

Personal History of:
Caroline Rachel Wakefield

Accounts of Caroline Rachel Wakefield and her mother, immigrating to America. Her father, John, was to set sail two years later.

From the passenger list of the steamship American Congress,
Departure date: 23 May 1866

WAKEFIELD, Caroline <1828> American Congress 1866
Age: 38 Origin: England Occ: Widow
Note: BMR, p.260

WAKEFIELD, Mary <1859> American Congress 1866
Age: 7 Origin: England
Note: "Daughter" (EECI).Ship: American Congress

Date of Departure: 23 May 1866 Port of Departure: London, England
LDS Immigrants: 350 Church Leader: John Nicholson
Date of Arrival: 5 Jul 1866 Port of Arrival: New York, New York
Source(s): BMR, Book #1048, pp. 251-266 (FHL #025,692); Customs #745 (FHL #175,624)

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS:

Autobiography of Henry Crane
Autobiography of Sarah Keep Buttars
Autobiography of William A. Blair
Diary of Joshua K. Whitney
Journal Excerpt of John Ryder
Letter from James A. Cunningham - July 18, 1866
Letter from John Nicholson - May 26, 1866
Letter from John Nicholson - July 4, 1866
Letter from John T. Caine
Reminiscences and Diary of Charles Denney
"Saved by Providence" by John Nicholson

Voyage Notes

"GOD'S PROVIDENCES. -- Through the blessing of our Father in Heaven, we are enabled to chronicle the sailing of the ship American Congress, with 294 adults on board. She cleared from the London Docks, on the 23rd of May. Late in the afternoon the vessel moved from her berth into the Shadwell Basin, when a meeting was held on board, and

the usual organization effected, Elder John Nicholson being appointed president, Elders Joshua K. Whitney and John Rider, his counsellors. Early on the morning of the 24th, the vessel was taken in tow by a steam-tug, and moved down the river to Gravesend. Elder N. H. Felt and several others of the brethren remained on board until reaching this point, and assisted in organizing the people into wards, appointing the most efficient men to take charge concerning the preservation of good order and cleanliness.

The American Congress is the third ship which has left these shores this season, bearing the Saints of the Most High -- flying like a cloud towards the promised land. The Almighty has blessed his Saints and servants thus far, during the business of the emigration, beyond their most sanguine expectations, for he has controlled the winds and the waves, and made them subservient to his purposes. . . ."

<MS, 31:22 (June 2 1866), p.345>

"Wed. 23. [May 1866] -- The ship American Congress (third ship of the season from Europe) sailed from London, England, with 350 Saints, under the direction of John Nicholson; it arrived at New York July 4th, and the emigrants reached Wyoming July 14th"

<CC, p.75>

Autobiography of William A. Blair

. . . I shall not forget the grand old ship American Congress, with 350 Saints. I may say; the parting from father, mother, brothers and sisters is a trial that came too often in those days. To stand on deck and watch one's home pass slowly out of sight, well, one's feelings cannot be described. However, my help was needed to care for a little girl who, with her mother had left father, he being opposed to the Saints, and thought they could come to Zion and be happy. Dear Sister Wakefield, her heart failed her as she stepped on deck. She tried to return, but we were moving out to sea. The dear woman had to be carried below. She said to me, "I shall never walk again". She asked me if I would care for the little girl. Well, she was carried up on deck many times during the next six weeks but failing every day. She passed away on the banks of the Missouri. I had been to the river to wash my clothes. I stayed in the water too long, took cramp and was laid on a bed by the side of the dear dying sister. I remember telling the little girl to keep the flies out of her mother's mouth, and knew no more for three days. Some motherly women woke me and offered some broth. I asked for Sister Wakefield. She said she was buried two days since and the girl had gone on the plains. Thus ended my care for the poor child. However, in a few days I was ready for the trip and started with Daniel Thompson's train.

. . [p.1] [NO SALT LAKE CITY ARRIVAL DATE WAS GIVEN IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY]

BIB: Blair, William A. Autobiography, p. 1, IN Maxine L. Breinholt, Biographies (Ms 8691), reel 1, p.1. (HDA).

Autobiography of Sarah Keep Buttars

. . . We set sail May 23, 1866, on the ship, American Congress. At sea we were tossed about and nearly all became seasick. I was blessed by having only three days of

seasickness. Father and mother and my two younger sisters were very sick, and my baby caught the whooping cough. The Lord spared her life and she got well. . . . We landed in New York the 4th of July, 1866. We anchored and saw many beautiful fireworks. A ship was set on fire on the sea and with flames coming out of its many windows, it was a great sight. Next day we went on the pier, and then came another task. We had to pass a man who read our names off the list. When he came to my name, as I was called Sarah Keep, and child, he said, "Stop, where is your husband, and how do you know he is not here? Stand back!" He shouted. I stood back and all the young men passed. My old friend, Will Penney, came and asked what was the matter. I told him, and he said, "Come with me, they will not know who I am." I went with him, and all was well. We stayed in New York three weeks. My sister's baby was born. Then came another task. My father did not have enough money to take me on to the Valley. I sold my wedding ring to buy my baby a pair of shoes and a hat; also to pay for an advertisement to be a wet nurse. My mother was to take my baby on to Zion, and I would follow. I went to the office and was engaged at twenty dollars a month. I was returning and met father who had been to the office where Brother Bullock and Thomas Taylor were looking after the emigration company, and they told him not to leave me in a strange land, since I had left my husband for the gospel. My father told them he did not have the necessary money, and they said the Church would take me and I could pay the money back when I got to Zion. Father decided I could go on with him if I wanted to. Later I decided to go. . . .

