

Professor Joseph H. Ketron: 1876 Travel Notes

NOTES OF TRAVEL: Volume I

BY JOSEPH HENRY KETRON – 1876

Biographical Sketch from Goodspeed's History of Tennessee; Published 1887:

Joseph H. Ketron, A. M., principal of Kingsley Seminary, at Bloomingdale, was born in Sullivan County, Tenn., November 12, 1837. He is the eldest son of **Watson and Mary (Cookenour) Ketron**, the former born in this county, April 22, 1809, the son of **Henry and Susannah Ketron**, the former the son of **Michael Ketron**, who was a native of Germany. The father is one of the oldest and best farmers of his county. The mother, born in Wythe County, Va., August 29, 1817, is the daughter of **Jacob and Mary Cookenour**, both of German origin. Our subject, one of seven living children, received country school advantages, and in his eighteenth year became a public school teacher. Later he received a high school education. Early in 1874 he became a student and tutor in what is now Grant Memorial University, at Athens, Tenn., and afterward attended the Illinois Wesleyan University, at Bloomington, Ill., where he was graduated in 1876. Two years later he received the degree of A. M., at Athens. In 1879 he received the same degree from his alma mater. In 1876 he taught in Holston Seminary, at New Market, Tenn., and a year later came to his present position, where he has since been one of the leading educators of the State of Tennessee. Kingsley Seminary has won an enviable reputation under the management of our subject. A normal class was organized in 1883, a very popular department. The attendance for 1886-87 was 162. Our subject has long been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in 1884 was a lay delegate to the general conference, at Philadelphia, Penn.



Professor Joseph H. Ketron (1837 – 1901)

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Editor's Notes: *Professor Ketron obtained his Master's Degree from Illinois Wesleyan University on June 15, 1876, so this extensive trip of Northern cities and universities was undertaken prior to his returning home to Tennessee and almost immediately following his commencement exercises.*

Tuesday, June 19, 1876

I went to **Springfield, Illinois** and spent a few hours there. Went out to the cemetery on the street cars. Saw a great many monuments and tombstones. Some are marble – some are Scotch granite which has a reddish color. Saw the receiving tomb of Lincoln. Then I went up to the **Lincoln Monument**. As it is described in a pamphlet I have, more fully than I can describe here, I say but little of it. The bronze statue of Lincoln is in place, but the other statues are not. Lincoln faces the south. There are 40 tablets – Abbreviations of 37 states appear on 37 of them. It has been suggested by some one that the letters U.S.A. occupy the remaining tablets. This will probably be the case. The monument, stairs, and all are of granite. The top of what might be called the base of the monument is covered with immense slabs of stone – Joliet stone, I think. I went to the top of the stairs in the obelisk which is almost a hundred feet high. The stairs begin at the top of the base. They consist of a hundred and eleven steps. I believe there is nothing destructive without unusual means except one door, and that is a temporary one. Saw clearly through the grating, the marble sarcophagus encasing the wooden coffin (cedar I think) and this enclosing a leaden casket which contains the body of Lincoln. In Memorial Hall, saw Lincoln's surveying instruments, two chairs – plain old fashioned ones – one of which Lincoln bottomed of bark about 30 years ago. The hand that tied the knots of the bottom untied the knot of slavery. Saw a cast of his hand. The joints are much longer than mine. Saw a stone from Rome, and various other relics. In an artificial lake in the city, there were three swans. They resembled huge geese, their bills and legs and feet look bluish.

Wednesday, June 20th, 1876

I went through the *museum and campus*. In Normal University saw Mess Hall, did some work, and in the afternoon with Mr. Marquis rode to water-works, cemetery and various places in the city.

Thursday, June 22nd, 1876

I left **Bloomington, Illinois**, about 8 A.M.; Normal on the **Chicago and Alton R.R.** about 10 A.M. reaching **Wilmington, Illinois** about 12:20 P.M. **William A. Crawford** then drove me twelve miles to his father's home where I was very kindly received by all. Nothing of very special interest noticed on the way, except that the land is almost perfectly level. A number of coal mines were passed. On a wetland, saw a great many plants with broad leaves usually only one or two at a place I believe – the leaf resembles somewhat a horse radish leaf, especially in size but more pointed with a deep indenture at the stem end

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– stem perhaps almost as thick as a person’s little finger. The leaf is quite rough on each side. The farmers call them “rosin weeds.” Some called by same name – have their leaves very deeply indented, much like tomato leaves. I saw along the road, and also at Mr. Crawford’s an uncultivated prairie, lilies, purple or blue red flowered plants like centaury (I think they are centaury water lilies), some yellow blossomed plants with somewhat woolly leaves and other flowers with grasses. Very beautiful Wilmington is on the Kankakee River. Some stone quarried is at this place. I traveled 11 miles to reach the place. I could see granite boulders along the way and also all around Mr. Crawford’s.

Friday, June 23, 1876

I walked with Mr. Crawford over a part of his farm. Talked and examined guide books a large part of the time. In the evening wrote to Prof. Bolton and to Rev. Prof. Manker. It rained very hard.

Saturday, June 24, 1876

I rode with Mr. Crawford and his two daughters to **Peotone** and **Manteno**, both on the Ill. Central RR, traveling 27 miles in the whole trip. I had a nice ride.

Sunday, June 25, 1876

I rode in the forenoon to Sunday School and Church and back about 3 ½ miles each way, with Wm. Crawford and his two sisters. In the afternoon I rode with the same and Mrs. Crawford to **Wilton Center M.E. Church** to a Union S.S. review. The exercises were interesting. Mr. Jones gave a good black-board address. The church is in a natural grove (*of trees*), the first I believe, I have seen in the state.

Monday, June 26th, 1876

I left Mr. Crawford’s about 6:40 A.M. in a carriage and reached **Joliet** – 19 or 20 miles distant, in a little less than 3 hours. From **Wilton Center** to Joliet, there has been considerable timber, and pretty dense groves of second growth, the land being a rolling prairie. Near Joliet – saw a stone bridge – it consisting of immense sections of solid masonry the whole width of the bridge. Saw in Joliet immense quantities of stone as the quarries of the place are very extensive. Saw bridge across **Des Plaines River**. It is a very neat town. While here, Mr. Crawford mentioned a citizen of the place who had built two very neat frame chapels for mechanics and the poorer classes mainly at his own expense – besides giving at one time, \$5,000.00 for an M. E. Church, first securing a resolution that no debt be incurred but that the building should contain only as means were secured. He also gives \$1,000.00 a year to Methodist preachers. He has resolved that he never will become any richer. On the first of January he assesses his business and devotes all his gains to charitable purposes. He is very wealthy – a lumber dealer, I believe, but was once very poor. When young he drank some liquor, but awaking with a headache after having spent the night in drinking, he resolved that he would never drink more. He kept his promise.

