

**JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF COL.
JOHN MAY, OF BOSTON: RELATIVE
TO TWO JOURNEYS TO THE OHIO
COUNTRY IN 1788 AND '89; WITH A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, VOLUME I**

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Historical and Philosophical
Society of Ohio.

Col. May's Journal and Letters,
1788-'89.

NEW SERIES—VOL. I.

JOURNAL AND LETTERS

OF

Col. John May, of Boston

RELATIVE TO

Two Journeys to the Ohio Country

IN 1788 AND '89

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By REV. RICHARD S. EDES

OF BOLTON, MASS

AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES

By WM. M. DARLINGTON

OF PITTSBURGH, PENN

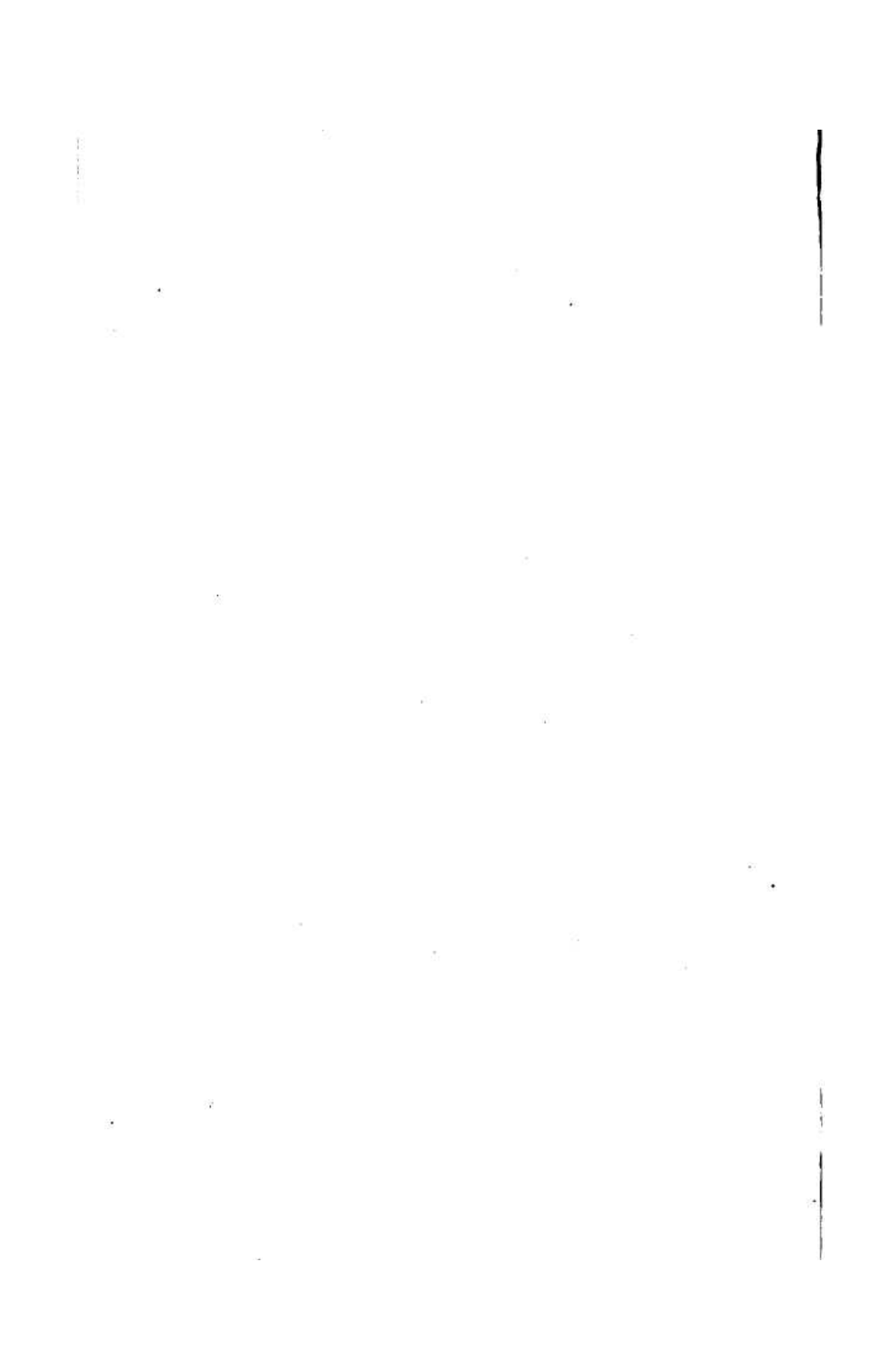


CINCINNATI
ROBERT CLARKE & CO
FOR THE HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF OHIO
1873

PREFACE.

The Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio offers to its members and the public the Journal and Letters of Col. JOHN MAY as the first volume of a new series of publications. The old series was interrupted in 1854 and never renewed. The present volume describes a journey from Boston to Marietta in 1788, and the daily life of the first settlers of Ohio. As it is a record made at the time the events occurred which it describes, the book is a valuable contribution to the history of the State.