. . . I traveled first with father and mother and two sisters in Pratt's Company, then Captain Enkley came back to bring the sick in, and I was put with his company, leaving my parents. We arrived in Salt Lake City at conference time, the 5th or 6th of October, 1866. . . [p.249]

BIB: Buttars, Sarah Keep, [Autobiography], Our Pioneer Heritage, compiled by Kate B. Carter, vol. 10 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1967), p. 249. (HDL)

Letter from John T. Caine

We are in receipt of a letter from Elder John T. Caine, of New York, dated July 10th, in which he, in speaking of the arrival of the ship American Congress, says:--"The ship American Congress arrived here on the 4th of July. They had a long, though otherwise very pleasant passage. A very good feeling appeared to exist between the Saints and the officers and crew of the ship. This was particularly noticeable during the debarkation of the passengers. The cordial shake of the hand, and the mutual expressions of goodwill, each towards the other, gave evidence of a respect, confidence, and esteem, rarely, if ever, witnessed between the officers of a ship and steerage passengers, and reflected the highest credit on both parties."

A sad accident occurred during the landing of the passengers from this ship at the docks, concerning which Brother Caine speaks as follows: "I regret to say that a young man named Robert Pike, [HE WAS LDS] from near Hull, fell into the water in consequence of the slipping of the gang-plank leading from the steamboat to the wharf, and was drowned before any assistance could be rendered. He was a very worthy brother, respected by the whole company, who deeply deplore his untimely end." . . [p.507]

BIB: Caine, John T., [Letter], Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 28:32 (August 11, 1866) p. 507. (HDL)

Autobiography of Henry Crane

. . .my parents soon got the spirit of gathering and early in May 1866, they sold out all their earthly possessions and started for North America, to find a home among that much despised people called Latter-day Saints.

We left Pulham Market on the morning of the 21st of May, 1866, and arrived in London at noon. We were met at the station by Elder C. [Charles] W. Penrose, who was then president of the London Conference. We stayed in London three days, and on the 24th of May we left the docks in the good ship American Congress, and sailed away across the great Atlantic. We were on board just seven weeks. We had some rough weather, and lots of contrary wind to contend with. There was but very little sickness, and no deaths occurred on the journey, which was quite remarkable among so many; there being three or four hundred people on board. After a long and tiresome voyage, we arrived in New York Harbor on the morning of July 4th, as that was a holiday we had to remain on board until the next day. We had a splendid view of the fireworks that night from the ship as we lay in the harbor.

The next day towards evening we went ashore and then went aboard one of the large river steamers which took us up the Hudson River to New Haven, where we arrived early in the morning, then took the train to St. Joseph on the Missouri River, where we arrived after about five days and nights on the train and laying around in cattle cars and in railroad sheds. We then went on board a steamboat and steamed up the river to a small place called Wyoming, the outfitting place then of the Church teams. We landed and had our first taste of camp life, also our first taste of real freedom and you maybe sure we boys enjoyed it, and were glad to have the chance to run around again after being on the ship and train for eight weeks.

We remained on the banks of the Missouri for about two weeks, and while there my father bought a cow. [He] appointed me to take charge and driver her across the plains, a task that I succeeded in doing, taking her into Salt Lake City in good condition after traveling over one thousand miles and being milked every day. We left Missouri River on July 24th to cross the plains . . . [p.409]

. . . After many ups and downs and many trials and privations, we arrived in Great Salt Lake city on Sept. 28, 1866, in fair condition, having been traveling just seventy days. All were enjoying pretty good health except mother, who with the care of the family and fatigue of the journey was nearly worn out.

We were all strangers in a strange land, and a hard winter coming on, but through the blessings of the Lord and the kindness of the Saints we did not suffer for the real necessities of life, but comforts were few. . . . [p.410]

BIB: Crane, Henry, [Autobiography], Our Pioneer Heritage, comp. by Kate B. Carter, vol. 19 (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1976) pp. 409-10. (HDL)

Letter from James A. Cunningham - July 18, 1866
New York, July 18, 1866.

President B. [Brigham] Young, Junior.

Dear Brother,--Having had little unoccupied time since my release till now, I embrace the present to give a brief account of my labors in the British Mission.

I was called at the April Conference, 1863, to fill a mission to Europe.

On the 16th of the same month I bid farewell to kindred and friends, and in company with others left for the States. After visiting a short time with my friends there, I left New York, on board the "Great Eastern," in company with Elders C. Kimball, M. Lyon, S. L. Sprague, and the late F. C. Free, for Liverpool, at which place we arrived on the 18th of June. Shortly after my arrival I received from President G. [George] Q. Cannon an appointment to labor in Newcastle-on-Tyne District, under the direction of Elder M. F. Farnsworth, where I labored until the new year, when, by the council held at Birmingham Jan., 1864, I was appointed to labor in the Bedfordshire Conference, under the direction of Elder D. Gibson, where I labored for nearly a year; and, [p.509] until appointed by President D. H. Wells and yourself to labor in the Glasgow Conference, under the direction of Elder J. V. Hood, in which place I continued my ministrations from the 2nd of Nov. 1864, until the sitting of the Birmingham Council in Jan. 1866. At this council I was released to return home; but, until the time of emigration, appointed to the presidency of the Hull Conference. In this conference I continued my labors to advance the cause of Zion till near the time of the sailing of the ship American Congress, on which vessel I sailed with the Saints from London, discharging the duties of passenger steward, according to appointment by yourself. I passed the government officers here as one of the ship's crew. In all the positions I have been called to labor, I have endeavored to do my duty faithfully, and I have enjoyed myself in my labors; for God has aided me by his Holy Spirit, for which I feel to praise him. I feel thankful to the Saints among whom I have labored, who have kindly administered to my wants, and I pray God to bless and prosper all who in any way administer to the necessities of his Saints. The experience I have gained while laboring in the ministry I feel to be more valuable than gold. I desire to be grateful to God for all his kindnesses to me. . . .

. . . I leave here in a day or two for the frontiers. I close praying God to bless you and all laboring with you in the British Mission.--Your brother in Christ,

James A. Cunningham [p.510]

BIB: Cunningham, James A. [Letter], Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 28:32 (August 11, 1886) pp. 509-10. (HDL)

Reminiscences and Diary of Charles Denney

. . . I left London, or rather home, No. 32 City Garden Rose, City Road, London, about 4 p.m. May 23, 1866 and went down to the London docks, and went on board the American [p.11] Congress, a very fine sailing vessel. I was seasick for about 3 weeks straight ahead. I really thought that I was going to die but about three weeks after we started Brother John Nicholson, one of the presidents of the vessel, gave me about a tablespoon full of brandy& I began to mend from that time.

