

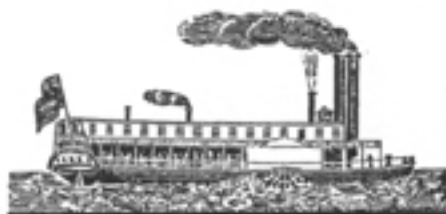
Journal
of
William Buxton



An Account of His Travels From
Nottingham, England to Carlisle, Iowa

November 7, 1853 to December 25, 1853

Buxton, William, *Diary, 1853-60*
Sayre (Mrs. Raymond or Ruth B.) Collection
Locker 21, Iowa State Historical Society
Iowa City, Iowa



William Buxton, a native of Derbyshire, England, migrated to the United States in 1851 at the age of twenty-one. He located in Carlisle, Iowa, and acquired a quarter section of land (160 acres). Two years later, his uncle in England died, leaving him \$2,000 in cash. He returned to England to claim his inheritance. On his trip back to the United States, he kept a daily account of his travel experiences. This journal is his record.

Buxton later married Betsy Bramhall. She had moved to Warren County, Iowa, with her parents. The Buxtons had five children, one son and four daughters. For seventeen years, they lived in a log cabin before building a frame house.

He farmed outside of Carlisle for forty years. In 1892, he moved to Indianola where he assumed management of the Warren County State Bank. He added to his farm land, owning 1400 acres at the time of his death. Simpson College received support from Buxton, with him giving it large sums of money and land. He died in Indianola in 1919, at the age of 89.

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- Mon. Left Nottinham early, on my return voyage to the land of the West
 Nov. 7 bidding adieu to the scene of many happy hours spent in the company of those who will ever retain a place in my best affections and thoughts.
- Tues. Went over to Didsbury where I spent the night and accompanied
 Nov. 8 by Mrs. Hobbs and Miss Lack returned to Manchester where after making several bargains I received the last well wishes of many friends I have learned to value as well as many other things with which old England abounds above all other lands.
- Tues. Tuesday arrived in Liverpool and took passage in the screw
 Nov. 8 steamship "City of Glasgow" for Philadelphia, Captain Whylic.
- Wed. Went on board the steamer then lying in the river which being all
 Nov. 9 tight started on her trip about half past one o'clock p.m. favored by the tide and a clear sky.
- Thurs. Steaming down channel with head wind run 160 mls. to 12 p.m.
 Nov. 10
- Fri. Irish coast in view head wind and clear sky pretty rough sea nearly
 Nov. 11 all sick, myself among (the) lot dreadfully sick and good for nothing vowed never to cross again except on my return. Course N.W. run 192.
- Sat. Feeling rather curious about after eating a good dinner was as fresh
 Nov. 12 and content as ever. Course West run 183.
- Wednesday midnight we had a most hairbreath escape of being run down by a large (vessel) in full sail which came so close as to carry away part of our rigging; a few feet nearer we should have met with certain destruction to many if not all of us, but as it is we are proceeding prosperously on the voyage and I hope thankful for our safety.
- Sun. Fine and pleasant service at 1/2 past ten conducted by the Captain
 Nov. 13 according to the Church of Scotland Course WNW run 210.
- Tues. Fine, getting quite jolly and friendly now on board spending the
 Nov. 15 day in reading and games at pub the evenings in concerts. Course NW run 199.
- Wed. With strong breeze which increased during the day and the sea
 Nov. 16 running pretty high knocking us about in all directions and causing no little inconvenience and a good many cases of sickness appeared again. Run 160 mls.

