Mansker's Narrative

I can inform you that in the year of 1768, in the fall Myself together with Abraham Bledsoe Isaac Bledsoe John Baker Joseph Drake Obediah Terril Uriah Stone Henry Smith and Ned Carven and others Came to the place now called Prices Settlement, on Cumberland river, where wayne court house now Stands for the purpose of hunting & exploring the Country; where we remained until the Spring 69, then some of the party returned to the Settlements; but myself with Uriah Stone John Baker Thos. Gordon Humphrey Hogan Cash Brooks & others 10 in all built 2 boats & 2 trapping canoes and loaded them with furs and bear meat together with a defeated boat we found, and Started down the river fair as where nashville now Stands, we discovered the french lick, there I saw then greatest number of buffaloe and wild game that I ever beheld in all my life at on place, the lick & all the old fields were crowded with them, all the elements resounded and were filled with their bellowing we killed a number to get their hides to cover our boats, there we discovered a Stockade garrison on the mount, which we supposed to be built by the Cherokee indians in their retreat from the Chickasaw old fields who had been defeated by the Chickasaw; another was discovered on camp fork and one Big Harpeth
We Sailed on thence to the mouth of Cumberland by this time we discovered our meat was Spoiling which reduced us to the necessity rendering it in to oil which we poured in to the lightest boat for market; but here another misfortune before us we were defeated by the mountain leader, John Brown and 25 others who were on their way to war with the Senaca Indians they done us no personal injury, but rob a us of two guns some ammunition Salt and Some tobacco which was but a Small disadvantage to us, except the loss of our guns for we fortunately met some french boats on their way to the illinois who appeared Very friendly and let us have Salt tobacco flour and Some taffe, the latter of which was the most agreeable of all as had been long without the taste of Spirits, all of which we procured for a few pounds of fresh meat, they passed on having a fair wind we also pursued our Journey to fort Natchez, where finding no Sale for our produce, we Sailed on to new orleans, at which place one of our boats got off loaded, which John Baker and myself pursued and overtook at fort Kaspel which we brought back and there we disposed of our cargo
Let me here note a peculiar (?) circumstance. Uriah Stone found a boat which had been stolen from him by a French man as he informed me the year before we came to Cumberland which by (?) he said that he and a French man were trapping on Stones river and had near by Cadia their boat with furs and in his absence the French man stole off with the boat and was then he made for the settlement & came out a second time with me and company from which man and circumstance that river took its name as New Orleans we remained some days, then dispersed, some returned home others still remained there I was confined there by sickness from May until November, then I returned with John Baker in a boat as far as Ozark where we met with one Fairchild with a drove of horses trading to Georgia then we came on through the kewee town in the cherokee nation on New river in the fall of the year I myself in company with John Montgomery Isaac Bledsoe Joseph Drake Henry Scaggs James Knox and others amongst whom was an old man by the name of Russell, who was so dim sighted that he was obliged to tie a piece of white papers to the muzzle of his gun to direct his sight to the game and thus he killed a number of deer
We encamped on Russells [Creek?] which took its name from the old man getting lost and who was missing 19 days in Very cold weather when we found him he was helpless and quite _peachless and remained so three or four days he was nursed by his Son and recovered and killed a number of deer afterward. The winter was midling Severe which drove us to build a skin house which gave name to the place to this day; thus we hunted down thro. this Country until February, at which time we were nearly out of ammunition, then Myself Henry Knox Joseph Drake and indeed all the company except five whom we left to take care of the camp who were Isaac Bledsoe, Wm. Linch, Wm. Allen Christopher Stoph & David Hughes returned to procure ammunition and other purposes Linch took sick with the Shingles Bledsoe came in with him to the Settlements the other three got defeated previous to our return.

Kasper Mansker