

Part of Dr. John Samuel Afferson Diary

February 2nd, 1859.

This morning was one of uncommon interest to me. I arose early and prepared myself to leave, for where, I hardly know.

I packed up my bundle, and about half past 8 O'Clock ^{P.} M. I bid my father's family adieu. My bundle was composed of a bag containing my clothes, being all I possessed in the world in the way of property. In my pocket I had twelve dollars and fifty cents in money, and twenty-four cents in postage stamps. I cannot express my feeling as I walked along the road that was leading me from the place I had called home. My former days seemed to hang around me - my memory seemed to haunt me, and caused me to stop and look back, and to almost believe I were dreaming or building air castles, but I soon again * * * * * myself and found that I was not dreaming and went on musing in my mind where I should be ere another month should pass away. I felt almost ashamed to meet anyone with whom I was acquainted. I went to a house where a friend and relative was working told my determination.

Then went to my Grandfathers and remained there until about four O'Clock P. M. when my friend came and I accompanied him home from where I intended to leave tomorrow morning for Orange Court House. He gave me a carpet bag to put my clothes in. I left a few articles there I could not well carry.

February 3rd, 1859.

This morning I arose very early to start on my way south. My Aunt prepared breakfast for me, and before day break I was ready to continue my journey. It was very cloudy. My Aunt and friend wished me to remain with them till the weather became fair, but I was

compelled to go soon in order to arrive at Orange Court House by the time the cars came.

I bid them adieu, though not without a tearful eye, my Aunt seemed very much affected at my sudden leave. When day broke I was some eight miles on the road and arrived at the Court House about half past seven o'clock, after purchasing some necessary articles. I repaired to the Depot to await the arrival of the cars. There were two very pretty young ladies also waiting to take the cars, but seemed not to feel as I felt, as they were laughing and singing, skipping and jumping about until the arrival of the cars. After taking my seat for the first time in my life in the cars, I again thought myself in a pitiful position. I could see those merry girls in the next car still laughing, which seemed to make me feel more lonely than ever, and their glee seemed to make my * * *. One of them had the * * * to stroke her little delicate hand at me in which she held an apple as rosy as her own blooming cheek. I suppose she thought that I might have waited on them, as they had no escort save the Agent at the Court House, and the Conductor of the cars, who was a very gentlemanly and kind looking man. The cars travelled at a very rapid rate until I arrived at Gordonsville where I had to change cars for Charlottesville to where I intended going. When the cars halted I got off not expecting to see anyone I knew for a long time to come, and in fact felt that I would rather be among strangers than among acquaintances, but as I stepped down from out of the cars I was surprised to hear a well known voice call to me by my name. I turned around and found myself face to face with J. S. R. A. - well known gentleman, and one that I looked upon as a friend and superior. He asked me where I was going? I was

at first loth to reply, and in fact I knew not what to say. I told him I had started to Mississippi, or Georgia, one or the other, I knew not which. He asked me was I going by Richmond? I told him No, I was ashamed to own my intentions of walking. I left my friend, went to the ticket office purchased my ticket to Charlottesville, and endeavored to get into as retired a place as possible until the cars should arrive, but I soon heard my name pronounced. I looked and saw him. He asked me had I decided where I was going. I told him "No", and my conscience forced me to own up. I told him the state of affairs and my intentions, he looked me in the face and said he thought I was doing bad business to go ~~away~~ among strangers without friends to take me through, and said, "I had better to have stayed where I was known till I could do better". Such words from such a man made me feel the worst feelings I ever felt in my life. I felt as if the whole human race was against me. I felt as if I had not a friend in the world, and that all was lost to me - all my future anticipations were blasted. I cared little where I went, or what I did. Soon the cars came, I entered them. I looked around in the car, that I was in ~~and saw~~ and all the persons that were in there some I thought showed a sorrowful and others a lighthearted countenance. Arrived at Charlottesville about 2 O'clock. I got off the cars and stood upon the platform musing on my condition and thinking what I should do when I was aroused from my reveries by a servant asking me if I wished to go to the Tavern. I turned - round and looked at him for some moments without answering, thinking to myself "I go to the Hotel?" "No", said I, shaking my head and speaking to myself. I would to God I were able to go there. I turned around, left the depot, took the first road I got to that led from the Town. I went 2 miles - $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town and sat down beside

