

## A Long Journey to Wachovia

In August 1753 the Moravians purchased 98,985 acres of land in North Carolina and named it Wachovia. The Moravians purchased this large tract of land in North Carolina to build a central town with administrative offices, trades shops, industries, and schools. The town would also be a center from which to carry on missionary work among the Indians. Land was cheaper in North Carolina than in any of the colonies to the northward.

In October 1753 twelve single men set out from the Moravian town of Bethlehem, PA with six horses and a wagon loaded with supplies to settle on their new land, Wachovia. The party consisted of Rev. Bernhard Adam Grube, the first minister of the new settlement; Jacob Loesch, business manager; Hans Martin Kalberlahn, physician; Henrich Feldhausen, carpenter; Erich Ingepretsen, carpenter; Hans Petersen, tailor; Jacob Lunge, gardener; Herman Loesch, farmer; Christopher Merkli, baker; Friedrich Jacob Pfeil, shoemaker and tanner; Jacob Beroth, farmer; and Johannes Lischer, farmer. The road, which they traveled, is called the Great Wagon road and runs from Philadelphia to the Yadkin River by way of the Shenandoah Valley.

One member of this party of twelve men kept an account of their journey. The original document is preserved in the Archives of the Moravian Church at Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

After reading the excerpts of their journey from Pennsylvania in 1753, compare it to the way you would travel today. Think about how you obtain food, fuel and lodging while on a journey today. Would there be hardships that you may encounter as you travel? Could weather affect your journey as much as it did theirs? What about risks to the safety of you and your family as you travel? Write down differences in travel that you encounter today in comparison to the journey of these 12 brave men and discuss them with your class.

Oct. 8, 1753

We rose early and made ready for our start, our dear Br. Christian Seidel holding morning prayer for us. And so with a feeling of blessing and contentment we set out from our beloved Bethlehem.

Oct. 10, 1753

Br. Gottlob held morning prayers. Then we had a conference about our wagon, which is several inches too wide, and therefore does not keep in the beaten track. We finally unloaded it and took it to the blacksmith's shop. The damp articles we dried in the sun..... In the evening when our wagon was ready, having been made three inches narrower, we repacked it by moonlight so that we might make an early start next morning.

Oct. 11, 1753

We rose early and prepared for our journey. As we drove over the millrace bridge it broke in, and it was truly a wonder that our horses and wagon were not thrown into the water; we thanked our Heavenly Father for the escape and for the help of our companions, of which we had great need.

Oct. 12, 1753

We rose at four and after morning prayers had breakfast at five and set out at six o'clock. We had traveled eight miles when suddenly a thick tree fell across our team, giving us a fright; however, the trunk fell just between the horses so that neither the horses nor the man who rode one of them were hurt, though a bush on the other side of the road was crushed. This was indeed a marked instance of the protection of our Father, and we thanked Him earnestly and besought His continued care. Today we shot several fawns, partridges and squirrels. In the evening we made our first camp in the forest, one mile from the Susquehannah, by a creek. All busied themselves collecting wood and building a fire. Br. Erich undertook the cooking, and after we had eaten we spread our blankets and lay down to rest. We set our first night-watch, — Br. Nathanael took the first two hours, and was followed by Br. Grube, and he by Br. Lösch, and in the future three or four Brethren will watch each night. At midnight a (traveler) came and laid himself by our fire, but did not disturb us. Br. Gottlob hung his hammock between two trees and rested well in it.

Oct. 13, 1753

After eating some broth we set out on our journey.

Oct. 15, 1753

We started at 2:30 A.M. had moonlight and a good road; and it was 80 miles to Friedrichstown. On the twelve miles to Shippestown, — a little town, — we found no water. We had a little work done on our wagon, as the pole had been injured. The smith charged a big price and his work did little good.

Oct. 16, 1753

Br. Grube conducted morning prayers, and we set out at 4 A.M. On the way we bought 10 bushels of oats, and after driving five miles had breakfast by a creek where Irish people live.

