

The Price of Freedom

A Young Quakers Voyage to Philadelphia.

7/27/1682

London

We are now at the point of no return. Everything we own and everything we will need in the new world has been loaded onto our ship, the "Welcome." Everything is behind us, and everything is before us.

It was my Grande mama who asked me to keep this journal of our voyage. We have been living with she and Grande Pappa while father sold our home, his business and anything we will not take with us, including Ashes my beautiful little dog.

7/30/1682

London

Living with Grande Mama and Papa has been difficult for my parents as my grandparents believe Father is being foolish by taking us to the new world to "tame a forest and live with savages." They believe that Jesus will return and become the King of England. I don't care what they believe they don't seem to understand we are leaving forever and I wish it was a more peaceful departure. I love my Grand Mama, and Papa and I will miss them with all my heart. I cannot imagine my life without them and I know they will feel pain as they grieve for us; we are the reason they have been happy.

8/30/1862

London

On the average night I would be sleeping and not writing in my Journal but tomorrow is our day of departure and I do not think I will sleep at all. My mind spins because I have shed many tears with the friends I will leave behind and at the same time I share in the sense of excitement with my friends who will come with us. Almost all of us are from Sussex, and most of us go to the same Meeting and School.

8/31/1682 –

Day 1

This morning the Commander gave the order for, “all aboard and then “Caste Off” “which to me meant all that we love, including Ashes, Grande Mama and Papa. Caste off our old life. All that we own and all that we will need for our new life, including a barrel full of nails we will use as money, in Philadelphia is on this ship. Father, my brother George and I will sleep on the top deck. Mother, Josiah, and Mary, will sleep on a straw mat on the floor below deck.

9/6/1682

Day 7

Progress has been very slow, there are times that we don't move at all. We have been on board for two weeks and we can still see England in the distance. When we set our sails, we were joined by two other ships in Mr. Penn's fleet The, "Hester and Hannah," and the "Society." I had thought we would travel together as some of my friends are on those ships. Sadly, as I write today, we have lost sight of the rest of them.

9/8/1682

Day 9

I had a dream that I would see England slowly fade out of sight and I would remember that moment forever. When the wind finally blessed us, we lost sight of land after dark. When I awoke the birds were gone and there was nothing to be seen but the ocean, miles and miles of ocean. I had missed my last opportunity to say goodbye.

9/12/1682

Day 13

Finally, the wind is with us, we have been at sea for just two weeks and there is not an inch of this ship that I have not explored, a passenger or crewmember I have not met or a book I have not read. The only entertainment is when the crew decides to sing. Even the adults who usually shun such things as music welcome the break in the monotony. This ship is just not large enough for its one hundred and eighteen passengers and a crew of thirty-six. That is enough souls to fill two ships. According to our commander this floating prison is only one hundred twenty-eight feet long, twenty-four feet wide and

weighs 300 tons. I am told a voyage can take anywhere from forty-nine to one hundred and twenty-eight days I don't know how I will do it, but I must for my family, I must.

9/20/82

Day 21

Several of the passengers have become ill with "Ship Fever" sometimes called small pox. One of these is my sister Mary who is only four years old another is my brother Josiah who is only six. My mother is below deck caring for the them and I fear she will become ill as well. Some ships lose as many as half their passengers to the fever. I will pray for them as long as I can tonight, and every night until I am in their presence once again.

9/25/1682

Day 26

Brother George and I are no longer permitted to go below decks to visit with our mother, brother and sister, news of their sickness is brought to us I by my fathers' faithful servant, Mr. John Ottey who is not a member of the Society but is a very kind man. Many lifeless bodies are being removed from below decks and hastily, almost without any last words are tossed overboard. I have witnessed several draped in white cloth that appear to be children of the same age and size as Josiah and little Mary but I have seen none. George and I spend much of our time in worship. Father, grieving over the loss of many Friends, especially his close Friend William Wade, now spends more and more time in Mr. Penn's cabin making plans for the

new colony. George and I spend much of that time alone, pacing the deck of the ship, reading and in prayer.

9/27/1682

Day 28

Mr. Ottey came from below deck to tell us the news. Before he spoke a word, I could see in his tear-filled eyes what the news was to be, Mother, Josiah and precious little Mary all passed within minutes of each other. Precious little Mary died in our mother's arms, Josiah shortly later and finally my dear mother. I will never know if they suffered or died peacefully. When I asked Mr. Ottey he just turned away and would not answer. A few minutes later, My Ottey came up from below carrying first little Mary, then Josiah and finally my mother. Each of their bodies which were draped in blankets that reminded me of home. He would hand the bodies to my father who shook slightly as he gently held them over the side and dropped them into the sea. In the end thirty-one passengers died. As I write these words; God forgive me but I hate this journey, I hate Mr. William Penn and I hate my father's decision to bring us to this. George feels the same.

