whole country was greatly alarmed and excited by the appearance of that terrible scourge, the Asiatic Cholera. About the close of June it began its ravages; and partly in consequence of terror and fright, and partly from ignorance of the nature of the disease, it was extensively fatal in its effect. Over three thousand died in New York City, between the fourth of July, and the 1st of October. In Philadelphia nearly one thousand died; in Baltimore, about six hundred; in Washington, nearly two hundred; and other cities and towns suffered in about the same proportion. But in New Orleans the cholera proved very malignant; for between the 28th of October and the 11th of November, sixteen hundred deaths occurred."—*History of the United States*, by Spencer and Lossing, Vol. III, p. 387.

of navigation, by which we sail along the margin of cultivated fields.

June 29, we passed Little Falls. At this place there is something striking and grand in the scenery as one passes on the canal, winding along the summit of the hill, suspended as it were by magic over the tumbling waters beneath. This evening, we floated down along the streets of the city of Utica, which though once an inland city, is now by the energies of science added to the number of commercial cities. The canal passing through the center of the city, presents quite a novel sight to the stranger. The entire route from Schenectady to Utica presents scenery the most varied, rich and novel. Sailing through orchards, on the margins of cultivated fields, and through groves decorated with foliage fresh and fragrant. Particularly rich and varied was the foliage which clothed a forest we entered near Onieda.

June 30, passed Syracuse. Here the eye of the traveler is arrested by the extensive works for the manufacture of salt, from the salt springs which abound in this region, the water of which is said to be more than five times as salt as the ocean.

How has the kind Heaven adorned the happy land,  
And scattered blessings with a lavish hand.

To the inhabitants of the interior, the products of these salt springs are more valuable than would be all the treasures of the Potasi.

July 1st, passed Clyde and Lyons, both flourishing villages.

July 2nd, passed Rochester and was led by curiosity to look upon the scene of Sam Patch's immortality. The Genessee Falls form a beautiful concave, and here it was that Sam Patch, from a height of 125 feet took his last leap into the foaming basin at the foot of the falls and quenched forever his singular thirst for immortality.

The gaping multitudes might stare,  
Patch took his stand aloft in air,  
In rivalry of fame, his bear  
On high, nor less exalted stood  
Eyeing their goal the dim low flood  
Ere down the giddy height he springs,  
"Some thing as well as other things,  
Sure can be done", the hero cried,  
Then leaped and whirled, dashed sunk and died,  
But no mistake the victor bear  
Leaped matchless—rival folk beware—  
Sam died and left you—a name,  
But Bruin lives in peerless fame.

July 3, passed Lockport and climbed by water to the summit of the hill on which the flourishing village is situated. Among other stupendous exhibitions of human art and energy is the excavation for 4 or 5 miles the canal is cut to a depth of 10 to 30 feet through a solid ledge. We hasten onward to Buffalo. Before being allowed to enter the city, we were twice rigidly examined, as has frequently been the case before on entering any place of importance, to ascertain if any one among us had been infected by the cholera, having also been detained here in the quarantine ground.

July 4, the day of the nation's jubilee, having entered Buffalo, we hastened to embark for Cleveland, leaving the city shrouded in gloom by the impending danger of the cholera, instead of being enlivened by the accustomed festivities of the day. We took passage in the schooner *Atlanta*, Captain Chase. As we swept along the bosom of Lake Erie, I could not forbear the feeling of national pride, while for the first time plowing the waters rendered glorious by the triumph of heroic Perry over his countries foes.

July 6th, we put in, in a heavy squall, to Fairport where for the first time, with all the novel emotions of a western emigrant, I planted foot upon the soil of Ohio. Leaving Fairport we arrived at Cleaveland.

July 8, Cleveland is a place truly characteristic of the

commercial ports on our inland seas. All was business and bustle, shipping off the superabundant produce of this fruitful region, and receiving in return foreign luxuries and necessities for its rapidly increasing population. At this time the grand exciting theme of conversation was the Cholera and Black Hawk's War, to meet whom in battle the American troops had just previous to our arrival passed through Buffalo and this place. Attended the Church of England in the forenoon—mummary. Here we took passage on the Erie and Ohio canal.

July 12th, arrived at Newark, which village perhaps more than any other we had passed, was alarmed and excited upon the subject of the Cholera. Though far in the interior of Ohio, the canal is making this a place of importance.

July 14th, we reached Columbus the seat of government, which is a pleasant and flourishing village. I visited the states prison and blushed for my countrymen who by their folly and vice 180 of them had made themselves the disgraced inmates of a place which only becomes the dominion of a tyrant the liberty of whose subjects is dependent upon his own despotic and capricious will.

July 15, we reached Chillicothe, the canal being completed no farther than this place. Captain Denis, a fellow passenger from New York, and myself hired a hack and proceeded onward for Portsmouth. The road passing over a very rough and broken country. On following the Scioto, at Pike's Ford in Pike county, I felt my curiosity considerably excited at fording a river of the celebrity and magnitude of the Scioto, the idea of fording a river being to me an entire novelty. I soon found however that he who would travel the western country and cross western streams must ford them. We reached Portsmouth about eleven o'clock that night. I shall never forget the feelings with which, in the clear light of the full-orbed moon, I came in sight of the far-famed Ohio river, and forest clad mountains of Kentucky. Wrapt in contemplation of the first view of Kentuck, "O! Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky", involuntarily broke from my lips. To come in sight of this for the first time—under the same circumstances, and in the same frame of mind with which they burst

upon my vision, is well worth a journey from Bangor, Maine, to that eminence from which I viewed them. At Portsmouth the workmen were hastening the completion of the canal which joins the Ohio at this place.

