The Day Book of Benjamin Walker, 1846

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Benjamin Walker was born on December 27, 1811, in South Carolina, and moved with his family, friends, and kinsman to the newly opened Mississippi Territory around 1815. His father, Samuel Walker, Jr., had been a state legislator in South Carolina and became involved in Alabama politics soon after the state was formed from the Mississippi Territory. Samuel Walker served several terms in the Alabama House of Representatives, and, before his death in 1841, was the speaker of the Alabama House. Benjamin’s mother, Fannie Eddins Walker, was one of a large Eddins family, the children of Benjamin Eddins of South Carolina, a revolutionary war hero.

When Benjamin Walker’s father died, he bequeathed the “plantation on which he now lives in Lincoln County, Tennessee” to Benjamin. Soon thereafter, Benjamin was on the move along with many other people of the time, heading West. In 1846, about the time his wife Susan gave birth to their first child, Benjamin Walker was living in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi, and from there he set out to Texas to assess the prospects of the newly admitted state. He was accompanied by his second cousin, Benjamin Holloway. The namesake of both of the cousins was probably their great grandfather, Benjamin Bell of South Carolina, said to have been killed in a Cherokee uprising in 1779. Their family line also included their grandmother Martha-Jefferson Bell Walker, second cousin of President Thomas Jefferson.

Among the supplies that Benjamin bought for his Texas trip was a four-by-six-inch leather-bound journal. One the first page he wrote “Benjamin Walker’s Day Book, Bot in Aberdeen, Monroe County, Miss. September 3rd, 1846.” The Day Book is still in the possession of the Walker family in Austin, Texas, and has been transcribed by family members. Some of the penciled pages are growing dim, but the pages written in ink are as clear as when they were written almost 160 years ago and the handwriting is legible. The Day Book’s pages chronicle one person’s impressions of life of East Texas in the autumn of 1846. Benjamin wrote about Texas prospects (“good prairie land, but badly timbered”) and dangers (“a cure for snake bite”). While traveling more than a thousand miles looking for land, he recorded, in addition to the everyday details of the journey, many folk remedies that he heard about, including one he thought would interest his wife: how to keep calico from fading.

The travelers often stayed with friends and family members. Benjamin, the record keeper, carefully noted each expense, however small, not only for himself but also so that he could settle up with his cousin – it seems that they had agreed to share expenses equally. Although they may have been self-reliant when it came to finding game for food, they had to spend hard cash for whiskey and for each of the river crossings they made by ferry. Many cross-
ings are listed; usually the price was $1.00 per person, which was about the same amount that they paid for their overnight stays.

At one point in the journey, or possibly on an entirely different trip, Benjamin visited the city of New Orleans. He made notes in his Daybook as he outfitted himself in good style, buying “2 pair casimer pants” at $5 each, at a time when cattle sold for $3 a head and land for less than $1 per acre.

After his trip to Texas, Benjamin bought land in Arkansas, recording the transactions in his Daybook. From 1849 until the mid-1850s he purchased at least seven Military Warrants for land in Arkansas, plus some other acreage, and within a few years he had moved his family there. The family members are recorded in Polk Township, Arkansas County, Arkansas, in the Census of Population of 1860, but sometime after 1865 they moved to Texas. Benjamin died about 1868 in Hornsby Bend, Travis County, Texas. His descendants are now spread throughout the western states. His Daybook, transcribed below with his spelling and grammar intact, is his legacy to his twenty-first century family and readers.

************

Benjamin Walkers
DAY BOOK

Bot in Aberdeen
Monroe County Miss
September 3rd 1846

 *****

Shackelford ____
Bot ____ 124 lbs Rope [?]

 *****

B.T. Emry hickory ___
The probate court to be holden [?] in the post On the 3 ____ Monday in July

 *****

Colic in Horses

Take one pound of Epsom Salts. dissolve it in not more than a half gallon of boiling _____ water. drench the animal with it. when you can hold your finger in it two seconds. don't be afraid of scalding the animal and a cure will result.

 *****

This is a note book of Grandpa Walkers.

 *****

A Receipt for the Cure of Pneuralgia

6 grains of Bromide of Pottassium daily
One month. Decrease one grain each month until cured.

 cinchanedic [?]

