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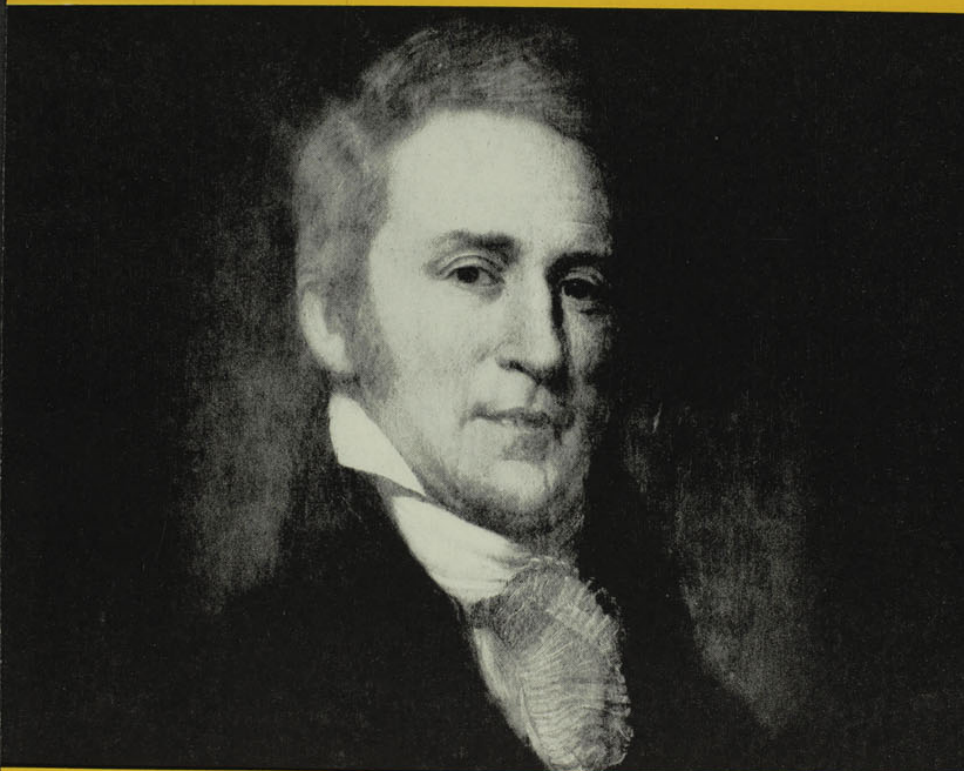
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## THE COVER

WILLIAM CLARK (1770-1838).—Best known for his part in the Lewis and Clark expedition, Clark's many years of able administrative service as governor of Missouri territory, and as superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, were a greater contribution to his country. Portrait from the Peale painting in Independence Hall, Philadelphia.



## THE KANSAS HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Volume XVI

February, 1948

Number 1

### William Clark's Diary

MAY, 1826-FEBRUARY, 1831

Edited by LOUISE BARRY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

IN the years of this diary William Clark was superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, and one of the town's most renowned citizens. The superintendency, which he had first received by appointment in May, 1822, covered a wide territory and included most of the Indian tribes on the Western frontier. No man more capable could have been selected for this position, either from the government's standpoint or that of the Indians. Clark was a man of integrity and administrative ability, with years of experience in Indian affairs. His knowledge of their problems and his fair dealings had made him a man of prestige among the Western tribes, which was greatly to the government's advantage.

William Clark was born in Virginia in 1770, ninth of the ten children of John and Ann (Rogers) Clark. The exploits of his famed older brother, George Rogers Clark, undoubtedly influenced William's early choice of a military career; and the removal of the Clark family to the Kentucky frontier region in 1784-1785 encouraged this ambition. Although born in a family of means and social position, he had little formal education. At 19 he was serving in Col. John Hardin's militia campaign against the Indians, a youth of striking appearance, over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, red-haired. At 21 he joined the army as an infantry lieutenant and for four years served under Gen. Anthony Wayne. On Wayne's expedition against the Shawnee Indians in Ohio, during 1794-1795, another junior officer was Meriwether Lewis, with whom Clark was to be associated later. After five years of eventful military service, he resigned his commission. The next few years were spent in travel-

LOUISE BARRY is in charge of the Manuscripts division of the Kansas State Historical Society.





ing, and in attempting to aid his brother George Rogers Clark in settling financial matters.

