

Condensation
of
Rev. William Taylor's
Journey
to
Canada
1817

As taken from "Hints to Emigrants" in a series of letters from Upper Canada by the Rev. Wm. Bell, 1824, Edinburgh:

They sailed from Leith, Scotland, on the ship, "Rothiemurchus" commanded by Captain Watson on Saturday 5 April, 1817, in company with Rev. William Bell. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bell engaged a part of the stern, in which were the two windows which usually light this cabin. For this part they paid 120 lbs.

They sailed past Stonehaven, and Aberdeen, but on 8 April a violent gale came up, and as they entered the Murray Firth it was worse and worse. The ship rolled from side to side. A woman gave birth to a baby, the the surgeon was several times thrown to the floor by the violent motion of the ship and at one time the berth in which she lay went to pieces with a crash. Clothes and vessels of all descriptions, etc., were heaped and strewn between the decks. Chests broke from their moorings, destroying everything in their path. Every now and then the sea broke over them and poured down the hatches, which could not be entirely shut for fear of suffocating the people below. The squall carried away the main-yard and damaged the rigging, and they had to turn back. At Aberdeen the captain was able to get a main-yard and they proceeded on their way.

Again as they entered Murray Firth there was a violent gale. Most of them were sick.

On the 17th they were near Wick, in Caithness, and it was calmer. At sunset they arrived at John-o'-Groat's House, the northeast point of the mainland of Scotland. The tide was not favorable for entering the Pentland Firth, so on the 18th they crossed that body of water with the tide running with inconceivable fury to Stromness, a port in one of the Orkney Isles.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Bell went ashore and called upon one of the ministers, and bought a few articles they needed.

The 20th of April was Sabbath. They had asked the captain not to permit any unnecessary work. Mr. Bell preached in the morning and Mr. Taylor in the afternoon....

On the 22nd, they left Stromness, passed the Hoyhead in company with fifteen other vessels, most of them bound for America.

On the 24th, they passed the islands of Rona and Barra. Now they were in the western ocean and many were sick. The food was bad and the water was not good. Later the sea calmed....

On May 3 they had another bad storm and the next day, snow and hail fell, so rough that no cooking could be done and this continued until the 6th.

On May 9 many were ill because of putrid beef and horrible water.

On the 16th, they were among icebergs and fog and near the banks of Newfoundland.

As they approached the entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, they saw several other ships.

On the 21st, they saw Newfoundland and on the 22nd they saw Cape Breton.

On the 23rd they prepared to enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence by a strait between Cape Nord and St. Paul's Island, and had to steer through fog and icebergs.

On the 26th they passed Cape Rosieres and approached the Continent of America. They took aboard a pilot and on the 31st they passed Bic Island and then Crane Island and later the Island of Orleans.

On the 2nd of June they went ashore and Mr. Bell went to the Chateau, residence of the Governor-General, to present his credentials. Most of the passengers were almost like skeletons from illness and bad food, but got their luggage onto shore. Mr. Taylor and family, with a great many more, went off to Montreal by the steamboat in the evening.