Recollections of Past Days

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[N]ow I will say My father and myself arived at Liverpool on December the 9th [1855] staid and visited with my sister and husband until the 12th and in the evening we went on the ^old^ ship John J. Bayed¹ bound for New York after we had got all our bagage on board we found the ship would not Sail until the next day so I said to my father and Mother that I would go back and stay all night with my sister² as we left my sister Tamar to stay with My Sister Zilpha to help her to get ready to leave in July in the afternoon I left them to go down to the ship again and when I got there low and behold to my great suprise the ship was in readiness to start out the Men was just taking away the last plank . there was all my folks standing on deck watching anxiously for me and shouting to the top of there voice for the Lord³ sake bring My girl on the ship and dont leave her behind there was just the one plank to walk on from the dock to the Ship and father and Mother was so afrid I would fall of into the water the sailors said Miss do you think you can walk this plank I told them I thought I could but thay thought I may get dizey and fall of into the water so thay was very kind one man went on the plank before me and took my right hand the second Man cam and toak My left hand thay said if I slept thay would save me from going in the the [sic] water I thank them and got on the plant with the assistance of those two brave sailors I got safe on the ship and fealt very thankfull to be with my father and Mother brothers and sisters² again my dear good father sais God bless you My dear girl we was all afraid you would be left behind we watched for your coming so anxiously . and when the men began to take away the planks Your Mother began to frett and said oh what will we do Patience has not come and the vesel is ready to start out to sea and we will have to leave her behind there was great anxiety with them all when thay see me walking an just one plank with two sailors holding my hand⁵ and there was great rejoicing when I was safe on the vesel with them all
We moved out a little way that evening. Never will forget the first night on the ship. There were five hundred Danish saints, three German, two Italean, and one French family. Two Scotch families and five English families. Charlse Savage had charge of the German and French saints as he could talk their language and Elder Canute Peterson was President over the whole company. He was a very kind and fatherly man so good and kind to all. We past a terrible night: not much sleep for any one that first night and we were ordered to go below. We could not get a berth the first night. So we had to lie down on the floor as best we could. I began to think we would smother to death before morning for there was not a breath of air. I made my bed on a large box. I had a big loaf of bread in a sack. This I used for my pillow to make sure of having bread for breakfast. This was not a very nice thing to do to sleep on my bread. But it was very little sleep I had but I rested my body for I had had a long walk before I got on the ship. I was very tired.

At twelve o'clock the guard came around to see us all with his lantern. I told him I was very glad to see him. He came with the light for we had been in darkness up to that time. He said how is it Miss you are not asleep? I asked him if he thought I could sleep in a place like this. I asked him if we would have no better accommodations than this all the way to New York. He said, don't feel bad tomorrow. We will be able to give you a berth up above and I will try and give you a place where you can get more fresh air than you will feel better. The guard said he was sorry for us but it would be better for us all in a few days. Old Br. & Sister Hailey quite an old couple. Made their bed down on the floor they had a beautiful feather bed and pillows all in white covers to keep clean all at once there came pouring down in their faces and all over their nice clean bed. Some dirty water. The old lady jumped up crying out to the guard: Lord have Mercy on us! I am going to be poisoned. Oh dear me what can we do in this dirty place? Have we got to stay down in this dirty place all through the voyage? We will all die before we get there and be buried in the sea. Poor old lady! I felt sorry for her and her poor old husband. The guard listened very attentively to her complaints and tried to console her by promising her that they should have a better place the next day. We were all glad when morning came so we could go on deck and breathe a little fresh air for we nearly all smothered not any of us felt like eating breakfast.