 *****

[Page torn out]

 *****

We arrived on the Sabine Riv on the 30th of Sept 1846. Crofisssed over into Texas Sabine County thence up the river to Jas. M. Burroughs' through a poor pine hill country from thence on the 1st of Oct to San Augustine a poor Pine Hill country within a few miles of San Augustine where we came to good looking ____land which produces pretty well but badly timbered. stayed all nite 11 miles west of San Augustine at Garretts from thence on the 2nd of Oct to Nacogdoches 3rd from thence across the Angelina and up too miles to Sackville
Easters & stayed until Monday morning the 5 Oct from thence across some poor Prairies & across the Neches River.

*****

Wm. W. Hill Washington County Independence
15 miles up the Brazos Cavinaugh
Washing[ton] County F__ guhas 3 miles
____ Thomas [?] Birdwell near ______

Sackville A. Easter addreBs
Nacogdoches County Douglas Texas

L.[S.?] A. Easter in Cherokee County

John G. Berry San Augustine Texas

*****

From Judge Lipscomb to Washington [18?] From thence to Montgomery 30
from Montgomery to Huntsville 30
miles from thence to Crockett 30 miles
from thence to Easters 40 from thence to
Nacogdoches 25 miles from thence to San
Augustine 35 from thence Olford 40 from
thence to Grays 37 from thence to Iquines 38 miles
from thence to Sicily Island 32 from
thence to Rodney 35 from thence to Port
Gibson 26 and to Eddins 11 from thence to
Raymond 36 from thence to Clinton.
Livingston, Canton 38 from thence
Kosciñsko 45 to Starkville 63.

*****

Washington Oct 24 .50 Ferriage across Beaos [Bravos?]
Oct 29 one flask wiskey .25 Oct 30 3.00
Boots for Holloway [Oct] 31 for ____in Cincinnati
____ shoein J.H. horse .50 Nov 1 for staying all nite at
Dillards' .20
Paid ______ 2.00 Whiskey
Staid at Mack Master 2.00
Ferrage at Nechea .20 Nov 5 for whiskey ____
Loss in exchange 1.00 Loß in exchange .25
At Nacogdoches 2.00 At San Augustine 2.00

Coß [loss?] in exchange .35 Ferriage at Sabine .25
At Olford 8 Nov 184__ 2.00 At Nachitochis 3.00

*****

B. Walker bot from John Shackelford
2789 lbs of fodder a 1 cent per pound.

*****

B. Walker paid for horses at
Helena
Paid for Mr. Sergant 2.25
A ____Brown's 2.25

Settled

Expenses of Coopwood, Holloway
____Walker to Arkansas October 1847

Coopwood paid to Walker $15.00
Holloway paid 14.00
A receipt for the cure of Dysentary.

Take equal portions of peach tree & elder bark the out side bark scraped off. make a tea & drink freely. is said to cure in 12 hours.

A remedy for snake bite.

A weed called croBswork. It grows various height. the leaves grow out of the stem to a T at a place opposite each other. The too next leaves come out from opposite sides of the stem and so on croBsing or changing sides as they grow __. the leaf is long ____ narrow and the top side quite rough. take the roots stem ___ leaves. bruise and boil in sweet milk. take it ___ apply some to the bite to affect a cure.

Bill of Expenses to Arkansas

Paid first nite Pontotoc  $4.50  A weed called croBswork. It grows various height. the leaves grow out of the stem to a T at a place opposite each other. The too next leaves come out from opposite sides of the stem and so on croBsing or changing sides as they grow __. the leaf is long ____ narrow and the top side quite rough. take the roots stem ___ leaves. bruise and boil in sweet milk. take it ___ apply some to the bite to affect a cure.

2. Nite Oxford  3.75
3. Esq. Ellisons  2.65
4 at Robertson  [??]
5. at Houston  3.60
6. at Hellena  5.25
7. at Bro ona  2.25
8. at Robertson  1.80
9. at Wm Robinsons  [??]
10. at the gun Comills  2.50
11. at Stillwell  12.00
At Montgomery  1.50

At Wm Robison  .00
Hendy  2.75
CroBsing White River  .60
C. McClendon  D to B. Walker

$44.20  4 lbs bacon

Holloway & Walker at Pike  1.60  ___
At Helena  3.00  12.36
Ferriage at Helena  1.00  21.00  for corn
Ferriage at Coldwater  .30  33.36
At Poone  2.12  9.00
At Coffeville  3.00  24.36  PAID
At Houston  2.00
At Pikeville  .25

$13.27  [divide by 2]  L [?, possibly S] Holloway to B. Walker
$6.63  [Du?]

