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## THREE KENTUCKY PIONEERS JAMES, PATRICK, AND WILLIAM BROWN

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It is not news to those who are familiar with the early history of Kentucky that many of its pioneers were men of education and refinement as well as character. But even among these there is apt to be a lack of understanding of the finer qualities of many of these pioneers. Pioneers were virile stock. They had rough and risky work to do. To their descendants—accustomed to the refinements of civilization, who have gotten soft, living under the easy conditions that have resulted from their ancestors' pioneering—the unconscious estimate of the pioneers usually is that they were largely a pretty rough lot. The pioneers had the good qualities, it is true, of those who do the dangerous work of the world, but hardly any of the fine fiber of their gentler descendants. How the fiber of these descendants has changed in the course of a few generations, we do not take the trouble to ask ourselves. This estimate is not lacking in the historical accounts of them, even by some writers who are in sympathy with their achievements. When it comes to the rank and file of the thoughtless, their vague estimate of pioneers is that they were a breed of brawling, hard-drinking, fighting—often murderous—ruffians. This idea, of course, comes from the accounts of the daredevils of the border whose lives lend themselves so well to picturesque description in its literature. But the estimate is not true.

Let anyone read the authentic literature of any of these pioneer movements—the settlement of the Ohio Valley or of the Western Plains, the movements over the Oregon, or the Overland or the Santa Fe trails, or even the Days of '49 in California—let him read the contemporaneous accounts written by the actors themselves, and he sees that many of them were men of intelligence and refinement, often of culture, sometimes strongly religious, and always set upon establishing law-abiding, Christian communities. Men of this kind were sufficiently numerous to dominate, in the end, these movements. The ruffians are there, too, but, when they become unbearable, the men of the right sort are always sufficiently strong and numerous to take care of the situation, even if they have to organize vigilance committees to do it. This is certainly true of Kentucky. Among its early settlers were many men who were not only equal to the hard and perilous work of the frontier, but who were men of ideals, education, and refinement, of a quality that was sufficient to insure a high degree of civilization in the communities they established. In illustration of this thesis, I am presenting a sketch of three brothers, James, William, and Patrick Brown, Kentucky pioneers.

Roosevelt, in his *Winning of the West*, draws a distinction between those who came from the Tidewater Section of Virginia and Pennsylvania and Carolina—the older settlements—and those who came from the Border Settlements of the mountains. I am not sure of any essential quality in the distinction. The first were from old communities, the second from backwoods districts that were themselves pioneer. The Brown brothers belonged in the first group. They came from Tidewater, Virginia—Hanover and New Kent counties. Their ancestors, for the several generations that are known, had been men in the upper walks of life. Their forebearers had come to Virginia from Scotland as representatives of interests engaged in commercial and shipping businesses. I have a letter of their father, James Brown, of Hanover. It is written to William Brown, who was then a merchant in New Kent, and has to do with the care of his youngest son, Miller, who is going to visit his brother William, and with business about a negro slave, Moses, who has disappeared. It is the letter of a gentleman. These brothers, like many other Kentucky pioneers, came from a gentle family of education.

## JAMES BROWN

The intimations that one can gain from the known facts about James Brown would indicate that his life was the most adventurous of the three brothers, but, unfortunately, we have only a few of its details. He certainly was an early Kentucky pioneer. Judge Samuel M. Wilson, of Lexington, in a personal letter to me writes: "It is of great interest to know of the relationship of William Brown and James Brown, the valiant and heroic surveyor and soldier. . . . There may, of course, have been two James Browns in Kentucky during the decade 1772-1782, but all the circumstances point, I think, to the fact that the James Brown of 1772 and the following years was the same man who fell at the Blue Licks."

In his "First Land Courts of Kentucky, 1779-1780," Judge Wilson gives the records known as "Commissioner's Certificates" of the Kentucky Land Court of 1779-80. They show that:

"I. James Brown made an 'improvement,' possibly a cabin, on the Hanging Fork of Dick's River, in 1772. (See, also, *Sinclair v. Singleton*, *Hughes* 176) . . . III. The following were made in the year 1774: . . . James Brown (probably the same as the James Brown, who made an 'improvement' in 1772) made an 'improvement' on Clark's Run, one or one and a half miles above Clark's Station. (See, also *Heirs of Crow v. Brown*, *Sneed* 102, and *Brown v. Heirs of Crow Sneed* 106, and *Crow's Heirs v. Harrod's Heir Hardin* 443)," (p. 63).

