Transcription of:

**HT 16197, Letter - George Allen, Melbourne, 1853-1854 (MIGRATION), Document, Registered**

By: Marita Dyson, History & Technology Department

Date: 20th December 2010

Transcriber notes:

* Underlining and punctuation as per original document
* Where text is difficult to read, alternative possible readings bracketed in italics.
* When unsure of text (?) added after transcribed word.

“No 1

Thursday Decm 1. 1853 (in margin)

Got up in Creed Lane at ½ past five loaded my luggage in a Costermongers cart with a shocking bad “hos”. Got through a great deal of Mud and went to the West India Docks, found I could not get my baggage admitted til nine OClock, after much Ceremony and going to three different Offices for Bills of loading and receipts, got the Bulls and Cow shipped very easily – consi-(*line break*)dering the Disadvantages and Immense Muddle, and jumble, Brother William, and John Burch, and William Clifford, came to see me on board, We reached Gravesend in the afternoon, after doing the best I could for the Beasts – I went ashore in the Evening had tea at a Coffee House, afterwards wrote several letters to some dear old friends, and posted ten in all that Evening, had a little Brandy and water, and returned to the ship in a Boat about nine OClock, groped my way to my Berth put my hand accidentally on some ones ‘nob’ in the next crib causing a loud Expression of a particular Character, righted myself again and after a great deal of cramming, jamming, exclaiming, and squeezing, got into my Berth and went sound to sleep.

Friday 2nd (in margin)

Arose at seven had great Difficulty in getting the hay for my Beasts and much more in getting water, after making sundry Enquiries and getting some surly and all indifferent answers, I at last had to dive down into the most extraordinary places in the hold of the ship, and had to bring up the water by dirt(*?)* of the greatest Exertions; Hailed a Boat to Gravesend and rushed to the post Office to get a letter from Mrs Bingley to say whether sister Betsy was coming to take a farewell look at me, was severely disappointed at not finding one – went into a Barbers Shop and got shaved and washed a little of the Dirt off, so prevalent aboard Ship in wet weather, ran with all speed to the Railway booked for London – went into a shop on Ludgate Hill (*continued*)

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And bought a clean Collar and put it on in the shop, went immediately to Creed Lane, and got some Breakfast, took farewell of William, Kate, and Eliza, which made me feel a particularly disagreeable sensation in the throat, went immediately to Mr. McCleod (?) Alports *Glos(?) (or Bros?)* Office to meet Mr Philpots by appointment waited ½ and hour did not come, hurried back to Gravesend in the hope of seeing Betsy and Mr Kennett, was stepping into a Boat when they hailed me out of a window at the Falcon Inn, had a Chop with them and enjoyed them very much, saw them to the Rail and felt something of the same sensation in the throat, went back to the Ship and commenced arranging my Berth. When hearing an enquiry for Geo. Allen looked up and saw Cousin Walter who waited til I had done my stirring work, then went and dined with him at the Falcon Inn, and really felt exceedingly happy. Went to the Railway with him, and then returned to the ship bringing with me some very handsome presents – a gold watch and telescope from Walter, a splendid pocket Knife and pencil case from Cousin Sally, and a few small Books from Aunt, unfortunately commenced winding up the Gold watch the wrong way and broke it, felt as wretched as possible for fear I could not get it repaired as we expected to sail every Minute however the fog continues –

Saturday 3rd (in margin)

Went ashore next Morning and got to a Mr Boorman a Watchmaker singularly enough Brother to Mr Boorman of Canterbury who repaired the watch without much trouble, I was of course delighted and shipped myself again comparatively happy wrote three or four more letters and fed my Beasts they poor Devils having much discomfort on board as well as myself ---- *(long dash).*

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Sunday Dec 4th (in margin)

Expecting to sail every minute – put off again, went ashore in the Evening to get an Iron pail for the Beasts and a few other things I found wanting – began to make some acquaintance with my shipmates – found we had altogether in our Mess a very decent lot of people excepting three or four Children and Babies who were particularly Musical –

Monday 5th (in margin)

Sailed from Gravesend had an excellent Passage down Channel and went on very smoothly til we got into the Bay of Biscay, when the good old Essex began tossing, and rolling in a most unseemly manner – went to Bed with everything capering about the cabin in the most disagreeable Manner, tin pans – pots, and pans, hat Boxes, and Articles of every Discription (sic). chasing each other the whole night, about ½ past six in the morning made an attempt to sit up in the Berth – Knocked my head rascally bad against the Beam – about two inches above my nose, layed too again and rubbed my head , and recovered my temper – with great perseverance and sundry bumps got my legs at last dangling over the sides of my Berth, made a desperate Effort to get on the floor stepped on a tin pan, and recovering myself fell against the Cabin Door which opening much easier than necessary I went out a regular ‘Buster’, righted again and after several unsuccessful attemps (sic) succeeded in dressing myself and proceeded in a very unsatisfactory and Crab like manner, to perform my daily duties, great deal of sickness and all sorts of disagreeables, directly anything is placed on the Table it has the perverseness to roll off again, commenced breakfast – water very bad colour, and queer (*green?)* taste.

