

## Excerpts from the 1892 Journal of James Ambrose Button

In 1892, James Ambrose Button was still married to Phebe Button, the mother of Maryette (Button) Fuller (who had married the year before and is called "Matie"). The ages of the children still at home during this time were: James Robert – 23 [called J.R.), Joanna – 19, Charles [Chas. L. to distinguish from Chas. R., a neighbor who helped] – 16, Ray – 9, Earl – 7, Frank – 5, and Harry – 3. He frequently calls anyone younger than Charles, "the little boys." James' oldest child, Emma, had married William Masten (spoken of in the journal) but had died in 1890. He spoke of visiting Will "Maston's" home. James' wife Phebe died in 1895.

A look at James' account book and journal for 1892 shows the hard work that he and his sons took on, hauling logs, scoring railroad ties, hauling stone, planting wheat and potatoes, cutting briars, digging a cellar, cutting corn, building fences. **His son James R. was paid \$1 each day he worked between August 24 and October 27, 1891.** Hardly a day went by, whether he was feeling sick or not (he had lots of nose bleeds), no matter what weather, that James and/or his older sons did not do many tasks, often before noon.

Look at the Button Family Tree Chart or in the Fuller-Button Genealogy book for the map showing the Button properties in Grand Traverse County during this period. It shows the property he refers to as "the lake property" between the southern tips of Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog.

James Ambrose's journal for about 3 years has several interesting entries:

"1891: Tues. Dec. 15th - Finished putting on roof boards & some shingles. Ben & Rogers helped me. Turned colder. J.R. & Ma went to Burg [Williamsburg]. This is my Birthday had apple dumplings as usual.

"Mond. Dec. 24th - I am about sick worked a little at shed put in bars piled up lumber & quite pleasant. J.R. got home in evening.

"1892: Thurs. Feb. 11th - Wifes Birthday - cold and stormy squally. Logs scaled - cut up hay hauled 1 load of logs from swamp 5 logs hauled wood P.M. Benedick.

"Sunday Feb 28th - I was sick nearly all day had another time with nose bleed -

"Thurs March 10th - ...I came home [from cutting and hauling at Elk Lake] at noon went to meet Matie at train. raw wind but thawed where sun shone.

"Sat. Mar 12th J.R. took Matie to cars in morning...

"Tues March 15th - I went to Traverse City on cars go pay for 15232 = 60.92. Paid Buck & Keselkey \$7.10 Debt for flour & groceries and tobacco - \$2.30 paid for shoes for Charles \$2.00 for Earl \$1.25 to Famous for Wash dish 10-for Knife 10 for Pants. buttons 10 for card of shirt buttons 10 for 3 quires of writing paper - [quire = a set of 24 uniform pieces of paper] - 15 for brackets & gimlets 20 - carfare. 65 - hotell - 25 paid D. Vinton and Son's ballance due on stove debt 6.94 paid. J.R. \$5.00 paid W. Davis 45 for shoing horse, paid Sprague for eagle \$1.00 [Traverse City *Eagle* was a newspaper]. J.R. and Chas. went to lake and worked at logs a.m. cold north wind.

"Tues Mar 22 - I am about sick but went to Elk Rapids on cars paid \$10.05 for interest on land contract. received \$62.68 for logs. Paid D. Vinton & Sons \$10.00 for work. Paid Davis for shoing .30. Paid Ed Cross for Buckwheat flour, \$1.86. quite a now

storm but not very cold. J.R. & boys went to lake place. J.R. hauled 1 load of logs to Follets Mill.

"Wed. Apr 6th. ...helped wife some about cleaning house... [**a modern husband!**]

"Thurs. Apr 7th ... **I went to Elk Rapids got a kick from horse on side of my forehead. Dr. Bayley sewed it up. I had to come home on cars and hire a boy to drive home team...**

**"Sat April 9th ... Mrs. A.R. dressed my head got along well did not bleed much. feel better but have a good deal of pain in back and groins.**

"Sund April 17th - Syruped off. [they have been working in the maple sugar bush all week] Chas. & I went to Chas. Truax Sugar party. W.R. Fuller & Matie came at night.