Holloway due to Walker  $6.63  15 stacks fodder
  .46  weighing
  7.09  1227 lbs ech
  15  18405 at ? ct
  9202  $92.02

44.20 [divide by 3] 14.73 1/3  $44.20  To 108 head stock
  $ cts per head  $108.00
15 head stock
cattle at $3.00 per
head $45.00

1000 bushel corn
at 25 cts per
bushel $250.00

Due 1st Nov 1849

Benjamin Eddins

Or Or [possibly "do do as in ditto"]
To Benjamin Walker

Fifteen dollars loaned
Money 8th of March 1850

Paid B. Walker

Jan 28th 1885

D.R. James to T.J. Walker
To 180 lbs pork at 5 cts. 900

James, Goyens
To 664 lbs pork at 5 cts 3320

Rect. of P.J. Crutchfield of State of Arkansas


W.W. Adams ____ of State of Ark. Certificate of Comtion by Benj. Walker of Mil Land warrant no. 43180 in name of Mich'l Sheridan for 160 acres of land also of Mil Land warrant No. 47130 in name of Wm. Calvert for 160 acres also M.L. Warrant no 13801 in name of Hardy Robinson for 80 acres land

M.L. W. 38489 in name of N.C. Hawkins for 76.88 acre all ____ 9 Nov 1852.

The above rects and certificates enclosed by Registered letter to W.H. Halliburton of Dewitt Arkansas. at McDade Bastrop Co T ___.

Benjamin Walker Bot of Joel M. Acker one land warrant No. 59251 calling for 160 of land and issued in the name of William Cothran late a corporal in Capt. Stewarts company Battalion Mi&B Volunteers under date of May 30th 1849.

Benjamin Walker Bot of Benjamin L. Howell late a Sergant of Capt Ackers company 2nd regiment Mi&B Volunteers one land warrant No. 51580 calling for 160 acres of land issued to said Benj. L. Howell 22nd day of March 1849.

T. N. Porter
Helena, Ark.

Mr. I hangr [?] Memos, Tenn

W. W. Adams of State of Ark. Certificate of Comtion by Benj. Walker of Mil Land warrant No. 43180 in name of Mich'l Sheridan for 160 acres of land also of Mil Land warrant No. 47130 in name of Wm. Calvert for 160 acres also M.L. Warrant no 13801 in name of Hardy Robinson for 80 acres land

Bot in New Orleans 2.00
2 pair casimer pants 10.00
1 ____ common ____ 2.00
1 vest 2.50
1 Blanket coat 2.00
1 shirt 1.50
1 pocket knife 1.00
1 purse .25

Infuse three gills of salt in one gallon of boiling water and put the calico in while hot and leave it till cold and in this way the colours are sun dried permanent.

To wash Calico.
Take 1 Dram Ext Bark
_ oz aloes
_ oz Rhubarb
7 oz Black Snake Root
1 oz Pesuman Barks

Put the above mixture in one quart of good spiritts. Take a common dram morning noon & at night so as cause at least 2 loose stools every 24 hours

signed] Dock Jas. B. Vaught
signed] James B. Vaught

Take 20 grs of Blue MaBs – 10 of specie – 15 of Calomel – mix & make in to six Pills. Take 2 pills every 4 hours – until you have taking the last 2 pills. If they should not purge in two hours after taking last 2 pills – take a tea cup of strong sima tea every 2 hours until they have purged some four or five times. Any motion over five restrain by taking Landinains opium or paregoric – thus commences your Batters War _ - _ n teas as Drinks.

| From Holloway | 10.37 |
| At Nacogdoches | 5.00 |
| Holloway paid at Jones | 1.00 |
| At Beeman | 5.00 |
| At Theens | 2.00 |
| 23.37 |
| To be taken from | 5.00 |
| 18.37 |

Walker paid for Holloway
To one pr Boots $3.00
For shoeing horse 2.00
$5.00

Holloway and Walker Expenses from Washington, Texas home
Total divided by 2 $40.75
20.37 _
Holloway paid 18.37 _

[This is a very faint penciled page]
Gave to ______

$10.00
5.00
5.00
5.00
5.00
2.00
32.00
17.88 Settled

September the 12th 1846 loaned S. Holloway 50 cts. Paid.
Walker bot for Saml Holloway ____ pounds of pork ____ in 1846. $5.46 Paid
Due Walker from S. Holloway $2.30. The above is paid except 30 cents. [signed] B. Walker

| Town 2 Range 3 | C.C. & I. W. Alday [?] |
| 12.27 |

[x] 15
18405

[Scratch page of additions, subtractions, and divisions of costs]