

# Balloonist John Leonard

The following lately received by N. Atwood of this city from balloonist John Leonard, now in Honolulu, will be read with interest by those who are fond of the daring cloud rider's many adventures.

San Francisco to Honolulu, February 21, 1902.

Friend Fred—I sailed at 9 a.m. February 19th for Honolulu, T. H.

Here I am in my little stateroom wondering how I will put in the fifteen or twenty days of the passage.

Why not write a log? That will suit me to dispose of some of it, and I shall have the log, written on the sides of the paper. I came aboard at 6 a.m. February 18th, as was told we would sail at 7 a.m.

But as the weather was thick with the fog breaking we postponed departure 26 hours, which gave me some time to look over the little cabin that was to be my home for while. I found her a trim enough vessel of 900 gross tons, an iron hull, barkentine rigged, with head sails, double to gallant and royal, main, middle and topgallant staysails, lug main and spanker. And since she carried no guns I reckoned her main and topsails would balloon out in yacht-fashion. She also carried, of course, a mizzen-topmast sail, and I guessed that her studding-booms were not being carried for ornament. Her outwater sharp and her bowsprit had a good lift and as I looked her over I could see her painted figurehead in its bust in a sigh as though it were tired of being buried in the water. She carries a roomy-looking deckhouse in which is the fore-cabin, storeroom, second cabin and the captain's room and donkey. Her pumps looked as though they were never used. Her poop runs within 12 feet of the main mast—where you are.

Captain Rufus Calhoun, I would say, as he is very reserved, and apart, is an old whaler, maybe 70 years old, white hair and a good deal of the knotty hand that comes of much rough weather and lots of hard work. Time has plowed up his back in furrows one could bury a pencil in. His face shows plain and for that matter everything about him shows the man who has spent his hands more than once in the Stockholm tar. His voice has the proper rattle in a calm, but the harsh note is reserved for heavy weather, a note that can never be missed by a preacher. His eyes were clear but the South Farrallons came up bright and sharp to me when he acknowledged to me that he didn't see a smudge of dirt on his nose, so I guess he's an atheist. His mate is an honest sort of seaman who looks to have weathered as well as the rest of them.

The morning of the 19th, not very hungry, I excused myself from the table before the captain and his mate. The captain said: "You are always excusable when you have done with your meal. We were towing out through the heads when a little bird, maybe a sparrow, alighted on the poop and the captain eased up to it and his hand said, 'Go home, little bird, or you'll get lost.'"

After we left the heads we laid our course for a while with the wind drove us 6 knots an hour, but after 24 hours found us only 85 miles from port. Muddy water, squalls and the wind blowing all round the compass on the 19th and 21st. A squall caught us at 21st with all her kites out on the 20th and the thunder of the cannon brought me on deck. Both watches were shortening sail. I ran forward to help the men clue up the main and topgallant sail and haul in some fore and aft canvas and the time it was done and she had hoisted again the rain that had been with the squall had soaked me the gizzard. Served me right. The captain told me once before not to help the men. "Don't want you to help a rope! If the men do their work I'll kick their trousers!" I'm not a sailor but by all the busted parachutes of other world that squall would have caught me aback. I came back the moment it struck us and the color of it it must have been 10 minutes before it laid us to. The captain—this is Feb. 20th, I fear, as I lose my reckoning for a man who grows at table with his mate and don't know the name of his own gear. I heard him say to the mate to trim the yards all the same way; now what do you think of that? Anybody knows that

it is safest and best to square in the lighter yards a little more than the courses. Then the helmsman can luff up till the leech of the royal lifts and tells him (no higher).

For three hours this a.m. he had every rag on her gave the stunsails, even a temporary staysail, useless as it is ungainly, that he sets to a temporary stay stretched from the break of the poop to the head of the mizzenmast.