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- Thurs. All quiet again today very glad to see it so and now begin to relish
 Nov. 17 the meals which are served up as follows. breakfast at 8 & 9 dinner
 1 & 3 supper 6 & 7 o'clock provided on a very liberal scale C. West
 run 146 mls.
- Fri. Past a very rough night, the sea now running what is term'd
 Nov. 18 mountains high, the finest I have ever seen, hope it may not last
 long, too cold to be on deck. The ship Sam Barker to Liverpool
 running before the wind with main & top sails a beautiful sight as
 seen from our ship. Run 190 mls. This was the day fixed for the
 grand concert and dress ball on quarter deck (weather permitting)
 but that not being the case it is deferred sine die to our great
 disappointment. At dinner there was a perfect commotion among
 the cookery (ware), ducks fowls beef & soup all alive occasionally
 some unfortunate dish would come sliding majestically on the
 floor, and requiring some effort to keep one's seat at the table.
- Sat. Fine & pleasant but head wind C.N.W. Run 184 mls. Saw the first
 Nov. 19 porpoises this voyage.
- Sun. Dry and cold moderate & favorable wind as we are passed at 8 p.m.
 Nov. 20 a mail steamer which left W. Fork last Wednesday signals were
 given & returned rockets were first thrown up from our ship and
 answered by the same number from the other. The night was clear
 and the effect of the scene was very startling and pleasing - Run
 200 mls.
- Mon. Fine & pleasant & fair wind 12 p.m. run 209 mls. This evening we
 Nov. 21 had our celebrated concert commencing at 7½ o'clock embracing
 most of the celebrated places of (Music) both vocal and
 instrumental piano concertina and accordian. The Mid amused us
 with some very original singing, the old Batchelor. What are little
 girls made of & Father Stevens made an attempt but was sadly
 deficient in voice. Molly (Coover) was very amusing. After the
 concert the company adjourned to the quarter deck to witness the
 fireworks which were very imposing. Then came the dance,
 concluding with supper in saloon. Appropriate songs and toasts,
 altogether the evening was spent very pleasantly. The captain did
 everything to entertain the company and fully deserved the good
 name he has already.
- Tues. Fine and steady winds. run 233 mls.
 Nov. 22
- Wed. 12 p.m. Last night we had the first theatrical performance on
 Nov. 23 board the comic farce of Box & Box & Mrs. Bouncer the lodging
 housekeeper, Messrs. Mienty-Gibbons & Kendall were the
 performers the whole scene was very laughable and went off with

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great eclat. There was a concert going on at the same time in the forward cabin. We have had beautiful weather the last few days, time passed very pleasantly and not at all monotonous as is generally the case. Wed. run 200 mls.

Thurs. Still very calm & fine too vessels astern expect to be in Philadelphia
Nov. 24 by Saturday. Run 213 steam only.

Fri. Last night the wind got up blowing strong, the sea changing in a
Nov. 25 few hours from a perfect calm to the opposite extreme but settled down considerably this morning. passed a beautiful clipper built ship hoisted American colors. Looking out for pilot boat. Run 233 mls. Course W.S.W. 1/2 W. about 2 o'clock today we took on the pilot and in a few hours more the land appeared ahead Cape May on our right. The shore all along is low and sandy. Philadelphia lies about 100 miles up the Delaware a fine broad stream with a fine country on both sides. We anchored in the river at night and came along the pier about 1 o'clock Saturday making a passage of seventeen days 3275 miles.

Sat. Myself and four others took up our quarters at Bloodwood corner
Nov. 26 of Walnut St. Took a tour through the city, which is one of the finest in the States. Chestnut St. the principal thoroughfare contained some splendid buildings. Hotels and besides being the great promenade for the fashionable. I think the ladies of Philadelphia surpass anything I ever saw in any other city for beauty and dress.

Sun. Attended St. Stephens Episcopal Church the sermon more political
Nov. 27 than religious thorough whig. Left with a friend for New York by rail.

Mon. Arranging business matters, went to the Exhibition which quite
Nov. 28 met my anticipation there were a great many things worthy of attention and was only sorry I had not more time to examine its contents. The (statuary) was the most attractive and next the agricultural department returned to Philadelphia at night (per) Camden and Amboy.

Tues. Took ticket for Cincinnati via Baltimore and Ohio rail to Wheeling
Nov. 29 then a boat on the river. Left Phil. at 2 p.m. arriving at Wheeling 2½ p.m. Wednesday 490 miles. The railroad runs direct over the Alegany mountains almost impassable, winding round the hills and overlooking some precipices truly fearful and certain death in case of any mishap one journey is quite sufficient to satisfy any traveller especially when he knows that the works are anything but substantial.

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Wed. Left Wheeling at 4 p.m. by the Latrobe, should be in Cincinnati
 Nov. 30 early on Friday but am afraid I shall be disappointed. The river being low the regular packets run there are twice the number of passengers on board there ought to be one half without berths a western traveller has plenty of exercise for a good stock of patience as well as a little *smartness*.

