

Anonymous Immigrant's Ocean Diary

1842

THE JOURNEY FROM LOCHMABEN TO CANADA

On Saturday, April 16th 1842, the ship cleared from her moorings in the dock, and took up her position near the dock gates, where she waited the inspection of the Government officer, to see that every immigrant had a sufficient quantity of food for the voyage, and also to see that the ship (If charterers) had not taken more passengers than they have allowed. During the inspection, many were sent to buy more provisions, us for ourselves, on showing him the list of our stores, he immediately pronounced it quite sufficient

Sunday 17th About noon the ship moved from the dock to River Mersey. The day was beautifully fine and owing to the circumstances of the immigrant ship going out of the same dock at the same time on a Sunday, was filled with and spectators to witness the departure of the ship and immigrants; the Jessie and the Chieftain, but there was no manifestation of feeling either by the multitude on shore or by the immigrants on board. The Chieftain anchored her next

On the Chesney ?? side of the river and the passengers underwent several examinations, to see that there were only the right numbers on board. After all this care, however, it turned out that after the ship had sailed about 3 days, 3 persons had themselves. After a reprimand from the Captain, they were set to work their passage.

18th The wind was light and variable. Good speed until about 4 o'clock in the morn. and the ship was out of the for about 10 miles.

19th Scarcely a breeze

20th was calm with beautiful morning, a breeze sprung up about 9 from NNE and we sailed holy head about ... Saw a ship on the starboard bow, supposed to be the Jessie from New York. We sailed about 3 mi. an hour until evening when the breeze died away. A good wind, however sprung up again during the night lightly moved the ship gaily along.

21st A fine morning with but little wind, the sea however, rose in heavy swells and during the day a good breeze sprung up from the NE and many people were sick. Passed Tusea/Lusea (?) light house about 11 in the morning. Saw a stern boat about the evening, supposed to be going from Cork to London. A fine clear night.

22nd a fine morning with and the ship made little progress. A disturbance day owing to several playing at cards, consequently, the Captain ordered, after much threatening they were induced to give up card playing during the remainder of the trip.

The evening was spent on deck in pursuing various other pranks.

23rd A dull morning with very little wind. the city of Cork being about 4 or 5 miles distant. Spoke to the Cork pilot boat and observed the Oxford packet ship about 2 miles ahead of us. Polish spice ships homeward bound. Saw Cape Fear light about 15 miles distant. Much anxiety was manifested by most of the passengers to see the last point of land in the old world and particularly by the Irish to take leave of their native shore.

In the afternoon the wind began to farther from .. some fishing boats tried. closer, but they could not, one however which was ahead of us succeeded in coming close to the ship and sold all the fish they had.

24th Sunday, A very strong gale of wind from the S.E. which continued during the day and drove the ship at a rapid rate. I went on deck about 7 o'clock, but after a short stay, returned below; being frightened at the turbulence of the ocean. The tremendous swells, the high waves, and the warring of the wind. It was intended to have a preaching on deck today, but instead of this such was the dreadful heaving of the ship, that no one could stand, and besides most of the passengers were violently sick and at one moment the ship seemed to be on a mountain of water, and at another to go rapidly down into a valley, with a high mountain of water ready to burst over her and swallow her up. The cans, boxes, trunks, and everything loose flying from one side of the ship to the other; and now and then a tremendous wave breaking over the ship and coming through the hatchway like a flood of water. No fires could be lit today.

25th This morning the wind had moderated, but the sea rolled dreadfully high. In the afternoon a strong wind sprung up from the E.S.E. with rain, and a very high sea. The wind and waves were so loud that most people remained out of bed during the night for fear of going down. What with the dreadful noise of the sea, the continued rolling of the ship, and the dreadful sickness of the passengers it was a most long and dismal night. We sailed ? a ship homeward bound this day.

26th The wind shifted to the W.N.W and moderated a little in the forepart of the day, but blew very hard again at night. Sickness still continued generally.

27th Still blowing very hard, and the ship drifting back. Wind W.N. W. and lying to. Sickness and fear still continues.

28th Wind not quite so high, and rather more favourable, though the sea continued to roll dreadfully high. Sickness and fear still continues.

29th Wind blowing a strong gale from the N.W. She shifts being close hauled to the wind, but drifting back. It was truly frightful to witness the heavy sea that came over the ship side, and rushing down the hatchway, like a torrent, terribly alarming the people below. In the midst of all the danger, some incidents took place assured laughter. Some individuals, on going up the ladder, with their provisions to cook. were met by a flood of sea water rushing

through the hatchways, forcing them down the ladder, wetting their provisions, and almost drowning them with water.

30th The wind still ahead of us, but rather more moderate, the ship still drifting back. Some thing was seen passing the ship thought to be a part of a wreck.

May 1st The wind moderated a good deal, but still against us and the ship drifting back. This being Sunday, and the day becoming fine, we had preaching on deck, morning and evening

2nd A fine morning with a good breeze from the N. and the ship began to make way again. This being a fine day, and the English families complaining to the Captain that they were getting lice out of their persons from the Irish. The Captain ordered all persons on deck, and all their bedding. Many hundreds were slain, and a few articles of bedding thrown over board. A disturbance took place being some English and Irish, and the Captain had to get his pistols before he could guide them.

3rd Blowing fresh from the W.N.W. And towards night the wind increased to a gale. The ship had to lie to under close reefed main topsail until morning.

4th Winds moderated a little, crowded more sail and turned the ship to go on another tack, Saw a large ship bound to England.