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On a street-car I went out about 2 miles to the penitentiary. (*Editor's Note: **Joliet Correctional Center** (colloquially known as **Joliet Prison**) which was in service from 1858 to 2002*). This covers a little more than 14 acres. It is enclosed by a massive stone wall 30 feet high, as I am informed. Some parts of it are higher. The towers I suppose are 60 or 70 feet; and one or more, perhaps nearly a hundred feet. There are 1,588 prisoners – 22 of them are women. They eat and sleep in their cells. In one place there are a thousand of these – five stories high. When the doors are closed upon the prisoners in the cells, a lever by being moved a short distance moves a stout iron door over every door of a whole row; afterward the doors are locked. Of course, the doors are iron. The cells are built upon solid rock. The whole prison is very neat, but the apartments for women attracted special notice as being remarkably neat. The women were dressed in checkered goods. The men were dressed in striped clothes, the stripes going around. Some had striped caps, but those who wore straw hats – had them painted, or they were painted rather, red on one side. In one shop there were 150 cutting stone. Some men were sawing stone. Some very fine work in Italian marble and other kinds was seen. I noticed a remarkably fine mantel and fireplace front of white marble, set with clouded Tennessee marble - all exceeding well polished and very beautiful; a very large number were making shoes and boots too, I believe. Coopering, blacksmithing, and other kinds of work were done. Inside was an Artesian well, with a reservoir around it; the water coming up as from a fountain. Fish were in it. It was elevated, and surrounded by beautiful gravel walks, grass and flowers. In the windows and other places are vines and other flowers. In Chapel, over the pulpit, "Simply to thy cross I cling." Many other mottoes were in the chapel. Library – free. A Store. Almost every thing needed. The prisoners may take as much bread as they want. The bread is good looking, baking I believe, and drying clothes are all done by steam. While here Mr. Crawford said there were 3 women church members for every man in the Rock River Conference. At entrance of the prison, is a stone I suppose nearly 15 feet square. On street cars and in reception room of penitentiary could be seen. "No smoking in this car," "Positively no smoking here." Seven of the females were in for murder. Most of them were intemperate. Only four can read and write and those but imperfectly, except one who has a common school education – none a higher education. The lady in charge said: "You could not get an educated woman here." They are very indolent and filthy – vicious too. "Shiftless creatures." Of all the inmates, perhaps about one-half claim to be temperate – some of them will not tell the truth. I could say more.

Rolling mills are immense at this place. Roll steel rails for railroads. Rails are 30 feet long. One said they had made a thousand rails in 24 hours. The work is done by machinery. Chisel cuts off and very easily.

The stone of quarries lies almost perfectly level. Saw a granite block at road side, having red spots in it pretty regularly over it – size about as long as a bird's eye or larger. The quartz and mica of which it is composed are quite pretty.

I reached **Chicago** about 4 P.M and stayed at the **Commercial Hotel**. Timber – natural forests – a large part of the way from Joliet to Chicago.

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Took a drive for which I paid a dollar, through the tunnel under the **Chicago River**, past **Dwight L. Moody's** church, to water works, and a distance out – a drive in the bay. The tunnel is said to be 14 feet thick of stone and brick. It is damp and cool. Moody's Church is unique in structure. I went to the top of the tower; at water works up a spiral stair case inside of 232 iron steps. From its top I had an excellent view of the City and of the Lake and its shipping. Can see, it seems to me that the surface of the water is curved. Saw a kind of light house, 3 miles out where the water enters the tunnel for the supply of the city with water. A very beautiful fountain lies between the tower and engine house. The engines are immense. There are four of them. The driving wheels (or one at least is) 26 feet in diameter. It is thick too. A piston is at each end of a beam – as one goes up, another goes down. All the buildings connected with the water works are stone. A great many boats are on the lake, especially at the mouth of the Chicago River. It was cool on the lake and in the tower. Went back across a turning bridge – I believe it is called a "draw-bridge." There are many of these across the river.

In Joliet – there is a canal. A man said it connects Chicago with the Mississippi. Not far north of Joliet is the dividing line between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic. The canal was lowered enough to make the Chicago River run the other way and convey the impure stagnant water away from Chicago. This information was obtained from Mr. Crawford. I might say here that Mr. Crawford paid my street car fare, admission to the penitentiary and for my dinner and would not let me pay any. I feel grateful to him.

I was in a number of book stores and publishing agency houses. A number of the buildings are three, four, five, or six stories high besides basement or cellar, and garret. State Street is very fine. Viaducts are for cars to run beneath the wagon or foot roads, or streets.

Tuesday, June 27th, 1876

At about 10 A.M. went to **Evanston, Illinois** and returned about 2 P.M. I went through Heck Hall (Theological) and the university building. This last is stone throughout. In the museum saw a skeleton of a whale nearly 20 steps long – "Pin-Back Whale" from coast of Georgia, a skeleton of a very large Indian elephant, an American Bison, with numerous other zoological specimens and a large number of geological specimens too. Went through the large library. Went to water's edge on shore of Lake Michigan and picked up several specimens. Called upon **Dr. Hemingway** for a few minutes. Saw another of the professors. Saw a great many trees some of them quite large. It is a beautiful shady place. Much of Evanston is a place of rare beauty. Shade trees, vines, flowers, walks. Artesian wells here and at Chicago. Houses most of the way between Evanston and Chicago. At Chicago, bought a hammer and chisel for cutting specimens. Paid 95 cents for them – bought a leather hand valise for \$2.75. The **Commercial Hotel** at which I have been staying is 5 stories high and contains about 300 guest rooms. Was in the **Palmer House** a little while. It is very fine. It is said to contain rooms for 800 guests. I think it is six stories high besides basement and garret – possibly it is bigger – I cannot recollect with certainty. Went 4 miles up State Street, Wabash Avenue, and Cottage Grove Avenue to the

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University of Chicago. State Street is wonderful for its beautiful, tall and very large houses and its immense businesses. Wabash Avenue contains beautiful private residences with shade trees, grass, and flowers around. Chicago University is a noble building of stone, on beautiful and well laid out grounds. Not many shade trees yet. I was conducted through the building. Saw library. Saw many fine specimens in museum – a very large grouse, a white Crane, and numerous other kinds of birds. Saw again fish – a very large spike at head end. Saw Ammonite (*extinct shellfish*) if I recollect the name.

Saw telescope – thought to be 24 inches long and about 20 or 24 inches in diameter – just at main building. Can walk out – just as in own house, though the support of the telescope is not attached to the surrounding building. Its immense dial and support is a very large stone. The building around is round in form. There is wheel work with necessary attachments for running it around. There are sliding windows to run the instrument out.

West – to **Theological Seminary** quite near. In its library are a facsimile of two New Testament manuscripts – Sinations and the Tishendorf. (*Editor's Note: See website for more on this: <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/goodspeed.html>*) The first is continuous without any divisions whatever. Several columns are on a page. The pages are very large in quarto. Saw many very old books – A Testament – it seems to me it is Ignatius's in his own notes in imitation of his own handwriting – about 300 years old – I think. Recently both sexes are admitted to the university. No distinction between races. Erasmian Greek. Formerly Continental Latin – now Roman.

Saw a stone turtle, I think in **Northwestern University**. In Chicago University saw a bone of a mastodon – 8 or 10 inches in diameter I suppose, it may be a leg bone. The grain elevators at Chicago are large and tall. The buildings are three, four, five and six stories high. In the "Parlor" is a portrait of **Stephen A. Douglas**, and there are also other portraits.

