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Welcome to
the Hudgell
Family
History Website

'The William Stewart'

***Voyage to Port Phillip Australia
January 1848 - May 1848***

The Voyage

Assisted Immigration Index

The William Stewart sailed from Plymouth 25th January 1848 the voyage taking 111 days.

The 'William Stewart' a barque of 576 tons and said to be a fine vessel. British built of oak, the Captain being William Jamison The commencement of the voyage was cold and uncomfortable. Icy north-westerly winds accompanied the vessel down the Channel and out to the sea.....

After leaving the Cape, a succession of heavy easterly gales retarded the barques progress, making the latter of the voyage trying for passengers, unable to leave the steerage compartments between the decks. In spite of their discomfort, they were warm in their praise of the treatment they received from the Captain, the Officers and the Surgeon.

HUDGELL

FAMILY TREE

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INTRODUCTION

OUR ANCESTORS

HUDGILL

The William Stewart was said to be a fine vessel, British built of oak. The commencement of the voyage was cold and uncomfortable. Icy north-westerlies accompanied the vessel down the channel and out to the sea.

One the whole, the 234 emigrants enjoyed good health. There were only three deaths, all young children.

HUDGELL

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SPOUSES

[Statistics of Voyage](#)

SITEMAP

Report of the Immigration Board on the Ship William Stewart

BIOGRAPHIES

Sir,

I have the honour to report that on the 15th and 16th Inst. the members of the Immigration Board assembled on board the ship 'William Stewart', which arrived on the 15th Inst with Immigrants sent to the Colony under authority of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners.

LINKS

CONTACT ME

This vessel sailed from Plymouth on the 25th January and arrived here after a passage of 111 days.

The description and general appearance of the passengers appear to be amongst the most desirable that have here to fore reached the district they were remarkable healthy during the voyage, only three young children died on the passage, everything connected with their health and comfort and conducive to the harmony appears to have been carried out and promoted in a very superior manner.

There has not been a complaint of any kind made but contrariwise, every one of them speak in the warmest terms of the treatment they experienced during the voyage, from the Surgeon Superintendent, the mast, and other Offices of the Ship.

The people consist of 33 families amounting to the large number of 133 soul 41 single men and 50 single women. The families come chiefly from the midland counties in England, the single men and women are pretty nearly in equal proportions from the different parts of the United Kingdom.

*'Congratulations on a wonderful
family history presentation.
I just "googled" on the off chance,
and struck gold!.....*

Jean Potter

We have in the present case to express our regret that so many families comprising such a large number of children under 14 years of age should have been forwarded to the district. The single men and women found employment at once, but as Your Honour is well aware, inhabitants of the Towns or Settlers in the interior will not, cannot afford to saddle themselves with a married couple, having a few say three or four helpless children to nurse and attend to.

The present importation has had the effect of slightly reducing the here to fore extravagant rates of wages, and no doubt similar importation will still further contribute to the same most desirable result and tend to make servants in every respect more happy, contented, and careful of their employers interests.

Signed : John Patterson

Chairman of the Board

[Original report](#)

**The Port Phillip Herald
Tuesday 15 May 1848**

P2 Shipping Intelligence

Arrived May 15 - William Stewart, ship, 576 tons, William Jamieson, commander, from Gravesend 14th and Plymouth 25th January. Passengers - Mr Charles Horrell, Mr W. H. Goddard, and 234 bounty immigrants, comprising 54 single females, 47 single males, and married couples with their families: Dr. Jenner Plomley, Surgeon- superintendent.

Imports

May 15 - William Stewart, from London - 29 cases 22 packages 2 crates 12 bales and 13 trunks merchandise, D. S. and M. Benjamin; 2 cases and 2 packages merchandise, 34 packages hardware, J. Gill; 3 packages stationery, 2 ditto hardware, Jackson and Co; 12 packages hardware, C. Ellershaw; 11 casks and 7 cases merchandise, Harriet and Marks; 1 case merchandise, Westgarth, Rose and Co; 1 ton Cavendish tobacco, 5 cwt., currants, 4 cwt., starch.....list continues

The fine ship William Stewart arrived early yesterday morning from London and Plymouth, with 234 emigrants, all well; there were seven firths and three infant deaths on board during the voyage. She spoke Her Majesty's ship Apollo on the line homeward bound from the Mauritius, with troops, all well. About a fortnight after the William Stewart left England an illustrious stranger made his

appearance, whose only account of himself could be obtained was that he had managed to stow himself away in the ship's hold in London, with the determination to see Australia Felix. (Major Thomas Mitchell passed through Victoria in 1836 naming all the country south of the Murray River 'Australia Felix'. It was a landmark journey in Australian History as shortly after his expedition the whole of the region was opened up and settled by the new inhabitants of the continent.)