a large creek, changed a portion of my clothing, procured a stout stick
x x x my carpet bag out and took up my journey on foot along a very
muddy road. I had travelled about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles farther when I met with a
man and I asked him if that was the right road to Lovington, he surprised
me by telling me "No", and that I was going the road to Richmond. I
found I should have to go back to Charlottesville to get the right road.
I went back more disheartening than ever, I resolved to get work if I
could. I inquired of several for work, and for the road leading to
Lovington. I was told that a railroad track was at that time x x x
would take me to Lynchburg. So I concluded to take that. By this time
night drew nigh. I began to think of lodging when I was overtaken by a
man somewhat intoxicated. He seemed very talkative. I entered into
conversation, told him my name and learned his, which was John Dudley,
living about eight miles from Charlottesville on Dudley Mt. I asked him
what was the prospect to get lodging for the night, when he asked me to
accompany him home, which I agreed to do. I mounted behind him on his
horse. We travelled some distance when we arrived at a Grocery, kept by
a relative of his - here he dismounted and wanted something to drink.
I thought as he was kind enough to offer me accommodations for the night
I called for something to drink and asked him to take some which he did.
He then tried to get the man of the Grocery to give me employment, but he
said he had hands enough at that time, but finally offered me \$8.00 per
month for the following month if I choose to take it. I did not feel much
disposed to live there for there were too many sorts of men whose ways
as well as their countenances showed dissipation. Finally, Mr. Jno.
Dudley, the man whose house I was going, got his fill of liquor, and we
both mounted the same horse and again took the mud. After travelling

some two miles we arrived at the foot of a Mountain, it being then about eight o'clock in the night and very dark we our way up the mountain until the beast was nearly broken down when I gently slid down behind and left my inebriate guide to take care of himself the remainder of our mountainous and rocky journey. But however, we soon arrived at his house which was situated at foot of an enormous hill. His son came out and I introduced myself to him. He seemed very cordial and agreeably social. I then went into the house where the old lady and four other children were.

The old man came pretty tight and called for supper which was soon prepared and I was asked to walk into the cellar and partake, which I did without a second invitation, and with an appetite sharpened by the lack of my dinner.

After supper the old man's son brought out a violin, which is the glory of the mountaineer. The old man requested me to play for him, as no one else could play. Having owned a violin once myself I could touch upon "Dan Tucker", and one or two other old obsolete and worn out tunes. I took the violin and with an air of an experienced player I tuned the worthy instrument and performed as best I could. The old man got up and commenced a drunkened dance. And I disguised my awkward performance, commenced singing and making as much noise as I could, which seemed to please both the old and the young ones very much. The old man and his son both invited me to stay with them until Saturday night when they intended to have a dance. I told them I would not promise them until morning. After the old man got very drowsy, he retired to bed, thus ending one among the most eventful days I ever passed.

Friday, Feb. 4th.

This morning I arose about sunrise went down among my new acquaintances, and found them all very agreeable and social. When I looked out I was surprised in mist of "City of hills". No one unless they witness the scene can appreciate the beauty and granduer that I had the pleasure there to view. The sun was just showing itself above the horizon, and reflected most beautiful and sublime one, the last of the Mountains that lies west of the railroad leading from Charlottesville to Lynchburg, which is now fast approaching its completion. Soon the quiet and hospitable people citizens will be startled with sounds of car whistle. I stood for some moments receiving in deep reverie the richness and magnifience which spread itself out before me. The plain constructed yet neat cottages of those independent mountaineers were everywhere among the Mountains to be seen with the smoke curling above the chimneys and burning itself among the rugged woods and the hills. I was soon called to partake of the homely yet wholesome fare of my host. He again renewed his invitation to me to stay and spend the remainder of the week with him, which I agreed to do.