Our family consisted of father, Mother, Myself and three sisters, two brothers and My Br. John's Wife and two children. I will never forget that night of experience. I am glad to say we left that place in the morning and went on the deck above and we had a very good place. Our berths were about in the center of the deck just beneath the skylights and they were opened to give fresh air. My brother John had traveled on the sea many times. He it was that percieard to get us in this part of the ship on going...
On the John J. Boyd, December 1855–February 1856

On deck we was glad to meet President Franklin D. Richards. My brother-in-law and my sister Zilpha, his wife, had come in a small boat to bring us some nice things for Christmas as they said we would have to eat our Christmas dinner on board the ship and that they had brought us raisins and currants and sweet already chopped and everything to make our Christmas pudding and a sack of own-made bread, some cheese, butter, and many other good things as soon as President Richards had settled all his business with the captain of the vessel and brothers Peterson and Savage, and gave all instructions necessary and all good counsel and blessings to us all. They bid us goodbye to all of us, and commended to the care and protection of our heavenly Father praying that we may have a prosperous and safe voyage across the Mighty deep. Then my dear sister and husband bid us farewell and got into the boat. We all felt somewhat downcast in parting with each other, but we did not part thinking we would never see each other again. My sister and husband and child—dear little Flora, whose name she was—and my sister Tamar all expected to leave Liverpool about July to come to America and join us again which they did and we met on Iowa camping ground.

Now I will return again to the old ship and relate some things that happened on that old ship. We had a terrible severe voyage. Much sickness and many deaths numbering sixty-two in all. We were on the sea nearly eleven weeks after we had been out at sea two weeks. We had a bad storm. The anchor was all locked, we could not go on deck for anything. The sky lights were open, and the sea washed over the [undecipherable letter crossed out] deck and tons of water came down through the sky lights as it happened. We were all in our berths unable to get up. We were all sea sick. The whole family with the exception of my father and brother John and they were kept busy waiting on us. We were all sick for five weeks after the storm was over, which lasted nearly a week. The captain told the mate to come down and tell us that all that was able to come on deck he wanted them to come up for a time. My brother and father helped us girls to go on deck. They said we were all sick and it would do us good to have a little fresh air. We were all got so weak that we were not able to go without help. After we were on deck, the captain said if we would be good girls and keep very quiet and keep out of the way of the sailors we could stay on deck and see the men turn the vessel. He had sighted a ship in distress and they were going to their assistance. This was something none of us had ever witnessed before and we thought we would like to see the captain of our ship. He was a very rough cross man, but this was one kind act he did and this was once he spoke kindly to us, but he was a bad man to his sailors.

When everything was ready, he gave orders for the lifeboats to be lowered, and the ship's mate got into the boat and went to the vessel in distress. He found the vessel was all broken to pieces and several of the
men had been washed over board the ship was loaded with flour bound for Liverpool the Mate fetched in his boat the first time four poor Sick Men poor things they looked so poor and waurn out two Men had two ribs broaken and could Not do anythink thay went into the hospettal the Docter attinded to them the other two poor Men Said to the captain sir we feel to thank you God bless you for coming to help us . the brute of a captain sais to them god d— you go to work that is all I want of You get up that riging I don’t want to here no more of th your talk I thought oh what an unkind man he was to make thees poor men go to work at once without giving them anything to eat . the boat returned again with more men thay too had to go to work the third time the Captain of the vesell came with the last of his Men this Captain had his jaw broaken poor man he was averey averey [sic] different Man to the captain of our vesell so kind to his men he had lost his only son sixteen years old the first time he had ever been from home he said his boy beged So hard of his Mother to let him come with me and now this has happened . I have lost my boy my only child how can I go home to my wife without our boy poor man it was verey greivous to see and hear his greif : this was averey destressing sean at the Same time it was ablessing to us the Captain of our ship had not men enough to work our vesel he had ofton had to call on some of the breathren for help . and it was Said if thees Men had Not come to our assistance that we would never got to New York

[A]t one time the captain Said if we did not stop our d— preachen and praying we would never land in New York I told the Mate that was the only thing that Saved his vesell for he was such awicked drinking Man and neglected his duty it was awounder that he was sufferd to live

[O]ne night I was liing in my berth I saw some spark of fi re come down I watched and thay come again I called to Mother and told her that there was fi re coming down we got up but we did not see any More the guard came around as usul then we found the Captain was drunk and had kicked over his stove in his caben the Men smelling fi re went in and put out the fire it had alreadny burnt the floor and if the men had not went into his caben the Stove would soon fell through upon someone below in the morning the carpenters came to repare the burnt floor in this I acknowledged the protecting ^care^ of God our heavenly was over his children now we was on the Mighty deep in the hands of drunken captain who had command of the ship if it had not been for some of the men he would have been burnt to death in his own caben and probely the ^Ship^ would have been burnt and all with all on board in this our escape from such adeath I acknowledge the hand of God in preserving our lives .