The Port Phillip Herald
Thursday 18 May 1848

P2

The William Stewart - We have received so many complaints with reference to the arrangements, or rather the total want of them, for engaging immigrants by this ship, and have heard so many causes for dissatisfaction expressed of the want of civility by the officers on board that we shall feel it our duty to make in this evening's supplement some remarks upon the subject. In doing so we are authorised and intend to give the names of gentlemen complaining, and to add dates and circumstances which we think should arrest the attention of the Government.

The Port Phillip Herald
Thursday 25th May 1848

P2

The emigrants per "William Stewart" - The Doctor of this vessel has replied to the charges we recently brought against the offices of his ship. As his letter has not as yet obtained a reputable circulation, we will publish it for him in our next number, with a few remarks by the way of a rider. In the meantime, we may observe that the Doctor admits the truth of our charges against himself, the chief officer, and the captain (with one exception); but he justifies them! Upon what grounds we will inquire by and bye.

Supplement to The Port Phillip Herald
Thursday 25 May 1848

Long letter from Dr. Jenner Plomley.....

***The Melbourne Argus
Friday 16 June 1848***

Sailed - June 15 - William Stewart, for Batavia

18th May 1848

The same date there is an extensive letter to the editor from the ship's doctor. Apparently the complaints were made by visitors on board the ship (including the editor) who were trying to hire servants and maids and in their hurry to get the best of the emigrants they felt they were not treated with enough politeness by the ship's crew. For example, the crew taking time out for a meal, or the captain telling an emigrant not to settle for a poor wage, wages in Australia were 2 or 3 times what they may have expected in England.

From Perilous Voyages to the New Land

by Michael Cannon

William Stewart

In the bumbling way typical of governments run by aristocratic amateurs minister did not even bother to advise Le Trobe of the first shipment of orphan girls. Fifty one of these arrived in May 1848 on the 450 ton barque William Stewart under Captain William Jamieson.

The ships surgeon, Dr Jenner Plomley, was kept busy with seven births and three deaths of infants during the voyage, but most of these appeared to be among ordinary emigrant families.

Le Trobe was taken aback by the whole affair. He protested to his masters in Sydney that 'The arrival of these girls being unannounced and unexpected, no steps could be taken for their disposal (or) for the protection of single females forming their first engagement'

Worse than that, the females described in the passenger list as 'foundlings from Cork' were actually aged between sixteen and the early twenties. Le Trobe warned circumspectly that 'in the case of girls of this description, it might be proper to take some additional precaution'.

On of the William Stewart emigrants wrote a revealing letter to her father in North Queensferry, Scotland.

She was a 23 year old Christine McRitchie, a domestic servant. Christine wrote that 'None need be afraid to come hear (sic) but for the passage'. During the voyage, she said 'There was some children died but none of the old people died, it would have been a great deal worse if there had been but the children were never much minded'.

The prosperity and rough democracy of Port Phillip surprised Christine. 'There is no beggars here, 'she wrote. Rich and poor lives all alike'. She was able to find work immediately with a family named Brown. 'We got more wadges (sic) than was givan (sic) on board., we have good situations and we are getting 25pounds the year.....The work is not so haired (sic) as it is at home nor the mistresses are not so sassy, they are glad to get any person to work to them'.

Why go to Australia?

Through most of the 1800s, and to some what also in the 1900's up to 1950 the British government covered most of the cost for 'assisted immigrants' to go to Australia. In the 1800s there were various reasons mostly to do with reducing the population in the towns and cities of England and providing a source of labour in Australia, as the cattle and sheep stations, farmers and merchants and those with fancy homes were all suffering from a shortage of labour.

Assisted immigrants in the 1850's had to be skilled in some way - whether in agricultural labour, shepherding, blacksmithing, domestic service, etc. No habitual poor were allowed. They paid from £2 to £6 per person (depending on age) for the cost of the entire 2-3 month journey. They travelled on specially chartered ships.

Unassisted immigrants went out to Australia on their own passage, paying their own cabin class or steerage fare. During the 1850's and 1860's these were most often gold seekers or wealthy merchants who sought to take advantage of the booming economy. Some of the young men and young women on the ships were domestic servants accompanying their employers.

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