I went out with him to his work, and amused myself with assisting him and viewing the country. The land I found to be very rick, though rather stony to my notion, yet those men seemed contented and happy notwithstanding the rocks and hills which surrounded them on every side. Finally noon came, and with it dinner. I accompaniad the gentleman back to his house and had the pleasure to become acquainted with his two daughters which had been visiting the evening before. They, like the rest of the family, seemed agreeable and full of their mountain sport. I soon became apparently intimate with those two "mountain beauties". I then

declined going with the old man into the field, as I preferred the company of his daughters who were very talkative in giving a description of their mountain life, and their manners of spending holidays - having parties. Then near the close of the evening I went upon one of the highest hills I could see and witness one of the most picturesque and lovely scenes I ever saw, from the summit of that x x x I could see for miles around - on my left stood the beautiful village of Charlottesville on my right stood Scottsville. They're hidden behind the mountains and beyond Scottsville to the S.E. lay the magnificent x x x River like a long sheet spread out and before me to the east lay one of the most beautiful valleys.

When I returned I was introduced to another of my mountain friends' son, who was a youth about eighteen years old, but well grown, who had just returned from School. Time passed merrily on until bed time when we retired, after I had written another letter to my Uncle in Miss.

February 5th.

This morning I arose with the intention of I did not get into business with a brother of the man I was staying with, to leave. I concluded to take the low wages of \$7.00 per month till I could hear from my friends. I went to his house and found that he did not wish to hire. I then went back where my carpet bag was - told them of my intention to leave, but the girls and old lady pressed their invitation for me to remain. I then concluded to content myself anyhow until next morning. I enjoyed myself very much ~~during~~ with the girls, the old man being gone to town, the old lady went visiting, the sons were preparing wood for the night. I found the girls were not bashful as they were where I was raised. They were constantly playing one me which I at first felt a

little bashful to return, as it was something I did not expect from strangers. They would frequently slap my face with their hands, which treatment I was determined not to stand. I seized a rope which lay in one corner of the house, and with the assistance of one of the girls fastened the other one firmly to the bed post, but after a while I let her loose, and she continued her pranks as merrily as ever. Soon night drew nigh, and with it came many merry looking persons of both sex. The Mountain seemed to disgorge them, from where they came I could not see. Presently supper being over the violin was tuned and several had tried their skill in performing on it. (I say several, for I believe all the Mountain Boys were fiddlers). One of the best commenced in good earnest. Soon they were prepairing for a reel. One of the "Mountain beauties" came to me and said I must dance. I told her I did not know how. She persisted and said I would soon learn. I knew that she wanted me to dance with her, so I offered her my arm, which she readily accepted, and I was forced to accompany her through two sets. Things passed on in a similar way till midnight when the dancing and violin playing was stopped. They then played "Please or displease" - Thimble and several other similar plays, till old Morpheus seemed to settle down on a good many - especially on the old folks. There not being room for all the company to lie down, they all concluded to sit up until day, which was not far off at this time. For my part I cared not. I rested my head down in the lap of one of the fair sex and had a good dose.

SUNDAY - Feb. 6th.

I felt this morning as if I had rather sleep and rest than to travel, and the old man said he thought he had got me a place, and that I had better go and see the man. After breakfast myself and him went

to see the gentleman, but he declined to hire on the excuse that he thought I was not handy enough, and that my hands did not look like I had ever done any work. This vexed me a little to think that a person could not keep his hands in a respectable condition while at work. I determined to try my luck the next morning on the road toward Lynchburg for the purpose of trying to get such business there as I liked. We returned to the house of my hospitable friends. My mind was overwhelmed with a thousand thoughts, and it seemed to me as if no where would suit me then as on the road toward Lynchburg. I even wished it were tomorrow morning, when to mend the matter it commenced snowing very hard and the clouds showed every indication of a heavy snow storm. No one is able to judge my feelings. I among strangers in a mountaneous country, and with little money and a heavy storm brewing. I was not afraid of suffering but hated to impose on the hospitality of those kind people. I found something would have to be done. I asked the old man if there came such a snow storm that I could not travel would he board me for my services, which he readily agreed to do. But soon the clouds began to break, and my feelings were much revived on seeing the sun go down behind the western hills clear and beautiful. I was soon in bed.

