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NARRATIVE OF COL. JOHN STUART, OF GREENBRIER.

Copied by the clerk, John S. Crawford, from the Records of Greenbrier County at the request of Judge G. A. Vincent, Fairmont, West Virginia.

John Stuart was the son of David Stuart and Margaret Lynn, a kinswoman of Margaret Lynn who married John Lewis, of County Donegal, Ireland, the father of Andrew and Thomas Lewis, of Augusta County. John Stuart was employed by John Lewis in locating land in West Virginia, and finally settled on the Greenbrier river. He was frequently engaged in Indian wars, was a member of the House of Delegates during the Revolution, and for more than a quarter of a century was county clerk. He was also county lieutenant of Greenbrier County, and in 1788 was a member of the State Convention called to pass upon the Federal Constitution and voted for its adoption. He married about 1774 Agatha, widow of John Frogg, of Augusta, and daughter of Thomas Lewis, son of John Lewis. See for sketch of John Stuart, Grigsby, *Convention of 1788*, 25-31.

MEMORANDUM—1798, July 15th (By John Stuart).

The inhabitants of every County and place are desirous to enquire after the first founders, and in order to gratify the curious or such who may hereafter incline to be informed of the origin of the settlements made in Greenbrier, I leave this Memorandum for their satisfaction being the only person at this time alive acquainted with the circumstances of its discovery & manner of settling.

Born in Augusta County, and the particulars of this place often related to me from my childhood by the first adventurers I can relate with certainty that our river was first discovered about the year 1749 by the white people, some say Jacob Marlin was the first person who discovered it, others that a man of an unsound mind who's name I do not now remember had wandered from Frederick County through the mountains and on his return reported he had seen a river running westward supposed to be Greenbrier River. However Jacob Marlin and Stephen Sniel were the first settlers at the mouth of Knapp’s Creek above what
is now called the little levels on the land still bearing the name of Marlins. These two men lived there in a kind of hermitage having no families, but frequently differing in sentiment which ended in rage, Marlin kept possession of the Cabin whilst Sneil took up his abode in the trunk of a large tree at a small distance, and thus living more independent their animosities would abate, & sociability ensued—not long after they had made their settlement on the river, the county was explored by the late Genrl. Andrew Lewis at that time a noted and famous woodsman, on who's report an order of Counsel was soon obtained granting one hundred thousand acres of lands on Greenbrier to the Honbl. Robinson (Treasurer of Virginia) to the number of Twelve including old Col. John Lewis and his two sons William & Charles, with the condition of settling the lands with inhabitants, and certain emoluments of three pounds per hundred acres to themselves—But the war breaking out between England & France in the year 1755 and the Indians being excited by the French to make War on the back inhabitants of Virginia, all who were then settled on Greenbrier were obliged to retreat to the older settlements for safety, amongst whom was Jacob Marlin but Sneil fell a sacrifice to the enemy: This was ended in 1762 and then some people returned and settled in Greenbrier again, amongst whom was Archibald Clendenen who's residence was on the lands now claimed by John Davis by virtue of an intermarriage with his Daughter and lying two miles west of Lewisburg.

The Indians breaking out again in 1763 came up the Kanawha in a large body to the number of sixty and coming to the house of Frederick Sea on Muddy Creek, were kindly entertained by him and Felty Yolkcom; not suspecting their hostile design were suddenly killed & their families, with many others made prisoners: then proceeding over the mountain they came to Archibald Clendenens, who like Sea & Yolkcom, entertained them until they put him to death, his family with a number of others living with him being all made prisoners or killed, not any one escaping except Conrad Yolkcom who doubting the design of the Indians when they came to Clendenens took his horse out under the pretense of hobbling him at some distance from the house—
soon after some guns was fired at the house and a loud cry raised
the people, whereupon Yolkcom taking the alarm mounted his
horse and rode off as far as where the Court House now stands,
and there beginning to ruminate whither he might not be mis-
taken in his apprehension, concluded to return and know the truth
but just as he came to the corner of Clendenens fence some In-
dians placed there, presented their guns and attempted to shoot
him, but their guns all missing fire (he thinks at least ten) he
immediately fled to Jackson's river alarming the people as he
went, but few were willing to believe him, the Indians pursued
after him and all that fell in their way were slain until they
went on Carrs Creek now in Rockbridge County, so much were
people in them days intimidated by an attack of the Indians that
they suffered to retreat with all their Booty, and more prisoners
than there was Indians in their party.

I will here relate a narrative of Archibald Clendenen's wife
being prisoner with her young child as they were passing over
Keeney's nob from Muddy Creek, a part of the Indians being
in front with the remainder behind & the prisoners in the center,
Mrs. Clendenen handed her child to another woman to carry
and she slipped to one side and hid herself in a bush, but the
Indians soon missing her one of them observed he would soon
bring the Cow to her calf and taking the child caused it to cry
very loud but the mother not appearing he took the infant and
beat out its brains against a tree, then throwing it down in the
road all the people and horses that were in the rear passed over
it until it was trod to pieces, many more cruelties were com-
mitted two hard to be related, & too many to be contained in this
Memorandum.