July 16, in the fore part of the day, we took steamboat passage for Cincinnati, at which city we found ourselves on the morning of July 17. The city of Cincinnati, in its growth, the acquirements of wealth, eminence, and fame—political, commercial and literary, may doubtless, for an inland city, defy the world for a parallel. Its situation is handsome and salubrious; the surrounding country almost unsurpassed for fertility. From its canals and its turnpikes are poured treasures in upon her. The roads are thronged with teams from the interior of Ohio and Indiana. Her canal boats are laden with goods and produce, to and from the same regions, and the majestic Ohio swarms with steam-boats bringing the tributes from every region to this emporium of the west. But why should I speak of the majestic Ohio, or the more majestic stream of which it is a tributary; uselessly, nay in the very mockery of the swarming millions, peopling the vast regions of the finest portion of the globe, would their waters have sparkled and dashed along in their march to the ocean had not the inventive genius of man set tide and distance at defiance by the application to nautical purposes of the energy of steam. Though navigable for 3 or 4000 miles, these noble rivers but for this invention must have remained un-navigated but for an all-directing Providence imparting this valuable discovery at the precise period when millions of his beings were just beginning to want its aid. And to speak justly of the swarms of emigrants, which chiefly by its instrumentality are pouring into this fair land would be looked upon as mild exaggeration, for aside from the citizens of the many different states of the republic, it seems as if there was formed an alliance of all the nations to overwhelm the land as the Northern Hive did the Roman Empire, for I traveled in company with representatives of eight different nations, English, Scotch, Irish, Welch, French, Dutch, Swiss, Germans and finally from Portsmouth to Cincinnati with seven Austrian roman catholic priests. Whether these latter were God-sends

or not is problematical, for unless they prove a greater blessing to their adopted than to their native country, we can very well dispense with their christian charities. Be this as it may *Holy church* is fairly lusted upon the valley of the Mississippi and the Pope is doubtless much flattered with his success. They have already the most celebrated institutions of learning in Cincinnati which the state affords and are sparing neither labor nor money to rivet their doctrines and dogmas upon the minds of the western world.

July 23, with my little bundle of necessaries, I took my staff and left the city in the character of a pedestrian. I journeyed onward and put up at Hamilton, a village of considerable note on the Dayton canal, 25 miles from the city of Cincinnati.

July 24th, trudging onward, I laughed outright repeatedly on the figure I was cutting—on foot—alone—a thousand miles from home—quite out of money—pushing onward—the Lord only knew where or for what. I crossed the line from Ohio to Indiana at precisely 20 m. past 5 o'clock p.m. which fact I noticed particularly. My first night's lodging in Indiana was with a farmer by the name of Haywood, the kindness of the old gentleman and lady (by the way genuine Hoosiers) was a welcome solace to me, wearied, my feet badly blistered, and lame as I was from traveling. At the table I was a little amused at having a saucer of molasses set for me to eat either with my bread or pork, the old man by his inquiries having ascertained that I was a Yankee.

July 25, I reached Connersville, the county seat of Fayette county, and put up with Mr. Adams. Learning that Mr. Campbell and his family from my native town lived not far distant, the next day after a walk of a few miles, I reached his house. The old gentleman and lady who had been sixteen years from Bangor, Maine, and as many of his children and grandchildren as had any recollection of the land of their nativity, had as many questions to ask me as I could answer in a week. I therefore made it my home with them about that length of time, getting notes and somewhat naturalized. I then took a little excursion around the vicinity, which I found to be a very pleasant country. Finding myself at this time absolutely

penniless I engaged a small country school.<sup>3</sup> At the close of which I engaged for a second quarter. Among other provincialisms and peculiarities of this people, the which would fill a volume: a custom prevails among the scholars either to make the master treat on Christmas day or else to turn him out of doors and duck him in the first horse pond they can get him to. Particularly in the school I engaged the custom had prevailed "a time whereof the memory runneth not to the contrary", and as the signal day approached I perceived indications that they had no intentions of losing their frolic. I designed cutting me a cudgel for the occasion, but on going to the house, on the afternoon of the day previous, I found they had anticipated my resolution, and fixing on that time as commencement of hostilities had taken possession of the castle and fastened the gates (doors and window shutters). A messenger stood at the door with proposals and conditions. He *axed me if I allowed to treat*—I told him I should be my own counsellor as to the matter. He *recokoned I a heap sight better treat, for he allowed I would stand a right smart chance to have a heap of fuss if I didn't*. Though I had neither cudgel or other weapon I concluded this was neither the time to parley or back out, so I told the sentinel that I should take the liberty to enter the camp without giving the countersign. After knocking at the door three times and receiving no answer I severed the shutter and tore it open about which time a window on the back side opened through which making a precipitate flight there was no small scatterment among the small fry. I instantly raised the window and doubtless presented to the inmates an appearance much like a wolf looking through the bars. I ordered the ringleader to open the door, which with a very sheeplike aspect and spirit he instantly obeyed. Making my appearance among them I took the pedagogues corner and ordered them to their seats, which every mother's son of them obeying most passively there was an end to their fun for that Christmas. In the evening I appointed a spelling school at which I invited all the parents to attend, and to whom and the scholars, particularly those who encour-

<sup>3</sup>I have heard my grandfather Chamberlain say many times, that his last two-shillings was spent to pay postage on a letter which had arrived from his home in Maine before he did, and was sent *collect*. (L. F.)

aged such a custom, gave a very serious and Yankee-like lecture. Closing my school on the 22d of February, 1833, I commenced reading law in Connersville on the 6th of March following.