Wednesday, June 28th, 1876

Left Chicago about 9:15 A.M. Ran near the shore of **Lake Michigan** 12 or 15 miles or more I suppose. On lake shore again at Michigan side. Quantities of lumber here. Large hills of seemingly almost pure sand almost white entirely destitute of vegetation, most of them. The City is almost in the Lake. Shortly after leaving Chicago saw a little wheat, but did not look well until we reached Michigan where wheat looks well and will be ripe about the 15th of July. Saw a little rye. Some hills, but not large. Land level in the main. Corn in Michigan, at least first 200 miles, looks well – 15 or 20 miles below Chicago – saw in ponds, plants with leaves I suppose about 4 inches, and white flowers about size of lily – it may be water lilies. At **Niles** there is a stream which is a creek or small river. From there went 47 miles to **Kalamazoo** without stopping. A stream at **Battle Creek** – I suppose the stream is named Battle Creek. Land is considerably sandy. Saw no limestone, but many granite boulders. About 200 miles from Chicago, saw stone fences built of granite boulders as I regarded them.

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Reached **Ann Arbor** about 5 P.M., having traveled 246 miles in 8 hours including stoppages. **Kalamazoo River** passed a number of times just before reaching Ann Arbor. The corn so far in Michigan is the finest I have seen. I don't think I ever saw as much corn – almost without exception so nearly perfectly clear of weeds. At Ann Arbor I was only a few hours too late for Commencement. Mostly cloudy and quite cool enough to be comfortable. Ann Arbor is on the **Huron River** as I was told by one at the place – also saw it on a map. Ann Arbor is a very nice city, with a great many beautiful shade trees the most of them maples, but the larger of the rock or sugar maples. Went to the Observatory, but **Professor Watson** is gone to Philadelphia, and so, I could not see the telescope. I have obtained boarding at **Cook's Hotel** one day for \$2.00.

Thursday, June 29th, 1876

I examined the **Michigan University** buildings the most of the time about from 8 A.M. till 3 P.M. Viewed the buildings and their contents. I went through the Chemical Laboratory which is said to be the largest in the United States. I noticed the Library consisting of 25,000 volumes, besides 8,000 or 10,000 pamphlets and 3,000 volumes in the Law Library. The grounds and walks are grand. A granite boulder is on the ground, about 7 feet high and perhaps about 5 or 6 feet in length and width. Another large rock – much smaller than the other – is on the campus not very far from the central building of the University. It is in red and nearly black stripes, curved and waved very beautifully. I suppose it is granite, or some kind of granite or related rock. But the grand Museum interested me more than any thing else I saw. It occupies the three upper stories of the north wing of the University – or at least a large part of the north wing. The first story which is the second story of the building not counting the basement (if there is one) consists of vast numbers of specimens in Geology. But near the middle of the central room of this story, is an exceedingly beautiful bust, large size very white, in plaster I suppose, of Lincoln. In a room on the extreme north, in each of the three stories, are a great many plaster casts, busts, paintings, pictures. (See pamphlet bought explaining all).

The next story above contains mainly mineralogical specimens. The last story; i.e., the topmost consists mainly of animals of numerous kinds. There are insects in abundance, but the larger parts of the specimens are of larger animals. The specimens, particularly in geology and mineralogy, are very well classified and labeled. The animals too are labeled. In geology, those of the various ages are arranged in separate sections. I saw **Dr. Winchell** in the University but did not speak to him. **Mr. Bennett**, the Steward and also the Librarian treated me very kindly. In the Library, saw another facsimile Tishendorf manuscript. Saw too, a book of explanations and one similar to the lately exhumed tablets. I examined a book containing the Lord's Prayer in 100 languages. Saw two books, a Commentary on the Psalms, printed about 400 years ago. The print is quite good. There were huge folios, one of which, I think would weigh 50 pounds or more. Below, I give some and broken notes of the Museum:

Astragalus of Mastodon; Shell conglomerate from Florida – very beautiful – about the size of my head, I suppose; Belammites - shark's teeth; Apocrimites – a hole in the middle rings running around about half

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an inch in diameter, I think they are like some I obtained in Bloomington. Trigonias of various kinds. Coal plants – many. Pecoferis – looks like ferns imprinted in rocks split open – have seen some elsewhere.

Editor's Note: Here I am omitting 2 pages of various plants with geneses and species very difficult to transcribe.... About 150 specimens of marble in numerous colors and shades. I do not think any two are exactly alike – mainly from Spain and Italy. Heavy spar. Rock salt of many colors, red, yellowish, white, etc. A great many specimens of copper and silver ores. Gold in quartzite – numerous gold ores. *Omission of more descriptions of ores and minerals.*

Two Bald Eagles: Bill white, and neck so in the main but somewhat darkish. Owls (Eggs and nests in abundance) Sand bill crane's egg. Ostrich egg – about 6 inches or more long – not altogether so thick – not thicker, so I judge at one end and then at the other. Snakes; Kashmir goat with long white wool – the size of a rather small, thick short sheep – two horns and looks almost exactly as if alive.

A real American panther – 5 or 6 feet long besides the huge tail. A Buffalo from Kansas – I suppose about 10 feet long – head and lower part legs nearly black – lighter above, resembling a gray sheep in color, i.e. above. Very wooly head and eyes almost covered up – horns about a foot in length, I suppose curved around toward head.

Mackerel shark – about 11 feet long, 20 or 24 inches in diameter, I suppose. Shark about 10 feet. Red and gray foxes. Wildcat – much larger than the domestic. White Hare; White Weasel. Horns of Elk – about 4 feet – besides branches. Elk large – color of deer; Virginia deer. Alligator about 10 feet long, I suppose. Rocky Mountain American Sheep. Pelican – California – Bill about 15 inches long – neck besides bill is near 8 feet – white. What we call a "Woodcock" is a "Pileated Woodpecker." Flamingo, nearly red – I may say whitish pink – legs about 26 inches, very slender – neck slender – 2 or 3 feet.

Blue Heron. Condor – an immense bird. Lynx. Black Bear; Gray wolf – about 4 or 5 feet long; Grizzly bear – sable, reddish, grayish; Porcupine – a rough animal. Prairie hens; Woodchuck – a quadruped about a foot long, chubby, gray. Beaver – dark reddish. Coyote; Mink. Wild Goose; Turkey; Wolverine; Swan.

Michigan University – whole length is 347 feet. The main Chapel is between the North and South wings is sized 127 x 130 feet- will seat 3, 500. Women admitted – none graduated this year. Erasmian Greek – Roman Latin. Of course all colors and people are admitted.

Left Ann Arbor about 3:50 P.M., and reached **Detroit** – on **Detroit River**, I suppose about two hours before night. It is a fine city. The streets are paved with tolerably large stones, about like the "river" stones of the South Fork of the Holston River in East Tennessee. The sidewalks are made of fine smooth stones.

Saw the City Hall – about 80 steps one way; I think perhaps about the same the other way. In the columns are lower parts of the building outside alternate stones are chiseled and an inch or two deep, in

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shape of a network of vines with bark cut so as to seem quite natural. Engaged night's lodging at **Michigan Exchange Hotel**, it had a fine white stone front for a dollar. My room was furnished with cushioned chairs; one a large arm chair. Went down to the river bank and looked at river boats. At City Hall saw a cannon with an inscription in honor of Perry's victory on Lake Erie.

