

**A NARRATIVE OF A TOUR
THROUGH THE STATE OF
VERMONT FROM APRIL 27
TO JUNE 12, 1789**

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A Narrative of a Tour Through the State of Vermont from April 27 to June 12, 1789 by Nathan Perkins

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NATHAN PERKINS

**A NARRATIVE OF A TOUR
THROUGH THE STATE OF
VERMONT FROM APRIL 27
TO JUNE 12, 1789**



REV. NATHAN PERKINS AND WIFE

A
NARRATIVE OF A TOUR
THROUGH THE
STATE OF VERMONT

FROM APRIL 27 TO JUNE 12
1799

BY
THE REV^d NATHAN PERKINS
OF HARTFORD

"I have zealously & uniformly endeavoured to hold up
ye truth plainly—to alarm ye Conscience:— to inform ye
judgement & to engage ye heart."



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FOREWORD

Nathan Perkins was born in 1749 and was graduated from Princeton College in 1770. He was fifth in descent from John Perkins, who reached Boston on the ship *Lyon* in February, 1631, and afterwards settled in Ipswich. In the year 1774 Nathan Perkins received from Yale the honorary degree S. T. D., and in 1801 from Princeton that of D. D. For more than sixty-five years he was pastor of the Third Church of West Hartford, Connecticut, and was greatly beloved and looked up to by his parishioners. He was considered one of the most eminent Divines of his day.

He married Catherine Pitkin, daughter of Rev. Timothy Pitkin and Temperance Clap, who was the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Clap, for many years President of Yale College, and of Mary Whiting. A son, also Nathan Perkins, born in Hartford, graduated from Yale in the Class of 1795, and for many years preached at Amherst, Mass. His daughter, Eliza, born in the year 1800, married Hon. George Grinnell, of Greenfield, Mass.

This narrative is a diary and expresses freely its author's views of conditions in the new settlements and of the people he met. As a diary, written merely for his own eye, it is hardly open to criticism. Yet its frankness makes it amusing, and, apart from its historical value, it is a human document of no little interest. The writer was a keen judge of men and women, and recognized and admired the courage and endurance of the settlers of the new country, their kindness and helpfulness to each other, and, above all, the splendid self sacrifice of the wives of these settlers. To these fine qualities he pays high tribute.

The route he followed may be traced on any map of Western New England. It led through Connecticut and Massachusetts up through Western Vermont, about as far as Burlington, and the return was over the same route. At one point he entered New York and passed through the town of Hampton in that state.

Just what was the bloody battle fought during the French War on the banks of the La Platte River seems uncertain. The river is a small stream running into Shelburne Bay just south of Burlington Bay.

The original manuscript of the narrative is in my possession.

G. B. G.

A Narrative of a Tour through the State of Vermont in the year 1789—from April 27—to June 12 to preach y^e Gospel to the New Settlements in that State by the Rev^d Nathan Perkins of Hartford appointed by y^e Association of Hartford County at the instance & request of the General Association of Connecticut.

§ § § § § §

April 27 I left Hartford and set out for Vermont. Took leave of my family, a tender Companion & five dear Children, with painful reluctance, & an anxious heart. I affectionately recommended them to the protection & care of a kind Providence, influenced by y^e Call of duty & Conscience. I reached Symsbury by one O'clock & dined with y^e Rev^d Mr. Stebbins; not prepared to receive Company glad to see me, & we discoursed on Divinity, politics & my journey.

Two O'clock P. M. mounted my horse — rode on as usual a slow pace, contemplating every surrounding object — amusing myself with y^e works of nature, y^e season — y^e state of agriculture & rusticity of y^e people's manners. — Dear travelling. — No hay. — no oats. My horse deeply grieved. About Sun-set arrived at the Rev^d Mr. Clinton's of Southwick; procured horse-keeping with a neighbour of his. 2^s per night. Mr. Clinton Out, but soon comes home; I had already introduced myself to Mrs. Clinton. She was just getting up from Child-bed; not very polished nor used to

Company: thought her boy y^e finest in y^e world—most beautiful—most sprightly—most promising. I smiled & Chesterfield-like bestowed some compliments to please y^e vanity of parental fondness. Innocent pleasantry!—She introduced me to her husband.—A Man of moderate abilities & moderate acquirements.—The evening passed in dulness & insipidity. Poor Supper—wretched breakfast—tea paler than water—Sugar heavier than lead. I then began to experience that hard & coarse fare which, wasted away my flesh in y^e progress of my travels & made me often, often regret my tour. how often have I remembered home—a table richly furnished, & elegantly set—food dressed, in y^e neatest & best manner.

Tuesday 28 of April, 8 o'clock A. M. Set out for Westfield. Reached Rev^d Mr. Atwater's, a sensible, agreeable man—an ingenious and cunning philosopher. Showed me his garden—his nursery of English & Italian Mulberries—y^e former cut off & set out like prim-hedge—y^e latter sowed as peas, & raised from y^e seed. Talked a few minutes on important Subjects & left him loaded with his best wishes.—Went on to Westfield mountains with a heavy heart.—The mountains as bad riding as they well could be—2 O'clock P. M. came to Rev^d Mr. Badger's, of Blanford. He absent—his wife old-poor-homely-kind. four years older than her husband, & courted him—helped to defray y^e expenses of his Education by her