On the 11th day of March I received tidings of an event more afflictive than all other causes of grief, I always loved my mother. I believe the ties of kindred never bound more enduring bonds than a mother's fondness and kindness had thrown around my heart—but the long dreaded hour came, and she was called to her rest on the 19th of February, 1833, and her last look of anguish when I bid her adieu on the 19th of June previous, left an impression on my mind which I shall carry unfaded to the grave.

August 10th witnessed a consummation of a purpose to which every exertion my limited means permitted, and every sentiment and ambition had been devoted for the last seven years—admittance to the practice of law. On this day after so long a time I passed a successful examination and obtained my license. At the fall term of court which commenced in Fayette county on the 14th of September I made my salam before the jury in my newly acquired character of attorney at law. The bar of this state is respected for talent and legal requirements; there are however those of its members, who in both these respects, fall much below the standard, and whose blunders (being quite illiterate) are an inexhaustable theme of the most unrestrained amusement to those whose superiority seems to give them a license to indulge in unbounded pleasantry at their expense. I think however the practice of admitting lawyers on examination is much preferable to that of requiring them to devote a certain length of time to legal acquirement as a requisite to admission, without regard to their legal attainments, which prevails in Maine. Anxious to see more of the country, and not regarding Fayette county as the most desirable location, for the length of time I design spending in the west, I leant my attention toward the new and far-famed region of St. Joseph. Though a transient sojourner at Connersville, I had formed such an attachment for the place, as induced me to regret leaving it, urged on however by the desire to accomplish an original purpose, and the gratification of an ardent spirit of adventure, I left the place for the St. Joseph country on the tenth of October, 1833.

The most convenient mode of traveling which I could procure, was in company with two young families who were moving out, and I took my chance to ride in the heavily laden wagon, ride on horseback occasionally, or wend my way on foot. Thus we started and soon found that recent heavy rains had rendered the roads which were in a state of ill repair, almost impassible.

October 10th, we traveled twenty miles, and put up with a family by the name of Clifford a native of New England who I found had some years previous enlisted in the van of western pioneers, the old man had been a preacher of the gospel but we soon ascertained that he had become a reckless, jolly toper, often crooking his elbows at the shrine of Bacchus. The family having disposed of their supper, the women in our company commenced preparation for ours by bringing in from the wagons the requisite provisions and cooking utensils with which they were supplied. Our supper over, after an hour's chat, the preparation for lodging was the order of the day. This brought into exercise the skill of the women to make arrangements as best they could for the accommodation of three young wives, three young husbands, the driver a married man of forty, and two passengers one who was a young man of thirty in the enjoyment of single blessedness—and one an infant child, for the accommodation of whom but one bed could be procured, excepting such as were made on the floor from bedding our company had with them. The arrangements were soon made for one couple bespoke the only spare bed—without stopping at considerations of those who had never taken a lesson of experience in moving into a new country—the women soon had our bed in order—I say bed for in fact there was but one for the whole—all the materials of the kind having for that purpose been spread on the floor in such a manner as best enabled the whole company to lay side by side. Being the first time I had ever been through the operation of bundling in this style, I must say I felt a little embarrassment in undressing and getting into the same bed with husbands and wives and this in the same room also with the females of the family—there being but one room in the house. But nevertheless so it was, that in a manner almost promiscuously we all stretched ourselves out before the fire, husbands and wives, and old bachelors; and after a night's

sleep as sound and refreshing as if in separate apartments on beds of down, we turned out in the morning and after breakfasting in the same manner as we had supped we harnessed our team and again packed away our provisions and furniture, pushed on upon our second day's journey. This arrangement for lodging with occasionally a little more or less inconvenience was our uniform arrangement during our ten days on the road. Our dinners were generally cooked and ate along the roadside at some convenient place for watering and feeding our horses.

October 11, we took our journey north for the National road, following a mere track through the woods. Having come near to the road we came to a fence across the way and a boy of 14 or 15 standing by it. We asked him if the road went that way, he said "yes" but he would not let us pass through the fence without a "fip", that is 4½ cents, "case this is dad's tater patch and we would mash a heap of taters". The fact was he had stopped up the proper road and pretended that we could pass no other way than through the "tater patch". Our teamster told him to go to hell for his "fip", and we would make a road for ourselves. I took the ax and went ahead but the young chap told us that was dad's land and he would prosecute us if we went that way and very resolutely threw back the brush into the road I had thrown out. I finally took by the but end a fallen sappling to which he had fastened for the purpose of throwing it before the horses, and the way I slung both sapling and boy out of the way was a caution to all "tater patch" toll gatherers, and the last we saw of him was when he put home for death ruin and his valedictory when he left us was "—— — my soul into —— if dad dont make you pay smart money for this". We now came onto the famous National or Wheeling road about 20 miles east of Indianapolis. This road though a very superb structure was in many places almost entirely impassable for mud, occasioned by the recent heavy rains and the roads recently having been worked. Over the numerous creeks and rivers we passed, Uncle Sam has thrown stone arched bridges with covered frames above. In a tremendous rainstorm and in utter darkness we at length arrived at a tavern kept by one Hagar. His house was not only full to