[A]llthrough such along and hard journey crossing the sea in taking thees other men on board prooved to us another blessing there was
more help to work the vessel and we had a more pleasant journey after they came to us: but through those men coming on the ship we were became short of fresh water and we were only allowed one pint of fresh water a day and that was for drinking. We had to wash in salt water and cook our potatoes in salt water. I said well one good thing we will not have to use any salt to our potatoes and we are all willing to share our fresh water with those poor men that lost everything and have come to help us. I felt to bless those poor men.

We had a great deal of sickness on the vessel sixty two deaths in all it seemed a severe trial to have to bury our loved ones in the sea. My brother buried his little girl Zilpha. It did indeed seem very hard to roll her in a blanket and lay her in the big waves and see the little dear go floting away out of sight. There was one Danish brother and sister that two sons all the children they had both died and were buried in the sea. The eldest was eleven years old and the younger was nine. I think this was very severe trial for this poor brother and sister. They were faithful, good Latter-day Saints. They were well they people and had been the means of several poor families coming to Utah but the loss of their two only children seemed almost more than they could endure. I never saw them after we got to New York.

We had a very hard voyage crossing the sea but we had a very nice company of Saints. Good and kind was the Danish brothers and sisters and we enjoyed ourselves together although we could not talk their language. Neither could they talk the English language but we could make each other understand they would make up a dance as many of the Danish brethren had instruments with them and could play. Many good dance tunes and the Young Men would come and invite us English sisters to their dance and we would go and enjoy ourselves for hours together and Br. Peterson our President would always attend the dances. He was very kind fatherly man and very watchful over his flock and ever ready and willing to give kind and good advice to those under his care but the journey was so long and tedious that we all began to get tired and worn-out. It really seemed sometimes that we would never see land again.

One night when we had a bad storm we could not sleep as we had to hold on to the berth to keep from being thrown out. We was all in the dark. My poor Mother was fretting and thought we would all be lost and drowned in the sea. My father had fixed some curtains in front of our berth to make it more comfortable and private for we girls just when the ship was tossing and rolling the worst I opened my eyes. We was all in darkness: but in amoment the curtains opened and a beautiful lovely figure stood there. Oh such a lovely countenance I had never seen before in all my life and the light was so bright around him that I could see the color of his eyes and he had brown eyes and lovely brown hair and he
spake the words to me as I looked at him he sais fear not You shall be taken there all safe then he left and the curtens was again closed and I called to my dear father and Mother in the next berth I told them what I had seen and for them not to think that we would never get land again for I believe I had Seen the savior and that he told me not to fear that we should all be taken there safe and My father and Mother believed in what I said and we all felt encouraged and felt to rely on this promise that our ship would take us all through safe to New York

[N]ot very long after this one morn My brother John came to our berth and Said come girls get up and go on deck and See land we did not beleive him at first we told him that he only wanted to make us get up as he had been up to the galey and cooked breakfast for us and we told him we could not eat or drink anything as we was feeling Sick oh he said come on deck and You will feel better when you see land So after some persuaiding we dressed and went on deck and to our great Joy we surely could see land I will never forget the joyfull feeling and how thankfull I fealt to think that we had spent our last Night on the old ship John J. Boyed was the name of the poor old ship this was the last voiage she went I ran down stairs to tell father and Mother that surely land was in sight and to night we would land in New York this was joyfull news to them for we was all tiard of our long sea voiage allthough we had made some very good friends with many of our dainish breathren and Sesters and Brother Charles Savage he was such good cheerfull company he would sing to us so many of his good old Songs to try to pass the time as cheerfully as we could for he was geting tiard of . the long and tedious journey