Thus was Greenbrier once more depopulated for six years,
but a peace being concluded with Indians in 1765 and the lands
on the Western waters with certain bounderys being purchased
at a Treaty at Fort Stanwix by Andw. Lewis & Thomas Walker
Commissioners appointed by Government, the people again re-
turned to settled in Greenbrier in 1769 and I myself was amongst
the first of those last adventurers, being at that time about nine-
teen years of age with Robert McClenachan, another very young
man, our design was to secure lands & incourage a settlement in the Country but the Indians breaking out again in 1774 Col. Andrew Lewis was ordered by the Earl of Dunmore (then Governor of Virginia.) to march against them with fifteen hundred volunteers militia which army march from Camp Union (now Lewisburg) the 11th day of September 1774 two companys of the said army being raised in Greenbrier & commanded by Capt. Robert McClanachan & myself we were met by the Indians on the 10th day of October at the mouth of the Kanawha & a very obstinate engagement insued the Indians were defeated, tho with the loss of seventy five officers & Soldiers, amongst the slain was Col. Charls Lewis who commanded the Augusta Militia & my friend Capt. Robt. McClanachan. Col. And. Lewis pursued his victory crossing the Ohio untill we were in sight of some Indian Town on the waters of Siota where we were met by the Earl of Dunmore who commanded an army in person and had made his rout by the way of Fort Pitt. The Governor capitulat- ing with the Indians Col. Lewis was ordered to retreat and the next year hostilities commenced between the British & Americans at Boston in New England and I have since been informed by Col. Lewis, That the Earl of Dunmore (the Kings Governor) knew of the attack to be made upon us by the Indians at the mouth of Kanawha, and hoped our destruction, this secret was communicated to him by indisputable authority. Independence being declared by America the 4th of July, 1775 [sic], and the people assuming the rains of Government a County was granted to the people of Greenbrier under the commonwealth in May 1778, and a Court was first held at my house on the 3rd Tuesday in said Month.

Not long after which we were invaded again by the Indians who had taken part with the British & on the 28th day of same Month Col. Andrew Donallys House was attacked abouth eight miles from Lewisburg by two hundred Indians these Indians were pursued from the mouth of the Kanawha by two scouts from that garrison to-wit: Phil Harmon & John Pryor, & passing the Indians at the Meadows gave inteligence to Col. Donally of their approach who instantly collected about twenty men, &
the next morning sustained the attack of the enemy. until he was relieved about Two o'clock by sixty men from Lewisburg, I was one of the number and we got into the house unhurt, being favored by a field of Rye which grew close up to the house the Indians being all on the opposite side of the house, four men were killed before we got in and about sixteen Indians lay dead in the yard before the door, some of these were taken off in the night but we scalped nine the next morning, this was the last time the Indians invaded Greenbrier in any large party. Peace with the British followed in 1781 and then the people of this County began to make some feeble efforts to regulate their society, and to open roads and passes for wagons through the Mountain which by many had been thought impracticable, no wagon at that time having approached nearer than the Warm Springs. On petition the Assembly granted a law empowering the Court to levy a certain Annual sum in commutables from the inhabitants for the purpose of opening a road from the Court-house to the Warm Springs. —— a conveyance so necessary for the importation of salt and other necessaries of Lumber as well as conveying our hemp and other heavy wares to market would readily be expected to receive the approbation of every one, but such is the perverse disposition of some men unwilling that any should share advantages in preference to themselves that this laudable measure was opposed by Mr. William Hutchinson who had first represented the County in General Assembly —— on this occasion without the privity of the people went at his own expense to Richmond & by his insinuations to some of the members with unfair representations obtained a suspension of the law for two years, but the following year Col. Thomas Adams who visited this County satisfied with the impropriety of Hutshinons representation had the suspension repealed and full powers were allowed to the Court to Levy Money for the purpose aforesaid, and by this means a waggon road was opened from the Court-house to the Warm Springs which made way for the same to the Sweet Springs—The paper Money emitted for maintaining our war against the British became totally depreciated & there was not sufficient quantity of specie in circulation to enable the people
to pay the revenue tax assessed upon the Citizens of this County wherefore we fell in arrears to the public for four years—but the Assembly again taking our remote situation under consideration graciously granted the sum of five thousand pounds of our said arrears to be applied to the purpose of opening a road from Lewisburg to the Kanawha river.

The people greatful for such indulgence willingly embraced the opportunity of such an offer and every person liable for arrears of tax agreed to perform labor equivalent on the road, and the people being formed into districts with each a superintendent the road was completed in the space of two months in the year 1786 and there was a communication by waggons to the navigable waters of the Kanawha effected and which will probably be found the highest and best conveyance from the Eastern to the Western Country that will ever be known—may I here hazard a conjecture that has often occurred to me since I inhabited this place, that nature has designed this part of the world a peaceable retreat for some of her favorite children, where pure morals will be preserved by separating them from other societies at so respectful a distance by ridges of mountains, and I sincerely wish time may prove my conjecture rational and true—from the Springs of salt water discoverable along our river, banks of Iron Ore, mines pregnant with saltpeter, & forrists of sugar trees so amply provided & so easily acquired I have no doubt but the future inhabitants of this County will surely avail themselves of such singular advantages greatly to their comfort and satisfaction and render them a greatful and happy people.

It will be remembered that Lewisburg was first settled by Capt. Mathew Arbuckle after the town was laid off in the year 1780 and took its name in Honor of the Family of the Lewis's in consequence of their holdings a large claim in the Greenbrier Grant. Arbuckle was killed the following year in a storm of wind by the falling of a tree on a branch leading from the turns of the waters of Anthonys Creek to Jacksons river he was distinguished for his bravery especially in the Battle with the Indians at Point Pleasant.