

Key-West Dec 29 1846

Are you well dear wife - have kind Angels guarded you and our darling child from from harm since last I saw you - Sad in deed was my heart the morning I parted from you but Sader still has it since been. I went to sea on Saturday the day I left home on Monday the 23rd in Nantucket South Channel I took a gale from the North East which exceeded in violence any that I ever experienced before; we had to take all our sails in and let our vessel drive with the wind and sea as best she might. The sea ran very high. At half past eleven on Monday Mr Reed my mate and three men were swept from the top of the cabin and terrible in deed was my agony when I thought that I saw them all sweep into the sea; two of the men struck on the vessels quarter rail and fell inboard one caught a rope and saved himself, but poor Reed fell into the

e

Sea and was drown^d, the gale was raging so, that we could do nothing to save him, could only witness his struggles, his agony and see him sink to his ocien grave. The gale continued with almost unabated fury except when it was changing from one quarter to an other for thirty days, it was mostly from West and Northwest during which time I lost my mate - deckload, foresail and boat much injured and my other sails and rigging nearly worn out, one of my men, young Morton had his foot badly burned on the night of the 25th of Nov which disabled him during the remainder of the voyage. At the time I lost my foresail two men came very near being swept overboard, it was blown away on the night of the 25th Nov when lying to with it three reefed. We continued for thirty days vainly endeavoring to get into Hampton Roads, New-York, Wilmington and Charleston but all to no purpose we could do nothing but drift to the South East. We got as far East as about 59 degrees of west longitude. On the 19th of Dec I had but one man with myself (Seth Garland) able to be on deck, or do any thing, one man having been taken sick on the 17th from wet and exposure. We were wet day and night constantly

Key-West Dec 29 1846

Are you well dear wife - have kind Angels guarded you and our darling child from harm Since I saw you - Sad in deed was my heart the morning I parted from you but Sader still has it since been. I went to sea on Saturday the day I left home on Monday the 23rd in Nantucket South Channel I took a gale from the North East which exceeded in violence any that I ever experianced before; we had to take all our sails in and let our vessel drive with the wind. and sea as best she might The Sea run very high. At half past eleven on mond Mr Reed my mate and three men were ~~wast~~ swept from the top of the cabbin and terrible in deed was my agony when I thought that I saw them all swept into the Sea; two of the men struck on the vessels quarte rail and fell inboard one caught a rope and saved him-self, but poor Reed fell into the

e

Sea and was drown^d, the gale was raging so, that we could do nothing to save him, could only witness his struggles, his agony and see him sink to his ocien grave. The gale continued with almost unabated fury except when it was changing from one quarter to an other for thirty days, it was mostly from West and Northwest during which time I lost my mate - deckload, foresail and boat much injured and my other sails and rigging nearly worn out, one of my men, young morton had his foot badly burned on the night of the 25th of Nov which disabled him during the remainder of the ~~vorge~~ voyage. At the time I lost my foresail two men came very near being swept overboard, it was blown away on the night of the 25 Nov when lying to with it three reefed. We continued for thirty days vainly indevering to get into Hampton Roads, New-York, Wilmington and Charleston but all to no purpose we could do nothing but drift to the South East. We got as far East as about 59 degrees of west longitude. On the 19th of Dec I had but one man with myself (Seth Garland) able to be on deck, or do any thing, one man having been taken sick on the 17th from wet and exposure. We were wet day and night constantly

(Coll. 88, Box 1/1)

Date: Dec/ 20. 1946

Description: Letter from John Davison to Eliza Ann Davison, his wife, written in Key West, about a drowning at sea.

On the 20th Dec the gale had not abated, My remaining
man began to complain, I felt my own health giving way,
our rigging and sails could not stand it much longer.
I concluded under such circumstances, I considered that duty
required me to get into port as soon as possible I accordingly
put the vessel on a South course and ran untill I got into
the trade winds which was in about 28 degrees North Latitude
I then stood for Abaco, passed the Bahama banks and
arrived here about noon of this day. Our cargo is much
decayed I know not as yet how much I have had a surge
turny on it and shall take all legal steps to dispose of it
There is no mail here the chain for communication is very
regular dependant on vessels that may chance to be passing this
way a vessel sails tomorrow morning for New-York which
is my only chance for forwarding this. My time for writing is
therefore short. Tell Capt Ellis that I will write him
the first opportunity after I ascertain how things stand with us
It will not be of any use for you to write me here as there
is no mail it would be very uncertain about a letters ever getting
here I should to undoubtedly be gone from here before you get
this. I will write you again the first chance
Tell Caleb H how much Father thinks about him and
wants to see him and wants him to be a good boy
Tell him if he will learn to read all he can that father
will buy him something pretty. I have not time to write
any more now. In haste

Affectionately your Husband

John Davison

On the 20th Dec the gale had not abated, my remaining
man began to complain, I felt my own health giving way
our rigging and sails could not stand it much longer.

I concluded under such circumstances, I considered that duty
required my to get into port as soon as possible I accordingly
put the vessel on a South course and ran untill I got into
the trade winds which was in about 28 degrees North Latitude
I then stood for Abaco, passed the Bahama banks and
arrived here about noon of this day. Our cargo is much
decayed I know not as yet how much I have had a surge
Turny on it and shall take all legal steps to dispose of it.

There is no mail here the chain of communication is very
eregular dependent on vessels that may chance to be passing this
way A vessel sails tomorrow morning for New-York which
is my only chance for for maleling this. My time for writing is
therefore short. Tell Capt Ellis that I will write him
the first opportunity after I ascertain how thing stand with us
It will not be of any use for you to write me here As there
is no mail it would be very uncertain about a letters ever geting
here I should to undoubtedly begone from here before you get
this. I will write you again the first chance

Tell Caleb H how much Father thinks about him and
wants to see him and wants him to be a good boy
Tell him if he will learn to read all he can that father
will buy him something pretty, I have not time to write
any more now. In haste

Affectionately your Husband

John Davison



[sideways on left side]
Key West
Dec. 29. 1846

[postmark] New York
SHIP
Jan 14
12