In a personal communication to me Judge Wilson writes:

"There were several suits, from Lincoln County, involving the land claims of Brown, which are reported in brief in the Kentucky reports, but, as the records of these appeals at Frankfort were destroyed by fire, about the close of the Civil War, the only way to find out more, perhaps, would be to examine the original papers at Stanford, the county seat of Lincoln County, which I assume have been preserved. These papers might or might not throw light on some of the points which the brief opinions of the court leave in obscurity, and might give clues that would point to other facts of interest to you. The suits in question you will find cited at pages 63-64 of the First Land Courts, and I repeat them here: *Sinclair v. Singleton*, *Hughes* (1 Ky.) 176. *Heirs of Crow*

*v. Brown, Sneed* (2 Ky.) 102. *Brown v. Heirs of Crow, Sneed* (2 Ky.) 106. *Crow's Heirs v. Harrod's Heirs, Hardin* (3 Ky.) 443."

Mrs. Ann Harrod's statement shows that James Brown was also one of the party who built cabins at Harrodsburg in 1774. I quote the following from notes taken November 23, 1842, by General R. B. McAfee during an interview with her as recorded in *The Register* of the Kentucky State Historical Society, September, 1929 (Vol. 27, No. 81), page 562:

"In Ky. in '74 [Captain James Harrod], built cabins at Harrodsburg. The names of his party with him in '74 as copied by Gen. McAfee from Harrod's company book, in possession of Margt. Fauntleroy, viz: Capt. James Harrod; James Davis; Wm. Venable; W. Arthur Campbell; Wm. Campbell; John Crow; Abraham Chapline; David Williams; James Kerr; Silas Harlan; Azariah Davis; Joseph Blackford; Patrick Doran; James Saunders; David Glenn; James Cowan; Elijah Harlan; W. Crow; Wm. Meyers; Wm. Fields; Wm. Montgomery; John Brown; Henry Dugan; John Smith; *James Brown*; Azariah Reese; Martin Stull; Wm. Garrett; John Clarke; John Wiley; John Shelp; \_\_\_\_\_ Sodosky."

From family records it is known that the James Brown, who was killed at the Battle of the Blue Licks, (August 19, 1782), had been in Kentucky for several years. His nephew, Alfred M. Brown, when a man of about sixty years, and always careful of his facts, says, in a letter:

"James, the second son of the same parents, came to Kentucky quite early. Exactly when, I do not know, but he was certainly in Kentucky as early as 1780 as the writer has an original paper in his handwriting, of 20 August 1780, which bears evidence that he and Col. George Rogers Clark (afterwards General Clark) were planning an expedition against the Indians at that date."

The land title records show that in May, 1779, James Brown made a settlement in the Harrodsburg district. (Judge Wilson's letter, November 25, 1929.)

William Fleming's Journal published in *Travels in the American Colonies*, mentions James Brown at Harrodsburg in the winter of 1779-80: "April 10th. Capt. Pawling came to Col. Bowmans and brought Letters from home informing me that the Military warrants were sent down by Capt. Todd who had not returned

and my preemption Certificates by James Brown who had Returned.”

It is certain that the James Brown who was killed at the Battle of the Blue Licks was a seasoned Kentucky pioneer and that he was a surveyor. Judge Wilson says on this point: “One thing I desire to call your attention to. It is this: In this story of the ‘Battle of the Blue Licks’ published in 1896, Colonel Bennett H. Young, described James Brown as a ‘surgeon.’ This is an error. I have examined a photostat of the report of the battle, in which James Brown’s name occurs, and he is there plainly described as a ‘Surveyor.’ This better accords with the business in which he was engaged in Kentucky between 1772 and 1782.”

On the relationship of James Brown, who died at the Battle of the Blue Licks, to William and Patrick Brown there is no doubt, for in his Journal of his trip to Kentucky in 1782, William Brown says:

“Monday 29 inst. [July 29, 1782]. I got to Harrodsburg and saw Bro. James. The next day we parted as he was about setting off to a journey to Cumberland. On Monday Aug. 19, Col. Todd with a party of 182 of our men, attacked a body of Indiana suppd. to number 6 or 7 Hundred, at the Blue Lick, and was defeated, with a loss of 65 persons missing and slain. . . . In this action brother James fell.” (*Pusey’s Wilderness Road to Kentucky*, p. 40.)