Thurs. Going along at a snail gallop. The banks all along are high and steep
 Dec. 1 dotted over with many little towns. Just had dinner, a few scraps of all sorts, goes bad after having such good fare so long on board the "City of Glasgow."

Fri. Moving slowly down the river expecting every minute to come to a
 Dec. 2 stand, several other boats being fast and stopping the navigation. In the evening most of the passengers were prevailed upon to go ashore in order to lighten a little and a good part of the freight put ashore but notwithstanding every endeavor the boat stuck fast alongside four others near Buffenden Island. We passengers were now in a fix having no means of getting aboard again until a yawl was got taking four passengers at a time with considerable danger.

Sat. Still fast and with every prospect of a famine on board. Hearing of
 Dec. 3 a boat, being below, for Cincinnati we all left the "Latrobe" sending our baggage and the ladies down in canoes. The gents walked down to the boat. The "Crystal Palace" a splendid boat, good fare, which they took care to get paid for many of the passengers having to pay a second full fare however I was glad to get off on any terms.

Sun. Arrived late in evening at Cincinnati.
 Dec. 4

Mon. Took boat for Lawrenceburg 20 mls where I had to remain until
 Dec. 5 morning for the cars to Flatrock.

Tues. Landed at Ben's just in time for a good dinner and found them all
 Dec. 6 well things improving fast. Looking round and visiting the rest of the week.

Sun. Went to meeting in the new Court House heard a pretty good
 Dec. 11 sermon in the evening took tea at the Avery's, one of the nicest families at Flatrock.

Mon. Took the cars for Lawrenceburg & boat to Cincinnati went to see
 Dec. 12 the pork slaughter yards which is carried on here on a large scale, a thousand hogs being a day's work for one set of hands to kill & pack, but rather roughly done.

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- Tues. Got on the Ben Franklin for Louisville and St. Louis, which left at
Dec. 13 12 p.m. reaching Louisville in twelve hours 15 mls.
- Wed. Took the bus down to Portland since round the falls the water
Dec. 14 being too low to allow the boats to pass over, and got aboard the
"Fashion" for St. Louis 700 mls. from Cincinnati entered the
Mississippi Friday noon. Took on a lot of Californians at Cairo
bound home, some with a good "pile" others with disappointed
hopes only.
- Sun. Arrived early this morning at St. Louis winter having set in hard
Dec. 18 pretty near closed navigation on the upper river however
determined to risk a day or two longer in town taking up quarters
at the City Hotel until Monday. Attended service in morning at the
Episcopal Church. Here I met with several of my shipmates and an
English gentleman, Rutherford, who was well acquainted with
Derbyshire.
- Mon. Got my drafts exchanged after a good deal of trouble. Then started
Dec. 19 off at 6 p.m. for Keokuk 215 mls on the "Dubuque," probably the
last boat to ascend the Mississippi this season - it being both
difficult & dangerous on account of the ice which is fast choking
up the river and very thick in some places. The upper Mississippi is
far more interesting than the lower (so far as I have been)
beautifully studded with islands and fine high bluffs. The water
above the Missouri is perfectly clear and transparent.
- Tues. The river rather more open this morning but making very slow
Dec. 20 progress. Passed some flourishing towns on the Miss. side.
- Wed. Morning arrived safe at Keokuk the end of my river travelling and
Dec. 21 very glad of it. In time of high water it is very pleasant but
miserable at low stages. Most of the captains & inferior officers are
generally nothing but a lot of sharpers.
- Thurs. Had to lie over until Thursday morning for the stage which left at 4
Dec. 22 a.m. for Fort D'Moines 180 mls. The roads being good we got on
pretty fast, travelling it in three days, first night at Fairfield, 2nd,
Oskaloosa where we just came in right for a bear meat supper and
ball the first was excellent, the latter very commonplace.
- Sat. Arrived at the Fort about seven Saturday evening, pretty well tired
Dec. 24 of the stage.
- Sun. Xmas day walked over to Carlisle 12 mls, which is to be my future
Dec. 25 home, where I found all things about as when I left after an
absence of about nine months during which time I had travelled
12000 miles without any misfortunes.