

Charles J. Teffrey, Oxford County
b. 1825 – d. 1908

An account from his father's diary of coming to Canada, 1834-38.

Archives: Box 24

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This transcription was coordinated by Jane Zavitz Bond, archivist for Canada Yearly Meeting, and fully transcribed by Sheila Havard and prepared for posting by Randy Saylor. The text was transcribed as written. Transcriber notes are in square brackets. The book has not been proof read. The paragraphing of this transcription has been altered to make it easier to read. The spelling and punctuation is left as transcribed.

There is a second transcription of this account published in the [Canadian Quaker History Journal, No. 67. P. 50-59](#). It is titled *From England to Canada 1834: An Account of the Settlement of the Treffry Family in the Township of South Norwich* by Sandra McCann Fuller. The paragraphing, punctuation and spelling have been modernized in this transcription.

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*[NOTE: This transcript has not been proof-read.
It reflects the original as closely as possible but, due to the non-standard spelling,
punctuation and capitalization, there could be discrepancies.]*

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17a

From *Journal of Charles J. Treffry*, born in Falmouth, Eng. 1825 & came to Canada with his Father, Mother & 8 other children. Chas. J. married Miss Corliss in 1854. He died 1908, buried at Mildale

At the request of several of the members of the Historical Society of the County of Oxford, I herewith present the Society with a sketch of the early settlement of ~~any~~ my father and family in the most remote South east part of the County then settled, which was upon Lot No. 2 in the 10th Concession of what is now called South Norwich.

my father had a family of seven sons and four daughters, his eldest son procured a situation in Bogota as Bookkeeper for an English Mining company where he went out in company with 50 Cornish Miners. His second son procured a similar situation in Brazil, the third son engaged in the tea trade with his uncle in the City of Exeter; the second son returned from Brazil at the expiration of three years on account of ill health and on his recovery persuaded his father to emigrate to Canada with his five sons and four daughters as it was very difficult to procure situations in England at that time for such a large family.

Consequently on the 4th of April 1834 he sailed from Falmouth in a timber ship called the Brazila (a Barque) bound for Quebec with 59 passengers on board; my fathers diary gives the names ages and occupation of the passengers; his record gives 17 Miners, 7 Carpenters, 3 Shoemakers, one Cabinet maker, 1 farm labourer, 1 Merchant & 1 old soldier, one Doctor, the remainder are women and children, my father and family had an apartment to themselves with free access to the Captain's Cabin who was a very genial Scotch man about 32 years of age; he allowd my father to copy from his diary or log book from which he copied a record of the weather, Latitude and Longitude and the course by point of compass we were sailing, had a fair passage of five weeks when the weather was fine he would allow the sailors to play games on the deck in the evenings with the passengers, some of the sailors would be plaiting straw for summer hats.

On the 1st of May we met the field ice it was a beautiful bright day but there was a considerable anxiety whilst passing through it the Captian on the crosstrees with a mate on either side at the foot of the ladder to repeat the orders to the men at the helm no one was allowd to speak but those on the water we were 12 hours passing through the ice.

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The captain wishing to put on a good appearance before entering the port put some of the men to give the ship a coat of paint one of the passengers a painter by trade volunteerd to help and my brother John also jouned in the work, one after noon my brother declined because of a headache consequently the painter was alone and by a mistake the sailor lowered the scaffold instead of raising it and the poor fellow was dropd into the sea, there was another ship near by and they lowered their boat at once as did also ours as soon as he saw an effort to save him he pushed his hat down tightly and turned on his back our boatmen soon picked him up had one little boy on board with him poor little fellow was in the act of jumping overboard when one of the men caught him and took him down the cabin until his father was safe on board the painter was a good swimmer and saved several lives in Falmouth harbour.

Our ship was complimented as being the cleanest ship in the fleet by the medical men at the Quarentine and we were only detained one night, we were all glad to get some soft bread if it was sour after having been kept on hard biscuit for five weeks, when we landed at Quebec our family Captain gave our family a treat, a nice tea at a private house a personal friend of the

Captians where we had a treat of thin bread and butter marmalade and a quite a contrast from our ship fare.