In the *History Quarterly of The Filson Club* (Vol. III, No. 5, October, 1929, p. 231) is published the statement, taken by Dr. Lyman C. Draper, of Mrs. Elizabeth Thomas, on one of the early residents of the fort at Harrodsburg, in which she says: “There were eight Harrodsburg people killed [at Blue Licks Battle]: Joseph Lindsay, James Brown, John Kennedy, Capt. Clough Overton, Stevens and three others. Defeat 19th August 1782. Thinks eight or twelve were taken prisoner.”

This would identify our James Brown as the Harrodsburg James Brown and would suggest that he was the James Brown who was at Harrodsburg in 1774, but it does not definitely establish that our James Brown and the James Brown of Harrodsburg in 1774, and earlier, are the same person. In a later letter to me Judge Wilson says that the land title records indicate that there were two James Browns in Kentucky before the Battle of the

Blue Licks, both of whom took up land. The facts which Judge Wilson has been good enough to give me suggest that the James Brown who was at Harrodsburg in 1774 and who made an improvement in 1772 was not the James Brown, brother of William, who was killed at the Battle of the Blue Licks, but another James Brown, whom we may identify as James Brown the brother of John, as he is referred to in some of the old records. Whether it was James Brown the brother of John or James Brown the brother of William who took up the first land claim in Kentucky, the fact remains that James Brown the brother of William was one of the early adventurers in Kentucky, played a part in its most perilous times, and, at the Battle of the Blue Licks, gave the last full measure of devotion to its cause.

#### PATRICK BROWN

Patrick Brown, the youngest of the three Brown brothers, came to Kentucky with his brother William on his first trip in 1782. They met their brother James upon their arrival, and were together on the battlefield of the Blue Licks with Colonel Logan's men when the body of their brother James was found. They were partners in most of their enterprises and lived upon adjoining farms until Patrick moved to Indiana in 1814—(Alfred M. Brown). But Patrick settled in Kentucky before William. Many records of his activities indicate that he had become a citizen of established position when, in 1790, William came to take up his land. He had become active in both civil and military affairs. In March, 1790, he was one of the commission to lay off what seems to have been the first road from Hodgenville to Bardstown: "At a court continued and held for Nelson County on Sat. the 13th day of Mch. 1790, Present, Isaac Morrison, Benjamin Pope, Gabriel Cox, Joshua Hibbs, Gentlemen, Ordered that Philip Phillips, Jacob Van Meter, Patrick Brown and Robert Hodgins, or any three of them, do view and report in this court on oath the nearest and best way for opening a road to lead from Philip Phillips near Hodgins's mill to Capt. Jacob Van Meter's mill on Valley Creek."

This record was furnished by Judge Otis M. Mather. Judge Mather comments: "This was evidently the first move towards the establishment of the road from what is now Hodgenville to

what is now Elizabethtown. If the settlers of the fort, which had probably been abandoned prior to the date of this order, had any public road as an outlet before this time it must have been towards Bardstown, the county seat."

He was with the Kentucky troops, with the rank of major, under Colonel Oldham, at St. Clair's Defeat, November 4, 1791. Samuel Haycraft in his *History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky*, says (p. 49): "Seeing death or escape the only alternative and being surrounded by the enemy on every side, Major Patrick Brown, Captain Thomas (since General Thomas), Stephen Cleaver (since General Cleaver), Mr. John Helm and a few others concluded to make a last desperate attempt to open a passage through the Indian lines, the only possible way by which to retreat."

Patrick Brown commanded in the last Indian fight in his part of Kentucky. Collins in his *Kentucky* (p. 646) says of this engagement:

"In August, 1792, information was communicated to Major Brown, of Nelson County, that a party of Indians were committing depredations on the Rolling Fork of Salt River. He immediately raised a company of volunteers, and commenced a vigilant search for the marauders. Falling on their trail, he pursued and overtook them, when a brisk skirmish ensued between his men and the rear of the Indian force, consisting of twelve warriors. In this spirited conflict, four of the Indians were left dead on the field, and the remainder were dispersed."

Alfred M. Brown, his nephew, in a letter to James P. Brown, of Danville, Illinois, described this same fight in more detail: "The invading party was about sixteen strong. The pursuing party was about the same number and was led by (then) Col. Patrick Brown. They tracked the Indians to a small river called Rolling Fork. Here night closed in on them. Early next morning they took up the trail and saw where the Indians had gone down into the river and then down the stream for about half a mile, when they went out on the other bank. . . . A short distance from where they went out on the opposite bank the pursuers came upon the Indians between the banks of a wet-weather stream and got the first fire. A hand-to-hand fight ensued, in which all of the Indians were killed but one and three of the whites were killed, towit: Ashcraft, Vertrees, and one other whose name is

not remembered. John Walters, from whom the writer got this information, was among the wounded. The place where this fight occurred is now known as Brown's Run and is in Bullitt County, Kentucky." Judge Otis M. Mather's records confirm the fact that John Walters was in the Battle of Brown's Run.

