

A VISIT TO PHILIP GATCH, OCTOBER 1825

Annotated by Milton McC. Gatch (February 2013)

A typescript booklet in the Gatch Papers, Archives of Ohio United Methodism, Beeghly Library, Ohio Wesleyan University (in Group XXI) contains copies of materials related to the family of James Smith, the half brother of Philip Gatch's wife, Elizabeth: Smith's 1797 Journal, his poem extoling their new home in Ohio, and some letters that relate to the Smith family and the Gatches.

The letter edited here, following a transcription of James Smith's 1797 journal, is on pages 6-9 of a group of separately paginated Smith family documents. It is headed:

"Substantial copy of a letter written by Mrs Mary Smith, wife of Thimas [recte Thomas] Smith to Mrs Judith Brown, of Indianapolis, a sister of her husband."¹

The letter records a visit made by children and grandchildren of Thomas Smith to their uncle Philip Gatch and his family at Milford, Ohio.

¹ Thomas Smith (b. 1780) was the third child and eldest surviving son of James and Elizabeth Smith. (A first child, also named Thomas died, presumably at or near birth.) Thomas and the writer of this letter, born Mary Kennedy Whitehill, were married in 1817. Thomas's sister, Judith Smith Brown (1794-1859), the addressee of this letter, was the eighth of the Smiths' ten children; in 1818 she married Hiram Brown, who became a lawyer in Indianapolis. Their infant daughter, Mary Angeline, had evidently died earlier in 1825. Identification of descendants of Rev. James Smith (1757-1800) and his wife Elizabeth Porter (1762-1825) is based largely on a memoir by John Quincy Smith (1824-1901): available in typescript at Mary I. Cook Public Library, Waynesville OH and online (as of February 5, 2013) at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohwarren/Bios/Smith-Whitehill.htm>. John Quincy Smith held a number of public offices, among them Member of the US House of Representatives and Commissioner of Indian Affairs (see *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=S000574>, as of January 31, 2013). A genealogy of the Smith family through the grandchildren of Thomas Smith (1719-1786), father of James Smith and his half-sister Elizabeth Smith (1752-1811), wife of Rev. Philip Gatch, is printed by Virginia Gatch Markham, *Descendants of Godfrey Gatch of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Baldwin City KS: privately printed, 1972), 448 (hereafter cited as Markham by page or, for Gatch descendants, by their identifying codes). (I have occasionally, silently added details not in Markham from the online genealogy maintained by James and Mary Gatch Chandler: <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/6449351/listofallpeople>, last accessed for these notes February 4, 2013).

Warren Co Ohio, Dec 18, 1825.

Dear Sister-

I received yours of the 25th October which brought news of your recovery from sickness. I trust ere now you are all restored to health again. Although I had heard of the death of Mary Angeline before, I do not know when I shed so many tears as when I received your letter. I think I have been taught by the hand of providence to feel sensibly for you in the death of your child. With regard to the emetic you mention, Dear Sister, I wish you to be satisfied. I have afflicted myself with such reflections all to no purpose. I believe it was no fault of the medicine. Therefore let us be comforted and think with the poet

"Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening buds to Heaven he bore,
And bid them blossom there".²

Your letter found our family and friends all well and doing well as far as I know. We have had a much healthier season than has been for three years past. There has not been an instance of fever in our neighborhood except Betsy Robinson had a long spell of the fever. She and Mr Scott both live at William Grays. Mr Antram and Mr John's families are all well and make frequent and friendly inquiries after your welfare.³

I must give you an account of one of the pleasantest visits I ever paid in my life. On the 29th of October Mr. Goode, Betsy⁴ and their youngest child, Mr Smith, myself and two children⁵ set off for Uncle Gatch.⁶ At Lebanon we were joined by Sister Hannah and her son.⁷ We

² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Epitaph on an Infant," 1794.

³ The persons mentioned in this paragraph are apparently not members of the Smith family but acquaintances in and around Waynesville in Warren County, Ohio.

⁴ Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith, fifth child of James and Elizabeth Smith, who in 1807 married Burwell Goode of Waynesville (d. 1852) (per J. Q. Smith).