In 1803, when he was 33, he was selected to go with Meriwether Lewis on an expedition to the Northwest. When the Lewis and Clark expedition returned to St. Louis in 1806, both men had achieved fame and honors. Meriwether Lewis was appointed governor of Louisiana territory, and the same month, March, 1807, William Clark was made brigadier-general of militia for the territory. In this capacity he was also Indian agent, so that his services in Indian administration dated from 1807.

From this year until his death, St. Louis was Clark's home. In January, 1808, he married Julia Hancock of Fincastle, Va. In August, he purchased property in St. Louis county; and in January, 1811, bought property on Main, or First, street in St. Louis.<sup>1</sup>

Clark's next important appointment was as governor of Missouri territory in 1813. In this position he was also ex officio superintendent of Indian affairs. During the War of 1812, it was his task to guard the territory's frontier, and to prevent British-incited Indian uprisings. In 1814 he led a small expedition up the Mississippi into British-held country, reaching Prairie du Chien, where he built a post named Fort Shelby, which was soon after captured by the British.

When Missouri was preparing for statehood in 1820, Clark was a candidate for governor, but did not attempt an active campaign, being occupied with other matters. He was defeated by his friend Alexander McNair. Clark's first wife died in June of that year.<sup>2</sup> In November, 1821, he married Mrs. Harriet (Kennerly) Radford,<sup>3</sup> widow of Dr. John Radford, and cousin of the first Mrs. Clark.

The following year President Monroe appointed William Clark to the superintendency of Indian affairs at St. Louis, a post newly-created by congress. Except for the additional commission in 1824-1825 as surveyor general of the states of Illinois and Missouri, and

1. The latter property Clark apparently sold to the government. In his letter of July 18, 1829, to Thomas L. McKenney, Clark described the Indian Department's grounds in St. Louis as: "Those Grounds [which] were sold by me to the Department for certain purposes and are situated between Main Street and the River. . . ."—Superintendency of Indian affairs, St. Louis, "Records," v. 4, in Mss. division, Kansas State Historical Society.

2. William and Julia (Hancock) Clark had five children: Meriwether Lewis (born January 10, 1809; died October 28, 1881); William Preston (born October 5, 1811; died May 16, 1834); Mary Margaret (born January 1, 1814; died October 15, 1821); George Rogers Hancock (born May 6, 1816; died September 29, 1858); John Julius (born July 7, 1818; died September 5, 1831). All were born at St. Louis, Mo. Julia (Hancock) Clark died June 27, 1820.—Coles, Elliott, *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark* (New York, 1893), v. 4, genealogical table; Drumm, Stella M., "The Kennerlys of Virginia," in *Missouri Historical Society Collections*, St. Louis, v. 6, pp. 106, 108.

3. There were two children of this marriage: (Thomas) Jefferson Kennerly (born February 29, 1824; died January 9, 1900); Edmond (born September 9, 1826; died August 12, 1827). The second Mrs. Clark died December 28, 1831.—*Ibid.*

WILLIAM CLARK'S DIARY

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the territory of Arkansas, this was the work to which he devoted the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup>

St. Louis in the years of this diary was growing rapidly. From a population of some 1,000 in 1800, it had grown to an estimated 6,000 by 1830. Founded by the French in 1764, the St. Louis of the latter 1820's contained a large proportion of English-speaking settlers from Indiana, Kentucky and Tennessee. There were also many Negroes, both slave and free. It was the only town of any consequence in Missouri, or in all the area west of the Mississippi. The older section had narrow, crowded, unpaved streets; in the newer part there were broad streets and squares, some paved; and houses of brick. The waterfront area was fairly well built up with warehouses and stores. There was a natural deep channel at the waterfront, and except for a brief frozen-over period in the winter, the Mississippi river at St. Louis was accessible to the largest steamboats.

As the commercial metropolis of the West, St. Louis was the depot for the fur trade, and the growing commerce with Santa Fe. The lead mines up the Mississippi were being developed in this period; army supplies were centered at St. Louis for the Western military outposts, and near-by Jefferson Barracks was also a source of much business for the townspeople. There was a vast Indian trade to be supplied, and numerous Indian visitors to the city. Increase of steamboat construction had greatly enlarged the commerce with New Orleans and provided more outlets for trade.