J. R. Zimmerman has a fuller account of this battle in *The Courier-Journal*.<sup>1</sup> It is based upon personal information handed down in Bullitt County and a letter by Alfred M. Brown to Judge W. R. Thompson of Shepherdsville. Zimmerman shows that the site of this fight was about twelve miles southwest of Shepherdsville and two miles southeast of Pitts' Point; that it did not occur on Brown's Run, which empties into Salt River, but on Indian Run, which empties into Rolling Fork three miles south of Brown's Run. It was a bloody fight. Of the fourteen or fifteen whites three were killed, and of the twelve or fifteen Indians only one escaped. As Zimmerman says, "Somewhere near Blue Spring twelve or fourteen redmen are buried, but as far as I can learn no one had ever pointed out the exact spot; but they were given burial by Colonel Brown and his men." Let us note that, while the Indians were practically exterminated, they were not scalped and their bodies were not left for carrion, but were given burial by their foes.

In civic affairs in his district Patrick Brown was even more active. His name is constantly found in the records of the county among those engaged in forwarding its interests and holding positions of responsibility. He was a justice of the first court held in Hardin County. Haycraft (p. 30) says:

"On the 26th day of February, 1793, the first Quarter Sessions Court (being the first court held in the county) was held in the house of Isaac Hynes in Severn's Valley. A commission was produced appointing Phillip Phillips, Joseph Barnett and Thomas Helm, Justices of the Court of Quarter Sessions, who being sworn took their seats; and in the same commission Patrick Brown, John Vertrees, John Paul, William Hardin, and Alexander Barnett, gentlemen, were appointed Justices of the Hardin County Court." Again, Haycraft says (p. 17): "The first term of the county court was held at the house of Isaac Hynes on the 22nd day of July, 1793. Present, Patrick Brown, John Vertrees, Robt. Hodgen and Bladen Ashby, gentlemen, Justices."

Patrick Brown was a member of the Second Constitutional Convention of Kentucky, held in 1799. He was among a considerable minority who were opposed to slavery and who refused to sign the Constitution because slavery was recognized by it. Their names are, therefore, not included in the list of signers of the Constitution. Hardin County, according to this list, had no representatives in the Second Convention.

Judge Otis M. Mather, of Hodgenville, is the best authority on the history of the Nolin Valley Country. He confirms the statement that there is no doubt of Patrick Brown's membership in the Constitutional Convention of 1799, and, indeed, furnishes the explanation for the lack of his name and others among the list of signers, which I have given in the preceding paragraph.

Alfred M. Brown says upon this point: "Patrick Brown was the owner of a number of negroes; represented Hardin County in the Constitutional Convention of 1799; wanted to make Kentucky a non-slave holding state; failed in that; came home; freed his negro slaves, and, in due time, located on a tract of land (in Indiana) which was patented to him about 1814, on which he died in the year 1835, at the age of seventy five, and on which his remains were interred. This tract of land is about two miles from the city of Madison, Indiana."

I have examined the tax lists for 1812 for that part of Hardin County which is now La Rue County. It is an interesting fact that at that time Patrick Brown lists no slaves. His brother William, however, was the largest slave-holder in the district, owning fourteen.

#### WILLIAM BROWN

James Brown was the outstanding pioneer of the Brown family, Patrick was the public citizen; and William was the observer and recorder. We know more about William because he made notes. And, in a way, this is fortunate, for a clear picture of William Brown has some general historical interest due to the fact that he is an example of the men who established and determined the character of the community in which, a generation after its foundation, Abraham Lincoln was born and spent the first seven years of his childhood.

William Brown's name has been preserved in the annals of Kentucky through the two Journals of the roads to Kentucky

which he wrote: one in 1782, and another in 1790. He first came to Kentucky in 1782, with his younger brother Patrick, doubtless influenced, in coming out to look the country over, by reports from his brother James. He arrived at Harrodsburg on July 29, 1782, and was back in Hanover, Virginia, in October. He was in Kentucky only a few weeks, but he was in the settlement during one of the most disastrous periods of its history. Seventeen Eighty-two is the Dark Year in the pioneer history of Kentucky. William and Patrick Brown arrived there just three weeks before the unequalled calamity of the ambush and massacre at Blue Licks. They were with Colonel Benjamin Logan's men who reached the battlefield on the 24th of August and buried the dead, including James Brown. William Brown thus had an experience of the worst dangers of the frontier—dangers that were intensified for him by the shock of his brother's death at the hands of the Indians. The only comment he makes upon these harrowing experiences is: "In this action Bro. James fell."

