

Dear Sister

Cheltenham 2nd Mo 19th 1825

We having heard there was a letter at Edith Cohlens from brother Daniel J. McCall to see whether it was correct finding it was so I sent up for it; and knowing it would be a satisfaction to you to hear the particulars altho the account of him is not very pleasant the following is a copy of it

Rocky Mountains July 7th 1824

Dear and respected friend

I take this as the only opportunity to write to you and beg to be excused for my bad spelling and writing, I have more news than I am able to communicate whereas I will give you the most important. After leaving you I arrived in Illinois in July the same year and tarried there until mid winter and from thence to Masum where I tarried until spring from there I embarked for the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia for the purpose of hunting and trapping and trading with the Indians in a company of about one hundred men, We hoisted our sails on the third day of April 1822 at Saint Lewis and arrived at Cederfort about the middle of July when we where reduced to the sad necessity of eating any thing we could catch as our provision where exhausted and no game to be had, being advanced five hundred miles above the frontiers, we were glad to get a Dog to eat and I have seen some gather the skins of Dogs up through the Camp sing and roast them and eat heartily this so discouraging me that I was determined to turn tail up stream and bear my course down in company with eight others and by the way lost from the others without gun ammunition provision or even cloths to my back of ~~which~~ account being four hundred miles from any white people or even knowing where to find Indians; now my dear friend how must I have felt if young Birds, frogs, and Snakes where exceptable food with me and not means of fire I in the course of a few days fortunately fell in with a party

of Indians who treated me with great humanity and favor and with them
four days and then fell in with a trader who conducted me within 350
miles of the frontiers he being able to give me but little aid & I tarried
but three days when I started with provision consisting of only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a
pound of Buffalo meat and arrived at the frontiers in six days were by
eating too much and starvation I was taken with a severe spell of sickness
which almost took my life, I here met with a second Boat and ascended
the Masuri the second time and arrived at the mouth of Mussel Shell
on the latter end of November where I wintered with thirteen others here
was a remarkable escape of my scalp as two large parties of Indians wintered
within twenty miles of us and our better enemies the Black feet this place
is in latitude 48. the River froze to the immense thickness of four feet
and did not break up until the fourth of April and we embarked in
Canoes on the 6th and on the 11th I was severely wounded by a wiping
stick being shot through both knees which brought me to the ground
this disabled me for the spring hunt and almost for ever - This spring
two parties here met with a great defeat one by the loss of four men the
other seven about the same time a third boat was ascending the river
and was attacked by Rickarays Indians and was also defeated with the
loss of 15 killed and 18 wounded; - Indians only one or two - this so
imbroiled our blood that we unanimously volunteered our service to
reinforce and give them battle which we did with the aid of three
hundred Regulars and one thousand Sioux Indians and defeated them
without the loss of one man; in this engagement about seventy
Rickarays lost their lives and evacuated their village out of all the
company only thirty odd returned and those were fired on by the
Mandans and Grosventers in the dead hour of the night and killed two
and wounded two more of our men two guns were fired from our
men and killed one Indian and they retreated, one man was also
killed nearly all to pieces by a White Bear and was left by the way
without any gun who afterwards recovered; from thence we moved
our course for the mouth of the little horn and by the way I was closely
pursued by a party of Indians on Horseback whom I took to be Black feet

and narrowly made my escape by hiding in a little brush and they
came close that I could see the very whites of their eyes which was
within five yards. — from thence I started with ~~my~~ ^{many} others a trapping
across the Rocky mountains at the commencement of winter we started
for the Columbia Mountain to winter with the Crow Indians who
are our only friends in this country here I got straid away from my
company and fell in with Indians who where not ~~C~~ Crows and traveled
thirty miles from one hour by sun in the evening untill midnight
across the mountain through snow up to my middle which froze
my feet severely so that I lost two toes entire and two others in part
from this I did not recover untill late in the spring nevertheless I made
this spring with the addition of ten days last fall three hundred and
fifty Dollars and the ensuing fall and spring I expect to make about
twelve hundred Dollars if nothing happens more than I know of. — the
mountains are now covered with snow many feet deep in places and
vegetation within ten feet of it in full bloom. — We now are about to
embark for the Columbia waters where I expect to remain for two years
at least. A man in this Country is not safe neither day nor night, and
hardly ever expect to ~~return~~ get back. — this Country is the most
healthy in the world I believe. — A variety of hot springs, boiling
Sulphur, and Oil springs, also salts, salt Peter, and Volcanoes;
petrification is astonishing; such as men, animals, fish, wood, and sea
shells, those into the best kind of flint, those are to be found on the
highest mountains. — I have celebrated the fourth of July by the
pursuit of a Bull Buffalo two being on horseback ran him about three
miles came up along side poured in two broad sides he took the river
and it not being fordable he sunk to the bottom and the pursuit ended
when I have been hunting I have often thought of you and some others
of my friends how you would glory in the sport. — White Bear, Buffalo
Elk, Deer, Antelope, and Mountain Sheep are our principle game: I shall
now bid farewell and desire you to remember my best respects to all my
enquiring friends particular J. Taylor J. McCalla. C. Morris. — and
J. Mather inform them I am in good health and spirits I remain with
high respect your most particular friend &c Daniel J. Potts
Thomas Cochran — ^{original} MB the letter was directed to Rockham

Ann Thomas

Plymouth