Friday, June 30th, 1876

Left Detroit about 8 A.M. ran back 3 miles and after waiting awhile at **Grand Fork Junction** left that place on Grand Trunk R.R. for **Buffalo** at 9 A.M. by my time. Ran 62 miles to **Port Huron** at the lower extremity of Lake Huron. Our car with its inmates was taken across the river in a steam ferry boat. After passing entirely through Michigan, I saw no weedy or grassy corn. Saw no briars till I reached Canada, then I soon saw some. I saw not any limestone in Michigan nor any in Canada until not far from **Buffalo** – it may be 20 or 30 miles distant. Some places have a considerable number of rocks, though in the main they are very few – no cliffs. Rocks as well as I could judge are nearly all in the distance, entirely metamorphic boulders, large and small though in Canada mostly small and granite. I saw Elders through Canada; also apples too.

Between **Stratford** and **Buffalo**, crossed **Grand River**. Reached Buffalo a little while before night. A fine city; streets well paved with large stones. Sidewalks are broad and laid with smooth stones. Had a fine view of **Lake Erie** and its boats, piers, the canal, bridges, etc. Stayed at the **Continental Hotel**. An excursion party of I believe 200 or more took supper at this house. The City Hall is a good building. At Buffalo crossed the **Niagara River** on the train running over a railroad bridge. An intelligent colored man, long acquainted with the place, informed me that the bridge is about three quarters of a mile long, over the river, but extending out over a canal. The Niagara River is very large.

In Canada saw almost no corn; but wheat, oats and grass. Houses not numerous nor large, much timber but not very large nor tall. Some beeches, sycamores, many spruces, pines, oaks and other trees. I think lindens are plentiful. I saw some fine red flowers on stems 2 or 3 feet high. Baggage was examined on entering Canada and on leaving it was not examined much.

Saturday, July 1st, 1876

Left Buffalo about 7 A.M. and reached Suspension Bridge about 8 A.M. Paid \$3.00 for a carriage to drive me the whole trip of 10 or 12 miles. Crossed both the New Suspension Bridge and the Old. They are very steady. While on them, I had fine views of the Falls. The hotels, residences, parks, public and private yards, museums, etc. of Niagara Falls are very beautiful. Near the museum on the Canadian side, saw two male black bears, or so I was informed and I judged they weighed about 900 pounds each. They were caught when cubs at the Rocky Mountains. While here went to the top of the building about 60 feet and had a splendid view of the Falls. Then dressed in an oil robe for the purpose, and went down a winding stair right under **Table Rock** and then under the pouring flood. The water splashed my

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face and the water and mist were hard to breathe. The sight was grand but I did not much like to be so nearly drowned. The pouring flood is in the form of spray and clouds. The **Horseshoe Falls** are here. Cut some specimens here, also at **Whirlpool Rapids** and **Whirlpool**.

But the first place I went was the Whirlpool Rapids. In a neat room large enough for ten to be comfortably seated are tower seats. I descended perpendicularly 192 feet I was told. 260 feet from top of the elevator to water's edge. It was 364 feet across the water. The water whirls and tosses amazingly. Cut various specimens. Then saw the Whirlpool from which an excellent view of the Falls is obtained. We then drove up to the bridge extending to **Goat Island**. There are numerous islands here; but, as it was raining hard I had but little time, the fee was considerable so I did not go to the islands. I had an excellent view of them, however, and I saw enough to satisfy me very well. We then went still farther up the river, and saw canals, slusses, etc. above ground, and under ground. After a drive of 10 to 12 miles, and having spent several hours, I found myself at the hotel near the depot, ready to start for Rochester, which place I reached in due time – quick time about 5 P.M. Rained almost all the time and could not see the country very well, but saw corn, wheat, potatoes, grass, etc. There were some boulders and hills, though the hills and boulders are not very large. I might say here that the above sketch is very incomplete and should be supplemented by drawing upon my own memory and upon books and papers.

Rochester is a very pretty city. Main Street in the evening is grand. Examined the **Genesee Falls**. Noticed the railroad bridge. Went across the foot and carriage iron bridge which is very high, and about 375 steps long. Then went up to the bank just opposite the Falls. The Falls are very beautiful. **Sam Patch made his last leap here.**

*(Editor's Note: the following account of Sam Patch is from the **Niagara Times Reporter**)*

ROCHESTER: LAST STAND FOR DAREDEVIL

By Bob Kostoff

Sam Patch, the Jersey Leaper, was the earliest of the well-known daredevils of Niagara Falls, but little is told locally about his fate in nearby Rochester. Patch leaped 190 feet from a hastily constructed ladder into the swirling waters of the Niagara River near the Bridal Veil Falls in October, 1829, his second such successful leap. Then he moved on to Rochester for another engagement to jump into the water below the 92-foot high cataract on the Genesee River in the heart of Rochester. And this proved to be his downfall.

No one has ever researched a biography on Sam Patch, so there is much legend and myth surrounding his background. He has variously been described as an ignorant, loutish showoff or as a mild-mannered athlete. Some stories even brand him a drunk. He was in his late teens when he gained local fame as a daredevil by jumping feet first into the Blackstone River from the top of a high building in Pawtucket, R.I. Then he made similar leaps in New Jersey, thus attaining the name Jersey Leaper.

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Sam Patch started on a tour of likely jumping places, which included both the Niagara River and the Genesee River. An artful showman, he traveled with a bear on a chain and a pet fox on a rope. After his Niagara leaps, he hurried to Rochester to fulfill his jumping commitment before the water froze. The Rochester Daily Advertiser made note of Patch's favorite saying, "Some things can be done as well as others."

The daredevil was quoted as saying, "There's no mistake about Sam Patch. He goes the whole hog and, unlike too many politicians, he turns no somersets in his progress. He goes straight as an arrow." Sam Patch made his successful Rochester leap on Nov. 6, 1829. Although the crowd of onlookers was large, the collections were small. Needing more money, he decided to make a second leap, but this time 25 feet higher from a platform built atop the falls.

*His handbills proclaimed "**Higher Yet!**" and "**Sam's Last Leap.**" Flouting superstition, or perhaps making a showman's use of it for publicity, he chose to make his second leap on Friday the 13th, or Nov. 13, 1829. This apparently worked, because the second crowd of onlookers swelled into the thousands.*

News accounts later said Sam Patch did not appear to be himself on that day and many thought he was seriously hung-over or about half-drunk. Dressed in a jacket, white pantaloons and with a red sash around his waist, he climbed up to the platform. He took a few minutes to address the crowd.

Sam Patch reportedly said, "Napoleon was a great man and a great general. He conquered armies and he conquered nations, but he couldn't jump the Genesee Falls. Wellington was a great man and a great soldier. He conquered armies and he conquered nations, but he couldn't jump the Genesee Falls. That was left for me to do, and I can do it, and will."

Sam Patch usually had great control of his body and his many feet-first jumps were, as he claimed, straight as an arrow with his arms close to his sides and his feet together. But something went awry this day. On the way down, his balance was off, he flapped his arms and his legs were apart. He entered the cold November water at an angle. The throng waited, almost breathlessly, for him to bob to the surface, but they waited in vain.

Sam Patch never surfaced. For a few months after that, rumors were rife that he was alive and was seen at various locations in the Rochester area. But the rumors were false. In the spring, when the ice had thawed, his body was recovered near the mouth of the Genesee River. He was buried in the Charlotte Cemetery in Rochester and a bronze plaque on a boulder marks the spot.