Tuesday 6th (in margin)

Gale still on, lasting several Days, Passengers looking as if they had been up all night smoking. Have three very decent fellows in my Berth (*continued)*

(*Page 4*)

Altogether about as big as Mrs Bingleys (sic) dressing Room over the front Door, Ship very leaky, water coming in our Berth right onto my Bed, and as water could make it half way up, Our Cabin swimming with Water, and sundry things floating and chasing each other up and down the whole Night, Wet and blowing for Days, Continually baling the water out of the Cabin, Carried on Deck altogether near 200 Buckets of Water out of our little hole – felt particularly seedy and depressed in spirits both the seats of the Table of the Cabin being smashed(?), everything tumbling about your Ears, each in the most admired disorder having the greatest difficulty to Keep on your legs, and bruised from head to foot with bumps and thumps, and falls –

7. 8. 9. 10th (in margin)

Weather fair, made a first attempt at pastry in the shape of suet Dumplings, succeeded admirably looked most tempting, but to our utter disappointment and Disgust found they had been boiled in salt water and were quite uneatable, next day made a plain plumb pudding boiled in fresh water turned out stunning and quite established my Character as a Caterer, infact was by some of my palls considered a professed Cook in disguise, my Companions are in my Cabin Mr Lee and Mr Constable both been educated ~~at Cambridge~~ (sic) for the Church and Mr Toulmin (*Joulmin?)*a Master all apparently very highly connected but equally apparently very poor. Getting very tired of the Provisions Meat very salt and preserved soups & C. Not very palatable and everything very dirty frequently obliged to have recourse to a little artificial spirits so kindly provided by Brother William

Sunday 11 (in margin)

Very fine Day got my Beasts fed, had a good (continued)

(Page 5)

Wash and shave expected to have Divine Service on the Quarter deck but was disappointed, had boiled Pork and baked Plumb Pudding for Dinner, enjoyed a bottle of Sherry and a Smoke on the Forecastle with 7 or 8 of our party, and drank to our absent friends, in the Evening read the afternoon Service.

12. 13. 14th (in margin)

15.16. 17th (in margin)

Cabin dryer, still wet and dirty, had a bad Cold and Cough, Spirits quite as well as could be expected, after thinking of old friends and every night praying for their happiness, got my animal houses a little improved by the Ship’s Carpenter after the greatest importunity. Up at ½ past five every morning to get my Beasts cleaned out and fed, and watered, Ship very leaky, obliged to pump her three or four times per Day, first rate lot of Seamen.

Sunday 18th (in margin)

Beasts rather recovering health and appetite; one of the Bulls have become so tame as to eat or drink almost anything out of the Sailors hands. Morning miserably wet. Made a very large Plumb Pudding for Dinner, turned out very satisfactory had a glass or two of Sherry on deck with five or six of our Party all very agreeable – read the afternoon Service and one of the sermons Aunt Daniel sent me – ladies and Children still very poorly in our Cabin and occasionally shipping a sea that nearly washed us out of the place, smoked a pipe and then to bed at 11 O’Clock.

Monday 19th (in margin)

Saw the Island of Madeira about 20 Miles off just getting into North East Trade Winds. Water still dripping on my Bed, Ship much less leaky and Beast doing better –

20. 21. 22. 23rd (in margin)

Weather fine and pleasant no accident or incident occurring –

Saturday 24th (In margin)

Anticipating Christmas Day made a first *(continued)*

(Page 6)

Rate plumb pudding of Currants, Raisins Sugar, 4 eggs, 2 pints of Milk, ½ pint of Brandy, flour and candied peel, originally intended to keep myself isolated from the rest of passengers, but from strange fatallity (sic) find myself and Bulls general favourites on Deck.

25. (in margin)

Christmas Day had fresh Meat allowed for a treat 1½ tb each person we had a very good boiled Leg of Mutton and the pudding turned out first Rate, with a little Brandy and a glass of Sherry, drinking all absent friends, and prosperity to Old England – The Weather so warm that we were all stripped to our shirts, and some of the passengers slept on deck all night pittying (sic) the poor cold people in England.

26. 27. 28th (in margin)

29. 30th (in margin)

Imagine four great fellows in a space about as big as a good sized Chest of Tea with the weather hotter than you ever experienced, and then you can in some Measure realize our position. My companions are very quiet we have hardly had a person drunk on board.