"Tues Apr 19... I went to Deliver fruit trees for W.R. Fuller. Cold northwind. W.R. Fuller stayed all night.

"Thurs Apr 28th ... made deed to Co. for R.R. siding...

"Sund July 17th - Started for Fife Lake, but met Matie Coming home so we came home. Getting quite warm. J.R. went back to work.

"Sund Aug 25th Went to Fife Lake... I am feeling poorly with a heavy cold and tearing cough.

"Mond Aug 29th Came home stopped on plains and picked blue berries found them very plentiful. [Two weeks before, he was able to get \$1.66 for berries.]

"Friday Sept 2nd - We went to Mr. Mastons to see Emma's children, found them doing finely. I went to see a yoke of oxen for Jimmy. Quite warm. Our team got frightened, run and jerked my wife out on back, did not hurt her very bad but it was a serious affair.

"Friday Sept 23rd - Took L.B. Rickerds - grist and coal down to him. O. Pray got barrels. We went late to lake to pull beans. George Watson helped. I paid him .50 for work. I went to Burg PM to hear Mr. George H. Smith who Spoke in the interest of the [?P.s of Q.s]. Small turn out but a good plain common sense talk. He came home with me for supper we went back with him to hear his Peoples party talk. Small turn out but a good politacal speech with out any bitter Sarcasm. I had another light attack of nose bleed. Paid A. Durnishell \$55.00 on note. paid \$1.68 to store for Shugar, pork & tea.

"Sat. Sept 24th - Dug potatoes a.m. Chored arround. Went to Burg to hear Mr. Ferril [?Ferris] speak but could not get the hall.

"Sund Sep 25th ... Went to hear Mr. Hall preach at night he stayed all night with us.

"Tues Oct 11 ... went to Town hall to Prohibition speech good speech and extra nice singing.

"Frid Oct 14. Went to lake to husk corn. I am quite sick with severe attack of cholera morbis [cholera morbus -acute gastroenteritis with diarheah, cramps, and vomiting]. Moved corn crib PM. Warm.

[He was working hard again the next day taking a load of hay to timber camp.]

"Thurs Nov 3rd [after working hard all day] I attended Political meeting at Town Hall. Democrat, Mr. Davis from Pontiac. great speech.

"Mond Nov 7 - ... Butchered Buck P.M. L.B. Worden helped. Weight of fore quarter took to L.B. Richaerd 196.

"Tues Nov 8th Went to Election AM. Chas R. helped P.M. Chas. L took potatoes and Beef to Camp. Weight of beef 320 lbs twenty bu of potatoes, Snowed by squalls - paid Chas. R. \$2.50, Paid \$1.25 for Rubbers, .25 for tobacco, .25 for Eng Currents - .30 for raisins.

"Sat Nov. 12th - ... Will and Matie came on visit....

"Sund Nov. 27th Nearly sick lame back and neuralgia. J.R. at home. chored some read and rested. Snowing soft wet snow.

"1893

**"Mond Jan 9th Terrible Terrible Storm. Snowing and blowed all day. R.R. blocked nobody could do anything. J Rand Chas L. cut logs & wood for J.R. A.M. stormed so they came home at noon. J.R. went to Burg P.M.**

"Sat. Mar 4th President Cleavland took Seat as the President of U.S.A....

"Sat Mar 11th - Got up 3 O'clock tried to meet the early train but got left, came back home took team to Depot got a load of freight for G.W. Hasting. Wife & me took 11 O'clock train for Traverse City. Got Deed from John Pulcipher, drew pay for logs from T.C. Lumber Co. Scale of my logs NO-80 9334 ft - amt \$20.53 scale of J.R.'s logs on siding NO 216 scale 42750 - amt. - 94.04. Paid for feed \$5.75 for shoes \$2.50 for boots for J.R. \$2.50 to W.H. Foster for making and acknowledging a deed to Chas E. Pray \$1.00 for getting discharge of mortgage for Ed. T. Pray 100, for R.R. fare \$1.30. Paid J.R. borrowed money \$14.50. Recd from C.E. Pray cash \$100.00 paid W. H. Foster \$75.00. Paid John Pulcipher \$200.00 for Deed of land. Thawing all day...