Oct. 17, 1753

We started at five o'clock and had two miles to go to the Patomik which we reached at daybreak....Three miles further was a spring, and after driving four miles more we put up our tent by a creek. For supper we cooked chicken, which very good. Br. Nathanael conducted evening prayer.

Oct. 18, 1753

We rose at three; Br. Nathanael held morning prayer.....We breakfasted by a creek, and two miles beyond found water again. At noon we passed through Friedrichstown, which consists of about sixty houses rather badly built. One mile beyond Friedrichstown we stopped for lunch near a mill, and bought some bread and corn. We turned our horses out to graze in a meadow as we had no feed for them; the Brn. Lischer and Merkli stayed with them during the night.

**Oct. 19, 1753**

We rose about six but had not slept much having been disturbed by the smoke. One mile beyond our camping place we stopped to bake bread, and about nine o'clock started on again.

Oct. 20, 1753

Very early the Brn. brought in our horses from pasture. Br. Grube waked the other Brn. by singing a few verses, and after eating our broth we set out about five o'clock. There was a considerable hill just ahead and we had to push hard to help get the wagon up, and reached the top before daybreak. We heard that from here we would see no house for 20 miles, but that we would find water every three or four miles. Several Brn. went hunting, but returned empty handed. We had a pretty camping place to-night, and felt happy, and thankful to the Lord for bringing us safely so far. Br. Nathanael held evening prayers.

Oct. 22, 1753

We set out again at five o'clock. ....We had to climb two hills where every one had to help push or we could not have made it, for our horses were quite exhausted. Two Brn. had to keep a little ahead to seek out the road; and so we came at last to Thom. Harris' plantation, where we bought food for our horses, and set up our tent a little way from the house. The people were friendly and assisted the travelers gladly.

Oct. 23, 1753

We started at daybreak. We bought a bottle of milk to use at our noon lunch, but the bottle broke and we lost it all. Two miles from camp we bought some meat..... Our meat and dumplings tasted good and refreshed us.

**Oct. 24, 1753**

2:30 A.M. our broth was ready, and at three we were on our way. One mile from camp we found good water, the same one mile further. Two more miles brought us to Middle Branch, a fairly large creek, with a bank difficult to climb that gave us much trouble. Most of the Brn. crossed on a fallen tree, Br. Kalberlahn fell in but did not hurt himself. It was not yet day when we crossed the creek.

Oct. 26, 1753

We rose rather late on account of the rainy weather ..We had bad hills to-day and as soon as we were at the top of one we had to hang on the break-rope, and even then it was dangerous going down. ....It began to rain and continued almost all night, and as our tent was on a hill the water ran through it and we were all soaked through and through.

Oct. 27, 1753

We rose early to dry our clothes, and the sky cleared. We were very thankful to the Saviour for giving us good weather again; it was badly needed for without it we could hardly have gone forward, for our wagon is very heavily loaded, and the ascent of the hills is almost more than we can manage. ...This morning for the second time we had to take off half our load, in order to climb the

hill, for it was so slippery that the horses could not keep their feet in pulling but fell constantly to their knees. Br. Lösch shot the first turkey, which we ate for supper. Passing over the creek we came immediately to a long high hill, which took us an hour to climb, and we all had to push on the wagon. But we had fine pleasant weather, and from the top there was a beautiful view of the great mountains, and the valleys on either side of us. We drove some miles along the ridge.... In the evening we set up our tent eight miles from Buffler Creek, by a stream, made a good fire and rested from our labors which today have been rather trying. Br. Nathanael held the evening service, and we were all so tired that we dispensed with the night-watch.