One Rochester historian, Blake McKelvey, noted, "Rochester gained wide fame from Sam's last jump. Patch became the subject of much doggerel verse and won a place in the folklore of the young Republic." McKelvey also credits Patch's purported drinking as a boost to the temperance movement sweeping the state at that period. He wrote that "curiously enough, it was the foolhardy leap of Sam Patch that touched off the emotional powder keg (of the temperance movement) in Rochester."

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The water just below the Falls is said to be very steep. Not far below is an island. I suppose the foot and carriage bridge is nearly half a mile below the Falls. The streets of Rochester are paved with stones set on edge like bricks. Corn, wheat, potatoes, orchards, etc. were on the way from Buffalo to Rochester.

Sunday, July 2, 1876

Engaged lodging at the **Whitsome House**, 110 East Main Street for \$2.00 per day till Monday morning. **Asbury M.E. Church** was only a few steps from the hotel. Attended morning and evening service; also class meeting just before evening service. At the class meeting I spoke briefly. After the service a considerable number of ladies, young and old and some gentlemen gave me a hearty handshake. Though I do not know their names, yet this cordial welcome made me feel at home. The pastor is **Charles Eddy**. There were some hard showers of rain.

Monday, July 3, 1876

Left Rochester about 7:30 A.M. arrived at **Syracuse**, 91 miles distant in about two hours; stayed there more than three hours; and then reached Albany about 5:30 P.M. While in Syracuse went out to **Salina** on the street cars about 2 miles and examined the salt works. The water is very salty as ascertained by tasting. I saw the kettles and the wet salt dipped up and put into baskets to drain. Much salt is made by evaporation. The covered, shallow vats for this purpose cover a very large space of ground. They are at and near **Onondaga Lake**, six or seven miles long, two or three – possibly more – long. In the middle parts of the lake, it is said the water is very deep. After returning, went by street cars to **Syracuse University**, but as the distance is great, and street cars do not move very rapidly, I did not have time to go into the building. It is a beautiful stone structure, on an elevated place on the outskirts of the city – I believe in the Northwest part. Quite near is a place called **Yates Castle**, if I recalled the name.

***Editor's Note:** the following is a description of the **Yates Castle**: In 1852 **Col. Cornelius Tyler Longstreet**, a wealthy local clothing merchant began construction of his 24-room mansion in the shape of a Norman castle. The architect, **James Renwick**, also designed St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City and several buildings at Vassar College. The castle was completed in 1855 at a cost of \$200,000. First known as "Longstreet's Folly," it took its more familiar name from its second owner, **Alonzo Chester Yates Sr.**, who acquired it in 1867 and lavished thousands of dollars on it to make it into an elegant palace of high society. The profligate heir, Alonzo Jr. ("Lonnie"), allowed the property to fall into ruin, and most of its furnishings and art treasures were sold at public auction in 1898. The Yates family rented it in 1900 to Prof. **Abraham Lincoln Travis**, who used it for the Syracuse Classical School, a preparatory institution, until 1905. Syracuse University bought the 14-acre site in 1906. The castle was home from 1907 to 1934 to the Syracuse University School of Education and from 1934 to 1953 to the Syracuse University School of Journalism. In the spring of 1954 its new owner, the State University of New York, demolished it to make room to add a southeast wing to the medical school building, later called Weiskotten Hall. The stone wall on the west side of Irving Avenue near the Health Sciences Library of the SUNY Upstate Medical University is all that remains of the Yates Castle estate.*

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From this and from the University grounds are obtained a most delightful view of the city and lake. This is a fine city, quite well shaded, and contains some beautiful parks and walks, etc. I noticed two beautiful fountains. The Methodist Church is a good building. Saw the **Rochester University** – from the cars. At **Little Falls**, west of **Albany**, I noticed quarries – very high and almost perpendicular rocks. There were some very tall columns with fissures – some almost a foot wide perhaps almost perpendicular and also horizontal seams. Some of the rocks may be limestone, but some of them at least, appeared like granite of a grayish or reddish color. These are the first large rocks I have noticed since leaving Joliet. Further along I noticed some extensive limestone quarries; but almost all the way from Buffalo to Albany, saw a great many granite boulders – some may be sandstone. Many stone fences in New York, especially between Little Falls and Albany. At **Utica**, **Palatine Bridge**, and other places along the way I saw bridges across the Mohawk River. The land is stony and hilly down the walls of the Mohawk. Between Buffalo and Albany, I have seen the **Erie Canal** with numerous boats upon it almost all the way. The railroad crosses it a great many times. There are numerous bridges across it. When boats on the canal meet, it is said one lowers its rope, and the other passes over it. The loads drawn are very large. The most of the “tow” ropes seem to be a hundred feet, or even more, long. The corn and potatoes are quite well cultivated in New York, though I am not quite sure, so well as in Michigan. Many more potatoes are raised here than in Tennessee, as well as I can judge. In Albany, the parts of the city I noticed, the streets are narrow but very well shaded with large elms and other trees. The New State Capitol is of granite and very fine. I saw blocks of granite of an amazing size – long thick and broad. The building is now three stories above the basement; and it is said it will be built a story higher, besides the roof. It is 1,500 feet around 450 feet one way and 300 the other. I walked over most of one of the bridges across the **Hudson River**. The scene is very fine. A great many boats were seen. The vast basin for boats protected piers in the river, attracted special notice.

Tuesday, July 4, 1876

Paid \$3.50 for supper, lodging, and breakfast at the **Delehan House**, and then crossed the bridge across the Hudson on the cars for **Troy**, 6 miles distant, but having arrived at Troy and learning I could not go through the **Hoosac Tunnel** without waiting at **North Adams** all night, I concluded to go a more southern route by way of **Springfield, Mass.** which I did and arrived in **Boston** about 5 P.M. Along the Hudson River between Albany and Troy (East River), the view of Albany, suburbs, and surrounding country are grand. When about 20 miles from Albany, I saw on the Southwest, I think it was, some mountains in the distance. From Albany all the way to Boston, the larger part of the land is hilly, especially in Massachusetts, though a number of places it is low and somewhat marshy and particularly in Massachusetts there are some small lakes. About **Chatham, N.Y.**, there are cliffs of slate- looking rocks inclined perhaps nearly 70 degrees to the horizon. I think it was near the state line between N.Y. and Mass. that the train passed through a short tunnel. The rocks near looked whitish and shiny, resembling tobe, as they seemed from the cars while in motion, thought they may have been granite or some of its ingredients. Many Irish potatoes are in N.Y. from Albany onward, some corn but not so much as in East

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Tennessee, with wheat, grass, etc. Almost all rocks that are visible between Bloomington and Massachusetts are horizontal or nearly so. Massachusetts became more hilly and mountainous till we reached **Huntingdon** near which place and back a considerable distance there are a great many rocks which I suppose to be granite. I know or feel satisfied at least – that there are a great many granite boulders though some of them may be metamorphosed sandstones. For a long distance before we reached Boston, there is unmistakable evidence that the rock is very largely, if not entirely, granite. A great many of the fences in Mass. are built of these granite boulders.