We took passage from Quebec to Montreal in the steamer John Bull said to be the largest steamer and ship. This was before the Atlantic line of Steamers were running. We had four ships in town which made it slow work for the steamer however we reached Montreal after 3 days about half the time it takes now with a good voyage to cross the Atlantic Ocean quite a contrast now and then. Now it only takes about 8 hours on the train We found on this steamer a lot of filthy Emigrants, the steward and waiter both drunk, which made it very disagreeable for the better class of passangers; My father and his family put up at Mrs. Bellaings Hotel where he paid \$1 pr. day for adults.

Our next move was for Kingston via Lachine and Bytown (now Ottawa) and the Rideau Canal. My father made arrangements with a Mr. Cushing to transport our luggage and family including the Doctor Quick who crossed the Atlantic with us for £27 I think this was Sterling part of the way by coaches to Grenfield over very rough cordaroy roads we reached Grenfell or Grenfield about midnight.

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In attempting to leave that place the [...]ting to leave that place the boat drifted on a rock where we were from 5 to 8 o'clock in the morning before she was got off at 8 in the evening we reached Bytown, on the way a little boy fell off of one of the Durham boats that was in tow a young Scotchman named Gordon went after him with a small boat and one oar, and at a considerable distance in the rear picked the little fellow up.

May 23d left Bytown at 7 o'clock in the morning and accended the locks which were many feet above the River below it took 1 hour and 40 minutes in the Steamer Enterprise Captain Richards

– A leak was discovered about midnight – there was 6 inches of water on the Cabin floors, no pump on board that could be worked got one from a barge in tow, a Methodist minister found his boots floating in the water, he left the first opportunity that offered, the next morning got the Engine pump repaired – we reached Jones locks about 6 o'clock Sunday morning just then both cranks of the rods broke the flange of the pipe that connected the cilinders from the steam Boiler also parted which was a fortunate circumstance or the Boiler would have bursted – the Engineer said. The Captain consulted with the Cabin passangers and departed for Kingston

– 26th May at Jones falls fishing and others hunting saw plenty of Deer but caught none others went fishing and caught plenty the cook got drunk and declared he would not cook fish all the time the passengers made prisoner of him and put Mr. Chambers a servant man in the Galley to cook

27th the captain returned from Kingston with a plenty of provision we reached Kingston a little too late for the Toronto Steamer consequently was obliged to remain there all day.

Friday 30th of May left Kingston for Toronto had the Cabin with the Spences and Tantons for £1 per. head

31st reached Toronto at 2 in the afternoon Drank Tea at the steamship Hotel and in the evening went on board the Smack for Hamilton Mr. Stonehouse and the Hon. James Crooks was also a passanger

Sunday 1st June arrived at Hamilton about noon, put up at the Comerercial Hotel kept by Mrs. Green. John and self left Hamilton in the Afternoon for Warterloo, slept at Groffs Inn which was filld with Emigrants of all sorts could only get one bed between three of us in the same room were some Irish emigrants our driver slept in the stable he fared the best of us,

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we drove for several miles after night through the woods and over cordoroy roads – during which it was constant lightening

Monday 2d June arose early in the morning the air very cold indeed drove into Doctor Robert Jeffrys to breakfast reached his house in the pine woods in Waterloo at about ½ past 7 o'clock we waited 2 hours for our breakfast he took great pains go inform us that purchasing from private individuals was safer that from the Canada Company or even the Government, we returned to Hamilton the same evening

– Tues 3d June at Hamilton all day attended the sale of the Government lands most of those sold were town and farm lots near the Grand River to a party of Dutch men

4th June went to Burgesses about 15 miles from Hamilton took lodgings at 5/ per. week no fire in the house the women were obliged to cook on the ground without any cover over head until a kind neighbour came one morning and cut some crotches and poles for to support some new boards for a roof Our bread was baked in an iron kettle which was often dough on one side and a burnt crust on the other, the owner of the house had a situation in Hamilton his wife was a London dressmaker from England and knew nothing about cooking, with such, sourroundings

