

NORTHEASTERN OHIO

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*John Heckewelder.*

MAP AND DESCRIPTION OF NORTHEASTERN OHIO, BY  
REV. JOHN HECKEWELDER, IN 1796.

Among the many manuscript treasures of the Historical Society at Cleveland is a description of Northeastern Ohio, by Rev. John Heckewelder, the famous Moravian missionary, accompanied by a map also drawn by him. They were presented to the society by the daughter of General Moses Cleaveland.

Father Heckewelder was born in England in 1743. His father was born in Moravia, and went to England in 1734 as an exile in the service of the Moravian Church.

When John was ten years old he accompanied his parents to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where was a Moravian Indian mission. There he went to

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school and learned to be a cedar cooper. He desired to be an evangelist to the Indians, and in 1762 accompanied Post to the Tuscarawas River and began his labors near the present village of Bolivar, in the county in Ohio named from that stream. But Pontiac's war broke up the mission, and Heckewelder, like the evangelists of old, sometimes pursued his trade at Bethlehem and sometimes did mission service.

In 1773 he settled the second time in the Muskingum valley. There were built Schönbrunn, Guadenhütten, Lichtenau and Salem, flourishing towns of Moravian civilized Christian Indians. There, in 1780, he married Sister Sarah Ohneburg, and this was no doubt the first marriage between white persons solemnized within the limits of the State of Ohio. Their eldest daughter, Johanna Maria,\* was born in April, 1781, and for a long time was supposed to be the first white child born in Ohio.

When the Revolution came on, the too peaceful converts, being unwilling to join either side in the border warfare of the day, were suspected by both. In 1781 they were carried by the British, as prisoners of war, to Upper Sandusky. Eventually they were set at liberty, but not permitted to return to the Muskingum. That Heckewelder was a prisoner and compelled to settle near Detroit, was a double preservation of his life. The faithful Indians who returned to the Muskingum were most inhumanly massacred by Americans, and in the language of Johanna Heckewelder, "in one night a whole Indian congregation was translated from earth to heaven." An expedition followed on to Upper Sandusky to kill the balance of the praying Indians, but the second removal had taken place, and a new Guadenhütten had been founded near Detroit.

In 1786 they returned and settled on the Cuyahoga River at Pilgerruh (Pilgrim's Rest), which place Heckewelder left October 8, 1786, as appears by his manuscript here printed. He returned to Bethlehem, where this manuscript was written.

He still led an active, useful and honorable life, and in 1801 settled for the fourth time in Ohio, at Guadenhütten. He lived here nine years, having superintendence of 12,000 acres of land, granted by Congress to the Moravians, and acting as postmaster, justice, and judge of Common Pleas.

In 1810 he returned again to Bethlehem. Says his biographer: "In the beautiful graveyard of Bethlehem, where rests so many a child of the forest, the red man's faithful friend is buried, and over his grave a marble

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\*Her own very interesting biography is elsewhere published in this number of the Magazine.

slab bears this simple inscription: 'In memory of John Heckewelder, who was born March 12, 1743, in Bedford, England, and departed this life January 31st, 1823.' " Mr. Heckewelder explains his map in the following language which is given *verbatim et literatim*.

DESCRIPTION OF THAT PART OF THE WESTERN COUNTRY COMPREHENDED IN MY MAP; WITH REMARKS ON CERTAIN PARTICULAR SPOTS &C.

Altho the country in general containeth both arable Land & good Pasturage: yet there are particular Spots *far* preferable to others: not only on account of the Land being here superior in quality: but also on account of the many advantages presenting themselves.

As the first place of utility between the Pennsylvania Line: (yea I may say between Presq' Isle) and Cujahaga; & in an East and West course as the dividing Ridge runs between the Rivers which empty into the Lake Erie; & those Rivers or Creeks which empty into the Ohio: (& which Ridge I suppose runs nearly Paralell with this Lake, & is nearly or about 50 miles distance from the same): Cujahaga certainly stands foremost; & that for the following reasons.

- 1) because it admits small Sloops into its mouth from the Lake, and affords them a good Harbour.
  - 2) because it is Navigable at all times with Canoes to the Falls, a distance of upwards of 60 Miles by Water—and with Boats at some Seasons of the Year to that place—and may without any great Expense be made Navigable for Boats that distance at all times.
  - 3) because there is the best prospect of Water communication from Lake Erie into the Ohio, by way of Cujahaga & Muskingum Rivers; The carrying place being the shortest of all carrying places, which interlock with each other, & at most not above 4 miles.
  - 4) because of the Fishery which may be erected at its mouth, a place to which the White Fish of the Lake resort in the Spring, in order to Spawn.
  - 5) because there is a great deal of Land of the first Quality on this River.
  - 6) because not only the River itself, has a clear & lively current, but all Waters & Springs emptying in the same, prove by their clearness & current, that it must be a healthy Country in general.
  - 7) because one principle Land Road, not only from the allegheny River & French Creek: but also from Pittsburg will pass thro that Country to Detroit, it being by far the most level Land path to that place.
- I will now endeavor to give an account of the Quality of the Soil of this Country: and will begin with the Land on the Cujahaga River itself.

Next to the Lake the Lands in general lay in this part of the Country, pretty high, (say from 30 to 60 feet high) except where there is an opening by a River or Stream. These banks are generally pretty level on the top, & continue so to a great distance into the Country. The Soil is good and the Land well Timbered either with Oaks & Hickory, or with lofty Chestnuts.