5th Winds W.N.W. And increasing to a gale and sea running mountains high. It was so rough and the sea broke over the ship with such fury that the fires were not lighted till late, and scarcely any of the passengers cooked any provisions.

6th Winds in the same quarter, but rather abated in the fore part of the day; towards, however, it increased to a hurricane. This was a dreadful night, and few persons went to bed till very late, the high waves of the sea striking her with such fury as to not abated, we should soon have been obliged to seek shelter in Cork Harbour. This morning a fight took place between two sailors, owing to one of them boasting, that he could do his work, better than the other.

make it wonderful to the ear and feelings of a chance that she did not break asunder, and the waves poured through the hatchways in such force as to make us think we should be soon swallowed up.

7th Winds strong, and blowing from the same quarters, it was very rough all day, the ship lying close to the wind, under close reefed sails. The sea rolled mountains high, the ship continued a rolling from one side to the other, and sending heavy waves, many persons were sick.

The helm had been lashed for several days and from the third to the seventh, we had drifted four degrees backwards.

8th Winds N.W. and a good deal moderated but very cold.

9th Winds N and favourable, we made about 8 miles an hour all day and night.

10th The winds continue in the same quarter till evening when it shifted against us. and became rough.

11th Strong winds from the S.W. and very wet and rough. This night an infant 10 weeks old, belonging to a female passenger died.

12th Wind N.W. and strong and much rain. The carpenter made a coffin for the child that died in the night, and about 10 o'clock in the forenoon suitable hymn was sung in the cabin, and the child brought on deck where the Captain read the funeral service, after which it was handed to the mate, who put it into the sea. The coffin was seen to floted a little distance, and then sink. The weather was wet all the day, and the sea rough and towards evening it began to blow a strong gale and the sea to run mountains high.

Tonight the winds increased in fury so much, and the waves beat the ship side so hard, that the Captain became alarmed for the safety of the ship and passengers and went through the ship requesting all praying people and all who felt disposed, to assemble in the cabin, to petition the Almighty for more favourable weather. This was a most dreadful night, many of the passengers stayed up late and those who laid down could not sleep, expecting every moment to be swallowed up in the deep.

13th Wind W.S.W. and not quite so rough. The sea rolled high which it generally as done for some hours after the wind has ceased to blow hard. We had been nearly a fortnite under closed sail, lying close to the wind, but after all that could be done, the ship had drifted many miles backward; indeed, if the storm had

14th S.W. and strong. Made about 5 or 6 miles an hour all day.

15th The wind shifted into the south, and became more favourable for us.

16th Fair winds from the E, and made about 7 miles an hour all the day

17th and 18th The winds continue favourable, and the ship sailed as steady as it she was lying in dock.

19th Winds light, the sea calm and the weather very sultry and heavy clouds hanging about. About 5 o'clock in the afternoon a large water spout was seen onlt a short distance from the ship, and shortly there afterward, two or three others formed, which put the Captain in fear for the safety of the ship.

20th Wind light but favourable and the ship sailed steady all day.

21st The weather cold and very foggy, which denotes that we were nearing the Banks of Newfoundland. The wind increased and the ship sailed fast.

22nd We were aroused about 4 o'clock this morning to see a large iceberg floating about 6 miles from the ship. It was a very large piece and was considered to stand about 50 feet out of the water, and it would be perhaps 100 feet in the water. Several other pieces we passed in the night, and one larger still was seen by the Captain at a greater distance. The weather was fine, but fully as cold as on a frosty day in England.

23rd Wind W.N. W. and rather strong, subsequently the ship made no head way today.

24th Wind shifted to the S by W and afterward to the S and the day very wet. The ship made 6 to 7 miles an hour, and entered the Gulf stream, and the water was nearly blood warm.

25th Wind S. with a very light breeze, but the day was fine, and the ship made 3 or 4 miles an hour, all day.

26th Wind W by S and rather strong and large shark passed the ship close to it's side, and several persons watched it out of sight. The wind into the N W in the evening and the ship made her way a little.

27th Wind SW and very sultry with heavy thunder clouds hanging all around us, but they discharged themselves at a distance from us, as much lightening was seen in the evening. A small whale passed before the ships bow about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and was seen to blow a spout of water a short distance from the ship.

28th Wind SW with a good breeze, which increased to a storm storm about noon, and several water spouts were seen, some only about 1/2 mile from the ship; one broke about a mile from us.

29th Wind SW but very calm. A breeze sprung up in the evening, and the ship made way a little.

30th Wind SW but light, In the afternoon a fight took place among the Irish, owing soon the fight general among the friends of both sides who left of fighting with fists and betook themselves to the wood and iron pins used to faston the sail ropes to, and with them broke each others heads most frightfully. It was a good while before the Captain, sided by the mates and sailors could restore order. It had become proverbial that after a fight. we might expect a storm, and so it happened this time for in the night a most awful thunder storm took place, accompanied by heavy squals of wind, with the rain descending in torrents. The storm lasted from 1/2 past 11 till 3 next morning, when the weather became fine. It was very fortunate that this storm was but of short duration, as no ships could live long in such a sea and weather.

31st Wind NW and weather gradually became calm till evening.

June 1st A dead calm the whole of the day, with the sea as smooth as glass.

2nd Wind E with a good breeze, and the ship going 8 or 9 miles an hour all the day.

3rd The wind still in the same quarter and sailing very fast.

4th Wind blowing from the NE with much towards noon, in the afternoon the wind shifted into the west by North and became calm and the sea smooth.

For more information on the Anonymous Immigrant, check out the “Meet the Diarists” section under “Discover” on our website: ruraldiaries.uoguelph.ca