⁵ I.e., Mary and her husband Thomas Smith with two of their children, John Quincy (born November 5, 1824) and one of his surviving older siblings, Joseph Whitehill (b. 1818) or James George (b. 1819) (per J. Q. Smith).

⁶ Rev. Philip Gatch (1751-1834; Markham, C-4)), whose late wife Elizabeth was a half-sister of the Smiths' father, James. The two families moved from Virginia to the Northwest Territory together in 1798. Elizabeth Smith and her children, who had been living temporarily on the Little Miami River at Newtown when James died, moved to their property at Waynesville after his death in 1800.

reached Uncles that evening. We found them all well except Uncle who was afflicted with boils and has been for about 12 months. He looks quite frail but appears himself and is quite cheerful in company and conversation. His son Philip lives with him⁸ and George had just got home from Conference.⁹ On Sunday morning they all set off to cousin Socia Osborn to hear the funeral sermon of her son Philip's child, except Uncle and myself.¹⁰ John Quincey [sic] was so unwell with a bad cold and sore throat that we were quite alarmed about him.¹¹ We doctored him that day and night. His father returned in the evening, and next morning he was much better, so that we joined our company at Mr Swings where they and several of your cousins had stayed all night.¹² They have built a new brick house, and are very comfortably situated, and sister Betsy¹³ and your cousins had a long conversation about your moving to their country, and about you in particular. I believe you were talked of at every house.

From there we went to Conduce Gatches¹⁴ and stayed until next morning, when we all repaired to Cousin Thomas Gatches to take share of what he called his wedding party.¹⁵ I suppose you have heard of his

⁷ George Smith (1799-1878), the youngest child of James and Elizabeth Smith, married a widow, Hannah Whitehill Freeman, in 1822 (per J.Q. Smith).

⁸ Philip, Jr. (1793-1857; Markham, D-20) was the seventh child of Rev. Philip and Elizabeth Gatch.

⁹ Rev. George Gatch (1796-1767; Markham, D-21), the youngest child of Philip and Elizabeth Gatch, had been at the Mad River (Ohio) circuit; on October 12, 1825 the annual conference in Columbus reassigned him to the Bellefontaine circuit (to which he traveled at the end of this visit to Milford).

¹⁰ Presocia ("Socia") Gatch (1779-1864; Markham, D-14), eldest child of Philip and Elizabeth Gatch, married James Garland in 1800 and (after Garland's death in 1811) David Osburn in 1812. Her son Philip Gatch Garland (1804-1879; Markham, E-29) had married Mary Ann Anderson in 1824, and they had apparently had a child who had died by the end of the following year (not in Markham).

¹¹ John Quincy Smith (1824-1901), son of the author of this letter. He mentions in his memoir that he had been a sickly child.

¹² Michael Swing, who had married Philip and Elizabeth Gatch's fourth child, Ruth (1788-1850; Markham, D-18) in 1806.

¹³ I.e., Elizabeth Smith Goode (see above, n. 4).

¹⁴ Philip and Elizabeth Gatch's eldest son (1783-1851; Markham, D-16) and his wife, Margaret (Peggy) McGrew (or Megrue) (1789-1872). Presocia and Conduce, Philip and Elizabeth Gatch's first daughter and son, were named for his parents.

¹⁵ Thomas Gatch (often styled "General") (1791-1859; Markham D-19) was the sixth child of the Philip Gatches. His first wife, Sarah Barber (1798-1823) had died after the birth of their fifth child. Shortly after their marriage in

marriage to Miss Lucinda McCormick¹⁶ and you may be sure we had everything in style. All his brothers and sisters were invited, and Louis [*recte* Lewis] Gatch and his wife.¹⁷ The latter inquired for you and said we did not treat her as friendly as you and Mr. Brown did, that we did not visit them. We went that evening to Mr Matsons¹⁸ and stayed all night. Next day we returned to Uncles where we dined with about 25 people. We all took a walk to the grave yard and saw your father's grave.¹⁹ When we came back Uncle baptized our children and two of Philips.²⁰ We then together with Cousin George, who came up with us, on his way to his circuit, took leave of our aged friend under the impression of never seeing him again in this world. Betsy Matson and

1814, Thomas had built his stone house overlooking the bottoms of the East Fork of the Little Miami River, where the gathering to celebrate his second marriage was held.