overflowing but stables were also full, and we almost despaired of finding shelter either for ourselves or the horses, but finally after spending an hour and a half in making arrangement for our horses, groping around in the dark and drenched in rain the while, we at length went to the house to make such shift as best we might for our own carcasses, hungry, weary and wet having this day traveled 25 miles. After our usual arrangements as to lodging and so forth, we the next day, October 12th, passed through Indianapolis, a village of no great importance other than as the seat of government of the state, quite pleasantly situated on the banks of the White river a stream not navigable for steamboats. Here is the governor's house situated on a pleasant eminence near the center of the village, on the one hand and on the same street in the extreme part of the village is the court house, a very similar building, and on the other hand and the same street, the capital near a huge pile of brush, was just being built. Here it is that has been let off in a manner to afford many amusing anecdotes, that purely Hoosier eloquence of which the following is a specimen (on a bill for improving a certain river): "Mr. Speaker—it *are* a fact that our rivers *is* rapid, and our resources for salt *am* slim". Here we left the National road again and took a northerly direction—the road almost intolerable [by the Michigan road]. Having traveled 19 miles we came to another Hoosiers nest and put up.

October 13th, we again put ahead through mud and over stumps and soon drove into a mudhole, and the axle-tree of one of the wagons striking a stump fetched up all standing and broke both of our single trees, or in Yankee phrase—whipple trees. Our next business was to haul up and repair, being a carpenter myself I was soon in the mud to my knees and elbows. When the necessary repairs being soon accomplished we were again under way. Night, and the distance of 16 miles brought us to the "nest" of Nevill a Kentuckian: one of Kentucky's real hunters. He came in from the woods with his rifle soon after we got there. A young man possessed of that frankness and hospitality which is truly characteristic of the Kentucks. His three charming children gathered about his knee to whom he related all the particulars of the day's hunt, and divided among them the pocketsful of haslenuts which

he had promised to fetch them. Here for the first time in my life I heard the wolves howl,—and such another concert as they set up in the evening—I began to think that I had got some ways from home. About 2 miles traveling the next morning brought us to a small prairie.

October 14, this being the first I had ever seen, I stopped a moment to gaze. So this is a prairie—not a rock—not a tree or shrub, save where 'tis bounded by the dense, distant forest. Eighteen miles traveled this day brought us to Michigantown—a city of four log houses. Proceeding onward the next day.

October 15th we found ourselves when evening and in fact almost total darkness came on, just entering an extensive marsh, the road across which being utterly impassable we found and took a track which apparently led around it. As we advanced into the woods on this track we soon found ourselves so completely enveloped in darkness that the driver could not see even the track. I therefore proposed going on before the team and leading a white horse we had in the company for a guide for the driver, and having succeeded in keeping the track we eventually regained the road, along which we groped our way till we came in view of the welcome light of another Hoosiers nest. Here at Proseners we made a halt. Nineteen miles this day. Though we here found our usual conveniences for cooking and lodging, yet he had nothing for our horses, but being told of a farm which lay through the woods to the west, I volunteered for one to go in quest of corn. Myself and another were soon mounted and off. Taking a lantern and being directed to the path, we bent our course toward the Pacific ocean, and verily thought I could hear the surf lashing its rocky shores, before the saluation of the day apprised us that we were drawing nigh the object of our nocturnal visit. We “hailed the house and then alighted”. The old man first called off the dogs and then went with us to the cornfield. While we were gathering the corn the hour was rife with anecdotes, in the relation of which the old man enjoyed himself much, especially that of the Dutchman and Yankee. He said that Pennsylvania Dutchmen, who are peculiar for their hatred to the Yankee nation, said: “If von tam Jankee comes pon my house and goes away and dont steal

nottin, I vont pelief he has been dar py tam if I vill". Our corn being gathered the old man wanted us to buy some honey and took us to his store house (a log hovel built over a spring) which was rich indeed with the spoils of the forest. Venison of all kinds fresh and smoked "in plenty hung" and every vessel he could procure or make, full of and dripping with honey. It is found in great abundance in the forests in this state. Late at night we got back with our corn.

October 16th we continued on our journey and about noon I stood upon the banks of the Wabash and with emotions I presume peculiar to all travelers I looked for the first time upon its passing waters as they hastened onward to the father of rivers. An incident occurred at White river near Indianapolis a short time since characteristic of that wanton recklessness of human life, and the consequences of crime, which I am happy to say is but seldom occurrence in the better ordered society of my native state. A very worthy young man who had but a short time resided in the place by some means became obnoxious to the ferryman, naturally a brutal man, came one day to cross the river. The ferryman in the wantonness of cruelty told him to get into the boat, but that he would be damned if he would not drown him before he got over. He however got in in company with another, telling the ferryman that he guessed he did not mean to drown him. The ferryman still swearing he pushed from the shore and when in the deepest of the river purposely overset the boat and himself and the passenger swam to the shore. The young man succeeded in getting hold of the boat and told the ferryman that he would pay for that if he ever got on shore. At this the ferryman with the bitterest imprecations plunged into the river, swam to him, seized him by the throat, pulled him under the water and they both sank together. The brute having finished his hellish design came up and swam to shore but the young man never rose, until he was subsequently found and taken from the river with evidence of the violence upon his throat and other parts of the body. This infernal deed was done in view of several who stood upon the shore and still the murderer was only sentenced to two or three years imprisonment in the penitentiary. And even while there his son committed a similar outrage upon a woman with an infant in

her arms, who however was rescued by her husband who had previously crossed over and this transaction my informant saw, and was entirely unnoticed.<sup>4</sup>