The William Clark diary provides little idea of the life and color of St. Louis. Although "Diary" appears on the cover and as the heading of page one, the word does not aptly describe the contents. This volume was kept as a record in the office of the superintendent of Indian affairs and in it were entered weather and river data, notes on steamboat arrivals and departures, a record of Indians visiting the superintendency, and some items of general and local news.

In another sense also "Diary" is a misnomer since the volume was not intended as a private or personal account. William Clark was undoubtedly its creator, and made some of the entries, but his subagent, or clerks, did most of the recording. Clark's handwriting can be identified from three "first-person" entries, the only such entries in the book. On August 12, 1827, he wrote: "Edmond Clark

4. He had personal business interests, such as the Missouri Fur Company venture. Although it was not particularly successful, other financial dealings were, and he died a fairly well-to-do man. William Clark's death occurred in St. Louis, September 1, 1838.





(my Infant Son) died at 8½ A. M. . . ."; on January 29, 1830, is the statement: "My family went to Jeff. Barracks"; and on February 2, 1830, he noted: "Boys from the College visited my cottage, hunt & scate." There is some emphasis in the local news items on Clark's relatives and associates, which gives the diary an additional personal touch. Rarely, there are bits of humor or pertinent comment in the entries made by Clark's assistants, which add sparkle to an otherwise sober and concise record.

Clark had, during these years, four assistants: a subagent, a translator, and two other clerks.<sup>5</sup> So far as can be determined the individuals who, in addition to Clark, made entries in the diary, were: the subagent Walter B. Alexander, who died on July 16, 1826; his successor John B. Ruland; Jesse Benton, a clerk; John F. A. Sanford, translator and clerk, who left following his appointment as a subagent on the upper Missouri, in mid-July, 1826; Dunning D. McNair, a clerk, who resigned on March 19, 1830; and Augustin Kennerly, who served principally as translator.<sup>6</sup>

It seems no coincidence that this record was started at the time of the Mississippi river flood of 1826, for the meteorological and river-stage data are the backbone of the volume, and the only consistently-recorded entries. There is a superabundance of material on the weather and on river conditions throughout.

The information on steamboat arrivals and departures is not so complete, as a comparison with the lists in contemporaneous St. Louis newspapers has proved.<sup>7</sup> However, since the newspapers sometimes failed to print the weekly steamboat register, the Clark diary fills a few gaps. In 1826, steamboats were no longer a novelty at the port of St. Louis. After the first such arrival, the *General Pike*, in August, 1817, there had been a yearly increase in river traffic. But in May, 1826, the month and year this diary opens, the *Missouri Republican* commented: "Never before this season has our city been frequented by such a vast number of Steam Boats; arrivals are daily, and sometimes as many as three and four of a day. . . ." <sup>8</sup> The entry of steamboat data as a part of the diary therefore only reflected the growing importance of the river trade. The Indian superintendency offices were on Main, or First street, which

5. Letter, Clark to E. Herring, Indian Department, dated July 16, 1832.—Superintendency of Indian affairs, St. Louis, "Records," v. 4, p. 391, *loc. cit.*

6. The names of all these men appear, in no particular order, on the fly-leaf of the diary.

7. Another check was made from the statement in the *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, June 7, 1827, that the "St. Louis Steam Boat Register" showed the arrival of 82 boats between February 12 and June 4, 1827. The diary for this same period noted 71 arrivals.

8. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1826. In 1830, 278 steam and 91 keel boats entered the port of St. Louis.—St. Louis *Beacon*, January 6, 1831.



WILLIAM CLARK'S DIARY

5

then afforded a view of the river-front and wharf, so that steamboat arrivals and departures were readily noted.

The recording of data on the comings and goings of the Indians seems the most natural part of the diary. The superintendency at St. Louis served as headquarters for Indian affairs in all the Western area. When Clark was appointed as superintendent in May, 1822, John C. Calhoun, the Secretary of War, wrote him:

I enclose you a Commission as Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. . . . Altho' the act [under which the appointment was made] does not appear, from the face of it, to make it a part of your duty, to exercise a superintending control over the Indian Agencies on the Mississippi and Missouri, yet it is believed that such was the intention of Congress in authorizing the appointment of a Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. You will accordingly consider the following Indian Agents as under your Superintendence—Major O'Fallon [at Council Bluffs], Mr. Graham [at St. Louis], Mr. Boilvin [at Prairie du Chien], Mr. Forsyth [at Rock Island] and Mr. Taliaferro [at St. Peters]—and also Mr. Menard, the Sub Agent at Kaskaskias. . . .<sup>9</sup>

