

A Journey Through Time

The **TIMES** Chronicle

Columnist Linda Reno is a historian and genealogist specializing in Southern Maryland history. Mrs. Reno is a member of the St. Mary's County Historical Society, St. Mary's County Genealogical Society, Charles County Genealogical Society, Maryland Historical Society and the Maryland Genealogical Society. She has authored many books and articles on local history. We hope you will enjoy these articles and welcome your comments and suggestions for future subjects.

By Linda Reno
Contributing Writer

Joseph Jarboe (1752-1834) and Raphael Jarboe (1760-1817) were the sons of John and Elizabeth Jarboe of St. Mary's County. After the death of their father in 1794, the sons moved to Frederick County, Maryland. Then, about 1812 Joseph decided to move his family to Kentucky.

This letter gives us a good idea of what it was like to travel in those days and how easy we have it now. This same trip in 2009 by car would take about 10 hours.

"Nelson County, Kentucky, February 4, 1813

Dear Brother,

I gladly embrace this opportunity of writing you these few lines hoping they will find you and family in good health. I shall wish to acquaint you of my journey to Kentucky.

We arrived at Brownsville or Red Stone Old Fort [Pennsylvania], the 15th day after commencement of our journey. It was there agreed by Mr. Honel and myself to take water, which after 5 days we agreed with two gentlemen who was bound down the Ohio to Limestone. We unloaded our wagons, sent them on by land and the families goes on board the boat, except Mr. John Philpot, my sons John and William, Mr. Honel's son who went with the wagon but I think I must not forget to inform you that my horses ran down Brownsville hill, ran into the stone bank, my wife and several of the children in the wagon.

John who was driving, fell off the saddle horse by the side of an old tree, the wagon ran over him, but the tree prevented the wagon from mashing him to pieces. He was much hurt for awhile. This was the first accident that happened. We started in our boat rubbing on every ripple and the second day she got quite fast on a rock. My poor wife and Ann Philpot, Negro Margaret and six children remaining in her in a freezing condition. All the large ones we set on horse to travel on foot to Wheeling and to get to Limestone as they could. You must understand this is the Monongahela about 35 miles above Pittsburgh.

I then hired a small boat to take my company to Fort Pitt. You must understand we are divided into three companies. We arrived at Pittsburgh the second morning after leaving the boat and then continued 10 days before I could get a passage, and when I got a passage it was in a reed-bottom boat, deeply laden with merchandise. No fire except some coals in a kittle. I expected we should all freeze together. To inform you of every disagreeable circumstance going down this river would be too tedious.

We arrived at Limestone in 2 weeks after leaving Pittsburgh on Monday morning about 3 hours before the appearance of day. I goes up into the town inquiring of every person I saw respecting my poor, scattered family. I goes into a Mr. Lee's tavern speaking as I went

in at the door, my poor distressed children cried aloud "That's my father!" I began to inquire of them how they got to that place and they informed me they got into an open boat some part of the way the river in freezing situation as my party had been.

I immediately beheld my son William in bed, his collarbone and shoulder bone broken, his leg dreadfully wounded by Mr. Philpot's wagon upsetting with 12 barrels of flour going down the river bank, the wagon went over three times before stopping. A doctor & surgeon of that town was attending him. Mr. Lee informed me that my family had been at house 13 days and that he could not with propriety render me a bill of the expense in my unfortunate situation. Just before I arrived here my son Harry with six of my Negroes set off down to Bardstown [KY] 104 miles below Limestone.

The remainder of my family left Limestone Tuesday evening with our wagons, excepting my poor child which I am obliged to leave with Mr. Lee and the doctor. We arrived at Samuel Gatton's the 23rd day of December. In a few days after I received a letter from Mr. Lee informing me that my poor child William was attacked with a violent pleurisy and extremely dangerous. I thought I would go up to Limestone, you may guess my feelings, but my journey was prevented. My wife was taken also with a violent pleurisy, both priest and doctor called to her. Both agreed there was little or no hope. Thanks be to God she is now likely to recover.

One night as I was almost distracted with grief, I heard it spoke that Billy was come. I started up and saw him before my eyes with young Cornelius McGinness who had take his wagon and carried him to his father's house and there was nursed till this young man brought him down to me. I do and ever shall respect the name McGinness. He would have not one cent from me.

You may guess the expenses of my journey. I hope you have sold Jack before the year expired and that you are safe from the two gentlemen respecting the hire, suppose you are. Then I have rec'd of your money \$368.00. What little may be coming to me I hope you will send by Mr. Medcalf who bring you this letter. I cannot expect one cent from Montgomery County until the expiration of 9 months. Ask my son Joseph who waits to settle my business there.

I shall not say anything respecting Kentucky in this letter. I expect the land you requested me to inquire of is not to be found. And I surely believe there is no such land. I thought I knew the situation of Kentucky and I am satisfied my idea was tolerably correct. If I was to inform you what I thought of Kentucky in this letter you might say I had not been in the country long enough to judge, therefore I will send my opinion in my next letter, but be sure I have paid for my arrival to Kentucky.

Be pleased to hand this letter Mr. James Stevens after you read it. Dear Brother, you will treat the gentleman who hands you this the same as you would me, he being a respectable character and useful member of Nelson County [KY].

I am with sincere affection your loving brother till death. Signed by Joseph Jarboe.

Everyone of my family send their love to your family and Mr. Stevens.

N.B. Dear Brother: You will be friend to the utmost of your power to this worthy gentleman, Mr. Medcalf, Respecting any business he may have to do in your neighborhood. Your compliance with my request will greatly oblige.

Your B. J. J."

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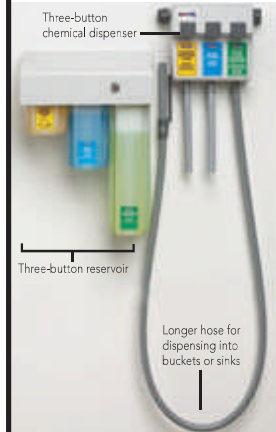
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