He remained a month in Kentucky and then started back to Virginia. All he says of his return trip over the Wilderness Road—when, if ever a man should have been afraid of ambush, he should have been—is this: "On my return to Hanover, I set off from Jno. Craig's Mon. 23rd. Sept., 1782. Left English's Tues. 1 o'clock. Arrived at the Block House the Monday evening following and kept on the same route downward chiefly that I travelled out. Nothing material occurred to me. Got to Hanover sometime about the last of October the same year."

We have abundant evidence that his temperament was not phlegmatic. The repression of his emotions under the experiences of Kentucky that summer illustrated the self-control of the strong men of the times.

There is no record that William Brown was in Kentucky between 1782 and 1790, but in 1784 he and his brother Patrick obtained a patent to a tract of land of about 1,000 acres in Hardin County upon the headwaters of the North Fork of Nolin Creek. Between 1782 and 1790 he was a merchant for at least part of the time, at New Kent, Virginia. He returned to Kentucky in 1790. This time he came to develop his place on Nolin, which he called Mt. Gilead. On March 21, 1792, he married Hannah Street at Hanover, Virginia. They came to Kentucky very soon thereafter and lived at Mt. Gilead the rest of their lives.

Hannah Brown is not a subject of this sketch, nevertheless a few words should be given about her, for she played an important part in the life of William Brown. Women of her sort were the chief explanation of how homes of cultured traditions were developed in the wilderness. She came of good stock. Her family had pride in the fact that her mother's father was a first cousin of James Thomson, the Scotch poet. The men on both sides of the house were successful merchants and planters; they had come to Virginia as representatives of Scotch and English interests. She was a sensitive, educated, Christian woman, accustomed to the amenities of the civilization of Tidewater, Virginia. With such a background she came to her frontier home, in 1792, a girl of twenty-one. She lived there forty-nine years—until 1843. At her death, her youngest child, Alfred M. Brown, was a man thirty-two years old. From him I learned of her personality, of her gentleness, and of the affection and well ordered discipline which characterized the household over which she presided. Her husband doubtless had her in mind, when twelve years after their marriage, he was led to write in his note book these lines:

“My loving partner in her turn  
Anticipates desire,  
And oft, as if it would not burn,  
She trims the blazing fire.  
Officiously she now displays  
The dish and cleanly platter  
And, when excuse for aught she prays,  
Contentment cries, no matter.  
Thus, round my soul endearments twine,  
With stronger faster hold,  
Yes Hymen's lamp still brighter shines,  
And charms still new unfold.  
As thus connubial pleasures rise,  
To gild my dear abode,  
To Heaven I lift my grateful eyes  
And thank a bounteous God.”

Upon a knoll commanding a view of his lands—“Much the pleasantest of any part of Kentucky I ever was in,” as he described it—and under a great oak tree, William Brown was buried

in 1825. He and his wife had carefully designated this spot as their burying place. Hannah Street survived him eighteen years, and carried on the responsibilities of the household. In 1843 she was laid beside him, and the epitaph upon her tombstone—one of the most satisfying I know—reads:

“She was the best of mothers  
And a pious Christian.”

I have no doubt that affection did not exaggerate in thus describing her.

I have often speculated why William and Patrick Brown went to Nolin Valley to select a site for their homes. Their journeys had taken them over all of central Kentucky. William Brown's Journal contains many comments on the quality of the land, most of them showing good judgment, as subsequent developments have proved. But, on the whole, it is probable they gave undue weight to the quality of the Nolin Valley timber and the water supply. Walnut, hickory, and maple, and other fine hardwood, running brooks and never failing springs were the advantages they considered in selecting their home sites. They were suspicious of the barrens, as the later people of the border were at first suspicious of the prairies. Whatever their reasons were, William and Patrick Brown picked their settlements on the plateau above Muldraugh's Hill on the headwaters of a lesser tributary of Green River. Mt. Gilead did not turn out to be a poor location for a home and a farm. It is situated in the valley, on both sides of the North Branch of Nolin—at that point a small but never failing brook. The land was rolling and fairly fertile. The home site which William selected was on a bluff fifty or sixty feet above the level of the creek, with a fine spring below it, and offered an attractive prospect across a pleasant valley.

