

Leon Buckwalter's Diary

on the cattle boat to Danzig, Poland

Cattle Boat Trip to Danzig Poland
Nov. 6, 1945 to Jan. 12, 1946

- Nov. 6, Went to Baltimore Md. for physical exam.
Went on board steamship S.S. Mexican.
Loading of cattle began at 7:30 PM. Helped to feed and water cattle until 10:30 PM.
- Nov. 7, Loading of animals finished at 5:30 AM. I got up at 6:00 AM to helped cattle. Breakfast at 8:30 AM. Worked with animals until noon. Went downtown afternoon. Bought used camera. Upon returning to ship I was assigned to attending 64 horses on top deck during the trip. Downtown in evening.
- Nov. 8, Out of bed at 6:00 AM. Watered horses until breakfast at 8:30 AM. Meeting in mess hall following breakfast. Luke Bomberger and I were assigned to 37 horses on the 2nd deck.
Ship left pier #9 at 1:00 PM. Dinner at 6:00 PM. Tended horses following dinner. Helped the veterinarian to inject horses until 9:30; PM.
- Nov. 9, The sea became a bit rough. A few of the men became ill.
- Nov. 10, Sea was very calm. A number of sick animals on the 3rd deck.
- Nov. 11, Sea was rather rough. I didn't feel well for a while. Ice cream for dinner. First animal died, (heifer).
- Nov. 12, 1,000 miles from Philadelphia. Sea was rather rough. The temperature was lower.
- Nov. 13, The weather was cool. 1st horse died. Pulled up hay from bottom hold with winch. Did laundry (1st time). Boat turned north toward England.
- Nov. 14, One dead horse and one dead cow overboard. Sea rougher than any time since sailing. Song time in evening.
- Nov. 15, Had rain for entire day. Sea was calmer. Cleaned horse stalls for the first time.
- Nov. 16, Calm seas. The vet operated on a cow. One horse died.
- Nov. 17, I had severe ear ache in AM. Pain relieved later in day. At 9:30 AM the captain received orders to go via of Scotland. Had fire drill. Luke Bomberger to bed with fractured ribs.
- Nov. 18, Warm weather. Light rain in evening. Sunday school and church in AM. Lead by Pastor Ross Noffinger. Program in evening.
- Nov. 19, Warm and light rain. Third cow died.
- Nov. 20, Weather cooler. Rain shower during the daytime. I had charge of singing for morning devotion time.

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- Nov. 21, Weather was cool. We saw land for the first time since leaving Baltimore. (15 days) One horse died. I lead in daily devotions. A pilot came on board ship at 10:30 PM.
- Nov. 22, Ship anchored off the shores of Dover England at 2:00 AM. Took up anchor at noon time. Saw the White Cliffs of Dover. Celebrated Thanksgiving time. Cooler temperatures. One cow died.
- Nov. 23, Ship anchored off the shores of Holland. Three dead animals over board. Very cold weather. Anchored near entrance to Elbe River at 7:00 PM.
- Nov. 24, Sailed along the coast of Germany via Elbe River. Cloudy, cold weather. Ship was towed by tug boat into the Kiel canal at 6:00 PM. Started through canal at 7:30 PM.
- Nov. 25, Through Kiel canal at 7:30 AM. Anchored in Kiel Harbor until noon. Saw much war damage. Sailed into the Baltic Sea during the afternoon hours. Anchored at 6:00 PM. Cold weather. One cow overboard.
- Nov. 26, Took up anchor at 6:00 AM. Sailed through the Baltic Sea entire day. It was reported that the ship lost its course during the afternoon hours and sailed thru dangerous mine fields. Ship anchored at 5:00 PM for the night off the shores of Sweeden. The weather was rainy and cold.
- Nov. 27, Sailed along the coasts of Sweeden all day and night. Weather was clear and cold.
- Nov. 28, Ship was towed into the port of Danzig by tug boat. Docked safely at 4:30 PM. Weather was windy and cold.
- Nov. 29, Unloading of livestock began at 8.00 AM. All livestock gone from our hatch except four cows. We visited the stock barn. Weather was rainy, driven by a strong wind. I served as night watchman until 1:00 AM.
- Nov. 30, I slept until 9:00 AM. Unloading of cattle continued all during the day. On ship until noon. went to downtown Danzig in the afternoon. Got a few soveniers. The ship Santiago docked at 11:00 AM. Clear, cold weather.
- Dec. 1, All the livestock were unloaded to-day. Went on board the Santiago in AM. Took the trolly to Danzig in PM. Walked to center city. Purchased Mouth Organ.
- Dec. 2, Church and sunday school in AM Walked to New Port in PM. Song service in evening. Cold weather.