6th June self and John with several others went to ~~dig 100~~ see the land along the Grand river some of it appeared pretty good behind was clay soil badle watered they had to dig 100 feet without finding water got to Cambro in the evening very much fatigued with our journey

Sat. 7th June arose early left Cambro without our Breakfast a bad plan for Canada – rode for 8 miles towards Dunville bridge then turned to the right towards Cyuga the siol sandy on the Banks of the River but clay botton a very ~~good~~ short distance back from a the river, bad to work but little water to be had for miles and the little to be had very bad to use, arrived at Bryants Hotel about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, all tired with our horses just starved, got vension for dinner after refreshing ourselves started for Hamilton and Burgesses, my son John the Doctor and myself went by way of Ancaster for Burgesses but missing our way got benighted arrived at Sharps Inn at Flansborough were we staid for the night

– Sunday 8th June left Sharps for Burgesses arrived there to breakfast and rested being very weary –

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Monday June 9th left for Paris and Oxford breakfasted at Paris dined at Oxford (now called Woodstock) called on Captain Drew rode several miles through thick woods we returned to the Inn as we could get no lodgings else where

Tuesday 10th got up early started right after breakfast and started for Stratford on Avon in the Narron Tract rode through Tora many parts of which is well watered with running streams a rare thing to be found in Upper Canada went several miles through thick woods Dr. Quicks mare got tired and was obliged to be led arrived just as it was dark at Stratford the wheat and oats was destroyed by frosts could get no hay for grass for our horses the Tavern Keeper said he had ~~tried~~ – tried for miles around without success her we found the house full of emigrants of all discriptions with difficulty we got 2 beds in the end of a large room filld with men women and children spread on the floor that we could scarcely get to our beds without stepping on them, we engaged with the companys agent to look at a spot in the morning, we rose about four oclock in the morning took a walk around the town which had been represented to us as being a growing place it is time there is a Grist Mill Saw Mill a Store belonging to the Canada Company where moat things can be bought for money and some on credit but the people said another stone was much needed to keep prices within fair limits, about ½ past five we met with a man going to work – about a new building we saluted – each other with a cold morning this and got into conversation with him and found he had been three years in the country, pray how do you do I like this part of the country he replied. I should like it well enough if it was not for the great uncertantrity of the weather of the weather one day it is very fine and warm the next day may be a hard frost which has destroyed the Crops for the last two seasons the Sand ladys at the Inn said she had lost three sowings of garden seeds yet she and her husband were most profuse in praising the country and climate like the companies agents and book-writers interested in puffing we were to go to see a 100 acres but the weather was very cold the crops for miles around destroyed, and so very different from those in Waterloo Dumphries Flamborough Oxford and many other places we determined to return by way of Galt we proceeded on 10 miles to Galt where we slept

left Galt early in the morning rode to Erbs Hotel

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or Inn to breakfast where we slept arrived home to Burgesses to dinner

--- afterwards we rode to Brantford were we met Edmond Lossing air the Stable who invited us to go to Norwich to see some land to sell there, according we returned our horses, to Hamilton,

14th left Hamilton for Brantford by the stage six in the morning Breakfasted at Ancaster and arrived at Brantford at one left soon after with Jessee Stover in his waggon arrived at Edmond Lossings in the evening and was kindly entertained by him and his wife, weather very warm,

Sunday 15 June went to Friends Meeting about 150 or 200 present dined at Edmund Lossings several came without their coats or shoes, Met Benson Lossing from Summerville who invilted us to go with him and his wife to Summerville to see several spots for sale we gave the preference to Lots No. 2 in the 10th concession a Clergy reserve abandend by a Black man it appeard well watered. and finely situatd, we were kindly received & entertained by Benson Lossing and his wife,

we lost no time in bending our way to Toronto and after walking seven miles in very hot sun we got a waggon to take us to Battys Inn 48½ miles from Brantford for 15/in all 28 miles arrived there about half past eleven at night,

Tuesday 17th arose at 4 oclock got breakfast started for Burgesses at about 9 oclock in the forenoon and rain with thunder and lightening most of the way and very hot,