¹⁶ Thomas married Lucinda McCormick (1801-1861) on June 30, 1825, and they would have another ten children. Lucinda was the daughter of Francis McCormick (1764-1836) and his wife Rebecca Easton (1767-1840). The Smiths' father, James, recorded meeting the McCormicks in the journal of his visit across the Ohio River in 1797 (of which there is a copy in the book with this letter in the Gatch Papers). McCormick and Philip Gatch met soon after the Smiths and Gatches moved to the Northwest Territory the following year, and McCormick persuaded the Gatches to acquire and settle on land abutting his own and to join his Methodist class—the first established in the Territory.

¹⁷ Thomas Gatch's cousin (Rev. Philip's nephew), Lewis (1784-1868; Markham, D-22), and his wife Maria Newton (1792-1849). Lewis had followed the Philip Gatches to Ohio from Maryland. Lewis and Thomas built stone houses for themselves in 1813 and 1815, respectively. (It is thought both houses were built of imported, quarried stone, probably brought down the Ohio River.) Lewis brought his parents Nicholas (1753-1830; Markham C-5) and Mary Hiss (1758-1842) from Baltimore County, Maryland, to live with his family in their last years.

¹⁸ Aaron Matson (1776-1857) married Philip and Elizabeth Gatch's fourth child Elizabeth (Betsy) (1786-1834; Markham, D-17) in 1809.

¹⁹ I.e., Rev. James Smith, Philip Gatch's brother-in-law, who died in 1800. Soon after arriving in Ohio, Philip Gatch established a cemetery (now Greenlawn Cemetery, Milford OH) overlooking the bottoms of the East Fork of the Little Miami River. According to Conduce's memoir of his father (Gatch Papers, Group I.D), the grave of James Smith was unmarked; his remains were later moved by his family to Waynesville, where his widow Elizabeth was buried in January 1825.

²⁰ The children must have been the 3rd and 4th by Philip Gatch, Jr.'s first wife Mary Dimmitt (1798-1833): George Smith (born July 2, 1823, Markham, E-82) and Conduce H. (born July 25, 1825, Markham, E-83). The Smith children are two of those mentioned in n. 5, above.

Polly Gatch²¹ came with [to] Mr Gest²² where we stayed all night and reached home on Thursday morning.

Betsy Gest is married to a Mr Laman [*corrected in ms to Leming*], very much to the satisfaction of her friends.²³ Conduce Gatch's daughter Hannah is married to Jacob Demot [*recte Dimmitt*].²⁴ Thomas Gatch and your brother George have both gone to Columbus.²⁵ We had a letter from George last week. He is well. Your sister Magdalen and her family are all well.²⁶ She has been some afflicted with a pain in her breast, but is better. I think Minerva will outgrow her complaint. Her (Magdaline's [*sic*]) children are going to school, and they seem to get along right well. Your brother Thomas sold 1500 weight of pork at \$3.00 per hundred to John Demott [Dimmitt]²⁷ and Louis [Lewis] Gatch to be delivered at Columbia.²⁸ She

²¹ Probably Mary Dimmitt Gatch, wife of Philip Jr. (see n. 20).

²² John Gest (1782-1822), widower of Philip and Elizabeth Gatch's second child, Martha (1782-1822; Markham, D-15).

²³ Elizabeth Gest (1803–1847; Markham, E-36), daughter of Martha and John Gest married Randall H. Leming in May 1825.

²⁴ Conduce and Margaret's first born, Hannah (1807-1844; Markham, E-41) married Rev. Jacob Gest Dimmitt (1806-1872) in 1825. He was a cousin of Philip Jr.'s wife, Mary.

²⁵ Thomas Gatch was a member of the state legislature from Clermont County, 1824-1827 (J. L. Rockey, *History of Clermont County, Ohio...* [Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1880], 129). George Smith (1799-1878), the tenth child of James and Elizabeth Smith, was the only member of his generation of Gatches and Smiths born not in Virginia but in the Northwest Territory. In 1825 he was elected to the state legislature—the beginning of a distinguished career as legislator and jurist (Josiah Morrow, *History of Warren County, Ohio*; consulted online: <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ohwarren/Beers/III/0379.htm> on February 5, 2013).