Among his neighbors in the Nolin settlement who had taken up their lands about the same time were: Jacob and James La Rue, Conrad Walters, Isom Enlow, Robert Hodgen, Conrad Kastor, Philip Phillips and Joseph Kirkpatrick, all men of large affairs in their communities. The strength of their stock has been proven by the ability of many of their descendants. It was an isolated district, of course; but before the days of steam transportation—even before roads—every place was isolated. The land

was fairly productive; it gave them good crops and the creature comforts of the day. I had always been inclined to sympathize with the poverty, as well as the hardship, of the lot of William Brown and his family, until recently when Judge Otis M. Mather called my attention to the fact that his situation was quite the opposite. He had a good farm and was the largest slaveholder in the district.

William did not have the interest or, perhaps, the capacity of his brother Patrick in civic affairs; there is no evidence that he took an active part in them. He appears as a trustee and a witness of wills, but he was not in public activities like his brother Patrick. William's memory is preserved by his evident accuracy as an observer and by the records he wrote and preserved.

The most notable illustration of this is seen in his Journals; first of his trip over the Wilderness Road in the summer of 1782, and second, of his trip via Braddock's Road and the Ohio River in 1790. These two Journals were given publicity, first, in Thomas Speed's fine book, *The Wilderness Road* [Filson Club Publications Nos. 2]. They have been republished since by many historians. Thomas Speed published four contemporaneous journals of the Wilderness Road: William Calk's, John Filson's, Thomas Speed's and William Brown's. The only other journal with which I am familiar is William Fleming's.\*

Brown's Journal of 1782 is a record of the road and of the country. It is more detailed and full, more so than any of the others. It so accurately locates the landmarks along the road that one can follow it, as I did ten years ago, as a guide. Its "occurrences and observations" of the road are clear and judicious comments.

Brown's Journal of 1790—his trip to Kentucky by the Ohio River route—takes him over Braddock's Road from Cumberland to Red Stone (Old Fort), thence down the Monongahela and Ohio rivers to the mouth of Limestone at Maysville, thence across Kentucky through Harrodsburg and Bardstown, to Mt. Gilead. Throughout the journey he makes careful observations, both of the road and the country. He gives interesting descriptions of the scenery along the Ohio River and most careful records and directions of its landmarks, and of the river's dangers and the ways to avoid them. It is the only contemporaneous journal of Braddock's Road that Hulbert publishes in his book, *Braddock's Road*.

These journals of the road are contained in his memorandum book, to which they have evidently been transcribed. I have lately found the original notes of his journey of 1790 by the Ohio River. These are contained in a home-made book, made by folding a few sheets of ordinary white paper to form a booklet that fits easily into a pocket. It is bound with a cover of three thicknesses of brown paper, stitched to the backbone of the pages; one side of the cover is sufficiently long to permit the book to be folded into a roll. This copy of original notes does not differ from the transcribed copy except that the "observations and occurrences" are often written at the point where they occurred, instead of being collected, as in the transcribed copy, at the end of the booklet. The "observations" in the transcribed copy are also somewhat more extensive than in the original notes.

The memorandum book in which these Journals of the roads are transcribed is interesting, not only because of the Journals but also for several other records and for the indubitable evidence it gives of the manner of man William Brown was. The book was originally a small ledger he had used as a merchant at New Kent. The tops of many pages are occupied by short accounts of customers through which, in order to cancel them, he carefully ran a series of continuous circles.\*

The contents of the memorandum book fall into four groups of subjects: Literature—chiefly poetry; notes on science and inventions; recipes for illness; and records of his own observations. He evidently was fond of poetry—poetry of sentiment and of the philosophy of life. The first lines in the book happily express the spirit of the times and of the pioneers:

"For should the blast of war be heard  
To threat impending harms  
Secure beneath our Veteran Bird  
We'll brave the world in arms."

This is nearer doggerel than anything else in the book.

The most space devoted to any one subject in the book is thirteen pages given to an abstract of metallurgical knowledge taken from Boerhaave's Chemistry. This is curious, for there is nothing in tradition, or of record elsewhere, to indicate that Brown ever took any active interest in mining.

