

## Pioneer Life Resources

### More About the Lewis Family

#### **What route did the Lewis family take to get to Michigan?**

“[They] came by the prairie schooner line through Canada, via Niagara Falls, Lundy’s Lane and Detroit, occupying some six weeks in making this toilsome, tedious trip.”

George H. White, “Yankee Lewis’ Famous Hostelry in the Wilderness”  
*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol.26, p.303

#### **How did the Lewis family get their supplies and household goods to Yankee Springs?**

“Leaving his family [in Yankee Springs, William] returned to Detroit and bought supplies and forwarded them and his household goods around by water to the mouth of Grand river, to be brought up the river in a pole boat to the rapids, and from there overland to their new home.”

George H. White, “Yankee Lewis’ Famous Hostelry in the Wilderness”  
*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol.26, p.304

#### **When did stage-coaches start traveling by Yankee Lewis’s inn?**

According to the 1880 *History of Allegan and Barry Counties*, page 514, the stage route between Battle Creek and Grand Rapids, then called Kent, was established 1837. This is how the account described the arrival of the stage at the inn (page 515):

“Lewis was at his best, however, when the stage-horn announced from the top of the neighboring hill the near approach of the welcome stage. Four stage-coaches loaded down and drawn by four horses passed daily for a time over the road each way, and it may be believed that Lewis’ tavern, the only stage-house upon a stretch of nearly twenty miles of road either way, was like an oasis in the desert.”

#### **What was it like to travel on the stage-coaches?**

“At the time [1845] the railroad was completed only to Marshall. We took the stage from there to Battle Creek, then a new little village, but apparently thrifty. We spent the night at the Battle Creek House. At About four o’clock in the morning we climbed into a mud-wagon, called the Grand Rapids stage. We breakfasted at a log tavern, in one of the small and infrequented clearings that we meandered into. In the timbered land the road was cut out, but was not worked, only as the feet of the horses and the wheels of the wagons worked it into ruts and pitch-holes where roots and stones did not prevent. . . .

“As we moved slowly on, now and then a deer or two would be seen and as the forenoon advanced we began to think and talk of what was to come and of dinner—Yankee Springs! That was the big oasis of the trip, so some good passengers said; there, good meals were served by the famed ‘Yankee’ Lewis and his wife.

“We got there. Four log houses standing in a row, connecting end to end, a big barn, sheds, a large garden with vegetables and beds of flowers delighted the eye, and made us all look happier.”

*Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 30, p. 655

#### **Notes:**

Michigan sources misspell Wethersfield, New York, calling it “Weathersfield.” It is spelled correctly in these documents. The 1830 census for Wethersfield, Genesee County, New York, lists the William Lewis household with 1 male under 5 years old; 1 male 20-30 (William); 2 females under 5; and 2 females 20-30. A secondary source says the Lewis family had 1 son, 3 daughters and an adopted daughter, Flavia Stone, in 1836.

William Lewis was also known as “Yankee” and “Yankee Bill” Lewis.

### More About How People Lived

(List web resources such as making candles, making butter, spinning, weaving)