#### **Oct. 28, 1753**

We rose early to continue our journey. One of our horses was sick. After a mile and a half we bought corn at a house. ...Our afternoon road was stony and bad, and we constantly had to steady the wagon with ropes to keep it from overturning. Four times we crossed a bad, stony creek, and the banks were so high that it was difficult to pull out. The South and Blue Mountains here approach within two miles of each other; we turned to the right to the Blue Mountains. Towards evening we saw Jeams (James) River; the road to it ran down so very steep a hill that we fastened a small tree to the back of our wagon. Locked the wheels, and the brethren held back by the tree with all their might, but even then the wagon went down so fast that most of the brethren lost their footing; no harm was done, and we thanked the Lord that He had so graciously protected us, for it looked dangerous and we thought at times that it could not possibly be done without accident, but in spite of stump and stone we got down safely. We made our camp near the River, and rested well after the fatigue of the day, for the road had all been bad and yet, we had made sixteen miles.

#### **Oct. 29, 1753**

We rose at five, having had a rather cold night with frost for the first time on this trip. ....We then had two miles of good road, crossed a creek, and came to a house where we spent most of the day, taking time to bake bread and to kill a hog that we bought. We turned our horses loose in the woods.

#### **Oct. 30, 1753**

The weather was bad, it rained and snowed, but we kept fairly dry under our tent. Our horses had strayed off and it took several of the Brethren nearly all day to find them, and we were glad when we had them back, for we had heard that in this neighborhood horses were often stolen, and that might have happened to ours. As the Brethren came in cold and wet through and through we had a cup of tea all round, and enjoyed it together. We changed the position of the tent on account of the smoke. Br. Gottlob held the evening service. We for the first time tried baking bread in the ashes.

#### **Oct. 31, 1753**

We rose very early and prepared to continue our journey. Immediately we had to climb a considerable hill, which was very hard on our horses for the ground was frozen and covered with snow. The farther we went the more snow we found, and travel was difficult.... One of our horses was sick, we gave him something that helped.....

#### **Nov. 1, 1753**

With earliest dawn we were again on our journey, but again had to bleed a horse. The change in food is largely responsible for the illness of our horses. Another mile brought us to a large Buffalo Lick, where formerly many buffalo gathered because the marsh was rich in salt. We stopped for noon by a creek, and had to drive through a large marsh. Br. Lösch, who had gone ahead to see if he could buy some corn, rejoined the party. About four o'clock we reached the Runoke, and had to wait for the corn, which was not yet shelled. Several of the Brethren went to the nearest plantation to help the people shell the corn, and two of them thrashed oats. It grew so late that we had to stay here all night.

#### **Nov. 7, 1753**

At daybreak we started again .....We came at once to a very steep little hill, and then there was a long ascent. From the top we saw the Pilot Mountain in North Carolina, and rejoiced to think that we would soon see the boundary of Carolina and set foot in our own dear land. We drove one mile along the ridge, then there was a very steep descent. We came to a hill, thought we could cross it yet this evening, but on trying found it impossible for the ascent was too steep. Br. Gottlob came back and said it would not be possible to pull the wagon up fully loaded; so we set up our tent at the foot of the hill near the river. Several of the Brethren took the horses half a mile away to a meadow, and spent the night there. We had a comfortable, peaceful night.

Nov. 8, 1753

At daybreak we prepared again for our journey, and carried half our goods to the top of the hill, and even then had much toil and trouble before we got the wagon up, for it was very steep. On the summit we reloaded our goods for the descent. In the valley we crossed a small creek and were scarcely over that when we came to a second hill and had to unload again and carry almost everything to the top, for this was the steepest hill we had yet crossed. We were all glad when we were over it. Going down we locked two wheels, hung a tree on behind, and made the descent safely. We set up our tent by a plantation; and today in spite of all our efforts we have advanced only seven miles. It began to rain, and we were all rather damp when we lay down.

Nov. 9, 1753

Most of the Brethren rose very early; they could not sleep on account of the heavy rain, the water running under us so that we lay in it and could not escape it. The river had risen two feet during the night, and we saw that it was impossible to cross. Toward noon the rain stopped and we hoped for better weather, but it began again harder than ever, and we could hardly keep a little fire burning. We changed the position of our tent and dug a ditch around it to lead off the water, but the rain beat through the tent so that in a short time everything was most unpleasantly wet, and we were up most of the night.