Next to the Journals of the two routes to Kentucky the most striking evidence of the sober accuracy with which he made observations is his record of the great New Madrid earthquake of 1811, which shattered western Kentucky. Of it he writes:

“Mount Gilead, Kentucky Earthquake. On Sunday December 15th, about 2 of the clock at night, a severe shock of an earthquake was felt, the motion of shaking continued about 15 minutes. About half an hour after the shock was over another shock was felt, less severe, continued only a minute or two. The next day, Monday morning the 16th, a little after sun rise, another shock was felt, the tremor continued a few minutes. Two other slight shocks were felt that morning—the next shock was on Tuesday about midday, not so violent as the first. The weather for some days before had been dull and cloudy. Again on the night of the 30th instant a shock was felt—again on Jan'y 23rd (Thursday) 1812 at 8 of the clock in the morning another severe shock was felt, the tremor continued for several minutes; when it had stilled, another shock was felt, which lasted a minute or two. On Monday, Jan'y 27th, a slight shock was felt. On Tuesday evening, 4th of Feby 1812, a slight shock was felt, the trembling of the earth continued for several minutes suppd. 6 or 7 and a rumbling noise heard. These are the shocks that we have felt in this place. By report hardly a day passes but the trembling of the earth is more or less felt. In time of the severest shocks to attempt to walk you feel light headed and reel about like a drunken man. Again on the night of Thursday 6th Feby about 4 o'clock A. M. a very severe shock was felt, which lasted fully 15 minutes, with a trembling noise like distant thunder and 3 very distinct reports like cannon was heard at the end of it. Again on Friday night the 7th a smart shock about 8 o'clock then again about 11 o'clock another less severe. Frequently you may feel a trembling in the earth where there is no visible appearance of shaking. It has invariably been cloudy weather about the time of the shocks and rains or snows shortly after. Again on the night of Thursday, 20th. Feb. about 9 or 10 o'clock 2 slight shocks were felt the last of which continued its tremor for more than 15 minutes. Again on Saturday night 22nd. about 10 o'clock another slight shock.”

His note immediately preceding the account of the earthquake is on the comet he had seen at Mt. Gilead: “A comet with a broomy tail appeared about the first week in September, 1811, in

the northern region of the Heavens. Its course appeared to be coming from the Northeast and making its way to the Southwest. Continued to be visible until about the middle of Jan'y 1812. The last appearance of it was in the South Western region of the Heavens."

The lack of exaggeration in the record of the earthquake and the failure to connect it by any superstition with the comet that preceded it is striking evidence of the sound sense and stable quality of the man.

The temperateness and lack of excitability of Brown's observations are brought out by contrasting them, not with those of men upon the ground at the center of surface activity of the earthquake, who were in the midst of its worst horrors, but with descriptions found elsewhere. For instance, an account of it in Louisville, as given by Collins in his *History of Kentucky*:

"The first shock was felt in Louisville, December 16, 1811, a few minutes after two o'clock in the morning, and continued three and a half to four minutes. For one minute the shock was severe. Several gentlemen of Louisville were amusing themselves at a social party, when one of their acquaintances burst into the room and cried out, 'Gentlemen, how can you be engaged in this way, when the world is so near its end!' The company rushed out, and from the motion of objects around them, every star seemed to be falling. 'What a pity,' exclaimed one of them, 'that so beautiful a world should be destroyed!' Almost every one of them believed that mother earth as she heaved and struggled, was in her last agony. For several months, the citizens of Louisville were in continual alarm. The earth seemed to have no rest, except the uneasy rest of one disturbed by horrid dreams. Each house generally had a key suspended over the mantle piece, and by its oscillations the inmates were informed of the degree of danger. If the shock was violent, brick houses were immediately deserted. Under the key usually lay a Bible."

The most pleasing evidence of the quality of William Brown is shown by a letter that has lately come to my attention. Mr. Harvey Mudd, of Los Angeles, one of his descendants, recently sent me a photostat copy of this letter. Of its history Mr. Mudd says:

"This letter was written in 1791. William Brown of Kentucky and Hannah Street of Hanover county, Virginia, had been en-

gaged, but because of some differences of religious belief the family persuaded her that it was her duty to break the engagement, quoting the passage: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.'"