31st (in margin)

In stepping down off the Forecastle had the Misfortune to drop the Meerchaum (sic) pipe William gave me, felt very sorry as it was a very nice one, In the evening made a bowl of punch in a pewter Basin and drank the Old Year out and the New Year in not forgetting all absent friends –

Jany 1st 1854 (in margin)

West Morning had no Service on the Quarter deck Bullocks suffering very much from heat and not having sufficient water and the hay turning out very bad

2. 3. 4. & 5th (in margin)

Sleeping of a Night without the least Bed clothing with the Cabin door open and the Hatchways all open with the Thermometer from 80 – 90.

6 & 7th. (in margin)

Getting very near the line, the beautiful Breezes preventing us from suffering so much from the hot left off all flannels and drawers, passing the line the sailors had a Gala afternoon shaving some of the apprentices (continued)

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And Crew but not allowed to interfere with any of the passengers, who almost all made them presents of Money on the occasion. The process of shaving is to blindfold a person then haul him up on the forecastle then lather him with tar and other vile compositions, then scrape him with a piece of Iron hoop and immediately throw him into a very large sail or tarpauling (sic) slung up and filled with water sufficient to drown 20 persons where of course they flounder about in great style there being a sailor dressed as a Bear to Keep them in and souse them well. You may judge of their appearance when they immerge from their Bath amidst roars of laughter.

8th (in margin)

Sunday a fine Day had Service on Deck –

9. 10. 11th (in margin)

Very Beautiful all hands pronouncing it one of the finest Voyages ever Known up to the Present Time but – the Winds, rather too light to make a very quick passage. The Evenings and Mornings so beautiful the Sun and Moon risings Splendid, In Latitude 26 South Longitude 3 or 4 West, about 3 or 4 days sail from the Cape of Good Hope where we expect to have the weather much colder.

15 & 16th (in margin)

Sighted a Vessell (sic) the Maid of Judd(?) from London to Sydney, Seven of the passengers came in a Boat to our ship and had a glass of wine and chat with the Skipper.

17 & 18th (in margin)

Weather very fine and Calm –

19th & 20th (in margin)

Getting into the Latitude of the Cape of Good Hope with a good Breeze.

21 & 22nd (in margin)

Sunday miserable wet Day weather getting very cold again no service put on flannell again –

23 & 24th (in margin)

Adverse Winds a great deal of tacking and ‘bouting Ship – one occasionally walking very much in the same position as a fly on the Ceiling as the Vessell sometimes lays quite down on one side and sometimes the other as the Skipper carries on so much sail – Beasts very healthy (continued)

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And well on the whole.

25. 26. 27. 28th (in margin)

Very boisterous Weather, got falls and Wettings

29th (in margin)

Sunday. Fine Day no Service.

30 & 31st

Very fine quite a Calm, Mr Dundas a Cuddy (?) Passenger shot two Albatros’s (sic) very large sea Birds and lowered a Boat to get aboard measuring about 10 feet from wing to wing.

Feb 1. 2 & 3rd (in margin)

A Lady in our Mess, Mrs. Tallett delivered of a very fine Boy – going on very favourably –

4 & 5th (in margin)

Sunday very windy blowing quite a hurricane and shipping large quantity of Water.

6th (in margin)

My Birthday Kept it in our Mess, bought a couple of fowls from the Steward and made a large Pie with some of the salt pork for supper with two pewter Bowls of Punch, made ourselves very happy for the Evening and thinking ~~and thinking you~~ would be drinking to my health at home and no Mistake.

7. 8. 9th (in margin)

10. 11. 12th (in margin)

Sunday very wet and Rough as several Sundays had been – wet weather is perfectly miserable on board ship, everything so dirty and uncomfortable

13th (in margin)

Blowing a Gale, whilst cleaning out my Bulls shipped a sea that almost washed me overboard and drenched me from head to foot.

14. 15. 16th (in margin)  
17. 18. 19th (in margin)

Sunday fine as well as several previous Days. No service as the weather being too cold, as the nearer we get to the south pole after crossing the Line, the colder the weather, being now in Latitude 43 South, Longitude 51 East. Very healthy and well, We discovered to our Dismay that one of the faces in our Cabin the greatest swell(?) and educated at Cambrisdge, was dreadfully Lousey, Bulls very healthy but light in flesh.