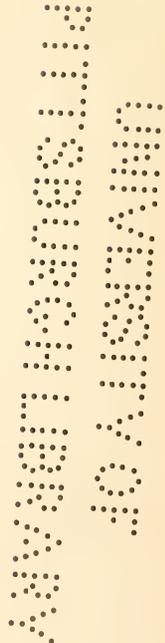
On the Cujahaga River are, I verily believe, as rich Bottoms, or intervals, as in any part of the Western Country. The Timber in these are either Black Walnut, or White Thorn Trees, intermixed with various other Trees as Cherry, Mulberry, &c. The ground entirely covered with high Nettles.

In such Bottoms, somewhat inferior to the above, the Timber is principally lofty Oaks, Poplar, or Tulip tree, Elm, Hickory, Sugar Maple yet intermixed with Black Walnut, Cherry, Mulberry, Grape Vines, White Thorn, Haw-bush &c &c Ash &c Wild Hops of an excellent quality grow also plentifully on this River.

The richest Land on this River lieth from where the road crosseth at the old Town downwards. Within 8 or 10 miles of the Lake the Bottoms are but small, yet the Land rich, from here upwards they are larger & richer. At the old Moravian Town as marked on my Map, they are exceedingly rich. Some low bottoms are covered with very lofty Sycamore Trees.

The Land adjoining those Bottoms within 10 or 15 Miles of the Lake, is generally ridgy, yet level & good on the top, excellently Timbered. Thro' these ridges run numbers of small Streams, & sometimes large Brooks; the water always clear and with a brisk current.

I have traced small Streams to their Sources, where I have found a variety of excellent Springs lying off in various directions. (see the run at the Moravian Town).



From these Lands upwards towards the old Town, & along the path towards the Salt Spring; the Country is in general pretty level; just so much broken as to give the Water liberty to pass gently off.

There is a remarkable fine Situation for a Town, at the old Cujahaga Town; & there can be no doubt of a large Trading Town being established here, as both a Road to Sandusky & Detroit crosses here: as also the carrying place between the two Rivers Cujahaga & Muskingum must be at this place.

Some miles above this Old Town there is a fall in the River. The Rock which runs across may be about between 20 & 30 feet high. No Fish can ascend higher up, or get over this Fall, tho there are Fish above it. Just under the Falls the Fish crowd together in vast numbers, & may be taken here the whole year round. At the more Easterly Crossing of this River as the Path runs; (the distance of which I do not exactly recollect, but think it between 15 & 20 miles) there is a most remarkable large Square Rock in the Middle of the Stream, which may at a future day, well answer the Pier of a Bridge. (see <sup>A</sup> this mark on the map) at this place there is a pretty large Plain on the Northwest Side of the River—and in several other places in this Country there are similar Plains or Flatts. On these the Land is rather thin in comparison to the other: yet not so that it would not bear good Grain.

There are also some Swamps in this Country, yet I have not seen one, which might not be cultivated, and make good Meadows.

Here and there I observed small groves of Pine, but never went to see of what kind they were. I supposed them only to border on some small Lake or Pond.

There are some beautiful small Lakes in this Country, with water as clear as Chrystall, & alive with Fish. In these Lakes as well as in Cujahaga River Water Fowl resort in abundance in Spring & Fall.

Between the head Waters of Beaver Creek & the head Waters of Cujahaga, the Country is rather more broken, yet not too much for tillage. The Land is good.

From the big Deer Lick on Beaver Creek to the Salt Springs (a distance of about 16 miles) the Country is rather of a colder Nature; but thinly Timbered, & much of a wet Clay ground. A comp'y of gentlemen have obtained some Years ago a Title to this Tract of Country comprehending the Salt Spring.

I cannot leave Cujahaga without mentioning one Circumstance, viz. That when I left the Moravian Town on that River which was the Eighth day of October 1786, we had not then had one Frost yet, whereas all the Weeds & bushes had been killed by the Frost some Weeks before, on the dividing Ridge. Ind'n Corn, this year planted at the above mentioned place on the 20th day of June ripened before the Frost set in.

The Cujahaga Country abounds in Game, such as Elk, Deer, Turkey, Raccoons &c In the Year 1785, a Trader purchased 23 Horseload of Peltry, from the few Indians then Hunting on this River—

Of the Country to the Southward of Cujahaga & between the dividing Ridge & Tuscorawas, where the line strikes across, I cannot give a precise description, having only seen this Country in part, yet what I have seen has been pretty generally good, except it be some barren Plains, and large Cranberry grounds. Otherwise off the River, and on the path from thence to Mahoning Old Towns, I saw vast bodies of very rich Upland, well Timbered, sometimes level Land, & then broken, especially the latter on the head Waters of the Beaver Creek towards Mahony.

From Tuscorawas Northly for 12 or 15 Miles I thought the Land very good, & observed extensive Meadows on the Banks of the Muskingum. But I think near the dividing Ridge the Country is rather Colder. The Country is in some places off the River interspersed with round Nobs or Hills, with short yet thick Trees upon them. The water of this Country is also clear & good.

I will insert the description the late Geographer to the United States gives to this part of the Country, copied from a Pamphlet he had printed in London in the Year 1778, which runs thus:

“The Muskingum is Navigable with large Batteaux or Barges to three Legs and by small ones to a Lake at its head. From thence, (namely from three Legs) to Cujahaga, (the Creek that leads, to Lake Erie) the Muskingum is muddy, and not very swift, but no where obstructed with Falls or Rifts. Here are fine uplands, extensive Meadows, Oak and Mulberry Trees fit for Ship building, and Walnut, Chestnut, & Poplar Trees suitable for domestic service—— Cujahaga furnishes the best portage between Ohio and Lake Erie: at its mouth it is wide enough to receive large Sloops from the Lake. It will hereafter be a place of great importance.”

JOHN HECKEWELDER.

Bethlehem Jan'y. 12th 1796.

MR. JOHN MCNAIR ESQR.