There can be no question of the authenticity of the latter. The writing and the signature are unmistakably William Brown's. He writes his beloved:

"Dear Miss: When you consider the pure unmingled affection I have for you, and how near to an happy union we have been brought, you cannot be insensible to the unhappiness I now feel in the present situation. Permit me then, O my Precious One, to speak the language of that spirit which now promptest me to write, and if I should extend my expressions to extravagance I trust, if from no other motive, that from the goodness of your own heart I shall be excused; which leads me to say, the sword of cruelty drawn by the hand of ungenerous prejudice has struck the stroke of separation between me, and myself, my better half; and I now (as I have always endeavored to do) commend and commit you to the Hands of God who is able to have whatsoever His will is, accomplished. And if ever hereafter my false delusive spirit should be drawing us on, to be entering on an Union that is not right in the sight of Heaven, be pleased O Lord to prepare me for early death and take me from out of the land of the living, and while my flesh shall lie sleeping in the dust, O Merciful God be pleased to let her enjoy all the happiness and comforts in this Life than thou dost intend any of Thy Creatures to have that are endeavouring to do Thy Will. And may your Habitation be blessed with peaceful solitude and even the whispering of the tops of the lofty trees conspire to raise your Idea's of the Majesty of the Great Eternal, and the gentle sound of the purling streams charm you with His Goodness. May the propitious smiles of Heaven enliven and sweeten your path through life, and may the blessed spirit continually influence you so, that guided by it, you may never feel that discomposure of mind, which the too light and careless even among the religious often do. And when the time approacheth that you are called from this mortal state, may your setting sun shine bright with the reflection of a well spent life. And then, O then, may the music of Heaven begin in gentle accents to sound sweetly in your ears, and the glory which you

are then soon to enter, begin in glimpses to open to your view. I must hold here. O Death where is thy sting! O Grave where is thy victory!

“And must I now bid adieu, and must I bid a long farewell to you, and at one and the same time take final leave of every Earthly happiness. Yes it appears so. But O—

“There is a land of living joy  
Above the utmost skies  
Where streams of bliss without alloy  
In boundless prospects rise.

“And altho’ I am by the cruel hand of Prejudice debarred of the happiness of travelling thither together with you at my side, March on, march on my Love, I hope to meet you there.

“I am Dear Girl, with every sentiment of affection that the Heart of Man can conceive, truly yours,

Wm. Brown.”

“P. S. My fortitude appears much shaken. Yet still I hope and trust, that—

“David’s Lord, and Gideon’s friend,  
Will help his servant to the end.

“May God Bless you, may Christ love you, and may the Holy Spirit comfort you. Adieu yr. W. B.”

“Miss Hannah Street.”

For some reason or other that is not just the sort of an outburst that we would expect from a yokel on the border of the Muldraugh’s Hill in the summer of 1791. The letter is, of course, an example of the florid style of the period. How admirably it fulfills its purpose is the final test of style. Did ever a man pour out his heart more handsomely or show a finer heart? Was ever a young girl addressed more beautifully? Could the sentiment be loftier or reflect a nobler passion in a suitor? It is true, it was seemingly hopeless, but it had that sweet hopelessness that lovers have who still unconsciously hope. And it was effective, for Hannah Street had too much sense and too much sentiment

to give up such ardent lover. She might take a chance on religion, but she accepted him.

I think we can let the question of the quality of the fibre of at least one pioneer couple rest on the evidence of this letter.

<sup>1</sup>"The Last Battle in this Section Fought 115 Year Ago," by J. R. Zimmerman. *Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Sunday, December 5, 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Filson's Journal is meagre, but written by an educated man. It extends from Philadelphia to the Falls of the Ohio by land, and was first published in 1784 in his *Kentucke*.

Calk's Journal is a picturesque account of the happenings of the road from Prince William County, Virginia, to Boonesborough, Kentucky, in March and April, 1775. [A photostat copy of Calk's Journal is in the Archives of The Filson Club. The most complete and most accurate copy of it with notes is the one prepared by Lewis H. Kilpatrick, read before The Filson Club, and published in *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, March, 1921.]

Fleming's Journal extends from November, 1779, to May, 1790, and is very meagre, and like Calk's has to do chiefly with occurrences on the trip. It is published in *Travels in the American Colonies*, by Newton D. Mereness.

Speed's Journal is incomplete. It, like Filson's, is by an educated man. It is dated 1790 and is headed "Distances from Charlotte Court House to Kentucky." The manuscript also gives the route from Cumberland Gap to North Carolina. [Thomas Speed was the grandfather of Thomas Speed the author of *The Wilderness Road*, Filson Club Publications No. 2, and the first Secretary of the Club, serving in that capacity from 1884 to 1905.]

<sup>3</sup>[William Brown's original note book made during his journey in 1790 was presented to The Filson Club by Dr. William Allen Pusey, of Chicago. Dr. Pusey also gave the Club a bound photostat copy of William Brown's memorandum book containing the transcribed Journal of Brown's journeys to Kentucky in 1782 and 1790.]