Logansport, the point where the Wabash and Erie canal terminates, stands in the fork at the junction of the Wabash and Eel rivers. The water being at low stage we forded over and passed through Logansport. A steamboat was lying there which had ascended thus far and the water being rather low did not dare venture back over the ripple. The treaty with the Miami Indians not far from this place being at this time attempted to be made, most of the speculators and gamblers and horseracers and loungers of the place were absent and I was informed that the appropriate business of the treaty (which proved a total failure) gave place to one continual scene of the accustomed vocations of such like gentlemen. Passing through town we forded the Eel river and reached the Barrens about 4 o'clock p.m. Having heard much of this description of country I felt quite a curiosity to reach the Barrens. Emerging from the thick woods I found the Barrens to consist of a scattering growth of various kinds of scrubby oaks. The soil is sandy though black and rich and the roads through them excellent naturally, always being dry even in the wettest seasons. The leaves that fall, and the luxuriant growth of grass, herbs and flowers becoming dry in the fall produce a mass of combustible matter, which every year causes a sweeping fire to run through them which is probably why the timber is of such an inferior quality. However, the soil is of so loose a nature that it cannot sustain a heavy growth, it being blown down by violent winds. We drove 16 miles this day and put up with Miller—who was trying the experiment of a farm in the barrens, which produced well, he said, and improved by length of cultivation. The soil being so impregnated with lime that when exposed to the sun, air and rain even from the bottom of cellars and wells, soon turns black and produces abundantly.

The next day, October 17th, we traveled 22 miles through the barrens and at night forded the Tippecanoe and put up

<sup>4</sup>The ferryman was Michael Van Blaricum and the victim William McPherson. The murder was committed about noon May 8, 1833. Governor Noah Noble pardoned Van Blaricum.—Holloway, *History of Indianapolis*, p. 45. This was the first murder in Indianapolis, if it could be called such.

with Judge Polke,<sup>5</sup> commissioner of the Michigan road bonds. The way the poor Indians were sucked in, in this Michigan road business was a caution. A road was laid out the whole length of the state, from the Ohio river to Lake Michigan, most of the way through Indian lands, and in addition to this they were induced to give a section of land to every mile of road to be appropriated in making it, the Indians being made to believe that a road through their country would be a great benefit to them, but poor fellows, it let in a flood of immigration which has swallowed up their whole country and the powerful tribe of Pottawattomies and all others, save a degenerate remnant of the Miamis, have by the last treaty sold the last foot of their heritage, before the road was half completed. As my horse dashed through the waters of the Tippecanoe its name called up the recollection of their last feeble effort to save their delightful country.<sup>6</sup> Their bleaching bones at Harrison's battle ground forty miles below where we crossed speak their nation's epitaph.

On the morning of October 18th we again moved onward and after about two hours' ride came to a small Pottawattomie village. On coming in sight of it across a small prairie, we perceived a small white flag waving with an emblem of a cross upon it. On approaching the flag and finding that it stood by the side of a small enclosure of rude picketing we had the curiosity to ascertain what was there enclosed. On examination we found it to be an Indian's grave. He was entirely above the surface of the ground setting with his back against a tree and his face to the west, having about him some of the rude emblems of office. On the outside of this

<sup>5</sup> "Col. William Polke was one of the most distinguished men in northern Indiana and was the first to blaze the way to civilization in this part of the state. He was one of the original proprietors of the town of Plymouth, and was appointed by the governor to take charge of the Pottawattomie Indians when they were removed from Twin Lakes in 1838 by Gen. John Tipton. He was buried three and one-half miles north of the south Marshall county line, and one-half mile east of the Michigan road on his farm, and the place is still known as 'Polke's Cemetery'. Plymouth was undoubtedly given its name by Colonel Polke who seems to have been the leading spirit in securing the location of the county seat."—McDonald, *History of Marshall County*, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup> Eighty years later, a grand-daughter of the writer of this Journal (Louise T. Fogle), organized a chapter of Daughters of American Revolution. Living near this river and this same spot, and actuated by recollections similar to these, named the chapter "Tippecanoe River".

barbarous repository of the dead were the ashes where had been kindled a large fire and a beaten circle around the picketing where the funeral dance had been performed. We learned that this was the grave of Ob-ee-knob-ee, a Pottawattomie chief, who in different drunken frolics had killed two of his wives and three of his sons and finally one of his sons killed him, and here he rotted after an exhibition of a combination of those rites equally barbarous and impious which savage superstition and hypocritical priestcraft had taught his race. Having traveled twenty miles we put up with an avaricious surly Dutchman named Oasterhouse.<sup>7</sup>

October 19th we traveled 25 miles and put up with Pomerooy on Assumption prairie.<sup>8</sup> This was the first extensive dry prairie we came to on the road, or that I had ever seen,—elevated if any difference rather above the surrounding woods, and of a most fertile soil. It was a matter of novelty to me to see immense flocks of wild geese flying and feeding about it. I learned that the lakes and prairies abound with them, and that they are very destructive on fields of grain.