²⁶ Sixth child of Rev. James and Elizabeth Smith (b. 1789) was married in 1808 to Robert Sale (per J. Q. Smith). Minerva is presumably their daughter.

²⁷ John Dimmitt was an uncle of Philip Gatch, Jr.'s first wife and a son of Ezekiel, a first settler at Batavia, who was a member of the Methodist class at Milford and close friend of Philip Gatch and Francis McCormick (Rockey, *History*, 243-4).

²⁸ Columbia was a settlement at the mouth of the Little Miami River on the Ohio, a short distance east of Cincinnati. The Gatch and Smith families landed there when they traveled downriver on their journey from Virginia to Ohio in 1798. The syntax is a little confusing here, but it seems that Thomas Smith and Magdalen Smith Sale sold swine to Dimmitt and Lewis Gatch, having them driven to Columbia, where they were either sent down river by steamboat to New Orleans or slaughtered and salted at Columbia or nearby Cincinnati. (A few years later Cincinnati had the nickname "Porkopolis" for its prominence in hog packing. Already in 1818, 10,000 barrels of pork were

[Magdalen] put her pork in with his, and sent John along to help drive it. She talks of paying you a visit next fall if she can get suitable company. Give my best love to Cousin Martha (Forsher?)²⁹ Tell her I do thank her kindly for calling her new son Thomas, as it is a favorite name with me, and has been rendered doubly so, by the loss of my brother and son Thomas. I begged sister Patsy and John (brother)³⁰ both to call their youngest sons by that name, but was unsuccessful. The latter call his name Philip. He (John) has begun to make improvements between us and the creek and expects to move there in the spring. Sister Rachel is married to Dr. Morris. Rebecca has a little daughter about 4 months old. Susan Tate is nursing her sixth son.³¹ Brother is still very lame. Judge Browns family is well the last I heard.³² I must draw my letter to a close, and you must excuse bad writing for Quincey is very troublesome and his popy is not at home. He has got his finger badly mashed. He is quite healthy and walks all about. We think him a very interesting child.

Joseph and James go to school and read very well.³³ Write often as you can and try to make your arrangements to visit us as soon as possible. Give my love to your husband and children and accept of my best wishes for your happiness and welfare.

Mary Smith

Judith Brown
 Postmarked Waynesville, O.
 12 Mo. 23, 18 3/4.

The Uncle Gatch mentioned in the foregoing letter is Rev. Philip Gatch, married a half sister of my grand father, James Smith. He lived for several years after this visit and did not die until Dec. 28, 1834. He

salted at Cincinnati: Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography ...*, 7th ed., 2 vols. [Charlestown MA: Lincoln & Edmands, 1819], 1:617). Lewis's son John Newton Gatch (1813-1891; Markham, E-97) was involved in river trading from the 1830s to the '50s. (See Ann Gatch and Brent Harper, *The Lewis Gatch Family of Ohio* [Cincinnati: privately published, 2003], 33.) The Smith letter may be evidence that Lewis himself was already involved in river trade by 1825.

²⁹ Not identified.

³⁰ Presumably Martha (Patsy) (married in 1816 to a Quaker, William O'Neall) and John (also married in 1815 to a Quaker, Sarah Evans), seventh and fourth children of James and Elizabeth Smith (per J. Q. Smith).

³¹ Rachel Morris, Rebecca, Susan Tate, and brother are presumably members of Mary Smith's birth family, the Whitehills.

³² Judith Brown, the addressee of this letter, was married to Hiram, son of Judge Ignatius Brown of Warren County (per J. W. Smith).

³³ The author's two eldest sons. See n. 5 above.

was born March 2, 1751. His wife Elizabeth Smith was born Dec 29, 1752, married to her Dec 15, 1778 and died July 12, 1811.³⁴

³⁴ From the reference to "my grandfather", it is reasonable to infer that this note and the note at the heading were written by John Quincy Smith