

to Sydney. At present she receives yearly six pounds and some odd shillings for her support, but, as she is a very steady girl, her parents are most anxious to have her with them, and she wishes to go and by her going both the parents and all the larger children would be able to work, and she would look after and take care of three or four younger ones. Would the Poor Law Commissioners therefore allow the parish to apply a part of that Sum, which they are going to raise, to the payment of the girl's passage, and how much – the rest must be made up by private Subscription.”

The letter continues: “The emigration commissioners require for each male: two good suits of outside clothing; two pairs of strong boots or shoes; six pairs of worsted stockings; three towels, combs and soap. And the Females are expected to have: A Bonnet; a Cloak; two Gowns; four Flannel Petticoats; eight Shifts; two pairs of Shoes; six pairs of Stockings; three Towels; Combs and soap. The Reverend Aubrey Price is sorry to say that those of his parishioners, who wish to emigrate, are very badly supplied with cloathes, and therefore permission is requested to expend the necessary sum...”

But for most of those emigrating, whether paid for by the parish or at their own expense, a well-established routine was developed by the shipping agents, such as Carter & Bonus mentioned above. So many thousands crossed the Atlantic each year that this was only to be expected, but it was also required by the Poor Law Commissioners who demanded proof that the emigrants for whom they had paid had been delivered to the relevant colony. Printed forms of contract between the agents and the passengers set out the conditions under which the passengers would travel. The illustration (pages 268-9) shows an example from 1849 for carrying a family from Eydon to Canada (the same Ann Willoughby for whom the Poor Law Commissioners had refused to sanction help from the poor rates – see above).<sup>21</sup>

From this document one can deduce that the journey across the Atlantic would have been quite well provided for in good conditions but the small print shows that the whip hand rested with the shipping companies who could vary the diet of the passengers at will; and the effects of seasickness or illness on the journey, which on average took about six weeks, will often have had a major impact in overcrowded ships on passengers without any experience of the sea.

But this did not stem the flood of emigrants. The number of ships engaged in the passenger trade from the United Kingdom to Canada in

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<sup>21</sup> Eydon parish agreed to raise the money itself to send Ann Willoughby and her children to join her husband in Canada (NRO EY 186). The Contract Ticket is at NRO EY 188.