

Basic Detail Report



00015738

Title

Journal of voyage from London to Sydney on board the ship KATE

Date

1853

Primary Maker

Howell

Medium

Ink on paper

Dimensions

Overall: 216 × 140 × 1.4 mm, 0.5 kg

Name

Letter

History

The ship KATE, 904 tons, was built in Plymouth in 1836. This journey to Australia outlined in the journal was not the first for the ship and seemed typical in the events that are outlined by the author. The major anomaly that appears is the duration of the voyage. The author laments that the ship ELLENBOROUGH had arrived in Sydney two weeks before the KATE despite having left London three weeks after it. The cause of this was the "calms, light and adverse winds that so lengthened our voyage; but on the whole it was pleasant, and in no way disastrous." Three month voyages at this time were filled with the ups and downs of life aboard a cramped ship surrounded by strangers. The monotony of shipboard life led to flare ups amongst passengers and crew but as the author records "unanimity is not expected to exist long in society formed of persons promiscuously brought together and, consequently, uncontrolled by a policy of dependence on each other." Despite this the distractions of nature such as whales and sharks and the beauty of the skies went along way to sooth tensions. The author talks of ship board pursuits such as rat hunting, bird shooting and shark catching as diversions in addition to the excitement that the changing weather brought.