

# Journal of Sarah Kemble Knight



**ABOUT THE READING** English colonists in North America faced a challenging life. They had carved towns and villages out of the wilderness. Only a few roads linked these communities. People usually traveled on horseback or by wagon. They faced bad weather, raging rivers, and wild animals. Sometimes there was conflict with American Indians. In 1704 Mrs. Knight traveled from Boston, Massachusetts, to New York City, New York. It took her two weeks to make this trip. The same trip today takes only a few hours.

## VOCABULARY

**post** mail carrier

**cloyed** unsettled

**ordinary** inn

**effected** made

**bait** rest



*As you read think about how Mrs. Knight's journal shows what daily life was like during her trip.*

About eight in the morning, I with the **post** proceeded forward without observing anything remarkable; and about two, afternoon, arrived at the post's second stage, where the western post met him and exchanged letters. Here, having called for something to eat, the woman brought in a twisted thing like a cable but something whiter; and laying it on the board, tugged for life to bring it into a capacity to spread; which having with great pains accomplished, she served us a dish of pork and cabbage, I suppose the remains of Dinner. The sauce was of a deep purple, which I thought was boiled in her dye kettle; the bread was Indian and everything on the table service agreeable to these. I being hungry, got a little down; but my stomach was soon **cloyed**, and what cabbage I swallowed served me for a cud the whole day after.

Having here discharged the **ordinary** for self and guide (as I understood was the custom), about three, afternoon, went on with my third guide, who rode very hard . . . Being come to Mr. Havens', I was very

**It took a whole day for Mrs. Knight to digest the cabbage she had eaten.**

**Mrs. Knight paid the innkeeper for lunch for herself and her guide.**

Source: *The Private Journal of a Journey from Boston to New York in the year 1704* by Sarah Kemble Knight.

civilly received, and courteously entertained, in a clean and comfortable house; and the good woman was very active in helping me off [with] my riding clothes, and then asked what I would eat. I told her I had some chocolate, if she would prepare it; which with the help of some milk, and a little clean brass kettle, she soon **effected** to my satisfaction.

I then . . . [went] to my apartment, which was a little room parted from the kitchen by a single board partition; where, after I had noted the occurrences of the past day, I went to bed, which, though pretty hard was neat and handsome. . .

I got up very early, in order to hire somebody to go with me to New Haven, being in great perplexity at the thought of proceeding alone; which my most hospitable entertainer observing, himself went, and soon returned with a young gentleman of the town, who he could confide in to go with me; and about eight this morning, with Mr. Joshua Wheeler my new guide, taking leave of this worthy gentleman, we advanced towards Seabrook. The roads all along this way are very bad, encumbered with rocks and mountainous passages, which were very disagreeable to my tired carcass; But we went on with a moderate pace which made the journey more pleasant. But after about eight miles riding, in going over a bridge under which the river run very swift, my horse stumbled, and very narrowly escaped falling over into the water; which extremely frightened me. But through God's goodness I met with no harm, and mounting again, in about half a mile's riding, come to an ordinary, were well entertained by a woman of about seventy. . .

From hence we went pretty briskly forward, and arrived at Saybrook ferry about two of the afternoon; and crossing it, we called at an inn to **bait** (foreseeing we should not have such another opportunity 'til we come to Killingsworth).

**In her room next to the kitchen, she wrote in her journal about what had happened during the day.**

**Her host saw that Mrs. Knight was concerned about traveling alone and found a new guide for her.**

**The road was steep and rocky, and it was hard on Mrs. Knight's body to ride on it.**

**WHAT DID YOU LEARN?**

1. What travel preparations would Mrs. Knight need to make before beginning such a journey?

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2. What can you infer about Mrs. Knight's character and experience from her journal?

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3. Why did it take such a long time for Mrs. Knight to make her journey?

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