February 7th - Monday -

This morning I arose before daybreak. I was rejoiced to find the sky clear and the air cool and refreshing. After breakfast I prepared to take my leave of my kind and hospitable new acquaintances. I felt some delicacy I tendered some compensation to my worthy host for his kindness, yet I knew it was my duty to do so, as I expected he refused anything for my stay, which I was not sorry, as I had not more money than I could

conveniently make use of. I took my leave after cordially shaking hands with all from the largest to the smallest. The old lady's eyes began to water when I parted with her. I travelled very briskly along without any occurrence worthy of note for some miles. My mind seemed to wander back to my former youthful day and wondered what another year, month, day, or even another hour might bring forth. I was then passing through one of the most beautiful countries I ever saw. There were beautiful cottages, some splendid mansions, rich and productive looking farms all lying between two great looking mountains. I must acknowledge that I almost x x x in that beautiful country. As I took the railroad which was building I passed many gigantic looking pillars on which were to be built bridges for the Railroad. About 10 O'Clock A.M. I came near where there were a company of hands working on the road. In a deep cut through a hill I saw some men with a piece of fire in their hands. I couldn't imagine what they were doing standing near a large stone. I was walking about 60 or 70 feet above them when I heard them cry out "fire, fire". I stepped near the bank and looked over I saw them all running. I then knew there was a blast going off. I ran a few steps when I heard a tremendous explosion followed by the whizzing of stones above my head. I got in company today with an Irishman, and travelled some four miles with him. He seemed well acquainted with the country and gave me a good deal of information concerning the railroad, and of who lived in different houses. I found him intelligent and well informed. The road seemed short, the hours passed swiftly by, and I was sorry to part with him when he arrived at his journey's end.

I travelled until I felt somewhat tired and hungry when I sat down on the top of a high hill overlooking a mill and a good many other houses. And after eating three of the biscuits which I brought from home,

and writing some, I felt rested and pursued my journey till near night. I crossed the Rockfish river on the foot piece prepared by the workmen who were building the bridge which like others was a great sight for me. Their great post with a long beam attached for the purpose of raising monstrous rocks upon those pillars varying from 40 to 100 ft high. Some of the bridges were arched most beautifully showing the ingenuity of man. Night coming on I began to look for night quarters among the many houses. I saw some, but to go to a private house and ask for lodging required me to summons all my resolution to do, several times did I stop and think whether I should go or not to certain houses, and several houses did I pass until night forced me to stop. I went about a half mile from the road to a neat little farm house in Nelson County just at the foot of one of the highest mountains I could see. I met the land owner at the barn. I asked him politely if I or he would allow me the privilege to stay with him tonight. He looked at me from head to foot and said "yes". He accompanied me to the house, made a fire in the parlor. I was highly pleased at the attention paid to me. He was a tall slim thin man, rather of a delicate appearance. His name was Purviss. He had an agreeable conversation. After supper he commended picking cotton and the old saying of "When one's in Rome he must do as Rome does" came to my mind. I joined him and picked several handsfull. He spoke of hiring a farm hand, and the beauty and quietude of his house almost tempted me to give up my trip to Lynchburg, and offer him my services, but he did not want to hire unless it was for a year. I retired about 9 O'Clock very much fatigued.

Tuesday -Feb. 8, 1859

This morning I arose about sunrise - my feet were exceedingly sore. There were large blisters on my right heel and middle of my foot.