October 20th we journeyed onward again for the St. Joseph, the banks of which we reached about 11 o'clock in quite a snow storm, at the town of South Bend, the county seat of St. Joseph county. We continued our course up the St. Joseph 16 miles to Pleasant Plain, a prairie about 2 miles in extent, where about three miles from the mouth of the Elkhart and a small village of that name, we took up our abode in a real Hoosier's Nest for a few weeks till we could look about the country a little. What a happy trait in the human character is that versatility of our nature which enables us with so much ease to adapt our feelings to our circumstances and even find pleasure in all the changes of life. Let purse proud elbowing insolence create to itself ten-thousand wants, pine and languish on beds of down, but let not the votaries of wealth

<sup>7</sup> "July 19, 1836. Charles Osterhaut was granted license for one year to keep tavern. His place was about two miles south of Plymouth on the west side of the Michigan road. He was a member of the board of commissioners, and the board met at his house until the first courthouse was erected after the county was organized (1836), when it began holding meetings in that building. That building is still standing (1908). It is the second house east of Michigan street on Adams street in Plymouth."—McDonald, *History of Marshall County*, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Now called Sumption Prairie.

and pleasure say that they enjoy more, nay as much real happiness and contentment as is found in the little

Hoosier's nest or Buckeye cabin  
Just big enough to hold Queen Mab in.  
Its situation low but airy  
Just on the borders of a prairie,  
Where one must stoop to enter in,  
The entrance closing with a pin.  
Where all in one small room do dwell  
And sleep and eat and cook quite well.  
Two beds are in the corners placed  
With curtains round in genteel taste,  
In one hangs clothes for babe and mother  
And clock and cupboard grace the other,  
One window made of well greased paper  
But moonlight answers for a taper  
The chimney being low and wide  
This kind of light doth well provide.

Such in short was the little log cabin in which for some weeks I found more real comfort than I thought could possibly consist with such a situation, enjoying the while perfect good health except on the evening of the 28th of October, a severe headache and excessive fatigue occasioned by a deer hunt and a visit to a cranberry bog about five miles distant, where on that day I got my feet wet.

November 5th I started on an excursion through some of the south-western counties of Michigan, visiting for the first place in the territory White Pigeon on the White Pigeon prairie in St. Joseph county. This is an extensive fertile and very pleasant prairie, the town which has been built in about two years is very pleasant and prosperous. The inhabitants are mostly from New York state, and apparently possess more of wealth and refinement than is common for the villages in this new country.

November 6th I passed through Constantine, a little town just budding on the banks of the St. Joseph about three miles from Pigeon. It is possessed of natural advantages such as excellent water power for all hydraulic purposes, and is situated on navigable waters, which will enable it eventually to outstrip Pigeon in wealth and improvement. Passing on to Kalamazoo county mostly through barrens, I arrived and put

up at Big Prairie Round, at Patrick's town. Here in the midst of this immense and fertile prairie is an extensive and beautiful grove, or in the phrase of the country an island, of thick timber. This upon a prairie is a natural advantage which is quite sure to cause a village to spring up under its lee, which is here the eastern side, there being in this region almost a constant prevalence of a western wind.

November 7th, I started for Cass county, traveling part of this day through a heavy growth of thick timber I reached Little Prairie Round about 18 miles where I put up. This prairie is entirely surrounded just in the skirt of the woods with some 30 or 40 families who from different regions have emigrated there within the last year or two. Here again I saw immense flocks of wild geese upon the wheat fields.

November 8th traveled through barrens and across Pokagon, an extensive and highly cultivated prairie I reached Niles, a village on the St. Joseph 25 miles by land and 50 by water from its mouth. Niles, quite a flourishing village, has like all other villages in the St. Joseph country, sprung up as if by magic, in a year or two. I put up at the tavern of Olas and was astonished to find quite a spacious house entirely overflowing with customers. Here were movers and merchants and travellers and peddlers of all sorts and sizes. The next morning, November 9th, I started for Newburyport at the mouth of the St. Joseph river in Berrien county and its county seat. Ten miles from Niles I crossed the St. Joseph at Brown's ferry. Here lies a steamboat where an attempt was made to navigate the river, but from its improper construction for that purpose it was laid aside. Traveling through barrens and small prairies to within about 12 miles of the lake I entered the heaviest growth of thick woods I have seen in the country. Reaching Newburyport<sup>s</sup> I put up at a tavern just upon the shore of Lake Michigan where at night I was lulled to sleep by the roar of its dashing waters. It was a sound lonesome and melancholy yet grateful to my ears, calling up the recollections of other lands and other times. Though Newburyport is a place of considerable business with a number of stores, large warehouses, steam mill, light-house and a ship-yard where a steamboat for navigating the river was being built, and will be a place of much more importance whenever

<sup>s</sup> The city of St. Joseph, Michigan.

an appropriation is made by Uncle Sam to improve the harbor, yet to me it seemed dreary, I felt oppressed with a sense of vastness of distance or some similar painful emotion, for it seemed as if I saw the ocean on the wrong side of creation.

Leaving the place November 10th, I arrived at Elkhart on the next day, November 11th, though on the route I experienced much rain and unpleasant weather, yet from the nature of the soil the roads for the most part were dry and excellent, except through the woods.

November 16th I started for LaPorte, put up with Johnson at South Bend the county seat of St. Joseph county.

November 17th I crossed an arm of the Portage prairie, but I had not the full pleasure of facing a violent snowstorm driven full in my teeth by a prairie wind till I entered on the Terre Coupee prairie when unobstructed for five or six miles the wind has fair play. I however buffeted it across this and the no less spacious Rolling prairie, till at length entering upon the Door prairie I finally arrived at LaPorte, the county seat of LaPorte county. This is a pleasant village situated near a beautiful little lake perhaps a mile across, of pure water and abounding in fish, with neither inlet or outlet. The prairie the county and the town have all taken their name from an opening between two extensive groves upon the prairie which from its resemblance to a door between two apartments received from the French the appellation LaPorte. This prairie, not less than fifteen miles in extent, is for the beauty of prospect, its lakes and groves, the fertility of its soil, etc., considered the most desirable portion of the county.