In this mountainous and hilly region of this state, the rocks are much tilted. I passed through **Springfield, Mass.** on the **Connecticut River**, a fine and pretty wide river at this place. Then I crossed on an excellent bridge. The bridges along the way are iron mostly if not entirely. In much of Mass. that I passed through I think there is not much farming done. The country seems watered. I think it better adapted to grazing and manufacturing than to farming. I think the people are quite saving, as I saw grass out for hay, right on the road side, where it was very steep and rocky. Saw quantities of a white speckled somewhat granite that was very beautiful. Much of Massachusetts I passed through resembles East Tenn. very much, though in the most mountainous region passed through, I think it rougher than most parts of East Tennessee with which I am acquainted. The soil of some of it at least is quite poor; I think much of it is sandy. I have seen but very few gullies or but very little land that is washed away. I have seen some pines and spruces, but much of the timber resembles considerably that of East Tenn., though I think the timber in Tennessee is larger. I became very dusty on the way.

Went to the **Metropolitan Hotel**, 1166 Washington Street in Boston and engaged a room for a dollar a day. Then I went down Washington Street, a mile or more, I think, into “**Old South Church.**” They are receiving contributions to try to preserve it. In large letters on cloth hung on various parts are sayings by two or three distinguished men in regard to its preservation – urging the people not to destroy it. I threw 5 cents into the contribution box. I felt as if I wished it preserved. I saw a great many fine buildings at various places. “Old South” is at Washington and Mill Streets.

Wednesday, July 5, 1876

Went out to the **Boston Commons** which contains many beautiful elms, walks, fountains, etc. Below separated by a street is a beautiful garden with a great many flowers, trees, grass plots, etc. It also contains a lake with a granite rim all around. In this are swans, and I am inclined to think of some other birds, though it is not improbable that these are young swans. A great many bird houses have been placed in the trees in the Commons and Garden, and the little birds are very numerous and quite tame. I saw a number of them at once flutter in the little streams as they issue from the fountains and fall. Saw a great many fine buildings; then went to **Faneuil Hall**, not very far from State and Washington Streets. I spent I suppose about half an hour in it. In it – on the wall in rear of the platform, there is a very large painting – I suppose about 16 x 24 feet – of **Daniel Webster** and a large audience all around. It is in a gilt – frame. At the bottom or just under it are Webster’s famous words: “**Liberty and Union,**

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Now and Forever.” There is a gilt eagle at the top. On the right side of this – facing the large picture – beginning at the top, are **Samuel Adams, Washington** (full-length), **Lincoln** (not quite full length). At the left are **John Hancock, Peter Faneuil** (full length) and **Gov. Andrew** (full-length).

In the gallery, on the right of Samuel Adams and a little below is **Edward Everett**. On the left in the gallery – corresponding to Everett is **John Quincy Adams**. Below the large picture and just in the rear of the platform are pieces of statuary in marble I think (though it may be busts). On the front of the gallery – rear end – opposite the large picture is a very large eagle with shield and stars and “E Pluribus Unum,” just over the large clock. On one side of it is **Commodore Preble**; on the other, **General Warren**. Higher and on the back of the gallery, are **Rufus Choate** and **General Knox**. There are a few other pictures. It is a plain building with six rising seats on each side. White, furrowed columns support the gallery, and just above them are columns of about the same size and length supporting the ceiling, at least in part.

Then went to **Bunker Hill Monument**, paid 20 cents for admission, and 10 cents for explanation of views, and went up the winding stairs to the top. The steps are all granite as is the rest of the monument. The outer walls are very thick. There is a round, hollow column of granite inside the steps. There is gas light in it. There are fixtures in the outer wall (and in the inner, too), I suppose about 18 or 20 inches wide and 26 or 28 inches high. Near the bottom on the outside, these apertures seem to be not very much wider than the thickness of a man’s hand. I staid (*Prof. Ketron used this spelling for stayed*) up I think nearly half an hour. From its top there is a fine view of Boston, suburbs, and surrounding country, shipping, Navy and waters. There are two small cannon at the top. The steps up the little hill to the Monument, I suppose are about 15 feet long, and they are of granite. I registered my name in a large book for that purpose.

Went down to the **Navy Yard**. Saw a great many cannon and balls, examined the dry dock. There is a large engine nearby that pumps out the water. Saw a great many anchors, too. There were some “man-of-war” and other vessels. One of these it is said draws 21 feet of water. One of the Coast Survey vessels was near – from what a young Negro man said. Saw a number of soldiers and officers. Tipped my hat to one of the officers near whom I passed and he gracefully tipped his in return. Then I went home and ate something. After dinner I went out on the street cars 3 or 4 miles to **Cambridge** and visited the buildings of **Harvard University**. In doing this, the street cars went over the Charles River and bridge. The most of the bridge looks solid, but is built upon timbers driven into the ground, and then built up and paved, so as to appear to the superficial observer as solid masonry. I crossed the **Charles River** also in going to the Bunker Hill Monument.

After dinner, went in street cars to **Harvard University**. The buildings are 15 or more, I believe. They are not crowded, but scattered at suitable distances from each other to admit beautiful lawns, walks and shade trees. These last are mainly elms. As the Library was closed, I did not get into it; but I went into the Museums. I first examined in brief, what is called the **Peabody Museum**. It consists mainly of geological specimens including those from Alaska, Mexico, Peru, Africa, Denmark, etc. It contains a very

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large number of various kinds of implements from the Stone Age, too tedious to discuss here. It contained ancient skeletons, armory, idols, Indians, dress made from inside bark, etc. This building is with the main group.

Separated from it – perhaps almost half a mile, is **Agassiz's Museum**. *Editor's Note: This is now the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology.* This is a fine building with spacious grounds, with some shade trees, shrubs, and flowers. While here I had time to name only a very few of the specimens and not time to give much descriptions, if any, of these. One of the first I saw was a walrus – a very large thing with two tusks standing almost directly down from below its little mouth. A Buffalo Head, and Horns of a Brazilian Ox (of amazing thickness and length for an ox of any kind). Lynx; Head and Horns of an Indian Buffalo; Rocky Mountain Goat; Indian Black Bear; Gray Wolf; American Otter; Jackal; Prairie Fox (what a tail!); Grizzly Bear; Rocky Mountain Sheep; Beaver; Dolphin; A large thick fish; Zebra; Skeleton of Northern Sea Lion; Section of Ammonite, corals; Huge Turtles; Wild Boar; Porcupines; Skeleton of Irish Elk – very large; Whooping Crane; American Elk; Giraffe; and a skeleton of a larger Giraffe. Moose; European Bittern; African Ostrich – the most of it black, but the better half of its wings white, or nearly so. The specimens in this Museum are very well marked or named so there is no trouble in knowing what you are looking at.

Went into **Memorial Chapel**, I think it is called. It covers a very large space of ground; and hence the general appearance is low, i.e. by contrast. There are 16 chandeliers in the main chapel. In a Hall just in front of this are two chandeliers that I believe are the finest I ever saw. I suppose they are worth more than a thousand dollars each. The building contains a great many inscriptions in Latin and many portraits too. While on the regular Memorial site grounds, I took a drink of excellent cool water from a well.

When I returned from Cambridge to Boston, the water in the Charles River, which is of course connected with the ocean, had fallen seven feet. I think the street-car driver said the usual tide is 5 or 6 feet – he may have said 7 or 8. I need not name other buildings and sights of Boston. The people seem to be polite and obliging, and were not inquisitive. The houses are mostly built of brick and granite, not as much sandstone and marble. The streets are exceedingly irregular. It is surprising to see the people, cars, omnibuses, etc. on Washington and other leading streets.