I helped to serve out the provisions on board the ship. We used to have some good times on board, singing, dancing &c. We had pretty good weather, very little storms, and a generally prosperous voyage, landing in New York on July 4, 1866, rather the 5th. I had

my bunk on the 2nd deck. On board I got acquainted with a number of boys, one whose names was Robert Pike who was drowned soon after leaving New York as he was passing from the steamer to the shore. He was much respected by all on board. His body was found about two days after the Saints left the New Haven steamboat station where he was drowned.

Left New York on the afternoon of the 5th and arrived at New Haven steamboat station by the next morning. Stayed there all day. [p.12] In the afternoon we took the cars for St. Joseph, Missouri which occupied about 6 days. We arrived at St. Joseph early in the morning and were to leave about 7 or 8 o'clock upon one of the river steamers for Wyoming, Nebraska. While the men were unloading the luggage from the cars to the steamer, Brother Riter & myself went into the town to buy some provisions for those who had none to last them two days on the boat, the length of time the steamer took to travel from St. Joseph to Wyoming. And while we were gone they had finished loading the luggage and while we were returning to the boat we heard the steamboat whistle, and when we came in sight of the landing, saw the steamer about half a mile on her journey up the river & we were left behind. We made the best we could of it, & went back to where we had bought the forty loaves of bread and got them to take them back and spent the most of the day there. We found that the folks that kept the store were apostates. They had been to Utah and had gone back dissatisfied.

While in St. Joe, [as] it is called, I visited one of their meetinghouses with a young boy who went to act as deacon & clean up the [p.13] house. It was in this place where I first tasted gum, the boy giving me a piece. 6 p.m. the 2nd day, visited the marketplace & bought some mutton & potatoes which the storekeeper where we bought the bread kindly cooked for me to take with us on the boat.

The first night after arriving in St. Joseph I slept in a wagon box on some hay. The next night we went and slept on the steamboat so that we would not be left behind again, and on the second day after, in the afternoon, we reached Wyoming where I found my luggage, a box, and a sack which contained all that I possessed in this world consisting of some clothing, a few tools, &c. I stayed in Wyoming that night, & the next afternoon started on the journey across those long, dreary, desolate plains about a thousand miles to our destination. I was in one respect more fortunate than many others, some of them having to stay in Wyoming 5 or 6 weeks. On the next day after my arrival in Wyoming, one of the brethren asked me if I would not like to go on. I told him yes, & he told me to get my luggage and get into a wagon that was just ready to start, and, after they had taken [p.14] away my box from me, as being too heavy to take along, and putting all my things into my sack, I started on my journey with about 500 others in about 60 wagons, across the plains The captain of the company [was] Brother Halliday . . . [p.15]

. . . It was on the night of the 25th of September, 1866, that we made our last camp out. Early next morning we were up and doing. This place I think, must have been what is called Hardy's Station. The most of us boys put on some of our Sunday meeting clothes and started to walk to the city ahead of the train, but it seems a tremendous long walk, in Parley's Canyon we met several parties who had come to meet their friends & relatives, but I thought I had no one to meet me, so I journeyed long, till I came to the mouth of the Canyon. I shall never forget my feelings as I looked upon the city of Salt Lake from the bench at the mouth of Parley's Canyon, it seemed beautiful to me. . . . [p.24]

BIB: Denney, Charles. Reminiscences and diary (Ms 1820), pp. 11-15, 24. (HDA)

Letter from John Nicholson - May 26, 1866
Ship American Congress, May 26, 1866.
President B. [Brigham] Young, Junior.

Dear Brother, - By the kindness of the pilot, we are enabled to send you a few lines to inform you of our proceedings since you left us on Wednesday the 23rd instant. On the evening of the same day we held meeting, at which suitable instructions were given by Elders N. H. Felt and J. [John] Nicholson.

On the 24th, we were only able to reach Gravesend, during which time we organized the ship company into seven wards, and placed a president over each as follows: - 1st, G. E. [p.365] Grove; 2nd, W. [William] Smith; 3rd, W. [William] B. Childs [Child]; 4th, A. [Adam] McGill; 5th, J. [John] Grier; 6th, G. Campbell, and 7th, W. Pinney.

On the 25th, we were prevented from proceeding further than Sheerness, on account of a strong head wind. The wind being more favorable, we again resumed our journey at 4 a.m. this morning, and are now, 4 p.m., under full sail. Two-thirds of the people are seasick; but we are happy to inform you that, with this exception, a more joyous, happy, and united band of Saints, it has never been our experience to associate with. All are willing to receive the instructions and counsels of those placed over them, the best of feeling prevails on board, every one appears satisfied, and discontent is unknown in our happy company. Thus far we have realized the promises made to us by yourself. You probably remember that several were very unwell when they came on board, among whom was Brother John Smith, who was obliged to be conveyed in a cab, also Sister Wakefield, whom, we are happy to say, have wonderfully improved.

Continuing in the course we have pursued up to the present, our united faith is, that every blessing you promised will be enjoyed by us, that our Heavenly Father will bless us, heaven will smile upon us, that we shall enjoy much of the Spirit of God, and be favored with a prosperous journey.

We ourselves are at present quite free from seasickness.

The captain and officers are very kind and obliging, and seem very willing to do all they can for the comfort and well-being of the people.

With love to yourself and the brethren in the office, and fervent desire for your happiness, we remain, dear brother, yours in the gospel,

John Nicholson, president,

J. K. Whitney,

John Rider, counselors,

Joseph Andrews, clerk.