The scope of Clark's authority, thus informally established, came to include several other agencies and subagencies which were later required. Land cessions by the Kansas and Osage tribes, in the treaties of 1825, created a large area west of Missouri and Arkansas for Indian reserves. Subsequently, negotiations were begun with the remnants of Indian tribes east of the Mississippi, and in Missouri and Arkansas territory, to remove to the new lands reserved for them. Thus, the period of the Clark diary was also an era of Indian migrations, and of restlessness on the part of the tribes remaining in the East. Many Indians came every year to see Clark on matters relating to their tribes, and most of the migratory Indians inevitably came through St. Louis on their way west, yet the newspapers almost never mentioned their arrival or departure. The Clark record provides unique data in this respect, but unfortunately, on this subject, too, the diary is incomplete.

For some periods the data on Indians, and on steamboats, were given in separate sections in the diary. The plan was not followed consistently and since the arrangement only makes for confusion in using the volume it has seemed justifiable to bring all the material together in one chronology for publication. This explains some duplication of entries.

9. Letter, Calhoun to Clark, May 28, 1822.—War Department, Secretary's Office, "Letters Sent, Indian Affairs, E: 59," in National Archives, Washington, D. C. The governors of Michigan, Arkansas, and Florida territories were, by law, superintendents of Indian affairs within their respective domains.—23 Cong., 1 Sess., *House Report 474* (Serial 263), p. 44.



The diary ends on February 28, 1831, at the end of the book. There is no continuing volume in the collection of "Clark papers" in the Kansas State Historical Society.<sup>10</sup> It seems unlikely that the record would have been so abruptly discontinued.<sup>11</sup> Clark was to serve for seven more years as superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis—until his death in 1838—and the few scattered volumes of records in our Society's possession only emphasize the quantity which must have existed at one time in the superintendency office.

## II. THE DIARY<sup>12</sup>

May, 1826

### WEATHER AND RIVER DATA

Day	Temperature. 8 O'clock.	Weather at 8 O'clock.	Winds	Temperature. 4 O'clock.	Weather 4 O'clock P. M.	Winds	Rise & fall of the River
1						S W	rising fast
2							rising fast
3							rising fast
4							rising fast
5							rising fast
6							rising fast
7							rising
8							rising still
9							rising
10							rising Slow
11							rising slow <sup>13</sup>
12							rose about 1½ Inches
13							rose 4 Inches
14							rose 1 Inch
15							on a Stand
16							rising a little Stand
17	79 a	Clear	SW.	84 a	Clear	SW.	rising a little do
18	78½	Clear	do	86	do	S. E	falling 1 Inch lost
19	79	do	SE	88	Cloudy	W	fell 3 Inches
20	72	Cloudy & rain	S.W.S.	84	Clear	SW	fell 1½ Inches.
21	78	Cloudy	S. E.	83	Clear	S. E	fell 5 Inches
22	70	Cloudy	SW	80	Clear	E.	fell 2½ Inches
23	79	Cloudy	S. E	75	raining	S	fell 8 Inches
24	74	Clear	S. E	80	Cloudy.	E.	fell 8 Inches.
25	80	Clear	do	80 a	Clear	S E	fell 1 Inch.
26	74	Clear	E	82	do	do	fell 8 Inches
27	78	Clear	SE	82	Clear	S	fell 6 In.
28	78	Cloudy	E.	82	do	S E	fell 1 Inch

10. The "Clark papers," more properly known as the superintendency of Indian affairs, St. Louis, "Records," is a collection of 33 volumes (as labeled), consisting for the most part of records maintained by the superintendency office. These papers represent only a small part of the vast records which must have been kept by Clark's staff. They were purchased many years ago from a second-hand book store in Lawrence, Kan.

11. It is the editor's opinion, however, that no similar record was kept prior to May, 1826, from the fact that an unnumbered page, preceding page one in the diary, is headed: "April, 1826," but contains no entries; also, it will be noted, the diary does not include full weather data until mid-May, 1826.

12. The diary for 1826 and 1827 is published in this issue of the *Quarterly*. The remainder will appear in succeeding issues.

13. "HIGH WATERS.—The Mississippi is, at this time, considerably higher than it has been for many years. The water, in many places, is over its banks, and the low lands, for miles back, entirely inundated. The inhabitants have been compelled to leave their homes."  
—*Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, May 11, 1826.