18th still confined to the house by the weather,

19th we started for Hamiltons wagon got there to Breakfast and at noon took the steamer for Toronto, and great difficulty in getting lodgings which was at last was obtained in the British Coffee House, went to bed on two small sofa in a sitting room and thought our selves well off, at one awakend by by the waiter who begged as a particular favour to give up our room to some ladies who had just arrived by a steamer we started over another pair of stairs with our clothes in our arms and stowed in two other rooms, As soon as we had Breakfast

20th June we started for Mr. A B Nawke and handed him the letters we brought with us from McIhon William and Mr Nawkes brother he immediately accompanied us to the land Office who in a very kind and handsome manner spoke to the Honble. Peter Robinson and the clerks in the office, who appeared very ready to give us any information relative to to the

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spot of land we had in view from what transpired we concluded to return and take all the family down to Summerville – very hot weather with thunder storms

Sat 21st Returned from Toronto to Burgesses

Mon 23 John went to Norwich with a load of goods with Mr. Hamilin's team & returned on the 24 sooner than we expected,

Thursday 26 June all hands left Burgesses for Summerville, slept at Burford House Inn kept by Wm Doyle

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Friday 27th arrived at Summerville about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and was kindly received by Benson Lossing & his wife at the school room which was vacant for want of a Teacher these kind friends provided a meal for us which was very acceptable after a long ride in a lumber waggon over new and rough roads, Father & Mother with 9 children Father and Mother & the youngest child slept in the log school house the remainder of the family in a new barn without doors some in the Hammoiks others in the wagon & sleighs,

I find from my father, diary dated from the 4th of April 1834 To the 27th of June 1834 with his son John Treffry Jr that he had much traveling with many hardships and privations to endure in selecting a spot and building a home in the backwoods for such a large family, as soon as he found as he thought a suitable location he proceeded to cut logs and procure lumber to build a log house he built his house with good straight [illegible] logs 20x32 feet he began to cut logs on the 7th of July and on the 19th of Sept. raised the new log house and on the 20th of October removed from the old Southwick house into it, whilst the house was being build A well was being dug the blue clay was used for plastering the chinks between the logs and for building a chimney cost over \$20

26 July settled with the choppers paid thm for 6&¼ acres at 6&½ dollars per acre they boarded themselves this with the clearing that the black men made left 8 acres clear, about 6 acres of this was put into wheat but it was so late in November among the green roots, and the harvest was very wet that it grew long sprouts as it stood in the field this 8 acre field, surrounded with a thick forest gave it no chance to dry between showers we were at this time 9 miles from Norwich Post Office which had been kept by the date Peter Lossing the first Post-Master in Norwich which was a mile north of the present Norwich Office Doctor Cooke was his Successor and the first Coctor in the Township, my father bought two brood

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sows a cow & a 2 year old heifer and a young Mare, which he found afterwards to be a pretty heavy stock to begin with before he raised any crop, At that time we moved into the new house

on the 20th of October – there was only one door, the north door space was filld with the Boxes brought from England with our clothing and the floors were laid with loose boards the wolves often made a good deal of noise but they would stop by my father going out and calling to them We had a place under the floor of the house to keep potatoes & other vegetables in from the frost, my father built a clay oven out of doors to bake short cakes & sometimes a loaf before the fire in the house

We had a stable built of split baswood logs stood end wise at the end of the house where the horse and cow was kept for the first winter and where some hay and oat sheaves was stowed away for them, a considerable time was spent to make the house and stable tight and comfortable. the first crop of wheat was sown in October and some in November, their a quantity of apple trees was purchased from the Willson Nursery ten miles north from here and heeled in

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for the winter to be in readiness to plant in the Spring he was told by some of his neighbours that he was too old to see them bear fruit but before he reached his seventieth year he saw a hundred bushel gathered from those trees – he frequently remonstrated with those who said he was too old to expect fruits in his time, then he set to work to cut and split rails to fence his wheat crop and his ground for Orchard and he and his sons commenced underbushing to clear more land for the next year,

On the 18th of Novr 1834 I find the first Mention of Otterville Post Office, all the mail prior to this I find Norwich mentioned,

on the 25th Nov – sent to Otterville P.O. there was no letters &

on the 28th Novr sent to the Upper settlement a letter to post a letter paid 2/ currency to New York, I should take it from there memos that Otterville Post Office was not established until Novr 1834 & then probably only once a week (see the change now in 26 awtrery we have 6 mails per days) (CJI) 1907

Monday Jan 5th 1835 John attended the Town Meeting in the Upper settlement (where all the township Officers were alleccted pathmasters pound – keepers &c.)

