

Selected pages of a journal kept by Elkanah Watson (two pages featuring comments about Wood Creek)

- pages 14 - 15, September 9, 1791
- page 17, September 12, 1791

from:

Elkanah Watson Papers (SC12579)
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On the Mohawk River we observed
 Several Black Thruers - & the devastating
 ruins, occasioned by the ^{late} cruel depredations
 of the Indians, aided by these Infamous
 White Savage Savages the Tories in the
 Late war - who carried on their Warfare
 in the Mohawk with the usual ^{unrelenting} rigor
 & severity. ^{and my heart has often been pained by the}
^{circumstances with the groans & tears of the}
^{old England in the town will} ^{one the justice of which will}
^{these} ^{isolate their damnable crimes by} ^{among their injuries, & that}
 Thus Morn. Our battalions

descend Wood Creek aided by a sluice
 which had been previously filled at a
 Mill dam just above. Some of our
 party at the same time descended by
 Land ^{by on} a tolerable waggon road to
 Canada Creek 6 Miles & 8 by water.

Notwithstanding ^{the} aid ^{of} the Water
 at the Mill dam, it was with great
 difficulty we ^{descended} ~~got on~~ with our battalions
 - & frequently we were obliged to wait
 for water altho' our boats started an
 hour after the sluice was opened.

In many places the windings
 were so sudden & short, that while
 the bow of the boat was ploughing
 in the Bank on one side her Stern
 was rubbing ^{against} ~~hard upon~~ the other.

In some places our men were
 obliged to drag the boats by main
 strength & in others the ^{upper} ~~lower~~ Limbs

from the other side. ^{Left} water communication
 and it is supposed to be the highest land in the State
 at present there is a large clearing round the Old Fort
 under tolerable good improvement of 2 or 3 ^{scattered} ~~scattered~~
 Journal of 7th scored in the Mary ^{house - unfortunately for the public} ^{house is owned by an}

were so close & Low as to Arch the
 Creek completely over & oblige all
 lands to lie flat. These obstacles
 with sunken logs & trees & crop the
 Creek renders the passage extremely
 difficult & almost impassable.

Such ^{Other!} is the present deplorable
 situation of a very important
 River which Providence has evidently
 intended for the most valuable purposes
 apt to be realized.

One thousand or at the utmost £1200
 judiciously applied under the Eye of
 an able & capable man would easily
 render this communication extremely
 easy & of the utmost importance to the
 Union - to the State - & to Individuals.

From a superficial View of the Creek
 it appears ^{to me} that the great difficulties
 may be ^{surmounted} ~~removed~~, first by cutting down
 all the bushes & trees on the Banks of
 the Creek - ^{by} to remove ^{any} all the trees & logs
 & lastly by ^{cutting} ~~taking~~ of the Creek, & erecting substantial
 sluices at given Distances according to the fall
 of Water so as ^{or in some} ^{or in some} ^{or in some} to continue a head of Water
 from Sluice to Sluice. This Creek may be
 considered in its present state as a natural
 Canal from 10 to 20 feet wide. If the Sluices
 were erected only to the height of the Banks
 it is probable they would be sufficiently high
 I am persuaded they could be well done
 for £50 each. The only possible objection as I
 conceive which can be ^{opposed} ~~opposed~~ to this plan

with a rainy day, for which we were
agreeably disappointed, & at 3 in the
afternoon we reached the Royal Black
Horse at the East end of the Onida
Lake. Nothing can exceed the crookedness
of Wood Creek, & nothing can be more
trying to the Patience of an active man
under its present obstructions, than
Sailing through it. The Points & Shoals
crook every moment present, themselves, carry-
ing us all round the Cornsapi; & in many
places running exactly Parallel to each
other at a little distance. We computed
188 distinct Points on both Sides between
Canada Creek & the Royal Black Horse
27 Miles. At a place called the Nuk
4 Miles from the Onida Lake we measured
7 fathoms & crossed the Nuk, & our boats had
to go a mile round to meet us on the
opposite Side. Some Individuals have
at this place, attempted to cut thro' the
neck without complicating the Plan which
might be effected for a few Pounds expense
if the Public ever undertake
the improvement of these western Waters
they might easily shorten the distance
of this Creek at least one third by cutting
thro' the Nuk formed by its windings
& I am persuaded the mode would
be found in General the Cheapest, by
abolishing the necessity of removing the
obstructions, in the neglected windings.
Opposite to Canada Creek commences
the Onida Reservation which extends