"Tue. Mar 21st Ma went to see Matie. I went to the city to attend to sending off application for a loan, tried to get J.R.'s log money but could not get it. J.R. Sold [?Thom] Watson some hay. Chas L. hauled in some pine logs and hauled home some lumber. Colder quite pleasant.

"Sat. Mar 29th I went to city on 11 O'clock train had quite a time in getting abstracts of land... I paid Bank note to Hannah of \$30.00 paid for land abstracts \$14.00 for R.R. fare .65 for dinner and lunch .45.

"Sund Apr 3rd Very pleasant in morning but cold. Sun shone out warm but soon clouded up had quite a Snow Storm. Children went to Barker Creek to Easter Church exercises. Boys went to Wmsburg to church at night. I made some Sap sprouts.

"Mond Apr 3rd Taped about 40 trees went to Burg to vote took J.R. and Ma to cars. J.R. started to Will Fullers to work. Ma went to T. City to see Dr. Snyder. I came home and worked in Bush P.M. very warm with a heavy thunder storm at night.

"Tues Apr 4th Everything afloat water in cellar worked in bush taped trees open roads gathered in Some Sap Set pans boiled a little turned colder with high wind.

[He continued to work daily in the sugar bush, tapping trees, boiling, cleaning pans, hauling wood for the fire for several more weeks.]

"Frid Apr 14th ... Went to Elk Rapids to mill. Sold 6 gals of maple syrup for \$6.00. Took down land contract got and extension of time of 2 years for final payment... bought .80 worth of wall paper..

"Thurs Apr 20th ... Wife papering house cleaning house etc. W.R. Fuller came at night. he is delivering trees.

"Sund May 25th James R. got home about 2.30 oclock a.m. Came after his mother & I have been broken of my rest so much I am nearly sick. Very nice day, but cold west wind. Hear that the Freeman Factory at Kalkaska was burned.

[During the summer of 1893 he began including 'little boys' in the work. That would have been Ray, Earl, Frank and maybe even Harry, though he was still enough baby that baby shoes were bought for him in the city.]

"Sund Aug 6th Cool but pleasant. Wife & little boys & me went out on plains got some berries horse got frightened at a [?robe] excursion train to Traverse City.

"Sund Aug 20th Ringling Bros Great Show passed on R.R. also excursion train to Petosky. Cool and getting dry again.

[in margin] "(German Button housed all night.)

"Wed Aug 30th... Boarders commenced to board at night 2 meals... [from thence forward, each day he recorded how many meals apiece the boarders ate, but did not name the boarders.]

"Frid Oct 6th ... Sample aples sent to worlds fair today. Collected by Mr. Hopkins.

"Mond Oct 9th [written in margin] Birthday party for Chas.

"Mond Dec 25th Warm for Christmas. Chas. L. hauled wood part of the day. rained some. Brooks made cupboard for P.I.[?] goods. Chas. L. went to Masquerade Ball at night.

"1894

"Sund Feb 16th Wifes birthday, little boys and Joanna got her a butter dish and cake dish for presents. very pleasant nice day. I went with J.R. to Barker Creek to Church. paid Mrs. Cross \$5.00 interest monies.

"Sat Feb 24th - Coldest Morning of the winter thermoniter registered 20 below zero. We got up late, hauled 5 loads of wood on to car No 613 same care we loaded Monday. Very pleasant Sun warmed up about noon.

"Tues Mar 6th Wife and me attended old settlers meeting..."

[March 11th is the last entry in this book 'carried forward.' No other book is known to still exist.]

**We are indebted to Corinne DeGraaf who loaned this journal to be copied. It is in the collection of Winifred (Linkletter) Button which Corinne DeGraaf now has in her possession.**