Thursday, July 6th 1876

Left Boston this morning and reached **New Haven** about 2 P.M. The ride from Boston to Providence was the cleanest and nicest I have had though not so fast as some. From **Providence** to New Haven we traveled about 30 miles an hour. At **Canton**, 14 miles out from Boston, could see villages, hills etc. in the distance – beautiful rock, mainly granite. Steep stony land is cultivated. Below not far, there are little lakes. Just before and at **Greenwich, Rhode Island**, water is on the left with boats on it. About westerly, a great many rocks – stone fences – a quarry – granite I think, I am almost sure. At **Stonington**

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and just before, water and boats are far out to the left. Many rocks at Mystic – Long Island on the left – with many boats – some large ones and numerous islands – houses on a number of them – a beautiful place for scenery – various passing over water by train leaving it on the right and left but of course, most of it is on the right.

Fences here and a long distance back are almost entirely stone – granite I am almost sure – green moss on some of the stones. It may be some are naturally green. Now we come to some land nearly level – grass, woods, fences. Now many stony grass fields. Beautiful clear water is on the left. Just before we reached **New London**, the houses across the water and rather in front with boats, etc. are very beautiful indeed. Now our car is on a boat, and away we go across the **Thames River** - I suppose nearly a mile across. I heard one or two pronounce it as spelled. “Granite Works” just before we crossed to New London. After we reached **Long Island Sound**, it could be seen a large part of the way to New Haven; though a distance back from New Haven, it could not be seen quite so much as from the Connecticut River onward probably more than half way to New Haven. The appearance on the sound was grand. I think one of the most picturesque, sublime, and beautiful scenes on my whole trip so far was Mystic and forward a number of miles, though it was quite rocky and rough in some, even many places. Much thrift and economy is seen to be exhibited by these New Englanders. I think East Tennessee might be made more desirable than this. I think the part of Connecticut I have seen is more fertile than that of Rhode Island. None of the land I have seen is much washed into gullies. The land I think is in the main sandy – the most of it rather dark though in some places it is white or whitish. In New England so far I have seen many maples especially the soft maple, though some hard or sugar maples; beech, pines, oaks and other trees and shrubs in East Tennessee, though perhaps the variety in trees is not so great – as in my native state. These trees are neither altogether so large. They are indeed quite shrubby to a great extent.

New Haven is a pretty city. I saw some rocks in approaching, or rather passing through, the first part of the city that I think are “East Rock” and “West Rock.” I went out to the building and grounds of **Yale College**. I was told by my guide that there are nearly 30 buildings in all. I went through the Library a few minutes. Saw a Hebrew roll, and some old manuscripts – and books. I went into the new Chapel. It has a new-fashioned organ. The pipes, or nearly all of them, look like they are steel or iron. It is pumped by water power. It cost \$10,000.00. I went through the new **Peabody Museum** – it will be a noble building when finished. I went too into the Gallery of Fine Arts. It contains many paintings, casts, and statues. There a number of the distinguished men of Yale. On the campus is a bronze statue of **Rev. Abraham Pierson**, the first President. I could say much more of the paintings, statues, etc. of Yale.

July 7th 1876

Left New Haven about 6:30 A.M. and reached **New York** about 9 A.M. From New Haven onward the land seems to be well cultivated; and it is not altogether so stony and rocky as back a distance toward Boston. I have seen chestnut trees in Mass., R.I., and N.Y. Saw the Sound sometimes, but not so much as on yesterday. I crossed the Connecticut, and other water along

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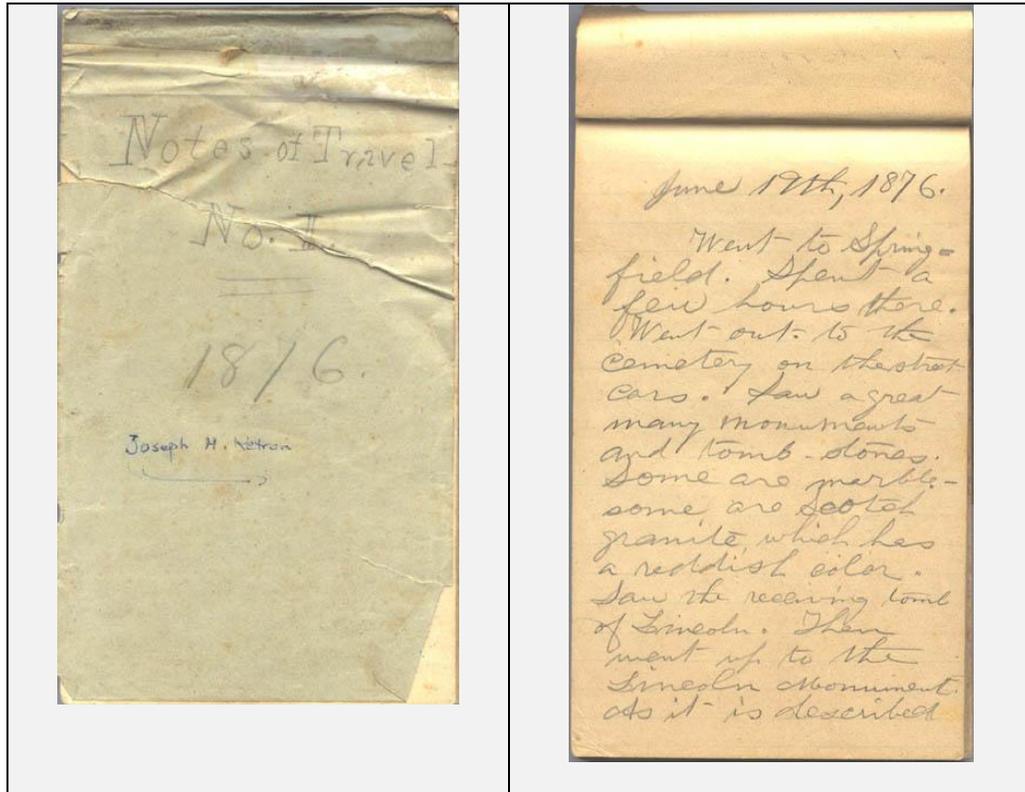
the way. Crossed the **Harlem River** before entering New York; also went a pretty long distance through a tunnel, with light coming down every short distance. I suppose it extends under a part of the city and has shafts or lattice work at various places letting down light. I arrived at **Grand Central Depot**. Then went in a stage for 10 cents to **Hoffman House** and engaged a furnished room, without board, for two dollars per day. Went in street-car (fare 5 cents) up to **Central Park**; but after entering the park, it seems that I walked nearly two miles to reach the reservoir. On the way, and at numerous places through the park are beautiful stone arched ways with water and seats usually and roads over them.

There were some sheep watched by a keeper and his dog. On the way there is a lake with boats, swans, a pelican and other birds. But before coming to this, there is a fountain on each side of the way with whirling jet pipes, the jets of water issuing from them, and also from the top, in such a manner as to cause the water to present a very beautiful form. Then just passing along the way between the fountains, there is a descent of beautiful stone steps of very great width, and having some immense stone slabs, passing through an elegant structure, entirely of stone arched over the top, with tables, stands of ice cream, etc. on each side. Vases of flowers on corners and other places; it may be on the top beside a road which passes over the structure. The floor is beautifully set with stones of different colors, and divided and laid off very beautifully. Then just in front of this and near the lake, is a very large fountain with a huge basin, the rising to a height of a number of feet, and pouring down beautifully. I then passed around a distance and crossed the lake on a bridge, and then wound my way to the reservoir which is immense. The rocks on the near side are natural cliffs. There is a beautiful observatory just this side, from which a delightful view of the reservoir and city is obtained. There are seats in the park for thousands, I suppose. Persons were sitting and walking almost all over the park. It is much too tedious here to give even a brief description of the shades, walks, drives, trees, shrubs, flowers, etc. The cliffs consist of granite, I think. The rocks present a glistening appearance. I obtained a specimen or two near the reservoir.