P.S.--Sunday, 27th, 1 p.m.--The pilot not having yet left, we hasten to inform you that, the weather being fine, at 10 a.m. we all assembled together on the upper deck, and enjoyed a most excellent meeting, the Spirit of the Lord being copiously poured out upon us. The countenances of all present seemed to beam with joy and gladness. Addresses were delivered by Elders [John] Nicholson and [John] Rider, which were listened to, with apparent interest and attention, by the captain and saloon passengers, as well as by the Saints. We propose holding another meeting at 2 o'clock.

We are happy to inform you that we have already been commended for our cleanliness and good order by the captain. Peace and union prevail. We all feel well, with the exception of those who are seasick, and anticipate some glorious times together. [p.366]
BIB: Nicholson, John, et. al., [Letter] Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 28:23 (June 9, 1866) pp. 365-66. (HDL)

Letter from John Nicholson - July 4, 1866
Ship American Congress, July 4, 1866.
President Brigham Young, Junior.

Dear Brother,--You will doubtless be glad to learn that the ship American Congress took a very prominent part in the celebration of the great day of National Independence of America, by bringing her precious freight in safety to the harbor of New York. In our last communication (from the Isle of Wight), we stated that our united faith was, that we would be much blessed of the Lord in journeying across the trackless deep, and it has been so. You promised us before starting, that if we would act in righteousness, the elders would have power to rebuke disease from the Saints. How truly has this promise been realized, for the power of God has been manifested among us, and numbers can testify to their being instantaneously blessed through our ministrations. Taking into consideration the number who were in a delicate state of health when they came on board, and the great number of children in the company, the general health of the people has been as good as could be expected. Thanks be to God, no disease of a contagious nature has made its appearance among us during the voyage, and we have crossed the Atlantic without losing one of our number by the "chill hand of death." We found our organization worked admirably, great praise being due to the presidents of the various wards, and the captains of guard, Brothers Samuel Roberts and Robert Snedon, for the creditable manner in which they performed their duties. Elder Cunningham, also, has labored assiduously as steward of the company. We had four concerts on board, three of which, the weather being suitable, were held on the upper deck, when songs, recitations, &c., of an excellent description, were given. The amount of musical and rhetorical talent displayed by the general company was surprising. These times of social enjoyment were not only appreciated by the Saints on board, but Captain Woodward, his wife, and the saloon passengers, were equally interested and delighted. In regard to Captain Woodward, we cannot speak too highly of his kind and gentlemanly conduct towards us; his willingness to make the voyage comfortable and agreeable, was truly refreshing to witness. We might sum it all up by saying, that were we necessitated to cross the ocean again, and should have the choice of a captain, Captain Woodward would be our choice. We enclose you a copy of a testimonial to him, which we propose publishing in the New York Herald. In assembling to worship God, we have experienced many happy times; the spirit of the Lord has been poured out upon us, causing our hearts to be filled with peace, and to be lifted up to him with thanksgiving. When the weather was sufficiently fine, the meetings were held on the upper deck. To us there was something truly grand, and calculated to fill the soul with peculiar, yet exquisite sensation, to witness the upturned, pleasant

countenances of the Saints, as their voices were raised in tuneful harmonious praise to the great Author of our being, with the heaven's broad canopy over head, and the expanse of deep blue water stretching out to the horizon all around.

We will probably leave here for the frontiers tomorrow evening.

Praying God to bless and prosper you, we remain your brethren in the gospel,

John Nicholson, president,

J. K. Whitney,

John Rider, counselors,

Joseph Andrews, clerk.

The following is the testimonial referred to in the foregoing letter;--

Ship American Congress, June 29, 1866.

Captain Woodward.

Dear Sir,--Having nearly reached the termination of our voyage across the Atlantic, and feeling unwilling to part with you without in some way expressing our grateful acknowledgment to yourself, for the solicitude you have manifested for our comfort, happiness, and well-being, during the [p.493] entire voyage, and for your kind and gentlemanly conduct toward all. We therefore take the liberty of returning you our sincere and heartfelt thanks; and we can assure you, that when in the future, in our reflections, the mind dwells upon the pleasant times we have spent on board the good ship American Congress, you yourself will ever be remembered by us with feelings of gratitude and esteem.

Whilst thanking yourself, we would not be unmindful of Messieurs Platford and Finessee, first and second officers, also the steward of the ship, for their kind and courteous behavior towards us as a company. We therefore take this opportunity of also thanking them through you.

With most fervent wishes for the future welfare, happiness, and prosperity of yourself and all belonging to you, we remain, with feelings of the most profound respect,

John Nicholson, president,

J. K. Whitney,

John Rider, counselors,

Joseph Andrews, clerk.

(Signed on behalf of the entire company). . . [p.494]

BIB: Nicholson, John et. al., [Letter] Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 28:31 (August 4, 1866) pp. 493-94. (HDL)

Journal Excerpt of John Ryder

“. . . In the year 1866, Elder Brigham Young, Jr., who was then president of what is called the European Mission of the church, appointed the writer of this article to take charge of a company of about five hundred Saints from Great Britain to the banks of the Missouri River in this country, on their way to Salt Lake City. The Saints did not cross the sea in fast-sailing steamships in those days. They traveled over the waters in slow-going sailing ships, depending for speed on favorable winds. At that time, six weeks was considered the average length of time for a voyage from England to New York.

We left the port of London on the 23rd of May, 1866, a very fine company of people, not a few of whom, I am pleased to say, are good, honorable members of the church, in Utah, today. I have in my mind especially now some of the boys who were with us. I have seen them grow up to manhood, and they are still faithful. . . . [p.M72]”

BIB: Ryder, John, [Journal Excerpt] IN The Families & Ancestry of William McDonald and Christine Wallace. p. M72. (FHL)

Diary of Joshua K. Whitney

Brother H. Luff & myself went to the Dundee Docks & met two of the Dundee Saints and assisted them on board of the American Congress.

Tuesday the 22. Fine day. Wrote letter to Brother McFarlane. Yesterday I was surprised at what I saw at the Highburgburns a place of amusement which was the most beautiful sight.

