

## A study of several entries from a 1794 travel diary

### Introduction

Volume 11 of the “**William and Mary College quarterly historical magazine**” (July, 1902) contains a transcript of “*A Diary Kept by Dr. Robert Wellford, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, During the March of the Virginia Troops to Fort Pitt (Pittsburg) to Suppress the Whiskey Insurrection in 1794*”. The diary is fascinating to me because it provides critical clues to the location of the Turkey Foot Road in Westmoreland and Fayette counties. This road was cut from Fort Cumberland in 1779 to provide critical supplies to Fort Pitt, enabling Brodhead’s successful campaign against the food supplies of British-allied Indians. That summer, 1,500 pack horses were engaged in the supply effort. The northern part of the route was cut by Providence Mounts, and the southern part was cut by Charles Clinton.

The diary entries analyzed in this article are from November, 1794:

*“Saturday, Nov’r 22nd. Left McFarlands, 15 miles from Pittsburg, on the west side of the Monongohalia, crossed at Perry’s ferry, 1 mile, the cold excessive, the Ink froze while writing, snowed this day. Genl Matthews, Capt. Carter, Lt. Glassell, Lt. Saunders, Major Wray & Capt. Chas. Stuart, the road so intolerably bad we stopped at Cornell’s, the Black house, slept before the fire. This day traveled 7 miles.*

*23rd. After breakfast to the forks of Yough, 4 miles, crossed at Budds Ferry, about 8 miles, took a right hand road called the “Turkey foot Road.” This is about 5 miles from Cherry’s Mill, passed this day thro’ the late encampment of Ye Right Wing, travelled the Turkey foot road 4 miles to Mrs. Woodrow, making 16 miles this day, 58 from Fort Pitt, slept before the fire. Mem. Sugar made on one plant’n here one thousand weight. The cold excessive, said to have been from theyear 1771 in no part of any winter more severe for 23 years.*

*Monday, 24th. Breakfasted at Mrs. Woodrow’s, the most comfortable house in this country that I have been in. One large room divided, by plank partitions, into 3 sleeping rooms & one eating room, with a very large log fire, the kitchen under the same roof. If this was the best house, judge then of the others. Crost Jacobs Creek. Arrived this Even’g at Amos Strickland’s, at the top of the Chestnut ridge, 14 miles.*

*Tuesday, 25th. At 1/2 past 7 left Stricklands, & at the end of 4 miles forded Indian Creek, 7 miles from there breakfasted upon broiled venison at Mariaty’s, from thence rode to the North fork of the Yough, 9 miles, making 20 miles to Anthony Reemes, a Dutchman. Snow this day, cold continues. From Fort Pitt 38, 14, 20, 72.”*

### Perry’s ferry

According to the June 1936 issue of the “**Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine**”, Perry’s ferry was located near the mouth of Lobb’s Run (Latitude 40.259948°, Longitude -79.909771°), and near the Perry’s mill that is shown on Reading Howell’s 1792 map of Pennsylvania. This is about eight-tenths of a mile southwest of the town of West Elizabeth.

### **Cornell's, the Black house**

Assuming that Wellford ate breakfast at “*at Cornell's, the Black house*”, Cornell's was located roughly four miles west of Budd's Ferry.

### **To the forks of Yough...crossed at Budds Ferry**

Although the name “*forks of the Yough*” was often times used as a reference to the land between the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers, Dr. Wellford uses the phrase to describe the Youghiogheny River. Howell's 1792 map illustrates Budd's ferry on the Youghiogheny River, along the road from Perry's mill. Budd's ferry was south of the location that would become West Newton. According to Howell's map, the location of the ferry would have been approximately at Latitude 40.190202°, Longitude -79.757814°. There is still a road there today that is named “*Budds Ferry Road*”.

### **Turning right onto the Turkey foot Road**

Before Wellford turned right onto the Turkey Foot Road, he was traveling eastward on the Glade Road. According to the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**”, “*In October, 1772, John Nicklow, James Wells, Jr., Thomas Kenton, John Ferguson and Richard Brown, as viewers, laid out a road from Bedford to the Youghiogheny river by way of the StonyCreek Glades and Sewickley. This was the road afterwards known as the 'Glades Road'.*”

The Turkey Foot Road crossed the Glade Road at the site of present-day Ruffs Dale. This is proven by a November 8, 1780 deed (recorded May 22, 1783) that describes John Emerson's sale of property located on Lick Run and the Turkey Foot Road. The property is described as being bounded by the properties of Denis Raixdon, George Fisher, Joseph DeVoss, John Conrad, and Hans Tarr. George Fisher (Book A-59, page 5) and John Conrad (Book C-46, page 31) were still adjoining property owners in 1793. Lick Run was described as “*Buffelow Lick Run*” on the related 1776 survey of John Amberson (Emerson) and John McClintock (Book U, page 291), and is now known as Buffalo Run, which passes through Ruffs Dale.

