



<https://www.historynet.com/fearless-radicals-turned-the-quakers-from-advocates-of-slavery-to-fervent-abolitionists/?f>

# The Journal of John Woolman

May 1, 2022 • Douglas Olena • Life Together



# On the occasion of a journey to the natives of Pennsylvania

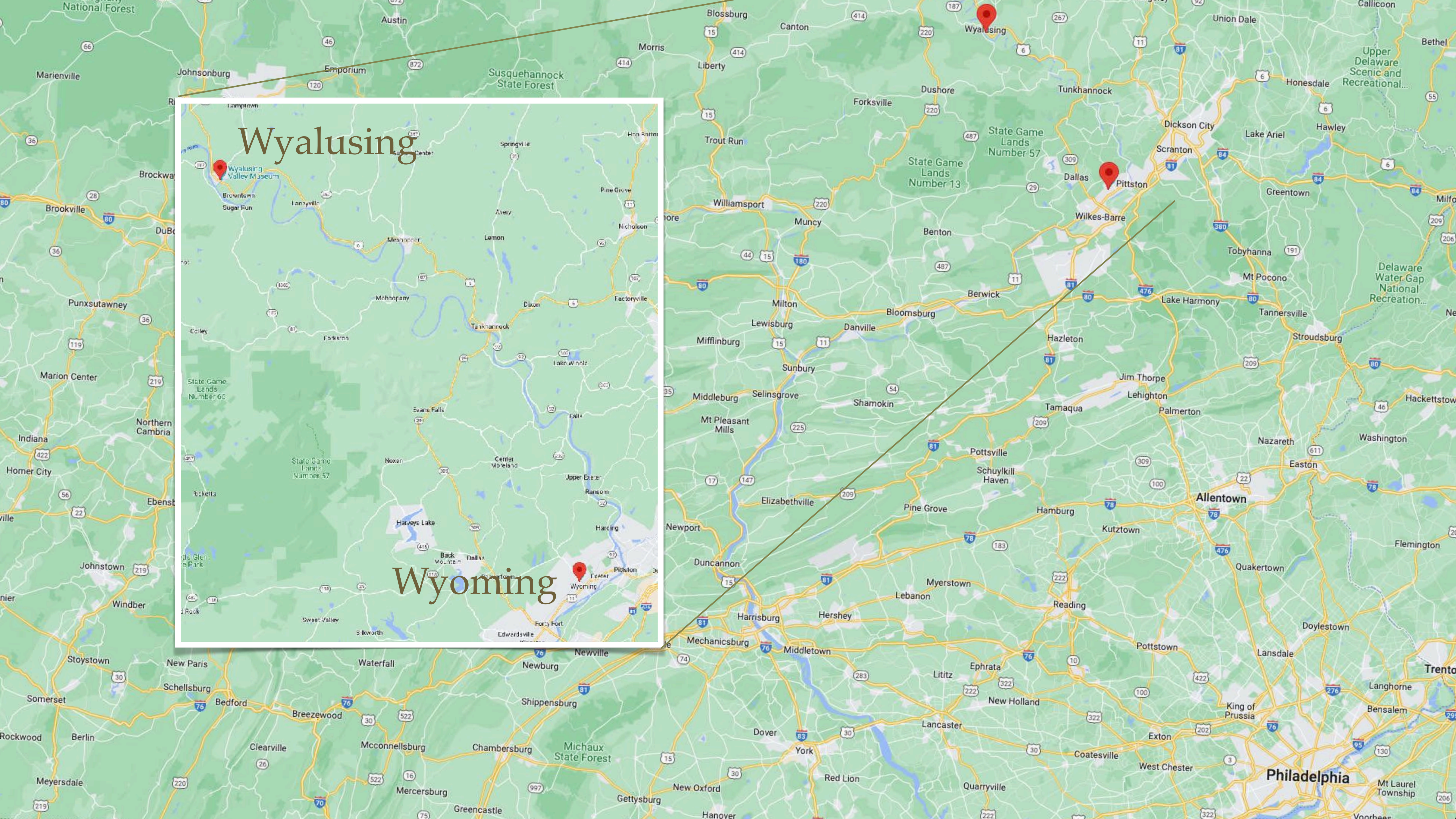
The story is the journey to an area  
called Wyoming, and the Wyalusing  
Valley on the Susquehanna River.

read p 122-123 paragraphs



John Woolman





Wyalusing

Wyoming



## First Encounter

“And in conversation with them by an interpreter, as also by observation on their countenance and conduct, I believed some of them were measurably acquainted with that divine power which subjects the rough and froward will of the creature. . . .”

*-John Woolman 122-23*



# Inward Drawings Toward a Visit

- 123 “Now as this visit felt weighty and was performed at a time when traveling appeared perilous, so the dispensations of divine providence in preparing my mind for it have been memorable, . . .” he recounted it in some detail.
- It is this recounting I am exposing the class to:
  - Woolman’s relation to God
  - His relation to the Indians
  - How he managed fear
  - His attitudes, his goals
  -



# Preparations and News

- After Woolman decided that he must go to visit the Indians, he said “thoughts of the journey were often attended with an unusual sadness, in which times my heart was frequently turned to the Lord with inward breathings for his heavenly support, that I might not fail to follow him wheresoever he might lead me.” 123
- Close to the time he expected to leave, some of the Friends from Philadelphia told him that Indians had taken a fort from the English, and slain and scalped people in a variety of places. 124
- However, he was assured that the Lord was with him, despite the danger. The danger was real.