The Society is indebted to *Rev. Richard S. Edes*, of Bolton, Massachusetts, grandson of Col. MAY, for permission to publish the Journal. The same gentleman also kindly prepared the memoir which precedes the Journal itself. *William M. Darlington*, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has added the notes. The Society returns thanks to both of these gentlemen for their kindness.



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

Colonel John May.

JOHN MAY, the subject of our memoir, and writer of the *Journal and Letters*, was born in Pomfret, Connecticut, November 24, 1748. His parents were Eleazer and Dorothy, whose maiden family name was Davis (of Brookline, Massachusetts), married in 1735. The father was a man of great height and size, and from that circumstance unwieldy in his last years; while the mother was of a more fragile and delicate constitution, and died just as she was entering middle life.

John, our subject, was the youngest of a family of six children; two brothers, Eleazer and William, respectively ten and eight years older, preceding him, and three sisters. Of these sisters, Dorothy, the oldest, married Amariah Dana (the parents of Mrs. Nathaniel Goddard, of Boston,)—in early life, on the death of her own parents, adopted into the family of Colonel May; Mary, the next, Jonathan Sabin (progenitors of Mrs. Faith C. Hosmer, now of Springfield, Massachusetts); and Prudence, the third, Silas Sabin, brother of aforesaid Jonathan.

After the death of his first wife, who died in 1750, Eleazer May married again, taking for a second wife Abigail Sumner, and, by her, had two more children, Ithamar and Abigail. Lucy, who many years afterward married William Rufus, a son of Colonel John, was a descendant of said Ithamar.

As it is matter of interest to some who will probably read the pages which succeed, these statements are followed by others, condensed as much as possible, relative to the more remote ancestry which preceded, and the families which followed the subject of our notice.

John,¹ the immigrant ancestor, bearing the family name (spelt in the olden time also Mayes and Maies), is said to have come from Mayfield, County Sussex, England. He was born in 1590, landed at Plymouth in 1640, was admitted freeman 1641, and died in 1670.

Two sons, John and Samuel, came with him. We follow the line of John.² John² married the widow Bruce (*née* Brewer or Bruer). Their family consisted of three sons—John, Elisha, and Ephraim; and four daughters—Maria (or Mary), Sarah, Naomi, and Mehetabel. The John² of whom we are writing, settled in Roxbury, in the part then known as Woolmanpagm, where and elsewhere he owned considerable real estate, and died in 1671.

John,³ eldest son of the above, also lived in Roxbury, married (1684) Prudence Bridge, and by her had a large family, as follows: John,⁴ 1686,—removed to Woodstock, Connecticut; Samuel, 1689; Prudence, 1690; *Ebenezer* (whose name we put in italics for subsequent reference), 1692; Prudence, 1694; Hezekiah, 1696,—removed to Wethersfield, Connecticut; Sarah, 1698; Nehemiah, 1701; Mehetabel, 1703; *Eleazer* (whose name also we italicize), father of Colonel John, 1705, who removed to Pomfret, Connecticut; Benjamin, 1708.

*Ebenezer*⁴ appears to have been the ancestor of most, if not all the May families that are now living in the city of Boston and vicinity. He lived in Roxbury, and married Abigail Gore. Not to go into detail respecting this family, it is sufficient to say, that of it were Samuel,⁵ born 1723, father of Abigail, who, in

subsequent years, married Colonel John; and Ephraim (Colonel), with whom, in youth, he served an apprenticeship.

Samuel⁵ married, for a first wife, Catharine Mears, and, she dying, for a second, Abigail Williams. Abigail,⁶ a child of this pair last indicated, afterward the wife of Colonel John, was born in 1754, and died in 1824. She was the oldest sister of the late Colonel Joseph May, of Boston (who was the father of Rev. Samuel Joseph May, of Syracuse, New York), and sister also of the late Samuel May, Esq., of Boston, who died in 1870, at the advanced age of ninety-four.

Colonel John,⁷ our subject (as appears from the foregoing statements), son of Eleazer,⁴ married in February, 1773, Abigail,⁸ grand-daughter of Ebenezer⁴ and daughter of Samuel.⁵ The names of their children, with brief notes indicating the course of family descent, follow:

I. Frederick, born November, 1773 (H. U. 1792); M. D.; afterward of Washington, D. C.; died January, 1847; married Julia M. Slacum, of Alexandria, D. C. Their posterity were Dr. John Frederick, of Washington; the late George, of New York; the late William, Commandant U. S. N.; the late Colonel Charles Augustus, U. S. A.; the late Hon. Henry, of Baltimore; Mrs. Julia M. Oelrichs, of New York; the late Mrs. Laura Wise, of Baltimore; and the late Julian, U. S. A.; and children of the above-named.

II. Abigail, born November, 1775; died September, 1800.

III. John, born May, 1778; died March, 1823; married Ann Gordon Reed, but left no children. A considerable portion of his life spent at Cape Town, Southern Africa.

IV. Henry Knox, born May, 1780; died March, 1865; married Maria R. Cracroft, of Alexandria, D. C., and lived in Boston. He is represented in his son, Edward T., and in the