

## ***Capt. William Presto & Journal of the Sandy Creek Expedition, 1756***

**Thursday, {February} 19th.** This morning all hands were bussied in getting Ready for their Journey and at 10 o'Clock we took leave of what friends were at fort Frederick Departed thence & after sundry stoppages on the Road we got to Wm Syers that Night & Lodged very Well in his Barn floor, I left 3 Men at fort Fk. under Lt. Tyler.

**Fryday 20.** I had occasion to switch one of the soldiers for swearing Profanley for misbehavior which Lt. McNeal & I Divertying ourselves by playing very much Incensed the Indian Chiefs then Present .

**Saturday 28th.** We marched at 10 o'clock & passed several Branches of Clinch and at length got to the head of Sandy Creek where we met with great trouble and fatigue occasioned by a very heavy rain. ...

**Tuesday ye {March} 2nd.** A number of the Indians went out Early to make what discoveries they could of ye Enemy-About 10 o'Clock some of them Returned & Reported that they had seen a Large Camping Place of ye Enemy where they had been stolen by them. The Cherokees Desired to stay that day at their Camp to Range the woods. This day we were put to half the allowance of Beef which was almost Exhausted-this Day on our march we came into the Cole Land Crossed ye rivr. 8 times.

**Wednesday 3d.** We March'd until Sunset or nigh that time & advanced only 9 or ten miles being much Retarded by the River & mountains which Closed in on Both sides each man had but half a pound of flour & no meat but what we could kill, & that was very scarce. we Encamped on ye Creek at a place where no food was for the Horses. Wch. occasioned many to stray away

**Fryday 12th.** It Rained very much all night. . . . The soldiers being all Ready to march up ye Creek 8 or 10 of my Company had their Bundles on their Backs & was about to march, after spending some time Reasoning with them about going I was obliged to Disarm them & take their Blankets by force. They had not been Disarmed above half an Hour until 5 of them went off Privately & left their guns. I soon missed them & sent Wm. Robinson & one other man after them who met them at some Distance & Brought them back to Camp. Capt. Wodson arrived & with some of his Company & Informed us that his Canoe overset & lost his Tents with every thing valluable in her. That Major Lewis's Canoe was sunk in the River & that ye Major Capt. Overton Lt. Gun & one other man had to swim for their Lives & that several things of Vallue was Lost particularly five or six fine Guns. Major Lewis, Lt. McNeal, & Mr. Chew arrived who Informed us of being shipwrecked. ...

**Saturday morning ye 13th.** Major Lewis give Orders to Each Capt. to Call his Compy together imediatly . . . & the Major Told the Soldiers that he was Informed of their Design to go home that he hoped they would alter their Intentions of

Desertion & Mutiny & would pursue the journey, he Likewise set forth the 111 Consequence that would Certainly attend such Conduct & that they would be well Supported when they Got into the hunting ground which. . . must be very nigh & horses would support them for some time notwithstanding all that Could be said they appear/d obstinately bent to go home for if they went forward they must Perish or Eat horses neither of which They were willing to do. Then the major Stepped off some yards Distance & Desired all that was willing to Serve their Country & share his Fate to go with him all the Officers & some private men not above 20 or 30 join'd him upon which Mountgomerie's Volhmters marched off & was Imediatly followed by my Company & Smiths. 4 Private men and my Lts. staid with me... A small quantity of wet meal was brought in, I see about one pound given to 12 men & one of them bought a share which he gave 2/ for, one Jesse Mays offered 13 Day hire as a Pa&horseman for 2 lb. of Bears meat so that it is Impossable to Express the abject Condition we were in both before after the Men Deserted us, except when a little fresh meat was brought in which would not last any Time nor had it any strength to support men, as the Salt was all Lost.