When I went into the parlor I could not avoid limping. My hostess soon came in and seemed the good natured easy hearted man that I took him to be the evening before. He invited me to spend the day with him, and take a good look of the mountains which rose magestically towards the heavens west of his house. He gave me a minute description of a mountain North, or northwest of his house known as the "Sugar Loaf", said by him to be the highest mountain in Nelson County. I was obliged, declined to accept his kind invitation, though I must confess I felt somewhat at a loss for courage to refuse.

He told me my feet would get better, and I could travel as much faster to make up for lost time, but I was bent on my journey to Lynchburg, where I hope to get business or a home, whether make anything or no. He kindly advised me not to attempt to walk more than 25 miles today, as it might make my feet so sore I would be unable to travel. After breakfast which savory and palatable and nicely served, I took my purse to compensate him for his trouble, but he refused any pay whatever. I took my leave, but not without a feeling of admiration and gratitude toward this gentleman. As I walked along today my mind was more than usually absorbed in reflecting on the past and looking toward the future. I felt as if my present condition was merely a dream or a fit of fancy; but yet it was no dream nor fairy tale, true, too true. Last year this time where was I? Thought I to myself among friends and acquaintances. Following an occupation that I loved more than ought else. Then the stream of life seemed to run smooth and through many a shady valley bearing along with it many high apperations. And now what has "Old Time done?" What a change he has wrought in the short period of twelve months. But yet I have asperations of as exalted nature as ever I had. I hope soon to be in the same course of life.

I passed nearly every mile or so parcels of hands at work on the road. 12 O'Clock found me at "Gye River". I found no way to crossing. I went to the shanty of the R.R.Co. I asked ~~thaxxxxx~~ them could I cross. They said I could wade and laughed at me. I felt anger rising spontaneously in my bosom, and turned to leave when a gentlemanly looking man told me his wagon was going over soon. I asked him if I could go over in it. He said "Yes". I thanked him and went to the ford where there was a mill where I found a young man or youth waiting. I asked if he would carry me on his beast. He carried me over and landed me Terra Firma on the other side. He said his name was John James Spencer. Nothing of interest occurred till near night which found me a few miles before Amherst Court House. I began to look for night quarters - it began to grow dark before I saw any houses worth asking accommodations of. Finally I saw a tollerable good looking house a short distance from the road. I went to it and asked the occupant if I could stay there over night. He turned around, and in a very churlish tone replied: "No, I never take in anyone". I without further ceremony bid him good evening and marched on. I very soon met a gentleman, and inquired how far before I could get accommodations for the night. He told me four miles was the nearest. I felt very tired and had gone through mud over an unknown country, along a rugged road with ditches and embankments, and as dark as it could well be, and then raining. Still I pressed onward till I arrived thru mud and rain over other obstructions till I arrived at the Tavern kept by a Mr. John Harrison. I called for supper which I ate with a relish, as I have had no dinner. Retired about 9 O'Clock much fatigued both in mind and body.

Wednesday - Feb. 9th, 1859 -

This morning I arose rather later than usual - wrote a letter to my Uncle, Charles Jones. Breakfasted, paid my bill which was exorbitant

for the fare I obtained. I then commenced my journey. It rained slightly and the prospect gratified for a rainy day. I walked as fast as my blistered feet would allow me. I got but two miles of Lynchburg. I changed my clothes in an open field. I arrived in Town about twelve o'clock hoping soon to know whether I should get into business or not. I went to Befford's Restaurant where I procured a meal and enjoyed a room for the night. I then went out in quest of business and continued until night without success. I returned to the restaurant and amused myself with reading till bedtime. I then retired to rest.

Thursday - Feb. 10th, 1859.