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- Dec. 3, Paul, Ray, Bill and I went to Danzig in the AM. Walked to Newport in the PM. I had a cold in the throat. Weather was cold and cloudy.
- Dec. 4, Stayed on board ship entire day. Weather was snowy in the AM, rain in the PM. A bit warmer.
- Dec. 5, Walked to Newport in AM. In the PM we were all taken on a truck through the country to a hall where a banquet was given in our honor by some polish folk. Weather was cold and damp. Ice on the ground.
- Dec. 6, ~~I served as~~ watchman from 3-5 AM. Walked to Newport. Oliver and I rode in a truck to Danzig in the AM. Walked back in the afternoon. The ship "Rockland Victory" anchored. We had snow most of the day.
- Dec. 7, We walked to the "Rockland Victory" in the AM. Back to our ship, Stayed on board remainder of day. Mail from home. Weather was snowy and cold.
- Dec. 8, Went to Gdynia in AM. Back to ship at 2:30 PM. Port was frozen. Stayed up all night. Clear cold weather.
- Dec. 9, Slept until noon. Stayed on board ship entire day. Weather was very cold.
- Dec. 10, Slept until noon. Stayed on board ship for the rest of the day. Weather was very cold. A bit milder in the evening.
- Dec. 11, On board ship all day. Bad weather. Snow And rain.
- Dec. 12, In Danzig most of the day. Weather was clear and very cold.
- Dec. 13, Started to unload manure from front hatch. On board ship all day. Weather was cold with snow and rain.
- Dec. 14, We went to Danzig in the AM. To Newport in PM. Weather was clear and cold.
- Dec. 15, Stayed on board ship during the day. Went over to the "Rockland Victory" in the evening. Sent mail via the "Rockland Victory. Weather was rainy all day.
- Dec. 16, Sunday school and church in the AM. On board ship for the rest of the day. Received orders for everyone to be on board ship by 6:00 AM. (Dec. 17).
- Dec. 17, Ship left Newport Harbor at 2:30 PM. Anchored Off the shores of Gdynia for the night. Weather was cold and damp.
- Dec. 18, Took up anchor and sailed at 7:00 AM. Sailed through the Baltic Sea today. Helped to clean horse stalls on top deck. I had haircut by Paul Reitz. Weather was cold and clear.