End of Volume I Travel Notes

Notes: *Volume II of Prof. Ketron's Travel Notes includes a visit to the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. (This volume has not been located).*

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Scans of Cover and First Page of Notebook

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Our Regional Past – Kingsley Seminary at a Glance

By Belle Gardner Hammond

Joseph Henry Ketron was born on **November 12, 1837** in a community now called Bloomingdale, Tennessee. He was the oldest of the thirteen children of **Watson and Mary Cookenour Ketron**. At an early age, Joseph showed an intense desire to be a scholar; however, he had little opportunity to secure instruction during his boyhood. At that time early time schools were not regularly conducted and sessions were short. He learned his three R's at home. Later he studied briefly at **Fall Branch, Tennessee**, and at **Rotherwood**. Webster's Dictionary was a great help to him. After he was able to get a dictionary he tried to learn one hundred words and definitions daily. He started teaching school when he was eighteen years old.

A wound he received on May 17, 1863, while he was serving in the Civil War, ended his military career, and afflicted him the rest of his life. *(Editor's Note: Ketron was critically injured in the Battle of Ball's Bluff, near Vicksburg, Mississippi fighting for the CSA. His younger brother, **John W. Ketron** traveled to Mississippi and cared for him in various hospitals. Later his other brother, **Reuben J. Ketron** returned Joseph Ketron home to East Tennessee by horse and wagon).* He then became principal of **Reedy Creek Academy** in August 1864, a position which he held for nine years.

Joseph continued until the end of his life his search for knowledge. In 1874, when he was about 37 years old, he entered **East Tennessee Wesleyan University** in **Athens, Tennessee**, where he studied and served as a tutor for one and one half years. On June 15, 1876, he graduated from **Illinois Wesleyan University** in Bloomington, Illinois with highest honors.

After he graduated from the University, Joseph taught one session at **New Market, Tennessee**, and then returned to his native Sullivan County, where he taught the remainder of his life. He could have received more money and lived a life of much greater ease elsewhere, but he felt the great need of a good school in his own part of the country. *(Note: Family sources reported that Ketron turned down a faculty appointment at the University of Michigan).*

Joseph was a versatile man and he put his knowledge to use in many ways outside the school room. He was a very religious man. He was converted at an early age in a meeting at **Reedy Creek Camp Ground** and lived a consecrated Christian life. His school was always opened and closed with prayer.

August 6, 1877 Kingsley school was chartered as a church school, with Professor Joseph Ketron as principal. The building had been erected for a church and the deed stated that the "trustees may also allow schools to be taught." The church was a one room frame building 42 by 30 feet in size. The material and construction cost \$150 and Joseph Ketron apparently directed and did much of the construction work himself. Carpenters who were also hired to help were paid one dollar per day. These

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workmen could board at the rate of one dollar and fifty cents per week. A music room was erected on the campus at a later date. This was "largely at the expense of the principal" and Professor Ketron served as principal and instructor at the school for twenty-five years. Over one thousand students attended the school during that time.

Kingsley Seminary was located on **Old Reedy Creek Road**. It was in a farming area where farms were large, one hundred and two hundred acre tracts and some larger. The farm which bordered the campus on two sides consisted of almost 600 acres. Contact with city life was rare. Roads were poor, there was only one stage coach road close by and other roads in the winter were barely passable even for wagons. Quite a bit of the country was still heavily wooded.

Students who lived near enough walked to school, others rode horses. There was a log barn on the farm which joined the campus. Students kept their horses there. If they were financially able they paid for the use of the barn.

The school was not only for local and regional students. Students from nine states other than Tennessee enrolled in the tiny isolated school. They came from as far away as Maryland, North Carolina, Mississippi and Kentucky. Professor Ketron had dormitories built to house a number of the students and others boarded in private homes. Board which included "table board, room and fuel" was obtainable near the school for \$1.25 per week. Later the price was raised to \$1.50 per week and at this higher price oil was furnished for the students' lamps. The very few girls who attended the school from a distance stayed in private homes.

In 1878 it was announced that instruction in any of the regular college courses was available. Students could study pre-medicine, Latin, Greek, German, and Hebrew at the school.

In 1881 the **Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church** made the school a conference ministerial seminary. The members of the Holston Conference thought very highly of Professor Ketron and his school. It was stated in 1882 that Ketron was one of their most successful educators. It was estimated that about sixty young men studied for the ministry under him. In spite of this, the conference provided little financial aid for the school. Kingsley served as a primary and secondary school. The state paid for that instruction. A normal course was added in 1883. That was the last change made in the school's curricula during its existence.

Although Kingsley Seminary was financed by a small amount of financial aid from the Methodist Church, along with Tennessee public school funds, the chief source of funding was from tuition fees. Many students were unable to pay their tuition in full and Joseph Ketron in turn would not turn them away. The money collected was not sufficient and Ketron was compelled to bear a large part of the financial burden himself.

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A small village, named **Bloomington**, was laid out a short distance from the school about 1883. A post office was soon established in the village. Sometime after that, the name **Reedy Creek Road** was changed to **Bloomington Road**.

After the death of his father, Joseph Ketron managed the family farm, cared for his blind mother and continued to carry his heavy load of work at the school. In 1901 he had pneumonia from which he never fully recovered. Later he contracted tuberculosis. He died November 1, 1901. He was buried in Reedy Creek Camp Ground Cemetery in **Arcadia, Tennessee**.

Plans had been made for a new school building before Professor Ketron's death. A new building erected in his honor, was completed in 1904. The school never again had the prestige it once had. There were two reasons for this, the death of Joseph Ketron and the fact that private schools were decreasing over the state. This was due to the rise of the public school. In 1907, the Conference agreed to sell the new school to Sullivan County for a public school.

The old Kingsley School Church building was used exclusively as a church after the new school building was erected. It was replaced by a new brick church building in 1947. **Ketron High School**, now Ketron Middle School, was named in honor of Joseph H. Ketron, our great regional educator.

Obituary Notes.

Judge JOHN PAUL, United States Judge for the Western District of Virginia, died at his home in Harrisonburg, Va., yesterday.

Prof. JOSEPH H. KETRON, who founded Kingsley Seminary at Bloomington, near the Virginia-Tennessee line, twenty years ago, and who had been its President ever since, died last night, aged sixty-four.

Dr. G. D. VANVRANKEN, a prominent resident of Hempstead, L. I., died at his home yesterday. He had for a number of years been prominently identified with all public improvements of Nassau County. He is survived by a widow and two children.

New York Times: November 2, 1901

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Professor Ketron at Kingsley Seminary 1880s

*Travel notes and documents were transcribed and edited by
Alan Bridwell, Great-Great Nephew of Joseph H. Ketron.
Some errors in transcription are likely due to the age and condition of the original documents.
March 1, 2009.*