Feb. 23rd. Arose at 7:30 and went in to breakfast at 8 bells. The skipper didn't even say good morning, but though he seldom speaks to me he would never let me forget my circus days. I was always on hand when the menagerie was fed, lived to watch the great cat animals rend their portion and listen to the wail of the ring-tailed wiggler crying for more; the sloshy-slosh of the jaws of the blood-sweating hippo and the rattle-tata of the pea-green Potalicus the only one in captivity, as it sat on its hind legs and rattled its ears with its tail to call the keeper's attention. All those sounds one hears in the menagerie are wafted from the head of the table as the skipper gloms his porridge or gnashes his fangs on the not too tender steak. Four days out this a.m. and I don't suppose we're over 400 miles from San Francisco. Yesterday afternoon I saw a sea gull caught unawares and capsize by the sea she was riding, and last night a St. Elmo's light burned at the end of the port upper topgallant yard—some poor seaman's soul perhaps come back to sit on the yard—he was lost from years ago. The men are grumbling forward; a drizzle is falling, the clouds are hanging round in chunks and if such signs don't count for anything, all right, mister. We had the port tack aboard when I arose this a.m. Went about twice and it isn't noon yet. Just such a day as I would wager my eyes that I couldn't get off the ground this evening if there were \$1,000,000 in the purse to go for. At noon, dinner, we had a very wholesome soup, a good roast, vegetables and a duff. The only remark the governor made was, "John makes a good duff." The mate said, "He does indeed." I remarked that it was a right peart duff. The cook came down the companion steps with a hard sauce; the steward in passing it lurched to windward and dropped it in a bowl of pilot bread. With a string of oaths the captain hurled the remains of the duff at Willie, the steward, missed him and landed on the cook's neck, just aback the starboard ear. With the duff plastered there like a wart on a log, the cook let out a yell and vanished. The captain grumbled out, "D—n bad shot." The mate and I smiled, but Willie didn't.

Feb. 24th. The trouble I expected came last night, but when it came on to blow I was sleeping and knew nothing of it. This a.m. when I went on deck the fore sail was furled—what was left of it, for the wind nearly blew it out of its roping. The men bent another at 8 bells. It also tore the threads off a turn-buckle that sets up the jack-stay which holds the weather leech of the spanker to the mast.

Feb. 25th. Bad night. Came on to blow at 11 p.m. and gave us enough wind to last a Dutchman one hundred years. Sighted big schooner and passed her this a.m. Made a sketch of the vessel; mate said it was good. Mate's name is Moore, a lineal descendant of the poet Moore. Strange how people continue to spring that old gag.

26th. Light head wind. Cook caught a bonito, 650 miles from San Francisco. Nothing doing.

27th. Head wind till 4 p.m. Calm two hours. Light wind sprang up from the N.E. Mate thinks it will last. Hope so.

28th. Heading W.S.W. wind astern. Stunsails, etc. This is the northeast trade wind that should take us to Honolulu, where the brown girls live. This is the weather that puts the skipper in a good humor. The captain thanked me for the sketch. Last night the mate spun me some yarns of the time when he was a master of ships and had his wife with him all the time. "Life was worth living then. The sea ain't what it used to be, Mr. Leonard. Wages and grub are better, the men get better treatment, some new-fangled gear has been invented to make the work lighter (they say, but I can't see it), still it don't seem like the same old sea. You'll notice the men ain't the same. They seem to be dreamin' of steamboats. You don't hear them sing the old-time songs. It actually disgusts me to hear some squarehead sailor start up some modern ragtime

chanty. It don't put no heart in men at all. The old timers feel a little behind the times, I suppose, and won't open up their hearts any more. Why, I've seen it, sir, when beatin' to the west'ard around the horn, a heavy sleet glazin' everything and the wind a-blowin' the tops off the seas and throwin' 'em aboard in a way 'at they'd tear your face like so much dry salt, the men all wet and shiverin', the galley fire out and no hot food for two days maybe—I say I've seen the men lead out the topsail halyards in such weather and the officer of the deck, knowin' the condition and the feelin' of the men, might say to them: 'What about that slob who was no sailor man; come, lads, let's hear.' Then, sir, some sad but husky voice would sing the verses, and the honest chorus from all hands that was hurled into the teeth of the wind as they followed the story of poor 'Renzo' would seem to temper the weather and the yard would be masted in such man-o'-war fashion that the youngsters would wish the mast had been higher so as to have heard what 'Renzo' did next. Oh, the old time growing and the old time songs. 'Whisky for me, Johnny,' 'Blow the Man Down,' 'All on the Plains of Mexico,' 'Shandore was a Rollin' River.' You're laughin' at me, sir, but the names of all those songs, homely as they are, are much to me. She used to like 'em so. Rest her soul; she died on the passage to Singapore." Then, brightening up a little, he sang an old Irish ballad for me that was full of melody:

"Oh, the cloud did pass and the sun advanced,  
When a convict came to the Isle of France;  
Around his leg was the ring and chain,  
For his country was of the shamrock green."

What if there wasn't much rhyme? It was full of soul and feeling.

But two hours yarning with the mate would fill a fair-sized volume and you couldn't appreciate him, anyhow.

March 1. Head wind. Caught aback at 12 m. twice in ten days. The skipper will lose his spars at laying to close to the wind yet. Starboard tack aboard and stunsail set at 6 p.m. Yarn with the mate in the dog watch. Buenos noches.

March 2nd. Sunday; lovely day; everything set. Royal (you understand, don't you? The sail that's tied to the highest cross piece on the first up-and-down pole), weather stunsail, gibsails, main and mizzen topsail and the captain's kite (as the mate calls the temporary mizzen staysail). Ham and eggs and hot cakes for breakfast. Instead of holding service of any kind the skipper had the men overhaul the clues and buntines, make up the gaskets properly and stop them to the jack-stays swig up on all halyards, sheets and braces and sweep'er down. Mate fell ill at 4 p.m. Bilious attack. Cook caught another fine fish. Roast chicken and duff for dinner.

March 3rd. Nothing doing. Mate had a bad night but is on deck today. 1,300 miles from San Francisco. A good trade wind and flying-fish weather.

March 4th. Sailing along nicely. A world of poetry in everything in sight. Bowling along about 8 knots an hour over the biggest thing on earth, the home of the "Dolphin, bonito and the porpoise and the whale." A seaman came aft to take the wheel this a.m. He had on among other things a jumper about six sizes too big for him and instead of buttoning it he had it tied to him, i.e., the two lower corners were tied together. The skipper took a look at him and said, "Huh! what, what! Go for'ard, you d—n savage, and take that knot out o' yer jib." The tar was a poem of carelessness, and the skipper's command smacked of his 60 years of looking to windward. When he dies he will surely return to the sea as an albatross.

March 5th. This day commences with a strong breeze, N.E. trade. The hands employed at repairing foresail. Making 9 knots.

March 6th. A full rigged ship is becalmed about 2 miles abreast our port beam. Nothing doing this a.m. but rolling. Washed a shirt. Light winds all day.

March 7th. She's rain putty much dees morning; cleared up 9 a.m. Hands employed scraping main boom. Carpenter repairing truck. Captain civil.

March 8th. Strong breeze, 8 knots, wind astern. Course S.W. Hands employed scraping fore to gallant crossrees. 8 and 10 knots all day.

March 9th. Keeping the Sabbath. In the tropics.

March 10th. Last night a school of porpoises played in the sea under the bow. A bewitching sight. The sea was full of phosphorus and their outlines showed plainly. It has been many years since I saw that sight

before. I hope this wind holds on two more days, as we will then be in Honolulu, where the nuts come from: I do hope I will be successful in making a hit there, as it will be the opening of a new life for me. I am going to turn over a leaf and try to surprise the world before I die. Three or four years of oriental travel will, I am sure, do me much good. I am anxious to get into India and Hindoostan, where they never heard of a balloonist. That will be away up inland. If they like the show (and all savages do) I may yet have on my staff of friends a Rajah.