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- Dec. 19, Amine pilot came on board ship at 8:30 AM. Anchored at a dock in Copenhagen Denmark at 3:30 PM to load sand for ballast for the trip across the Atlantic. We went on shore.
- Dec. 20, We went ashore again in the AM. Stayed out until midnight. Received mail from home.
- Dec. 21, I spent my 22nd birthday in Copenhagen Denmark. We stayed in bed until noon. We went on shore in the PM. Stayed out until 10:00 PM. Shore leave expired at midnight.
- Dec. 22, Left port in Copenhagen Denmark at 11:30 AM. Anchored at end of harbor at 12:00 noon because of dense fog. Set sail again at 1:00 PM. Sailed thru Baltic Sea into the North Sea. Passed the Morgantown Victory cattle boat. Received initiation for passing from fresh water into salt water. Steam valve broke on starboard side engine in the evening.
- Dec. 23, Sunday school and church services in the AM. We sailed along the coasts of Norway. The sea was rough. WE played ball in hatch #1 in the afternoon. We had a meeting in the evening in charge of Jack Baker. We anchored off the shores of Norway at 5:00 PM because of a Violent storm.
- Dec. 24, The ship was anchored off the shores of Norway all day long. The storm is still raging. Had Christmas program in the evening.
- Dec. 25, Christmas Day. WE are still anchored off the shores of Norway. Heavy storm still raging. Had a service in the AM. Also, in the evening. Played ball after evening service until 1:00 AM.
- Dec. 26, Started sailing at 4:00 AM after storm subsided. We slept until noon time. We did laundry in the afternoon hours. Played ball in the evening.
- Dec. 27, The ship docked in Scotland, near Edinburg at 7:30 PM to take on fuel. We went on shore until midnight. We moved into #5 bunk room on the second deck. The weather was warm & damp.
- Dec. 28, Left port in Gransmouth Scotland at 11:00 AM. The ship ran aground in the harbor at 12:00 noon. We were able to move on at 9:30 PM during high tide. We were informed that the ship took on 750 tons of fuel while docked at Gransmouth last night. We anchored at the edge of the harbor for the night.
- Dec. 29, Started sailing at 1:00 AM after taking on a pilot. Sailed along the coasts of England toward the Straits of Dover. Unsettled weather.

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- Dec. 30, Sailed into the Straits of Dover. Anchored at Dover Downs at 12:00 AM to wait for sailing orders. Began sailing at 12:45 PM. Sailed thru the English Channel. Sunday school and church service in charge of Albert Guyer. Weather was clear and cool.
- Dec. 31, Sailed out of the English Channel into the Atlantic ocean. The sea was rough. Weather was warm and windy. Had Doctor I Q program in the evening. Stayed up until 3:00 AM.
- 1946
- Jan. 1, We slept until noon time. Weather was warm. Sea was rough. More calm in the evening. Traveled 251 miles.
- Jan. 2, We slept until noon time. 60 degree weather. Sea was rolling. English aircraft boat passed by our ship. We are 572 miles from Dover England at noon time. Traveled 271 miles today.
- Jan. 3, Today it is 8 weeks since we left Baltimore. I played tennis with Lloyd Hoover. Hoover won. We played ball in the evening. My team won 18-12. Weather was warm and damp. Calm seas. Traveled 269 miles.
- Jan. 4, Rolling seas. Weather was windy and sunny. Traveled 273 miles.
- Jan. 5, The captain received orders to dock at Boston Mass. WE did laundry. Weather was sunny and windy. A bit cooler. Traveled 254 miles.
- Jan. 6, Sunday school and Church service. Pastor Noffzinger in charge. Jack Baker had the sermon. Had a meeting in the evening. The sea was rolling. Weather was rainy And stormy. Traveled 265 miles.
- Jan. 7, Had a meeting in regards to cattleman bonuses. we decided to draw up a petition and have all the cowboys sign it. Had a Quiz in the evening. Weather was damp and breezy. Fog in the evening and during the night. Traveled 229 miles.
- Jan. 8, The captain reported that we were 1,000 miles south of Greenland at 2:00 AM today. Had a fire drill. Signed the bonus petition. Fog in early morning. Windy and cloudy later Sea was rough. Traveled 225 miles.
- Jan. 9, I led the singing in devotional period. Washed my hair in PM. Strong wind and colder. Sea was rough all day. Traveled 175 miles.
- Jan. 10, I lead in morning worship. (psalms 46) Sea was calm in AM. Rougher in the aftrenoon. Weather rainy & foggy until 2:30 PM. Then windy & cooler. Traveled 266 miles.
- Jan. 11, Had meeting in the evening. Trouble in starbord side engine. Weather was windy. Sea was rough..