Somehow, Emerson's 1780 property sale went awry, because Emerson deeded the property to Joseph DeVoss on April 15, 1790 (recorded February 10, 1791). Devoss was one of the property owners adjoining John Emerson's property in 1780. Devoss's 1793 survey for 371-acres (Book A-16, pages 42 and 43) is located on the Glade Road, just a few yards west of Buffalo Creek, and a bit of it covers the southernmost part of Ruffs Dale. Based on the shape of DeVoss's survey, Devoss's property is clearly a combination of Emerson's 1776 property and another property that bordered Emerson's property on the west.

On modern roads, Devoss's property is the same four miles from the Woodrow property that Dr. Wellford describes in his 1794 journal. The reference to the Turkey Foot Road and Lick Run in Emerson's November, 8 1780 deed is significant because the deed was written the year after the Turkey Foot Road was cut as a military road, proving that the military road crossed the Glade Road at Ruffs Dale.

### **Cherry's Mill**

Cherry's Mill, which appears on Howell's map, was at the present-day location of Laurelville along Route 31—the successor to the Glade Road. The 1882 book “**History of Fayette**

**County...**” states, “Several miles above is the oldest water-power on Jacob’s Creek within Bullskin. It was improved by Ralph Cherry in the time of the Revolution, and had a wide reputation, although but a rude mill. The Cherry interests became the property of John Lobengier, about the beginning of the present century...” The 1882 book “**History of the county of Westmoreland...**” states, “Among the other mills within our own county or immediately near were Cherry’s mill, afterwards Lobingier’s, on Jacobs Creek.” John Lobingier built a stone house near the mill site in 1797 that still stands at Latitude 40.143341°, Longitude -79.487479°.

### **The late encampment of Ye Right Wing**

Wellford’s reference to “*the late encampment of Ye Right Wing*” relates to the positioning of Washington’s troops during the Whiskey Rebellion. Alexander Hamilton wrote a letter to George Washington from Cherry’s Mill on November 3, 1794 that states: “*I have returned to this place from Union Town. A letter from Governor Lee which goes with this probably informs you of the plan of future operations—but lest it should not I shall briefly state it. The right wing is to take a position with its left towards Budds ferry & its right toward Greensburgh. The left wing is to be posted between the Yocghagani & Monongalia.*”

### **Four miles to Mrs. Woodrow’s**

After crossing the Youghiogheny River at Budd’s ferry, Wellford turned right (south) onto the Turkey Foot Road just west of Buffalo Run, and arrived at Mrs. Woodrow’s place after traveling four miles.

Because Wellford does not refer to the man of the house, one can surmise that Mrs. Woodrow was a widow when he stayed at her place on the night of November 23, 1794. The only known candidate is Mary Woodrow, the widow of the John Woodrow who lived in East Huntington Township. According to Volume six of the “**Publications of the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania**” (1917), the will of John Woodrow is dated December 25, 1792, was proven on January 3, 1793, and names five minor children. This makes Mary Woodrow a widow at the right time to be Doctor Wellford’s hostess.

John Woodrow’s 1786 survey (Book D-115, pages 111 and 112) is located four miles from where the Turkey Foot Road crossed the Glade Road near Buffalo run. From the location where the northern end of Fenton Road terminates on Route 981, Woodrow’s property extends south one mile on both sides of Fenton Road. Most of the boundary lines of Woodrow’s 1786 property still survive as the boundary lines of modern tracts. Working clockwise, the approximate locations of some of the surviving Woodrow boundary features are:

- An outside corner at the intersection of Smith’s Hill Road and Route 981 (Latitude 40.146133°, Longitude -79.577181°)
- Crosses Route 981 at (Latitude 40.146338°, Longitude -79.573201°)
- An outside corner at (Latitude 40.143209°, Longitude -79.566243°)
- An inside corner at (Latitude 40.136213°, - Longitude 79.566576° •
- Crosses Fenton road at (Latitude 40.132838°, Longitude -79.569322°)
- Crosses Cherry Hill road at (Latitude 40.137439°, Longitude -79.577642°)

According to the 1890 book “**Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Westmoreland County...**”, John Woodrow “*was a leader in an alarm of Indians in the neighborhood, on account of which they call him ‘Colonel.’*” The 1882 book “**History of the County of Westmoreland...**” reports that John Woodrow was “*a farmer, and a descendant of Puritan stock*”.