Wednesday the 23rd of May. The Saints was on board and the American Congress moved to another dock. This evening Brother [Brigham] Young Jr. in company with Brothers Felt, Hatch, [Charles] Penrose and others came on board and organized the company and had the regulations read before the Saints. After Brother Felt had made a short speech, & then Brother [Brigham] Young Jr. spoke a short time very encouraging to the Saints and bid them goodbye & told them if they would be faithful they should reach their destined port in safety. This evening Brother Felt came on board [at] 8 o'clock, held a meeting & spoke to the Saints [p.90] to [- -] the vessel for the first time.

Thursday the 24, Brothers Felt, [Charles] Penrose, T.B.W. Kimball & one or two others of the brethren stepped on board until near noon, until we got opposite to Gravesend, where we bid them goodbye & they went ashore. The boat has been being towed out by the steam packet. This evening thunderstorm, the wind was high, the Saints all seem happy. This evening convened a council meeting to organize the cooking & other things. I was was [SIC] mouth in dismissing by prayer, tonight administered [to] two persons with Brother [John] Nicholson.

Friday the 25 of May, fine day, moved on. I felt a little squeamish for the first time on this vessel. There was a heavy head wind all day which was the cause of the vessel casting anchor at 10 o'clock a.m. Laid by during the day.

Saturday the 26 of May at ½ 4 o'clock a.m. the anchor was hoisted and the vessel moved on a short time being towed by the steam packet, and [p.91] shortly left. Then the sails was hoisted, the wind being favorable. The vessel sailed on to a good speed & many was seasick during the day. The sea being a little rough, in fact, I have thrown up a little today for the first time. During the day Brothers [John] Nicholson, [John] Rider & myself was the authors of a letter sent to Brother [Brigham] Young Jr. stating the condition & good health of the Saints on board. This evening the Saints seem to feel quite cheerful having got over their sickness.

Sunday the 27th of May, I was up in good time. It was a fine morning. I have been seasick during the day. There was a meeting held on board at 9 a.m. Brother John Nicholson addressed all on board the first principles of the gospel. Brother Ralso [PROBABLY MEANING: Rider] added a few words at 2 p.m. The presidents of wards & all the Saints gathered together below for meeting, where the ward presidents of wards addressed the Saints at evening. There was meetings held in each ward [p.92] during the

day. There have been two- third of the Saints seasick. At bedtime they were all much recovered.

Monday the 28th of May, fine day. We moved very slow, as there was very little wind. The Saints all feel well, some are dancing & others are singing and the day passed off well.

Tuesday 29th, at 4 a.m. The pilot returned to London leaving us this side of the Island of White [Isle of Wight]. The wind is quite brisk today, but not much in our favor, it being a head wind. Notwithstanding all feel well.

Wednesday the 30th, fine day. All is moving on well. The vessel is sailing 5 miles a hour. Today I administer the ordinances to two of the brethren who has been unwell. This evening we had a high wind which caused the ship to pitch about; which was the cause of most of all the Saints to be seasick.

Thursday the 31 of May, fine wind in our favor. Sailed at the rate of 10 miles per hour. The Saints continued to be sick, that is many of them. I was [p.93] sick all day.

Friday the 1st of June, we had good wind which was in our favor. The Saints got a little over the sickness.

Saturday the 2nd of June, we still are moving on at the rate of 5 miles per hour. All the Saints seemed cheerful although they have hardly recovered from the storm that happened on Wednesday.

Sunday the 3rd of June. [-] calm still day. We have been making very little progress today. Two meeting was held today on deck, both in the morning & afternoon, where Brothers [John] Nicholson & [John] Rider addressed the Saints. The day was a cheerful one. All feeling tolerable well this evening. I administered to several of the Saints who was sick. Today I have felt very dizzy.

Monday the 4th of June. Fine day all day and very calm & still, there being no wind, as but little. We have been going very slow, & the Saints all seem in good spirits. Some are singing & others reading & [p.94] enjoying themselves different ways.

Tuesday the 5th of June. Had a good wind, some was seasick.

Wednesday the 6th, fair wind, a little stormy.

Thursday the 7th, had a rough sea & a head wind. Quite a number on board was seasick, myself not excepted.

Friday the 8, fine day, very still & calm sea. So much so that we have only been going about 2 miles per hour during the whole day. The Saints have been on deck during the day, that is the most of them. This evening I administered to Sister Rachel [Taylor] with Brother Nicholson who was quite sick.

Saturday the 9, very calm & still during the day. Made little progress.

Sunday the 10th, very rainy & wet all day. At half past 11 o'clock a.m. tended meeting between decks where I spoke a short time. All seemed to enjoy the meeting well. Also tended a meeting [p.95] in the afternoon in the same place where Brothers Rider and Nicholson, Anders addressed the Saints. The day was well spent. During the day we have been making very little progress, there being but very little wind. Today the captain of the vessel issued out some tracts to the Saints and also presented a few small testaments to the brethren.

Monday the 11th of June, fine still day. All seemed well and happy this afternoon. In company with Brothers Nicholson and Rider, administered to a couple of sick persons

between decks. We have been making about two or three miles per hour progress today, as the wind has been very low. Notwithstanding the slowness of the vessel all full happy. Tuesday the 12, the sea was rough which made the pans & kettles rattle from one side of the ship to the other. Quite a number was sick on board.

Wednesday the 13th of June, had a [p.96] good wind in our favor during the day. Sailing about 10 knots per hour the most of the day, some was a little seasick.

Thursday the 14th of June, fine day. Wind in our favor sailing from 10 to 5 miles per hour. During the day, the sea was quite rough & the kettles & pans played their own tunes from one side of the ship to the other. I have felt rather squeamish all day.

Friday the 15 of June, fine day. The sea is quite still some of the time. We have been going at the rate of two miles per hour during part of the day, & the latter part, the vessel made a little better progress making from 2 to 6.