November 20th, I again reached Elkhart, and after all my ramblings concluded to spend the winter at that place. On the 25th of November and for several subsequent days, I attended court in Goshen, the county seat of Elkhart county, and finally opening a school in Elkhart on the 8th of January,<sup>9</sup> and dividing my time between my school and the business of my profession I spent the winter in the double capacity of a peda-

<sup>9</sup> "At Elkhart Town one of the first to teach was E. M. Chamberlain, a young man from Maine who had been admitted to the bar a short time previously. As is well known, he afterward became an honor to the bench, the legislature and to congress."—Weaver, *History of Elkhart County*, p. 103.

"His famous address on the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, delivered before the Democratic State Convention in 1841, exemplified before the people his strength and eloquence." p. 139.

gouge and pettifoger. Much has been said, and had we our poets here, much doubtless would be sung of the natural advantages and beauties of this region. It, however, is new, and society though rapidly improving is unorganized and therefore unpleasant. There is nearly as great diversity in the materials of which the community is composed as there is in the more southern regions, and each quite tenacious of his own notions, and sentiments. Here is the Yankee the real Johnathan, who according as his education has been, or the impulses of mother wit may dictate, either moves with grave precision in all his intercourse both secular or social, or regardless alike of time and place, cracks his joke, says *Hasty-pudding*, and laughs at the odd word *mush*,—guesses at *enny-most everything*, and though among Hooshiers—swears he will be a Yankee still. The Yorkers whom the native calls *blue-bellied* Yankees, who with his quicker yet distinct accent, reserved civility and *mind-his-own-business look*, sops his bread, makes a good bargain if he can, and adheres to the superior manners and customs of the Empire state. The Englishman, a teamster, butcher or a beggar, moves around in all the conscious dignity of a lineal descendant of John Bull, and who, though fled to this country as an asylum from the poverty and oppression he suffered in his own, finds fault with everything he sees, and grows fat on the recollection of Old England. The Yahoo, from Pennsylvania, who more the Dutchman still than American, has his mold-board on the left hand side of his plow, and lets his *childer thrun pare feat* (children run bare-foot). The German Dunkard with his flowing beard and grave face, partial to his countrymen and native tongue. The Buckskin from Kentucky who eats his pork and dodger, drinks whiskey and bites and gouges; butters his tea and totes his water, and *hopes* all who *axes* him to. The Buckeye from Ohio, who hates cod-fish and is never *saw* to walk or ride when the sun shines or when it rains, but is always *walking* or *riding* when it is *shiny* or *rainy*. Then there is the Chegoe from Michigan, and the Sucker from Illinois an occasional traveler, or visitor here.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> At this place in the JOURNAL is a copy of a letter written to a younger brother, no doubt, Elbridge G. Chamberlain, who later came to Goshen, where he was a prominent citizen for sixty years. The letter was recorded, to preserve for the future a description of the country and the people of that early day.

ELKHART CO. IA. June 8th, 1834.

DEAR BROTHER

It had afforded me much pleasure to learn frequently that you have enjoyed good health, in common with the rest of our family and friends. For myself I certainly in my life have never enjoyed such uninterrupted good health as I have during the eight months that I have sojourned here in the land of the St. Joseph. This in a great degree must be attributed to a naturally vigorous constitution for there are several diseases peculiar to the country which are very prevalent here. Among which the fever and ague has prevailed very much in all parts of the country. I have visited many people in this place who are victims of this disease, alternately and almost continually burning with a raging fever one day, and the next shaking with the ague like "Harry Gill". I think this is more naturally pleasant than is the country in the south—Fayette county, where I spent the last season. Though a very level region yet there is a greater variety here in the scenery than there. Portions of the country are covered with a noble growth of timber of all kinds peculiar to the west, and for most part so clear of underbrush that a team may drive through without much difficulty in almost any direction. The thick woods are well stocked with game such as deer, turkeys, foxes, rabbits or pheasants as they are called here, raccoon, &c, &c, with a variety of squirrels—striped, red, grey, and black. It is delightful to go into the thick woods this season of the year, as in addition to the trees being covered with the richest variety of foliage, the whole surface of the ground as far as the eye can extend is but a living picture of green herbage and a rich variety of flowers. Next come the barrens as they are called. They are a very scattering growth of scrubby oak. The leaves which fall from them and the grass which grows among them becoming dry, the whole face of creation as it seems here, is burnt over every fall or spring (perhaps by the Indians leaving fire where they camp) and this gives the barrens the most dismal appearance, the very picture of desolation and it is very late in the season before the trees leave out or the grass grows again. But as the leaves and grass burn very quick and the fire is very rapid it is seldom that the trees are killed by it and in fact it even causes the grass to spring up with

richer luxuriance. At this season of the year (June 1st) and for some weeks past the barrens exhibit a most delightful appearance. There is no tree where the foliage is of a richer green than the oak and they are just enough scattered to be no obstruction to the prospect, which is a most beautiful carpet of green enlivened with flowers of every hue. Here it is that the birds sing their songs—endless in variety and duration. The black birds here are all kinds of colors, many to be sure are black but I have seen them nearly as red as a robin and others black with bright red or yellow spots on their wings. There are many birds new to me and some I have seen at home I have never seen here—among which is the thrush, which I used to lay in the twilight of the evening and listen to with so much pleasure, while he whistled his soft tranquil farewell to the departing day. There is a species of grey wolf that frequent the barrens very much, and the people often run them down on horseback and shoot them or kill them with clubs. Bears are very seldom seen here.