### **Crost Jacobs Creek**

Veech’s book “**The Monongahela of old...**” states that the Turkey Foot Road “*passed by Cornelius Woodruff’s old place, descended the Chestnut ridge ... and crossed Jacob’s creek about a mile below the old Chain Bridge, there leaving this county...*” That bridge, which was the first of its kind in the United States, was built on “*the great road leading from Uniontown to Greensburg*”; i.e., at the present-day location of the village of Iron Bridge. Veech’s description puts the Jacobs Creek fording site somewhere in the general vicinity of where present-day State Route 1059 (Dexter Road/Overholt Drive) crosses the creek at Latitude 40.105403°, Longitude -79.569345°.

The knowledge that the Turkey Foot Road passed through Ruffs Dale helps to explain why the Jacobs Creek fording site that Veech describes is located so far west. The fording site provided a much more direct route, avoiding the meandering path of Braddock’s road in the Mount Pleasant area.

### **Amos Strickland’s, at the top of the Chestnut ridge**

Amos Strickland lived on the 228<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-acre Cornelius Woodruff property that is shown on the W.P.A. map of the northern part of Springfield Township, Fayette County. This is proven by an 1818 deed for 228 acres Isaac Parker bought from Thomas Herbert that states, “*...it being the same tract of land which the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by patent under the great seal and dated 28th November 1789 did grant unto Cornelius Woodruff who together with his wife Mary by Indenture dated the 28th day of August 1791 conveyed the same to Joab Woodruff who together with his wife Sabia did by Indenture dated the 8th day of September 1794 convey the same to Amos Strickland...*” Woodruff’s is the only Fayette County landmark that is identified along the Turkey Foot Road on the Howell map. The property is at the intersection of present-day Gas Well Road and Cavanaugh Road (Latitude 40.029027°, Longitude -79.45673°). Parts of these roads follow the route of the old Turkey Foot Road.

### **At the end of 4 miles forded Indian Creek**

The Turkey Foot Road forded Indian Creek at what is now Mill Run Reservoir, near the mouth of Skinner’s Mill Run (Latitude 39.972647°, Longitude -79.45604°). During the Revolutionary War, this site was known as the “*Bullock Pens*”, because it was fenced in for grazing cattle that were being driven to Fort Pitt. The property was then owned by George Morgan, under whose overall direction the Turkey Foot Road was cut.

### **Breakfasted upon broiled venison at Mariaty’s**

A place that is located seven miles south of Indian Creek would be located approximately at Latitude 39.905029°, Longitude -79.405022°, on Laurel Hill, where Maple Summit Road meets Jersey Hollow Road. Francis Moriarty transferred 400 acres to Abraham Stauffer in what was then Bullskin Township on March 1, 1796. The deed, which is included on pages 792 to 793 of

Fayette County Deed Book C-2, mentions Jacob Miner as having adjoining property. William Aar's May 16, 1796 survey is the only 400-acre tract adjoining the horseshoe-shaped Miner farm, and therefore may be a candidate to be the 400-acre tract Francis Moriarty transferred to Abraham Stauffer. Aar's survey (Figure 0570, Book C-4, Page 35) identifies Jacob Minor (Miner) living on the James Nob property, and shows Francis Marietta (a miss-spelling of Moriarty) living on the 367½-acre property John Nob warranted on January 30, 1794. This puts Francis Marietta's property at the location where Maple Summit Road meets Jersey Hollow Road. A John Moriarty is listed as having property a few yards from the intersection in 1798.

Surveyor John Badollet's November 23, 1793 journal entry mentions staying overnight at "*Moriarty's*", on Laurel Hill. He describes Moriarty's family as impoverished, lacking sufficient clothing, and living in a meagerly furnished house in a wild region. Badollet also breakfasted at Moriarty's on May 3, 1794, and after exploring all day, returned again in the evening. He also stopped at Moriarty's on the evening of May 7, 1794, after another day of exploration. His May 5th and 6th journal entries describe laying out a survey for a road from Moriarty's to Ohiopyle falls. Such a road exists—Maple Summit Road—but whether it is the road laid out by Badollet is unknown.

#### **Anthony Reemes, a Dutchman on the North fork of the Yough**

The North fork of the Yough is now known as Laurel Hill Creek, and the individual Wellford refers to as Anthony Reemes lived at what is now Ursina, Pennsylvania, in Somerset County. He is buried at the Ream Cemetery, which is located at Latitude 39.812123°, Longitude -79.336862°, directly along the bank of Laurel Hill Creek. Early documents report his first name as both Otho and Andrew.

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