Saturday the 16, fine day. We have been going from 2 to 4 miles per hour during the day. It has been very foggy today, as well as a few days back, as it generally is by the banks [p.97] of the Newfoundland. This afternoon there was a man come to us in a small boat fetching two large fish, something like 1 hundred weight a piece. The captain give him a bottle of whiskey & Brother Nicholson give him one of brandy in exchange for them which was very pleasing to him. This evening I administered to Brother John Smith who was very bad in his lungs.

Sunday the 17 of June, foggy, wet morning. In company with Brother Nicholson, administered to Sister [-] [POSSIBLY: Wakefield] who was ill. At 11 a.m. attended meeting which was held between decks of this vessel where, Brother Childs and Cambel [Campbell] & Grover & myself addressed the Saints. Had a good time, there being a good spirit, prevailing. In the afternoon at 3 p.m. [p.98] meeting convened at the same place where where [SIC] Brother [John] Nicholson occupied the time in addressing the Saints. Had a good time, meeting lasting one hour & a half, then dismissed. Prayer by Brother [POSSIBLY: Grier].

Monday the 18, fine day, but very little wind. We have only been sailing about 2 knots per hour during the day, take it all day through. The sea has been very still and calm all day. The Saints are all cheerful & are feeling tolerable well. Some are enjoying themselves at different games & singing on the deck.

Tuesday the 19, fine morning. The sea very calm, made very little progress during the day, the wind being still in the afternoon. At half past 5 had a concert on board where recitations & songs were given which seemed to please the captain & the [p.99] cabin passengers, & if the rain had not interfered it would have lasted longer. [One] thing I forgot to mention and that is the numerous school of porpoises that passed the vessel this morning which was a fine sight; in fact it was the first thing of the kind I ever seen. This evening in company with J. [John] Nicholson & Cunningham administered to Sister Young & R. [Robert] Cushon [Cushing] which was soon better.

Wednesday the 20th, a little rainy. Tolerable good wind. Some of the time sailing about 5 miles per hour.

Thursday the 21, fine day, but rough sea & a head wind. Some feel a little seasick. I have felt a little sick at times during the day.

Friday the 22nd, rough sea, rather a head wind the most of the day. The sick on board are improving and take it all together, all is doing well.

Saturday the 23rd of June, foggy day. The vessel from 5 to nine knots per hour during the day, although out of our course. This evening in company with Brothers Nicholson & Rider took my vessel tour around among the Saints, administering to those of them that was sick.

Sunday the 24th, a little damp this morning on deck. The sea was quite still and we have been moving on gently. [p.101] At 11 a.m. meeting convened between decks where we had a good time, Brother Rider addressing the Saints suitable for the occasion. The afternoon was particular fine. The Saints assembled on the upper deck and the captain and the cabin passengers all took seats on the quarter deck while Brother [Joseph] Andrews addressed them for a short time on the first principles of the gospel, followed by Brother [John] Nicholson. . . .He further continued on with the gospel and all give good attention. In fact, Captain Woodman is very favorable to us. Meeting dismissed at 5 p.m., benediction by myself. This evening before bed time administered to the sick with Brothers Nicholson & Rider as usual. During the day we have been going very slow.

Monday the 25, fine day, been going about 5 miles per hour during the day, but not in the right direction.

Tuesday the 26, fine day, had a head wind which made the ship rock considerable in the afternoon. About 3 p.m. the [-] concert was held on deck which went off well, there being a good number of recitations & a variety of songs given on the occasion. The captain and the cabin passengers give good attention & to wind up, the star spangled banner was given at the request of Captain Woodman & as it was started the stars and stripes was hoisted by the captain. Then to my astonishment captain and John Nicholson called for the American Congress to be sung, which was responded to by Brothers Rider, Andrews and Denney & after that there was three cheers by all hands for the American Congress.[p.102]

Wednesday the 27, a little stormy, & we are sailing a little out of our course. The sea is quite rough today. Two vessels to be seen at a distance which looked cheering. This afternoon a concert was got up by the young men in between decks, in the bow of the vessel, which lasted from 4 o'clock p.m. until 7 p.m. Many recitations and songs was given & among that number, Doctor Crop sang one, & to compliment him three cheers was given by the company for his song. This evening Brother Rider and myself took our usual tour around among the Saints. Between decks administered the ordinance to one of the sisters.

Thursday the 28, stormy morning. At 4 a.m., the sails was changed for another task which was not altogether in our favor. This afternoon at 4 o'clock had a favorable wind. If continues, will take us in New York in two days.[p.103] This evening it has been very rainy and wet during the night.

Friday the 29th of June, very rainy & wet morning, but the sea is rather calm, & we have made very little progress during the night. It has been a little unpleasant during the day. It has been raining all the time. At noon, took dinner with some of the Saints between decks. At times it has been very foggy. This evening took my usual tour among the Saints between decks in company with Brothers J.[John] Nicholson & [John] Rider administering the ordinance to some who was sick, & notwithstanding the closed quarters in which they're placed, they all feel well.

Saturday the 30th of June, wet foggy morning. Some of the day the vessel has been sailing 5 knots per hour. At 4 p.m. the fog began to clear off & the pilot come on board

which caused the hearts of the Saints to Rejoice as this was a certain proof that we was near the [p.104] Port of New York. This afternoon it has been extremely fine weather & all feel well. Being buoyed up with the thought of soon seeing New York, some are dancing others are singing and all seem light in their spirits.

Sunday the 1st of July, fine day. We are sailing about two miles per hour, & have been during the day. . . . Then the assembly was addressed by Brother [Joseph] Andrews and [Adam] McGill. Meeting dismissed, benediction by myself. At 3 p.m. meeting was held at the same place where Brother Nicholson addressed the assembly occupying the whole time meeting, dismissed benediction by myself. This evening took my usual tour among the Saints between decks.

Monday the 2nd of July, we are making very little progress.[p.105] I administered to three of the sisters who was ill. This afternoon at 3 p.m. Brother Nicholson and Doctor Crop had a short debate on the subject that is well-known to myself, but it did not last long as it was interrupted by 3 of our sisters who fainted on the deck, at the time they being in quite a weak state. This evening took my usual tour between decks visiting the Saints with the brethren.