Nov. 11, 1753

Several Brethren went early to the river to see whether we could cross and found it had fallen two feet. We had a man show us the ford, and one of us rode through on our gray horse, then we ventured it, and crossed safely. For supper we cooked Virginia potatoes (sweet potatoes), which tasted good. Br. Nathanael held evening prayers, and then we went peacefully to rest.

Nov. 12, 1753

We rose very early, and about 3 A.M. ate our pumpkin broth. Then the road led on through thick and thin, and often up steep hills where we had to push with all our strength. Here we had one of the worst banks we had seen, and people had told us some way back that we would hardly be able to cross; but our grubbing hoes and shovels did us good service and we made it safely.. .....We spent the night there, and as we had little wood we all gathered around one fire, sleeping for the last time on Virginian soil. We made 13 miles today.

Nov. 13, 1753

We rose at three o'clock, for it began to rain, and we hastened on our journey, but lost our way, going too far to the right. At dawn we crossed the boundary of North Carolina, where the road crosses a creek two miles from our last camp. Br. Haberland lost his hat trying to cross on a tree that lay across the stream, but he found it again when it grew lighter. The road was fair... Toward evening it began to rain and we hurried as fast as we could to reach Ten River (Dan River) but it grew so dark that we had to stop three miles from it at a creek. We made a fire and cooked a little food; then it began to clear with the north-west wind. At midnight we started again, in order to cross Ten River. One Brother went ahead of the wagon with a torch of pinewood to light the way, and at 2 A.M. we reached Ten River, and as it had not rained any more we thought it would not rise and we might spend the rest of the night on its bank before crossing. It was cold and we had little wood to burn. We were all very tired, having come 25 miles today from the Meho River.

Nov. 14, 1753

We went very early to see whether we could cross the river, but it had risen two feet, and was running rapidly. So we had to wait.... Some Brethren went hunting, but came back empty-handed.

Nov. 15, 1753

Several Brethren went hunting, but secured nothing.

Nov. 16.

We rose early to ford the river. The bank was so steep that we hung a tree behind the wagon, fastening it in such a way that we could quickly release it when the wagon reached the water. The current was very swift, and the lead horses were carried down a bit with it. The water just missed running into the wagon, but we came safely to the other bank, which however we could not climb, but had to take half the things out of the wagon, and tie ropes to the axle on which we could pull, helping our horses, which were quite stiff, and so we brought our ark again to dry land. ....We retired early, being quite worn out.

**Nov. 17, 1753**

We rose early having had a cold night; it looked much like snow. .... At last, at half past twelve, we reached the boundary of our land, whereat we all rejoiced.... It touched us, and we thanked our Saviour that He had so graciously led us hither, and had helped us through all the hard places, for no matter how dangerous it looked, nor how little we saw how we could win through, everything always went better than seemed possible. We wished that the dear ones in Bethlehem, now gathered in the Sabbath Lovefeast, could know that we, in less than six weeks, had safely reached our land. We drove three miles further on the new road, then turned to the left and cut a way for two and a half miles to the little house that the Brethren found yesterday. We reached it in the evening and at once took possession of it, finding it large enough that we could all lie down around the walls. We at once made preparation for a little Lovefeast, and rejoiced heartily with one another. Br. Gottlob began the singing with the little verse; —

We hold arrival Lovefeast here,  
In Carolina land,  
A company of Brethren true,  
A little Pilgrim-Band,  
Called by the Lord to be of those  
Who through the whole world go,  
To bear Him witness everywhere,  
And nought but Jesus know.

....While we held our Lovefeast the wolves howled loudly, but all was well with us, and our hearts were full of thanksgiving to the Saviour Who had so graciously guided and led us. Then we laid ourselves down to rest, and Br. Gottlob hung his hammock above our heads.