March 11th. This day commences with a two-knot breeze that we carried all last night and has a tendency to make one nervous, and the sun if softening the pitch and tar in tropical fashion. The hands are employed scrubbing paint work. The carpenter is still pounding away on the freight truck; the skipper cranky. Just suppose we got no wind for six months and the currents drifted us back a few knots each day; it isn't probable, but should it so happen, "wouldn't it jar you?" A fellow would feel like "going away back."

March 12th. A five-knot breeze sprang up this a.m. and brightened up the faces of the officers quite a little. I hope it will continue to blow. Anxious, you know, to get ashore. Not that I haven't had a fine passage. It has not been rough enough to suit me. I most admire the big ocean when the gale is lashing her to fury. I am tired of the society of old Sharon, as the mate has rechristened him. "Old Sharon and his barkentine"; may he continue to sail on forever if it pleases him, but I have had enough of him.

March 13th. Light breezes. Nothing doing. Look for land tonight.

March 14th.—  
"Aloft on the Indian ocean,  
In fair, in foul and calm;  
I saw, as the sun was rising,  
An island full of palm."

Mate sighted land at 7 bells this a.m. Huray! I'm glad, for this day will end the sea log for this passage. It is 9:30 a.m. and the leper island is broad off the port bow. The land birds have been around visiting all morning.

March 15th. Ashore among the brown folks. The town looks good. Got a room whose windows are shaded by all kinds of tropical trees. Big bunch of bananas growing within 10 feet of where I'm writing; beautiful birds are singing in the trees and the atmosphere is laden with the perfume of flowers. The daughter of the house is a tall Dutch girl, but across the fence in the next house lives a half-breed Kanaka family and now as I write I'm looking over the fence.

"To get a good look at the half-caste girl  
That lives next door to me,  
Next door to me, next door to me."

The street on which I live bears the "eufunniest" name of Kukin street. Met Denver Ed Smith on the street, also Mr. Scroggy who used to be connected with Orr & Tukey in Dawson. Ain't a-goin' to write no' mo'. Address me at Honolulu, T.H., U.S.A. Regards to the boys.

LEONARD.

From Japan.

Seattle, March 22.—Seattle will soon have the honor of entertaining another prominent citizen of Japan, in the person of Count Masayoshi Matsukato, ex-premier and ex-minister of the treasury of Japan. The distinguished guest will arrive in this city on the steamer Kangu Maru, on March 26, and will remain in the city 24 hours. They left Yokohama on the eleventh instant.

A committee of Japanese citizens called at the Chamber of Commerce yesterday, and expressed the wish that a joint reception by the Japanese citizens and the business men of Seattle, be tendered the visitor. This is thought to be a better plan than to have two receptions.

The Chamber of Commerce meets today at 11 a.m. and consideration will be given to the matter of entertaining the distinguished traveler from the Orient. A plan for his reception will no doubt be adopted.

The committee on factory sites will submit a report to the Chamber in regard to certain tide land sites. The committee on Alaska will also submit its report.

Hon. John Barrett, ex-Minister to Siam, will probably arrive in Seattle within a short time, and no doubt the Chamber of Commerce will invite him to deliver an address.

Secretary Meikle yesterday received a copy of the rivers and harbors bill of the lower house of congress, known as house bill No. 12,346.

He is also in receipt of a communication from L. Burnett of New York asking the aid of the Chamber of Commerce in locating his missing wife. The man is afraid his wife was drowned on some ill-fated Alaska

boat, and he requests assistance to either find her or obtain knowledge of her death.

**Buys Government Property.**

Washington, March 22.—Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Taylor today sold to Felix Isman, real estate buildings and grounds. The price was dealer, in Philadelphia, the old mint \$2,000,000, part of the purchase money to be paid immediately and the balance within six months.

**An Italian Shot.**

Sault Ste. Marie, March 28.—In a drunken row last night in the Italian settlement Dominick Deluca was shot and will die. He runs a boarding-house and blind pig, and, in attempting to throw Ben Seigilano out doors, Deluca says he was shot by Alex. Barrata, a friend of Seigilano. The latter was arrested. Barrata has fled.

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