9/28/1682

Day 29

With Mr. William Wade now diseased, his servant, Mr. James Portiff was now serving Mr. William Penn. This morning he came and told George and I that Mr. Penn wanted to meet with us in his cabin and he was to escort us there.

We were very nervous but were put at ease As Mr. William Penn met us in his doorway and put his hand on George and my shoulders while warmly welcoming us into his cabin.

Entering Mr. William Penn's cabin was like stepping into another world. Unlike where George and I sleep on deck, the cabin was warm elegantly decorated and smelled of food. George and I were humbled when Mr. William Penn settled into a silence that seemed to last forever. When he finally spoke, he looked at George and I directly with very kind eyes and told us that our Father as a Quaker minister was very important to the success of what he called his, "Holy Experiment" and we should understand why he spends so much time away from us. He said the loneliness we feel is our gift to the new world. He said the with our dear mother gone from this life we needed to love God and become men before our time. He told us that in the future our lives should be spent honoring her and the gift of life she has given us. He then took both of our hands and we spent the next few minutes standing with heads bowed in silence. Strangely when we did, I felt the presence of my dear mother. May God rest her soul.

10/6/1682

Day 37

Very suddenly this morning the wind from the north began to blow cold, winter is on its way and we still have miles to go. Luck is with us however as the ship has noticeably increased its speed. I will pray that the wind continues and delivers us soon. The food has become infested with bugs, the biscuits have gotten too hard to eat, the cheese is moldy, the butter is rancid and even the beer which is the only thing you can drink that will not make you ill, has gone sour. George and I are wearing the same clothes that we wore when we departed England and we

have not had a bath in six weeks. I don't know how we will endure.

10/15/1682

Day 46

The day began as a beautiful Autumn day but by midafternoon the sky had darkened. Just before dark the seas began to swell and the waves were washing over the deck. Our situation was quickly becoming dangerous. Brother George had begun to cry from fear. We had no time to comfort him. All we could do is tie him to the ship and pray he would not be drowned.

The captain ordered that the ship be lightened and I stood with father as all of our possessions including the nails, were joined with Mother, Josiah, and little Mary at the bottom of this endless sea.

10/20/1682

Day 51

The wind we had with us has now become a breeze and there are still miles to go. Brother George and I argue with each other constantly. Without Mother to control us I fear that we will arrive in America, no longer friends.

10/25/1682

Day 56

This morning, as George and I lay beneath our well-worn canvas, I sensed something strange in the air. As I awoke, I realized that I was smelling the sweet smells of land. I woke up George and we saw sea gulls flying in the air. My eyes have

never seen a more beautiful site. We started running up and down the deck waking everyone and yelling, "land, Land there is land!" We were to arrive in America just as I was certain I couldn't bear another day aboard this ship. The new world, my new world, was in sight. When we saw our father, he embraced us both for the longest time. I shall tell no one but I saw him shed a tear. Our Journey, or rather our ordeal was coming to an end.

10/26/1682

Day 57

This morning Mr. Penn approached George and I and said he wanted to discuss the work he and father had been doing. He said they had produced what they call a "Frame of Government." He said in this government everyone would enjoy religious freedom, and every man would have a say in the government even if he didn't own any land. George who was still grieving over losing our mother said loudly, and with some impertinence said, "we have lost our mother, brother, sister and all of our possessions following your promises how can you make such a promise?"

He answered by saying that he could because it was not his promise alone, it was the promise of the new world. He looked us square in the eye and could see we were respectfully skeptical and then, after a thoughtful moment he smiled broadly and said, "let us see what love can do."

8/4/1699

Fitwatertown, Pa

At my father's memorial service My grandson found this dusty old diary among my things. I thought I would make a final entry.

Two years after we arrived in Philadelphia my father remarried, she left him almost immediately because he never stopped loving my mother. Soon after that he discovered limestone on our property. Prior to his discovery, bricks for building homes were all imported from England. It is said that the bricks that built the Independence Hall included lime from his quarry. He was so successful that William Penn ordered a road to be built between his lime mine and the city port. He also built several limekilns and the road was called, "The Limekiln Pike." He also built a tavern and a hotel. My father died on the fourth day of the eighth month in sixteen ninety-nine.

He was a great man.

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