

The Journal of Jane Voorhees Lewis

In the spring of 1847, Abraham Voorhees and his wife, accompanied by their married daughter Jane and her husband, moved from New Jersey to Illinois, traveling through the center of Indiana on the National Road. Jane kept a journal of their trip west. The families settled in White Hall, Illinois, and Jane's husband died two years after they arrived.

May 27, 1847:

Mother and me walked 5 miles yesterday. I have walked no more since we crossed three brooks without bridges. One came up to the body of the wagon. The land is a little hilly here.

May 28:

We got off the turnpike at Richmond on the National Road. It is not finished but it is a good road. Only the wet places they are laid with logs and that is rough enough. There is no toll.

We can live good. Everything is cheap: eggs 3 cents a dozen, fresh beef 2 1/2 cents a pound, sweet potatoes as good as in the fall 12 1/2 cents a peck, the best of bread from 4 to 6 cents a loaf. They keep a large stock fat horses and fine carriages.

The roads are better. We crossed the Blue River. Some ride it and some are ferried over. We rode it and it did not come to the Body of the wagon. We have a fine place to stay all night in a beech wood on the green grass. We built a fire against a stump, stones for andirons, dog chains for trammels, and a table stands here for people to eat off. It is a great stopping place for movers.

May 31:

It was a very rainy day yesterday. We were caught in a hard dash and could not get the wagons under shelter. But at night we got the horses and wagons in a barn and we stayed in the house. They was a very clever family. We felt ourselves at home while there and had radishes as thick as my wrist for breakfast this morning. If the people in Jersey was to have everything to look as well in the spring they would be almost scared, and they say it is a backward spring here. I like Indiana better than Ohio so far.

June 1:

Came through Indianapolis, the capitol. There is a fine statehouse here and they are building a lunatic asylum. It is very large. Mason's wages are 1 1/2 dol[lars] a day and boarded. We turned off the National Road to go by Clinton. The National Road goes to Terre Haute . We have to put up before night along Walnut Creek. It is so high we cannot cross it. It will swim a horse and runs swift. They are fixing the bodies of the wagons on blocks to cross in the morning.

June 2:

We got over the creek very well. Mother was so afraid she laid on the bed. She said if she must drown she would not look. I sat up on the bed and looked out. I could not feel afraid for laughing to see her.

June 3:

Today we crossed the Wabash River at Clinton in a ferry boat. I was more afraid than I have been at all. The river is deep and was very high and an old concern of a Boat.