# Family and Friends

- Read section 124 on telling his wife.
- He waited till the last minute!
- Benjamin Parvin attached himself to John, insisted on going on the journey despite the risks. For the first part of the journey William Lightfoot and John Pemberton joined them. 125
- Here we have the first date to mark the beginning in the journal:  
June 9, 1763.



# Critique of the Treatment of Indians

- At Bethlehem They parted with John Pemberton, and went on.
- They met with an Indian trader coming from Wyoming and heard of the practice of selling rum to Indians in trade for furs.
- Woolman regrets this trade, because of the bad effect on the Indians and thinks it a vile practice of selling rum to the Indians that further impoverishes them. To think that somebody does this on purpose for gain is detestable.
- That, coupled with high rents shows the poverty of capitalism, and Woolman soundly rejects this as non-Christian.
- This is part of the problematic sale of Indian lands to the Whites.







# The Damage of War

- “. . .the toils and fatigues of warriors . . . thinking on their miseries and distresses when wounded far from home by their enemies, and of their bruises and great weariness . . . and of their restless, unquiet state of mind . . . and of the nations engaged in war with each other
- “during these meditations the desire to cherish the spirit of love and peace amongst these people arose very fresh in me.” 126



# The Moravian

- John and his team met one of the Moravian ministers with an Indian companion on their way to Wyalusing.
- This man was David Zeisberger (1721-1808) famous for ministering to the Indians in the Pennsylvania wilderness over many years. The mission to the Indians was one of the Moravian's evangelistic efforts. 127



# Woolman deeply troubled

- The Indians were impoverished by the Europeans, both by settlers moving in to their lands, being tricked out of their lands by them and pressured by superior force to leave, in addition Woolman mourned the plight of the Negro slaves. He was solicitous of his own spiritual affairs lest he be responsible for the degradation of these humans.
- “My heart was deeply concerned that in future I might in all things keep steadily to the pure Truth and live and walk in the plainness and simplicity of a sincere follower of Christ.” 128-9
- He marked “luxury and covetousness, with the numerous oppressions and other evils attending them” as causes of the apparent evils. 129



# Troubling News

- Arriving at Wyoming, an Indian runner said that some Indians had attacked an English fort and were on their way to attack another one. The Indians were at war with the English.



# Meeting a Scared Indian

- Woolman met a man who had a “tomahawk wrapped under his match-coat” 129 who took it out to protect himself when he saw John.
- John spoke in a friendly manner and set the man at ease.
- Woolman came to recognize how dangerous it was to travel at this time. He searched himself to make sure he was doing the will of God. 130
- At each conflict, or sign of trouble Woolman examined himself in front of God.



# Travel Was Arduous

- Woolman trusted the all-sufficiency of God's provision for him in his pilgrimage. He was industriously employed to get to a **state of perfect resignation**. 131
- The small party trekked over land and the Susquehanna River, while their baggage was carried in a canoe upstream to the next campsite.
- Even though Woolman was healthy, he became weakened by the constant effort. This was a trial of his faith, which he found mercy from God for.



# Arrival at Wyalusing

- On June 17, 1763, eight days from when they set out, the party arrived at Wyalusing.
- A gathering was called using a conch shell and their party was welcomed. Among the gathering was the Moravian.
- Woolman negotiated times to speak, in agreement with the Moravian who was well known in those parts.
- The Indians were aware that David Zeisberger and John Woolman were of different faith groups. Yet Zeisberger and Woolman found a way to minister together.



# Ministry

- Woolman ministered in the Quaker way, waiting for the Spirit to move him before he spoke. 132
- He mentioned the difficulty of speaking using interpreters.
- They ministered until June 20, then agreed to leave.



# Travel Again

- They left in the company of a number of Indians who were taking furs downriver by canoe, suggesting that the river would cause difficulty for the horses traveling the normal way.
- They arrived in Wyoming on the 22nd of June. They were rejoined by their horses.
- Together their company was fourteen.
- On the 25th they reached Bethlehem. On the 26th they reached Richland, and parted company on friendly terms with the Indians.



# Arrival at Home

- They got home on the 27th of June.
- His family and friends were relieved to see him.
- “But my mind while I was out had been so employed in striving for a **perfect resignation**, and I had so often been confirmed in a belief that whatever the Lord might be pleased to allot for me would work for good, [that] I was careful lest I should admit any degree of selfishness in being glad overmuch, and laboured to improve by those trials in such a manner as my gracious Father and Protector intends for me.” 136-7



# Conclusion

- “But I was not only taught patience but also made thankful to God, who thus led me about and instructed me that I might have a quick and lively feeling of the afflictions of my fellow creatures whose situation in life is difficult.’ 137



How does Woolman use the  
term **resignation**?