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Jan. 12, Anchored outside of Boston Mass. harbor at 6:30 Am. A Pilot came on board ship. Proceeded into the harbor. Anchored in the harbor while a health inspector came on board to inspect the ship etc. Finally docked safely at Boston at 11:30 AM. (67 days since leaving home) Customs officers came on board to inspect our baggage. We had a farewell meeting at the rear of the ship. Signed off the ship at 1:45 PM. Took a taxi to South railway station. We purchased tickets for train fare to Philadelphia Pa. on the 3:00 PM train. Arrived in Phila. at 10:44 PM. Took a train to Lancaster. Arrived in Lanc. at 11:10 PM. Took the trolley to Leola and the bus to New Holland. Biz Mellinger took Ivan Fox, Paul Martin and I home. I Got home at 1:20 AM. (Jan. 13, 1946)

Persons Responsible for Cattleman

Dr. Robert Reisinger- Baltimore Md. 24 yrs. single, veterinarian in charge of all cattlemen.

Dr. George Brandt- Baltimore, Md. 23 yrs., single, veterinarian second in charge.

James Fairall- 1104 Snowden Place, Laurel Md. 35 yrs., Married 3 children, U.N.R.R.A. supervisor of cattlemen.

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Names and adresses of cattlemen aboard S S Mexican

- Baker, John-New Enterprise Pa. single, 18 yrs., Farm laborer.
Anticipates medical mission work.
- Barkdoll, William S.- 10 N. Washington St. Naperville, Ill., Married,
73 yrs., 4 children, 19 grandchildren, retired
farmer after 39 yrs.
- Bomberger, Luke-Mount Joy Pa. single, 18 yrs., 2nd trip as cattleman.
- Bontrager, Willard- Comins Mich., single, 22 yrs., poultryman,
anticipates working as a dairyman.
- Bauman, Mahlon- Maugansville, box #11, Md. single, 17 yrs., farm laborer.
Canadian citizen.
- Buckwalter, Leon H.- Bareville R #1, Pa. single, 22 yrs., farm
laborer an fathers farm.
- Deal, Henry, Charles- Scottsville, R #1, Mich., single, 35 yrs.,
Farm laborer.
- Deihl, Elmer- 315 W. 4th. St. Sterling, Ill. 53 yrs., married, 2
children., retired farmer.
- Dove, William, Oliver- Manassas Va., 25 yrs., married, 1 child, farmer.
- Eckles, Oliver- Elkhart, Iowa., single 18 yrs., student, farmer.
- Fox, Ivan- New Holland, R D #1 Pa. 20 yrs. single, farm laborer.
- Guyer, Albert- New Enterprise Pa., 19 yrs., single, farm laborer,
licensed minister, anticipates medical mission work.
- Hitz, Alvin- Polk City, Iowa. 48 yrs. Married, 1 child, Farmer and
dairyman.
- Hollinger, John- r D #2 Ephrata, Pa., single, 19 yrs., farm laborer.
- Hoover, Lloyd- Tuppecanal, Ind. 42 yrs. married 3 children, mechanical
engineer, instructor in principle of diesel engines,
farming at present.
- Leatherman, Ray, L.- New Paris, R D #1, Ind. 22 yrs., single, works in
feed mill & helps to manufactor life boat equipment.
Future farmer.
- MacCall, Harold- Garnesville, Va. 17 yrs., single, electrical engineers
aid.
- Martin, Lester- Hagerstown, Md., R D #4, 17 yrs. single, works for
father, custom work & farming.

