

# DIARY OF JULIA JONES SALTER

The following passage from the diary of Julia Jones Salter was transcribed by George Smith of Sarnia. The diary is part of the collection at the Lambton County Archives along with two diaries from Henry Jones and thirty-four volumes kept by Henry's son, Henry John Jones.

Miss Julia Jones states in her diary that on Thursday morning, August 26, 1830, her parents and the members of the Jones family left Detroit by Steamer enroute to Maxwell, where Mr. Jones had started his colony on the Owen settlement plan. Her narrative runs:

The steamer was the smallest I ever saw, but it answered very well to take us up to Fort Gratiot. After sailing a little way up the Detroit River got into Lake St. Clair about 12:00 o'clock (They started at 8:00 AM). We arrived at the hotel of that name, a very respectable place indeed on the morning of Friday the 27th. At 8 AM we were pretty advanced for up the river. The scenery up the lake and river was beautiful, but nothing remarkable. We passed several small islands which were just above water, also an island called "Hog" which was supposed to have had some time ago wild animals of that name living there. It would have been splendid if the wind would have admitted of our being carried up as far as Maxwell. It was, however, northerly, and my father said it would be impossible to land, owing to the roughness of the lake. Therefore we were obliged to land ten miles from Maxwell on the Canadian side directly opposite Fort Gratiot at a family named LaForge's where we were to spend the night while father walked up to Maxwell to order the cart and oxen.

Now let my aunts and cousins picture to themselves mother seated in a small log house, knitting just as usual. LaForge is quite a common man with seven children, a wife and an Indian boy. These are the inhabitants of this log house. Ten in all with ourselves as a surplus. There were seven of us. First one and then another would take mother's knitting and then admire it, another would do this, another that, but the worst thing of all was that none of us could understand the other. Before my father started for Maxwell, Chief Wawanosh and his wife (the Queen) came up to pay their respects to him. She was full dressed for the occasion, and brought her daughter, the infant Princess, to show us. The Queen's dress was very smart indeed. She had a black beaver hat with two broad bands of silver almost covering it over, and she had quantities of large silver ornaments hanging from them, also a pair of large gold earrings given to her by my father. Round her neck she had an amazing quantity of silver and glass beads. She had on a kind of pelisse (large) of scarlet cloth, covered entirely with rings of silver. The princess (poor little mortal) how I pitied her, was laid flat like a piece of board like a shallow box with two sides taken away and the top and bottom left and bound round and round with strips of flannel and cloth as tightly as possible. The little thing was so fat and the day so hot and the mosquitoes flying around in such numbers that I wonder how the little thing kept alive. Even its little hands were not left a liberty. It looked exactly like a mummy. Mother shook hands and she appeared very pleased. After staying some time they all withdrew and left us to take our tea. They gave us a very tolerable tea and about eight o'clock mother began to think about bed. It never entered her mind that we were to sleep where we sat, for it was such a place. When they understood what we meant Mr. LaForge told us that he had no other room, but that he would make up three beds on the floor and we must make the vest of it. There was a bed in the room where LaForge

and his wife slept, and the children slept on the floor. Mother was horrified when she heard about this, but at last she said to Aunt Susan, "I shall just loosen my things and lie down and I hope the cats will not lay on my face. Do you think the night will ever pass?" After the accustomed answer, "You know that it will" she lay down and in less than five minutes she was asleep.

After Aunt and I moralized upon where we were, and feeling disappointed that we were not more astonished and thinking of what any of our relatives would say if they could only see us, we also went to sleep. We slept very well but were disturbed twice by a party of drunken Indians. The first party opened the door and were coming in but LaForge stopped them, and then fastened the door so that the second party could only make a noise outside.

Saturday, April 28th, 1830. Father came down before breakfast. He says that he has found all well except poor Saunders Hamilton, who had been unwell, but was now quite insensible (fever). We had a very good breakfast of eggs and pancakes, the last arriving soon after we were prepared to start out on our travels.

Aunt, mother and I were to set off and walk first. The flowers were most beautiful. The monkey plant is now in grate profusion, and a plant I never saw in England, a most beautiful bunch of orange bells with yellow petals. The ox-cart overtook us about half way. It was not able to take one-tenth of our luggage, and with that there was, B and B-- had not been able to ride a step of the way. Mother was now so tired that a place must be found for her. Tom was perched on the very tip top of the cart, and after a great deal of manoeuvring Father succeeded in making a place for Mother, and another for Anne. So Bessy and I, Aunt and

Father walked the whole of the way. We were a bit tired but nothing to speak of. When we got inside of the fence about two miles from Maxwell, father congratulated me upon noticing the grounds of Maxwell. It did begin to look as if we were approaching some habitable place. The country we had passed through, really beautiful, savoured of Aunt Caroline's Backwoods Stories. On the edge of the lake, inside the fence, it is really beautiful. For a little way in, it is quite clear, and a most beautiful turf. For half a mile there was an avenue as straight as a string. Just inside the fence there is place exactly like the amphitheatre at Saltern. Our view of Maxwell, even at first was favourable, although . . . Here the narrative abruptly closes.

***To learn more about the Jones story and the Maxwell settlement, visit the [Lambton County Archives blog](#) and read articles [Lambton's Communal Experiment: The Maxwell Settlement](#) and [Keeping Up With The Joneses: The Maxwell Settlement Part 2](#).***