Tuesday the 3rd, fine day, the sea was calm this afternoon. According to the request of Captain Woodard [Woodward], had a concert on deck where many recitations & songs was given & take it all together, it went off well which pleased the captain and the cabin passengers. In the evening I was in company [with] Brother Nicholson & the captain & a few others on the quarter deck enjoying ourselves in recitations & songs.[p.106]

According to the request of the captain I sung "John Brown Caught A Little Indian" which pleased them & made the ladies laugh. Today I have been delighted in seeing Long Island & plus places as we passed along.

Wednesday the 4th of July, arrived here opposite New York in the Hudson River early this morning which made the Saints feel well. Having accomplished their voyage in safety across the Atlantic. This afternoon the officer over the Saints was invited in the cabin by Captain Woodard [Woodward] out of respect to take a glass of champagne, which was accepted. He will be long remembered for his gentlemanly conduct to us as a company. This afternoon Brothers John N. [Nicholson] & [Joseph] Andrews, myself, [James A.] Cunningham, [John] Rider chartered a small boat, went ashore to [p.107] New York, which cost us 50 cents apiece but as it was the 4 month business was being done owing to this [UNCLEAR]. After walking around we returned to the American Congress. The trip costing us 7" shillings apiece. This evening has been very fine & the sight has been truly delightful as the fireworks has been plain to our view from the city of New York to our vessel.

Thursday the 5, fine day. The Saints have been very busy moving their things up on deck. This afternoon the government officers came on board and our goods was passed & not examined & were soon taken off by the steamer [-] & just as all hand was moving off three cheers was given for Captain Woodard [Woodward] & the ship American Congress. We was conveyed to the Castle Garden in New York where the passengers [p.108] were all required to have their names registered according to law. After this some of the Saints remained there as they had not means sufficient to pay their way any further. While some two hundred & twelve moved on in the Hudson River this evening just after the changing of our luggage from one packet to another in New York; Brother R.[Robert] Pike stepped overboard as it was dark. The person that saw him give no alarm until 10

minutes after & then it being too late nothing was done and he sank no more to be seen. It created a gloomy feeling among us as we thought much of the young man. We looked for him with a light but all in vain & soon was obliged to leave & was soon moving along in the Hudson River. We passed through many fine places & among them was the Canadas. Chicago [p.109] [is] where I was left in full charge over the Saints during the night in a old sheet as Brother Nicholson went up in town to lodge. That night Brother Denny & myself on one of the truck cars on the bare boards, rather than lay among the fleas on the floor. The next morning all started on by train except a few that was left but soon caught up again in a short time. We passed through or rather along side of Quincey and crossed the river called the Mississippi & traveled through Illinois & Missouri. Arrived at St. Joseph on Friday the 13th of July, all in good spirits at near 8 p.m., having only one death on the cars which was Sister Wakefield, who has been ill ever since she left London. I left the cars & went up in town [p.110] for provisions for the Saints that was very much in need. On my return to my astonishment the boat had left & the consequence was that I stayed there at Mr. [POSSIBLY: Wetheskien] apostate Mormon, who treated me well & made me welcome. Brother Denney and the two Brothers [Francis and William Sells] and [Charles] Denney [Jr.] was with me and Brother Rider stopped in another place. We Remained here until Sunday 15, morning at 5 o'clock, when we started off after traveling 200 miles. Arrived at Wyoming on Monday evening 16th. Found the company alright although they was sorry to have to leave me in the way they did. Found quite a number of acquaintance here.

Tuesday the 17, fine day here all day. Commenced to board with the brethren at H. [PROBABLY Shurtliff]. [p.111]

Wednesday the 18th of July, fine day here all day. Left in charge of the boarding house by Brother H. Surtliff [Shurtliff] in his absence.

Thursday the 19, fine day here all day. Sister Wakefield was internal who died at 3 a.m. She has been ill all the way from London. Today balanced up on journal.

Friday 20th, fine day, quite warm. During the day my time was occupied here among the Saints.

Saturday the 21, fine day. Assisted Brother G. Hill in the store during the day.

Sunday the 22, fine day. At evening the Saints convened together & was addressed by Brothers Bullock and Thomson & Rollins on their duty that was required of them on the plains.

Monday the 23rd, fine day. In company with Brother Nicholson all day. Drove a mule team to Nebraska [p.112] City, the distance of 7 miles to get a load of articles for the Church. I also bought myself a trunk which cost me \$10.50.

Tuesday the 24th, fine day. 50 wagons left here & started west some 7 miles under the charge of Brother Thomson.

Wednesday the 25th, fine day, here all day at the store house.

Thursday the 26th, went to Nebraska City, attended court.

Friday the 27th, attended another court-in-Nebraska City at 9 a.m., concerning the Church.

Saturday the 28th, I attended Brother Mousley who has been sick for some time.

Sunday the 29th, instant [UNCLEAR] fine day. Between 9 and 10 am. the steamboat "Denver" landed some 7 hundred Saints mostly from Denmark. Brother L. Hauge [Hague] was in charge. Brother Cunningham came with them from New York. [p.113]

BIB: Whitney, Joshua K. Diary (September 26, 1865 - July 29, 1866) (Special Collections & Manuscripts; Vault, Mss 76, box 7, fd. 8), pp.90-113. Harold B. Lee Library Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

“Saved by Providence” by John Nicholson

The elders of the Church often speak of the care shown by the Lord in preserving his Saints from harm. He has delivered them miraculously from accidents and death many times.

I will tell of a case which God exercised his power in behalf of a company of his people. The children who read the Instructor perhaps all know that hundreds and thousands of Saints gather to this country, from far-off nations, every year. Many ship loads of them have crossed the Atlantic Ocean - a voyage of nearly 3,000 miles. On the sea, many accidents occur whereby people lose their lives by drowning, through the sinking of ships in storms. But nothing of this kind has ever taken place with a ship load of Saints. The reason for this is, that God has promised to protect his elect who should gather from the four quarters of the earth in these latter days.