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April 6th 1835 John Treffory Jr married Mary Ann Southwick a granddaughter of Peter Lossing the first settler in Norwich who emigrated from Dutches County in York State with a number of others from that locality following, many of them where Friends of Quakers, and they built a Quaker meeting House the said Peter Lossing was a Minister of the Gospel in that society.

April 19th 1835 shows the difficulty to procure seed grain after dinner I rode to Edmond Lossings where I slept and walked from there to Justice Wilsons to breakfast Thence to John Palmers and Fred Stovers to try and get seed Oats Pease and Potatoes did not succeed in either place, I returned to Edmond Lossings took my horse rode to Jessie Stovers on the same errand from thence to Wm. Barkers then to Henry Suttons where I purchased 1 b. Bushel of potatoes a 2/ york per bushel went on to Wm. Harlets where I was reccommended to go to Caleb Tomkins Junior who had a Vandue I bought two bushel of timothy seed and was informed that Seth Weston had Pease to sell I accompined Justice Wilson back to his house where I was hospitably entertained it rained and snowed most of the day and was very cold, after breakfasting with Justice Wilson I walked with him to Seth Westons where I purchased 12 bushel of pease large white Marrow fats at 5/ per bushel of Oats at 2/ and 6d. Y.R. Currency returned to Justice Wilsons took my horse rode to Joseph Whrogmortons. Thence to Hugh Websters and then returned home on the 21st April

Note I would appear that my father was purchasing a large quantity of seed for such a small clearing but he and his son was working some cleard land upon shares hence they required so much seed and my motive in copying so much of his diary to show what difficulty he

experienced in procuring seed grain in the spring from the best of the farmers in that locality (CJT)

24th April 1835 An ever memorable day Our darling little Henry (aged 3 yrs 4 months 6 dys.) caught his clothes on fire by a log heap and burnt in such a state about 4 o'clock in the afternoon that about midnight he breathed his last his cloths was letterly consumed we washed him in sweet oil and then dusted him with flour and gave him 6 drops of Laudum which appeared to lull the pain he was wonderfully patient and departed in a most quiet manner.

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The trial to his parents and Brothers and sisters is very great yet we have abundant cause to be thankful to the Almighty for his Mercy in removing him so soon had he lived until the following day his distressed state would have been beyond description Therefore we say the Lord be praised and His Will be done on Earth as in Heaven.

Saturday 25th most of our friends and neighbours called today to sympathise with us on the melancholy event during the past night.

Sunday 26 April several of our kind neighbours called to see us in our troubled state, in the afternoon John Page brought the Coffin and we laid our dear child in it.

Monday 27 Apl. Henry Wood, Jacob Barnes, Wm. Sherwood and Joseph Barnes, carried him as far as Paulina Southwicks here we were met by most of the families in the neighbourhood after sitting a short time we sat off in three waggons to the Buriel ground to the Friends Meeting House nine miles north and west from here, where we were met by our worthy friend Justice Wilson who kindly had everything needful prepared and after sitting some time in the Meeting House we removed the corps. to the ground, all was done in a most quiet and peaceable manner several of the friends in the neighbourhood favoured us with their company and on our return our kind hearted friends Benson Lossing and his wife had refreshments prepared for us, Note the corps was carried across the woods and fields from our residence to where we were met by the teams a mile or more (CJT)

Wednesday, 13 May

Self at the Land Office in Toronto was informed the Lot we were located should be put up immediately the Hon. Peter Robinson expressed his regret it should not have been advertised last summer I.B. Askin Esq. of London is the District Surveyor and expected at Toronto every day when the lots would be advertised for the season

Thurs. 14th left Toronto this morning and came by steam Packet in about 4 and ½ hours by the Britin to Hamilton, left Hamilton and came to Brantford by Coach arrived about 7 o'clock pd. \$1.25

Left Brantford five o'clock in the morning took breakfast at Burford at 7 got a lift to Sadour in Hernans waggon from the Grand River paid \$1 thence home.