20. 21. 22. 23rd (in margin)

Going on well getting within about three weeks sail of Port Phillip in perfect health although our Cabin almost always flowing with water the old Essex proving very leaky – I should advise anyone intending to come out to come by a regular Passenger Ship as all they care any thing about here is the Cargo, and the Sailing of the Vessell, passengers are thought very little of

25th & 26th (in margin)

Sunday rather fine Day but very cold, and the Old Ship as leaky as possible, Mr Constable very ill had to perform the Character of Nurse and apply a Mustard poultice to his chest. No service in fact we have only had service three times during this whole Voyage – The Boatswain Killed a porpoise and hauled him on Deck. The Sailors eat the fry and part of the fish –

27. 28th (in margin)

Going very rapidly with good winds, very cold, had Pancakes for dinner made by Mr Brett one of our Mess very good –

March 1st (in margin)

Making great Progress within about ten Days sail of Port Phillip. Bulls all very well, very fine breeze, was invited by our Mess to supper in return for my Birthday Spread – had boiled Leg of Mutton, pie and plumb pudding all hot and very good – well washed down with plenty of good bottled Ale and Gin and Brandy Grog.

2 & 3rd (in margin)

Slack breeze weather much finer and pleasant having been so very cold lately – Bulls very well

4 & 5th (in margin)

Sunday fine Day good breeze –

6. 7. 8. 9th (in margin)

Blowing very hard sea running Mountains high, and shipping an immense lot of water in fact I am writing at two O’Clock in the Day in our Cabin by Candle Light as the Hatches are all battened down, we have been literally floating in water for Days and the present far exceeds all I have said before, about the wet in our Cabin and Berth(*added underneath*) I could not at present advise any one to come out except in the first Class and very young Persons as the *(continued)*

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Voyage on the whole is a most miserable affair of course very much aggravated by the exceeding leaky state of the Vessell, the rough weather has punished the Bulls and Cow very much, as they frequently stand up to their knees in water, and the weather so exceedingly rough that I can hardly stand on my feet to feed them last night our “Cross Jack Yard” and Mizen top were carried away, and this morning the forestay sail and Main sail were split to ribbons , such a scene as cannot be easily discribed (sic). Infrequently have to step into long Boots and waterproof Coat; If this is a specimen of Austra -(*line break)* lian weather, I think I shall not enjoy it very much as we are now off the Coast and within about five hundred Miles of Port Phillip –

10th (in margin)

Weather about the same,

“Land” Land” Land” Ahoy – Weather abated sighted Cape Otway Light House and continued in sight of Glorious Land and entered the Heads at Hobson’s bay. Finally casting anchor at about 3 O’Clock on Sunday the 12th March – making 92 Days from Land to Land and 102 Days from the Docks to Melbourne –

After the first exultation on our arrival I began to feel some anxiety about my reception, I immediately went on shore to find out Mr Philpot but was not so fortunate as to find, but luckily fell in with a friend of his who recommended me to an Hotel, where I passed very comfort able*(line below)* Night - next Morning I found Mr Wm Philpot who received me very Kindly and on tuesdaylanded the Bulls, and got them up to Glenferrie , Mr Dayonions(?) place Brother in Law to Mr Philpot, I was assisted by Mr John Startop and Mr Kettle both Kentish Men where I staid about a fortnight. Since then I have been up to Western Port with the Bulls and Cow, and staid about ten Days – I have lots of riding about after cattle – they are *(continued)*

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Very Wild up there, even the calves will rush at you. I assisted several times in the Operation of branding them It is very exciting Affair with such Cattle, the head man at Mr Lyall’s Station is a fierce Scotchman Mr Mitchell he behaved very hospitably to me through Mr Philpots Introduction – it is quite a wild sort of life –

I have returned to Glenferrie and yesterday the 15th April I saw Mr Collins for the first time, as he has been layed (sic) up with illness – and have got Commission from him instead of going to Mirrumbidger (sic) to go 160 miles up into the bush to draw out 2000 sheep out of 6000. and bring down to Melbourne Market – it is rather a respon-(*line break)* sible job as I have yet seen but very little of the sheep in the Colony they are very small compared with ours the best only averaging from 54 – 60 lbs. I hope please God I shall succeed in my first Essay, and find the sheep in good condition as I am to reject them if they are not of a certain quality – I start to morrow Easter Monday. I am now writing about Eleven OClock in the day which is about 1 OClock in Morning with you who are all I hope sound asleep in your happy Beds – I am afraid I shall not be back soon enough to write by the next mail which starts the 10th of May – I hope I shall soon hear from some of you how you all are and what little events have happened at home – I shall be about a month gone in this Journey and am to have £30. and horse found and all expenses paid if I get the sheep alright and satisfactory, Mr Collins is a very large Cattle and Sheep dealer and well known to the Philpots. I send this packet by the Ship’s Butcher who behaved very civilly to me and assisted me during the passage out – I hope this will find you all well and as happy as you can wish – I am *(continued)*

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I am in excellent health and spirits since I have got my Billet – with my Kind Love and Remembrance to all friends – believe me ever your affectionate Brother

Geo Allen

To (in margin) Mr W Allen & Family & Friends at home

Easter Sunday 16th April 1854

Glenferrie, Gardiners

Creek Road

Melbourne

Victoria”