

**DIARY OF CALEB
CRESSON,
1791-1792**

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Diary of Caleb Cresson, 1791-1792 by Caleb Cresson

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CALEB CRESSON

**DIARY OF CALEB
CRESSON,
1791-1792**



recollect any thing of me, and to thyself and
Thy Sincere Friends

Caleb Carrison
N^o 2

1353

D I A R Y
OF
CALEB CRESSON,
1791—1792.

Printed from his Original Manuscripts,
FOR
Family Distribution,
BY
EZRA TOWNSEND CRESSON,
AND
CHARLES CALEB CRESSON.

PHILADELPHIA:
1877.

P R E F A C E .

Caleb Cresson, the writer of the following Diary, gives the account of his own birth, at page 197, with various circumstances of Family History.

His first marriage with Sarah Hopkins, and her decease, are mentioned on page 199.

His second marriage with Annabella Elliott, the mother of his two sons John and Caleb, is related on page 199. Annabella Elliott was daughter of John and Annabella (Bonnyman) Elliott, formerly of Bolton, Leicestershire, England. She was born at Leicester, in England, 8th mo. 3d, 1743, and arrived with her parents in Philadelphia 5th mo. 27th, 1753. She deceased 10th mo. 12th, 1793, as related in the note on page 193.

On the 2d of 7th mo. 1795, he married Jane Evans, of Edgmont, Delaware County, Pa. widow of Thomas Evans, and daughter of John and Mary Cox. He outlived his third wife, and deceased at Philadelphia the 21st of 10th mo. 1816.

His father, James Cresson, deceased 3d month 23d, 1745. His mother, Sarah (Emlen) Cresson, deceased 8th mo. 2d, 1752.

It will be thus seen that he and his brother Joshua Cresson, (who was born 2d mo. 30th, 1744,) were left orphans at a very early age. They were adopted by their mother's sister, Mary (Emlen) Armitt, wife of John Armitt, who had no children of her own. She was as a mother to them during the remainder of her life. The feelings of love and gratitude, expressed in this diary, on the occasion of her decease, manifest the affection felt towards her by her nephews. A favourite

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saying with her was, "*It's poor living without Love,*" —which indicates her character.

Caleb Cresson took an active part in the affairs of the Society of Friends in his day. The old Book of Records, now held by the branch of Friends at Fifteenth and Race Streets, Philadelphia, is in his handwriting, as Recorder, from 1st mo. 16th, 1770, to 12th mo. 22d, 1799.

In person he was rather tall, (about 5 feet 10 inches,) slender, yet erect; of a dark complexion. Of courteous manners, though what would be called positive, or decided, in his character. His wife, Annabella, was small and slender in person, very meek and gentle in her character, amiable, and much beloved by those who knew her.

These traditions I have had from my Mother, Sarah Emlen Cresson.

He had two sons, John and Caleb, to grow to manhood, but left no daughter. John Elliott Cresson was born 11th mo. 11th, 1773; deceased 8th mo. 25th, 1814. He married Mary Warder, 4th mo. 28th, 1795. Caleb Cresson was born 5th mo. 11th, 1775; deceased 11th mo. 21st, 1821. He married Sarah Emlen, 6th mo. 4th, 1807.

His diary is written in a desultory manner, passing sometimes from subject to subject, without any attempt at connection or continuity. It contains records of occurrences evidently intended to be interesting only to his own family; and as he mentions (see page 34, under date of 5th mo. 13th, 1791,) intended only for family perusal.

C. C. C.

2d mo. 27th, 1877.

THE
 DIARY
 OF
 CALEB CRESSON,

Began 1791.

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1791.

I have thought that if persons who are so favoured as not to be under a necessity of labouring for a subsistence, would keep a Diary, or make notes as time daily passes—considering the well or ill spending of it of the utmost importance to our present as well as future happiness—such a practice might, on many accounts, be productive of benefit.

I am, therefore, now induced, although so far advanced on my journey through the wilderness of this world, to make a beginning in such an undertaking, and regret I had not began earlier in my day.

However, I am sensible it will require care, attention, and patient perseverance; nevertheless I am induced to set about it, though late, believing it may prove of some advantage and satisfaction to my own particular, in sometimes reviving things which would otherwise be buried in oblivion, and excite to the filling up the measure of our allotted duty in our short span of human life, which is afforded for the great and

momentous end of working out our own salvation; and our blessed Saviour counsels to *work while it is day, for behold the night cometh, wherein no man can work.*

May we then press on with faith and holy confidence in Him who is alone able to begin and finish the great and all-important work to His glory and our peace and everlasting happiness.

I begin this Diary in the 49th year of my age—born the 29th day of the Eighth month, 1742—and although, as I have before observed, I think it a late beginning, I hope my dear children may not follow my example in that respect, but attempt it earlier, and I am fully satisfied they will not have cause to repent the labour which it may cost.

7th Day, 1st of First month.—This may be called seasonable weather, being very cold, a great body of snow being on the ground, which makes fine sleighing, and is reckoned a protection to the winter grain. The Lord's mercies are great. His sun shines and His rain falls upon the just and the unjust; yea, the most minute parts of His creation partake of His bounty. Let the earth, therefore, praise Him who provides for all, in time, and who will be the never-failing Source of Good to all His rational creatures in a blessed eternity, if they do but love, fear and serve Him.

The navigation of the Delaware has been stopped a week or two. Wood comes over on sleds, and from the west-ward by land. Oak, 32*s.*; hickory, 45*s.* is about the present value. Flour, 26*s.*; beef and pork, 4*d.* @ 5*d.*

Widow White, (mother of him called the Bishop,) deceased. P. Nicklin's wife, a youngish woman, died very suddenly, having been one of a jovial company the preceding evening, and a corpse in the morning: an awful instance, indeed, of the necessity of daily preparation to meet the undeniable messenger, as he comes sometimes with little or no warning.

1st Day, 2d.—Attended meeting thrice—afternoon at the burial of John Clifford's child, about four; uncommon for her forward parts and sweetness of disposition. Betsey Bringhurst, buried about 27th ultimo. She had been for divers years conversant in the school of affliction. A cancer in her side brought her to her end, which I trust, through mercy, was happy; bearing her great affliction and pain with much patient resignation, and it may be the impurities of early life were purged away by this suffering dispensation, which, though it was grievous, yet, I hope, was in great mercy and to enduring profit. She died beyond the meridian of life, in a single state, and, I trust, rests in the Lord, having escaped the pollutions of the world—a *great thing indeed*.

2d Day, 3d.—A pleasant day for the season.—Dined at Aunt Armitt's, with my wife and sons. She appeared pleased to have us with her, now in old age, (near 83,) having been a mother to me from infancy. Afternoon employed in writing, and a little carpenter work, which I reckon conducive to health.

3d Day, 4th.—At meeting for worship, and adjournment of monthly meeting, which held late.—Had several friends to dine with us, who remained during the afternoon.