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- Martin, Paul- Ephrata, R D #1 Pa., 22 yrs., sigle, farm laborer.
- Martin, Raymond- East Earl, R D #1, Box 18 Pa. 17 yrs., single, truck driver, farm laborer.
- Mellinger, Wilber- New Holland Box 78, Pa. 18 yrs. single, Auto salesman. (Ford).
- Miller, Simon- 2103 E. 12th., St. DeMoines, Iowa. 59 yrs., married, 3 children, retired farmer, wholesale grocery employee.
- Nafziger, Andrew- Gap, Pa: Box 233 18 yrs., single, farm laborer.
- Noffsinger, Ross- Elkhart, Iowa. 28 yrs., pastor of DeMoines Valley Church of the Brethern.
- Pellman, William- Lancaster R D #1, Pa. 21 yrs., single, farm laborer.
- Petre, Calvert- Hagerstown, R D #4 Md., 16 yrs., single, farm and poultry laborer.
- Reeser, Clarence- Albany, R D #1 Oregon 18 yrs., single, farm laborer.
- Reitz, Paul- Lancaster, R D #4 Pa., 20 yrs. single, Farm laborer.
- Rowland, Elmer Hagerstown, R D #4 Md. 62 yrs. married, 3 children, retired farmer, painter, minister of Long Meadow church of the Brethern.
- Shank, Irwin- Hagerstown, R D #4 Md. 29 yrs. Married 2 children, Interior decorator and fruit grower.
- Stutzman, Bernard- Lebanon, R D #2, Box 46 Oregon. 17 yrs. single, farm laborer.

Notes of Interest

Name of Ship; S S Mexican.

Age of ship: 38 years.

Ships length: 489 feet.

Ships width: 50 feet.

Ships depth at center: 40 feet.

Empty weight of ship: 5,024 tons.

Maximum load; 8,330 tons.

Load this trip: 2,500 tons.

Speed of ship: 11½ knots. Approx. 13 MPH.

Number of crew members: 54.

Ship is propelled by two steam engines.

Size of engines: 2,500 HP each engine.

Ship moves forward 17 ft. each propeller revolution.

Speed of propeller screws 72 RPM.

Size of propeller: 15 ft.

Size of propeller shafts: 14½ in.

Fuel requirements: 315 barrels per 24 hours.

Can distill 22 tons of water daily.

Distance ship travels is determined position of the sun or stars or by the of revolutions of the propeller for a24 hr. period x 17 ft.

18 feet of ship is below surface of water when empty.

22 feet of ship is below surface of water with this load.

Number of livestock on board this trip:	Heifers	444
	Bulls	14
	Horses	202
	Calves	18

Number of pounds of provisions on board;	Meat	23,000
	Sugar	3,300
	Goffee	2,00
	Flour	6,200

Notes of Interest

Transportation cost per head of livestock: \$150 plus \$150 paid to each cattleman. Fees paid by U.N.R.R.a.

By Jack Baker

Well boys, here we are
We've not even a car
We live just like squirrels
Only we comb our curls.

Just lying in bed
Til our head feels like lead
Sometimes we read a book
Other times we just look

The old ship she rolls
Up and down o'er the knolls
She squeaks from bow to stern
As the nearer waters churn

For days she pushes ahead
But the hope of land is still dead
Lots of rumors float around
Till finally they're all run aground

Some days pass swiftly by
While others kind of get a guy
Here on board we all wash clothes
Its a little tough but thats the way she goes

Wish they would turn out these lights
A fellow just can't sleep at night
Once in a great while we have a drill
Course most of us think it a pill

But did you ever think what you'd do
If you were really in a stew
Most every one looks for land
While the slippery deck they stand

If you ever go to sea on a ship
Let us give you a friendly tip
You've got to like Sea life a lot
To leave the home you got

By Jack Baker

Each day you spend in the hold
Will make home seem more like gold
For this sea life is no place for a man
Who thinks a lot of Anne
However, there will always be ships
To ride the dips
Cause ever since the beginning of man
There's been more water than land

Pull for the shore boys,
Pull for the shore
Heed not the rolling waves
But bend to the oar
Safe in the life boat
Cleave to self no more
Let the stranded wreckage go
And pull for the shore

Typed in January 1989