This morning I awoke about sunrise and lay for some time buried in thought. My mind seemed to wander for sometime. All seemed still below on the street. I arose dressed with more than usual care determined once more to try my luck on the streets of Lynchburg. I went down into the Restaurant, there I found the proprieter. I called for a "stew of Oysters." and a cup of coffee which I ate with considerable relish. I then went out among the stores and tried to get into business for my clothes and vituals, but could not get into any kind. I then went to the Depot, where I thought I was sure to get something to do. I made application to Mr. _____, the President of Va. Tenn R. Road, but could get nothing to do. I was walking along the street with a gentleman with whom I had had some conversation the evening before in regard to going to Smyth Co. Va., ~~where he lives~~ where he lives. He said he was sure I could get something to do that would enable me to obtain a living. The fare on the cars from Lynchburg to Marion where this gentleman lived was \$6.50 and I had but \$5.33. What then was I to do. He advised me to go as far as my money would carry me, which I resolved to do. I bought a ticket as far as Max Meadows, and got on

the cars about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12 O'clock pm. This gentleman's name was J. Holt. He was also on the cars on his way home. I felt about as independent as I ever did in my life. I cared not how far I went, nor where I went. We travelled at the usual speed, passing thru tunnels and over bridges until some time after night. During which time I had many wondering thoughts. I knew there was certainly something to be done soon for I now had but 28 cents in a strange country among strangers, and out of business. The cars arrived at Max Meadows the place where I was to get off, but I concluded I would stay on as long as I could, and finally I never left the cars until I got to Marion. The gentleman that I came with was asleep on the cars and never got off at Marion, so I was forced to go to the Tavern that night for lodging which I did.

Friday morning - Feb. 11th -

This morning I arose not very early having spent one of the most restless nights I ever experienced. There were many things occupied my mind that night. I knew I had no more money than would pay for my lodging. I knew the supposition of some men especially those in public business, and could expect nothing from anyone there. I once thought I could rise early next morning and take leave the Hotel before anyone was astir, and in that way save my money, but then I thought I had well steal this, and many other similar thoughts arose spontaneously in my mind, but I finally resolved to be honest. The servant had made a large fire in my room when I arose. The Clerk had been up to see me before I finished dressing. My shoes were blacked, which only seem to mock my poverty. I had no relish for fire now * * * * * stairs and to call for the proprietor was my first movement. I told him my situation, and offered him all the money I

had for my lodging, which he refused and very politely asked me to walk into breakfast. I went in though with the most down cast feeling I ever had to think I who had often laughed at the trials of others should now ask the hospitality of strangers. Yet I asked it of strangers with more * ** of spirit than I could have asked of acquaintance. I ate my breakfast and went around among the villages "to gaze and to stare."

Time wore away rather slowly until the cars came from Bristol where the gentleman who had the misfortune to sleep in the cars on yesterday evening came and I accompanied him home. After eating dinner I went in search of business and spent the day in fruitless attempts and returned at night to Mr. Holt's, whose house my clothes were and remained the night.

Saturday morning - Feb. 12th -

This morning after breakfast I again went in pursuit of business, and spent the day without any prospects of obtaining any, I begin to think myself in a bad pickle.

Sunday morning - Feb. 13th.

I feel somewhat in despair, but there is no other alternative now but work for me, now if I don't get more than my board. I spent the day in walking over Mr. Holt's farm and writing. I found my friend very hospitable and plain spoken. He cheered me up and tells me not to despair.

Monday Morning - Feb. 14th -

This morning I commenced again trying to get business, but have failed as usual. Mr. Holt gave me a - - ax and tells me to go to work for him. I worked until evening when he found where laborers were wanted. I went to Mr. _ _ _ and procured work at J.H. There work was chopping R. road trees. I set in this.

16 April losing $\frac{1}{2}$ day in the month -

April 17th - 1859 -

I set in for Mr. P. Killinger to work one month @ 10. My month's experience on the 19th of April losing $\frac{1}{2}$ days during month.

April 26th - I commenced reading medicine with Dr. Wm. Faris - will board at Mr. Wm. McCready - at working 2 hr the week to pay my board.

*Example of what will
be done in the future
I have been told
that the best way
to learn is to
do it.*

*For the last few days
I have been working
on the same thing.*

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Over