From the barrens let us visit the prairies—the glory of the west. They are of different sizes from two to twenty or fifty or even a hundred miles in extent. Some are almost a perfect level; others are rolling (in the phrase of the country) that is a succession of gentle swells. On these in many places the grass is often twenty feet high, but generally there is a much richer variety of herbage and flowers upon them than there is in the barrens or thick woods. Where they are uncultivated, and uncrossed by cattle grows in wild luxuriance,—they are annually burnt over with a tremendous rushing fire. On these occasions “save himself who can” is the principle of action with bird, beast and reptile.

The prairie often borders upon the thick woods and it is a matter of much curiosity and speculation why, upon the same kind of soil, and the richest in the world, there should be a bold line of the heaviest timber immediately joining a prairie on which there grows neither tree nor shrub. It is more general however that the prairie borders on the barrens.

The prairies have also their own peculiar kinds of animals and birds. Among which is the prairie wolf, the badger &c, of the former, and of the latter, the prairie hen is the most peculiar. They are larger than the patrige somewhat similar

in color and form except they have a larger neck and shorter tail. At this season of the year they strut round like a turkey, and at the same time make a noise—a kind of a boo-boo-b-o-o b-o-o which three sounds are made on different notes or tones rising from the first to the third. It is amusing to hear them in the morning at a distance, twenty or thirty of them visiting with each other in the interesting confusing with their boo-boo-b-o-o. The sand hill crane, an enormous great bird also inhabits the prairie. And when they hallow they make a most startling clamorous noise. Among the smaller tenants are the quail, the lark and the plover.

Among the peculiar features of the country are the numerous little lakes with which it is interspersed many of which though their water is perfectly pure have neither inlet or outlet, notwithstanding which they abound in a great variety of excellent fish. We will now take a pirogue—that is a dugout or in other words a log canoe and our gigs and spears and push up the St. Joseph or the Elkhart, just which you please and when drifting down again we will spear a mess of fish; perhaps we will catch a sturgeon five or six feet long; perhaps we will catch a pike weighing 30 or 40 pounds. The pike is probably the same as the pickerel, only the larger ones here are called pike or muskalonge. There is also a greater variety of smaller fish which come up from Lake Michigan. The sturgeon is somewhat different from those in the Penobscot and are ranked among the finest fish here.

The most unusual mode of fishing here is to go out in the night with pirogue, gig and torches when those who are skillful spear great quantities. I was out the other day with old man Compton and he speared a monstrous big turtle and let Beebe,<sup>11</sup> one of our merchants, have it and the next day Beebe invited me to dine with him on turtle soup which I assure you to be a most delicious dish.

There is something new and wild and romantic in the scenery of this region, which notwithstanding the absence of

<sup>11</sup> Judge Samuel Beebe was the character of Elkhart during the early days. He had been originally a merchant, but was then settled to the occupation of a farmer, and had been elected to the office of Probate Judge. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, of great good sense and correct habits, and of honorable principles, but withal a free-thinker in religion, and a practical joker. *History of Elkhart County*, p. 138.

the long tried friends, and that social intercourse in the jarring elements of society here to which I have been accustomed, in the land I remember with fond regret, has tolerably reconciled me to the place. When the dullness and monotony of a small inland village becomes irksome, I find relief from a consuming *enui*, by spending a day or two with some of the farmers in the vicinity, who pleased and flattered with the visit spare no pains at their command to make it pleasant.

Thus after being repeatedly solicited and pressed by Mr. Faley to pay him a visit, I spent two or three days in his house about the last of June. The old man being a genuine son of Old Kentuck friendly and hospitable, whenever he takes a notion, the hour was rife of anecdotes,—of barbecues, horse-races and elections. He dwelt particularly upon a barbecue which the people of the Fork gave the company of Captain Yantes when he marched for the Canada lines and another to the troops who went to the defense of New Orleans. The Fork, as he called it, lies at the confluence of the Dick's and Kentucky rivers. Among the excellent troops sent out by that chivalrous state during the last war (1812) it seems that the Fork, and its vicinity sent its full share. On the departure of these brave fellows, the whole community *en masse*, turned out to give them a barbecue, which seems to be a sort of a free will offering on the altar of patriotism. For this purpose a trench about 15 inches deep and perhaps as wide, is dug a sufficient length, for the purpose of cooking as many pigs and chickens and lambs, mutton and veal, beef and venison as the occasion requires. This being filled with suitable wood, it is set fire to and burned, till sufficient heat and coals are produced. By the side of this trench are laid poles near its edge, large enough to raise the articles to be cooked sufficiently high from the fire.

[E. M. CHAMBERLAIN.]

In the fall of 1835, I came out a candidate, for the legislature, and made my debut on the stump, and after a well contested campaign succeeded by a large majority. The stump speech system of electioneering, which is prevalent in the west as in the south has, when compared with the convention system of the eastern and middle states, its peculiar advantages

over that system, as well as its demerits, which in some respects give the other the preference.

On the first Monday in December 1835 I entered upon the untried duties of the legislature. This was one of the most important sessions ever held in the state, as during its sitting, many new and important measures were adopted, and many others discussed.

The end