In the year 1866, Elder Brigham Young Jr., who was then president of what is called the European Mission of the Church, appointed the writer of this article to take charge of a company of about five hundred Saints from Great Britain to the banks of the Missouri River, in this country, on their way to Salt Lake City. The Saints did not cross the sea in fast sailing steamships in those days. They traveled over the waters in slow-going sailing ships, depending for speed on favorable winds. At that time six weeks was considered the average length of time for a voyage from England to New York.

We left port the port of London on the 23rd of May, 1866, a very fine company of people, not a few of whom, I am pleased to say, are good, honorable members of the Church, in Utah today. I have in my mind especially now some of the boys who were with us. I have seen them grow up to manhood, and they are still faithful.

When the American Congress, on which we sailed, was near the shores of Newfoundland a thick fog prevailed for several days, which prevented Captain Woodward from taking an observation, being unable to see the sun. He therefore could not tell exactly where we were.

About this time the captain and Brother John Rider, who now lives in Kanab, and who was one of my counselors in the presidency of the company, were conversing on the part of the ship called the quarter deck. I was standing some distance away from them.

Brother Rider happened to turn his face in the direction in which the ship was sailing. At that moment the fog lifted up from the surface of the sea, as if a vail or scroll had been raised. He saw clearly between the fog and the water for some distance ahead.

Suddenly he exclaimed, pointing forward, “Captain, what is that?”

Captain Woodward, who was tall, powerful and active, made no answer. It was no time for orders. He sprang to the wheelhouse with the agility of a tiger, and knocked the man at the helm “heels over head,” sending him sprawling upon the deck. At the same instant he grasped the wheel, turning it with the most surprising rapidity. Although his movements were so quick, he did not lose his presence of mind a moment. He was busy with his voice as well as his hands, for awhile he acted as I have described, he shouted, in clear, loud, piercing tones, the several orders directing all hands to “bout ship.” The

sailors sprang to their posts. They were active limbs and busy hands among the rigging. The good ship American Congress, swayed slowly around, and the moment of peril was past.

Had this action been delayed a few moments the vessel would have been among the breakers, upon the rock, dashed in pieces and probably not a soul of the nearly five hundred on board would have escaped a watery grave.

The rocks and breakers ahead, on the line of the vessels course, were what Brother Rider saw when the fog lifted. The captain asked us, as a special favor, not to say a word to the people about the danger with which the ship had been threatened. He being the commander of the vessel, we considered it right to respect his desire; besides, we thought his suggestion wise, as a knowledge of what had occurred would doubtless have caused an uneasy feeling among the passengers. The company were, therefore, not aware of the great danger they had escaped.

Elder Rider and myself thanked God for his goodness in so manifestly exercising his power in behalf of his Saints. The Lord fulfilled the promises made to us by his servants at the time we left England for the land of Zion. [p.19]

BIB: Nicholson, John, "Saved by Providence," in *Juvenile Instructor* 16:2 (15 January 1881) p.19. (HDL)

Account of John Wakefield, immigrating to America.

From the passenger list of the steamship Colorado,
Departure date: 14 Jul 1868

WAKEFIELD, John <1827> Colorado 1868
Age: 41 Origin: England Occ: Warehouseman
Note: BMR, p.27

Ship: Colorado

Date of Departure: 14 Jul 1868 Port of Departure: Liverpool, England

LDS Immigrants: 600 Church Leader: William B. Preston

Date of Arrival: 28 Jul 1868 Port of Arrival: New York, New York

Source(s): BMR, Book #1049, various pages; BMR, Book #1041, pp.21-44 (FHL #025,692); Customs #798 (FHL #175,655)

Voyage Notes:

"DEPARTURE. -- The steamship Colorado left this port for New York, on Tuesday, 14th instant, having on board a company of Saints numbering 600 souls. At 11 a.m. a meeting was called on deck, when President F. [Franklin] D. Richards addressed the Saints upon the great blessings conferred upon them by the Almighty, in delivering them from bondage and opening the way for their escape to Zion. They had long talked of the changes and difficulties which would attend their journey, and had been exhorted to

prepare for them by laying by a good stock of patience; they were now beginning to experience the realities of the journey, and had an opportunity to exercise their patience and all those good qualities which could be possessed by Saints of God. He exhorted them to cleanliness, order, forbearance, and obedience to proper authority. Said this was the last company of Saints for the season, and expressed his gratitude to God for the great deliverance which had been wrought out for so many of his people, this company swelling the number to about 3,170 souls. He then appointed Elder William B. Preston president of the company, and the returning missionaries on board his counsellors. This appointment was unanimously sustained by the vote of the people. Elder W. B. Preston made a few remarks, congratulating the Saints upon their present favorable position. Elder C. [Charles] W. Penrose dedicated the ship and its company to the service of God on this voyage, by prayer. Several hymns were sung, many cheers were given, and all on board seemed filled with joy and gratitude. The following named returning missionaries took passage on the Colorado: -- Elders William B. Preston, Aurelius Miner, Griffith Roberts, Moses Thatcher, Richard Benson, Barry Wride, John D. Rees, and John Barker. About 4 p.m. the noble vessel steamed out to sea, the sun shining brightly, the sky without a cloud, and no sadness appearing on a single countenance, except of those who returned to shore after bidding their friends farewell. By letters from Queenstown, dated 15th July, we learn that all on board were well, the sea was as calm as a mirror, and no one had experienced any symptoms of seasickness."
<MS, 30:30 (July 25, 1868), p.473>

"Tues. 14. [July 1868] -- The steamship Colorado sailed from Liverpool, England, with 600 Saints, under the direction of William B. Preston. It arrived at New York, July 28th, and the company reached Benton, Aug. 7th."
<CC, p.78>

GENEALOGY HOME PAGE WOOD FAMILY HOME PAGE CONTACT HOWARD