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Monday 15th June 1835 Left home about 11 o'clock for London rode as far as Cap't Curtis-situate about half way between Martin's Tavern and Oxford village to breakfast from thence to London 20 miles arrived there about 1/2 past ten in the fore-noon, I.B. Askin Esqr Clerk of the Peace and surveyor of the district who informed me that the Reserve we occupy was offered for sale twice last year and not sold vis on the 20th Sept & 20th Octr he said this year's notices for the sale of land had not arrived when he received them I should be informed by post, wrote to McNeanke at Toronto left London about 3 o'clock and returned to Dorchester where I breakfasted to stop for the night,

Tuesday 16th June rose at 1/2 past 4 left Dorchester at 5 arrived at Capt Curtis Tavern 9 miles to breakfast and left at 8 for home missed my way and came home through Dereham called at Mr Bourns and very kindly entertained with refreshment for self and horse which I much needed, reached home about sunset much fatigued,

July 27th 1835 - attended the sale of lands at Blanford & purchased our farm lot No. 2 in the 10th concession of South Norwich for three dollars per acre

Entries having reference to the rebellion of 1837-8.

Mar. 10 1838. W. Mason came to summons people to attend at London about training for the militia.

Mar. 28. Obtained a horse from P. Southwick in order to ride to Hamilton to attend the trial of Solomon Lassing for high treason.

29th Left home on the pony for Hamilton. Stopped for the night 4 miles beyond Brantford.

30. Rode on towards Hamilton. Overtook Mrs. Lassing her son Albert my daughter Marianna (Note my sister was governess in the family of S. Lassing so was summoned as a witness in his defence) and Myron Dukes near Van DeSaip's tavern where we breakfasted. Arrived in Hamilton about 2 o'clock. The roads were very bad. They were obliged to get oxen twice to pull the horses & wagon out of the mire.

31st, Sat. At the court house most of the day hearing the trials of the prisoners for high treason in the late rebellion. Attended on Mr. Strahan, the solicitor, with witness in behalf of Solomon Lassing. Court did not break up till near midnight.

April 1st Fine weather. Self writing and preparing brief for counsel most of the day.

2nd Fine, but rather colder. Lossing put into the dock for trial. Could not find S. Jennings a principle witness. Got leave of the judge to put off the trial for that time. Court proceeded with the trial of another prisoner. Did not succeed in getting Jennings. Had to petition the court, and make affidavits that we had made due diligence in searching for him – that he was a material evidence in the prisoner's defense. Judge granted him till 10 o'clock the following morning. Despatched Albert Lossing at half past five in the evening for two other witnesses, Dr. G.W. Carder and Edward Anderson. Anderson came into court about 11 o'clock and A. Lossing soon after him. Mr. Carder, having lost his way did not arrive till after the trial was closed. It lasted most of the day. When the jury retired for 3½ minutes and returned with a verdict of "not guilty", to the great satisfaction of the prisoner and all present.

The counsel for Mr. Lossing were Mr. Strahan and Mr. O'Riley Their joint fees were \$90 or £22.10s. This was on Tuesday, 3d of April, a very fine day.

4th. This day 4 years, we left dear old England in the "Brazilla"^x
Returned as far as Brantford in company with Dr. Carder.

5th. Weather continues very fine. Left Brantford at 6 in the morning. Arrived at Mt. Pleasant to breakfast, and home about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Found Edwin ploughing in the orchard and Charles boiling sap in the sugar bush. Absent 8 days.

x. Attended at the Court house and heard sentence of death passed on 9 of the prisoners for high treason. viz. Dr. Ephraim Cook, Nathan Towan, Stephen Smith, John Taffert, Wm. Webbe ---- Hammill Horatio Hill, Peter Malcombe, ---- Walrod, to be executed on the 20th of this month (April 1838).