**About this file**

This is a sample from the full journal doc that is used as the “source of truth” for a project regarding my Great, Great Uncle’s journal.

Occasionally, corrections are made, or comments added to the document. When this happens and changes are committed, the web site is automatically rebuilt with the updated journal and comments./

I’ve included files with and without images to show that both get parse correctly.

**Reminiscences Of My Early Life & Service As Bandsman In The Navy**

**Herbert Holloway**

**1848 To 1869**

I was born on October 4th 1848, but cannot say that I remember anything of that

interesting event, but that important fact has just had to be verified by the Registrar

general before I was considered eligable to receive the benefits of the old age pension

on my attaining the age of three score and ten, and hope I may be spared for at

least a few more years to enjoy it, and finish my yarn, which is not done with

the idea of publication, but just a little amusement for myself, and perhaps others of

the family who may care to peruse it. The illustrations I have repainted from

pencil sketches taken by me in 1867 and 69 and although perhaps not quite equal

to what I could do in my younger days, are near enough to convey a general idea

of the west coast of Africa and Island of Ascension, where I was stationed for just

on three years. But to get back to my diary properly, I must candidly confess

that I have not the slightest recollection of how or where I spent the first year

or two of my existence. The first and only circumstance I do distinctly and

always have remembered, is playing with my brother Walter underneath the

parlour table, which would probably be on a sunday afternoon, for Dad

and Mother were seated on each side of the fire, the one smoking a long

clay pipe and reading the paper, and the other with a grey shawl, and I

believe a white cap with a frill all round her face, nursing the latest baby

which would be either Alfred or Harry, while us two radicals under the table cloth

were fighting for the possession of the small soft hair brush which was used

for baby’s toilet. At this time we were living about three doors down from the top

of the “Pightle” on the left hand side, close to Fernie’s gate. Why all these little

details, should be so clearly impressed on my mind after all these years, I

cannot say, as from the time until I was about for or five has always

been a perfect blank, until one fine day I find myself living with Grandpa

and being very much bathed etc by Aunt Kate, who at that time was

single and living with them at Incent House. Auntie always kept me

in clothes, and also paid for my schooling, when I was big enough to go

Mr. Crew’s school. And I remained with them until Grandpa died in 1866

when I went to work in London for a month or two, and eventually joined

the Navy. For the present I will get back to my younger days, and relate

some of the little adventures I had while living with them. I know that

one day when I was about five or more, he brought home a large enamelled

gridiron, which according to my early musical views was a tolerable imitation

of a banjo, so one day after watching Ann, the servant out of the way, I took

it, and proceeded up to the sheds at the top of the very large yard there was

to the house in those days, settled myself down in the bottom of a cart, and

strummed across the bars with a piece of stick, and produced what seemed to

me at that time a capital imitation of that instrument, and as I could sing

“Jim Crow”, “Buffalo Girls” and other well known nigger songs, I was having quite

a grand concert all to myself, but the concert came to a very abrupt stop,

for Ann came accross from the house, boxed my ears, and carried my banjo

off to grill a rump steak on. They had been searching high & low for it, and

thought someone was having a practical joke with it. Grandpa was of course

in a terrible rage, as he was waiting for his dinner, and in a hurry to get

back to his work. At any rate he was rather amused at my converting it

into a musical instrument, and promised if I was a good boy and would

not take it again, to buy me a jews harp, which I afterwards received, and

soon became a proficient performer on that now much despised, and in

fact almost forgotten instrument. Capt'n Key came to stay at Berkhamstead

to make all arrangements for the wedding with Aunt Kate, And of course my

musical abilities on the jews harp must be paraded before him, But judge my

suprise, when after listening to me for some time, he produced two silver plated

ones from a velvet lined can, and played both at once, one each side of his mouth.

I know I thought it sounded lovely, and tried hard for some time to play two at

once myself, but gave it up as a bad job. At any rate he promised me a large

Accordion, which was thought as much of in those days, as a piano is at the present

time. I was soon proficient on it, after its arrival, and the good use I made of

it you will read later on. Their wedding took place shortly afterwards, and

the recollections of the festivities, which were held at Incent House, are just as

fresh in my memory, as if it occurred only a day or two ago. I seem to recollect

every little detail from Margaret & Mary Smith, who lived with their Aunt, Miss

Woodman, at the top end of Castle Street. Making and trying on the wedding dress

to her departure with the Captain to Houghton Hall, his home in Cheshire.

Incent house being opposite the Church, no carriages were required and all

walked over, and I can now see the Company trooping over from the old

house, with the half of Berk on each side of them, as I looked through the

small diamond shaped panes of glass that used to be in the old sitting room

window, before Bam determined to remove it & insert a more modern one in

its place, and which was still there until the old place was restored to

(?)it old original style and shape, about 40 or 50 years afterwards, soon after

father died.- But getting back to the wedding, I can see the wedding

breakfast, laid in the old sitting room, with the old open fireplace, and

I believed I cried because I was not allowed to sit down at the table with Aunt

Kate, and it ended in my being sent out into the kitchen, and sat down to

dinner with Ann, the servant, Tom Costin, a one armed man, who was helping

her, Mrs. Dean the Charwoman, and one or two more, whose names I cannot

recollect with the exception of Mr. Milburn the waiter and cook. One of

the items of our meal, was a very large pigeon pie, made, and sent over I

believe by Mrs. Costin, who lived in the old house opposite in Back Lane, and

so the pie was made with Tom Costin’s pigeons, I very forcibly expressed

my opinion that he should at least abstain from eating any of them.

What there was to wash it down, & drink the bride’s and bridegroom’s

health, I really cannot say, but Ann had evidently taken just a

little drop too much, and was soon stretched out on the scullery floor

And the pump being handy, Tom tried the cold water cure, but all

they could get out of her was, “Oh! if my mother was here, Oh! if she could

only have seen them coming from church etc etc—-- Hysterics, & carted up to

bed out of the way. So much for Ann of Wigginton. Tom Costin, I came

accross in Australia about 25 years afterwards, Manager of some Saw mills

owned by his brother Harry, who was then Mayor of Ballarat, But will

say more about this, when I write about my voyages to Australia & China.

After the wedding I don't reccollect much that happened, only the

railway accident at *Berk?* station, or rather between the Old station

and the present one, when a luggage train, or best part of it, toppled

over the high wall, into the roadway underneath, and some even into

the canal. The trucks were loaded with bales of flannel, Crimean shirts &

other things for the troops out at the Crimea, for the Russian war was

in full swing at that time, and it was a very severe winter that year.

I made one more trip to Calcutta in the “Sumatra”, had the usual week end at Berk &

had just gone one deck to have a moke in the dinner hour, when I received letter

from home, which father must have posted half an hour after I left home, for

I had not been on board a couple of hours when I received it. Mr. Cobb the rector

hearing I was at home, and George Bedford, who was manager of the Coffee Tavern

being sumarily dismissed for some petty offence, he thought I would like to have

the position; I telegraphed to say I would come down that night and see

him, which I did, and decided to accept the position after a deal persuasion

from Father and Mother. My wife had just been wrecked in the “Hindostan”

and was on the way home, so for about five or six weeks I was there all on

my own. At anyrate that was the finish up of my seafaring life, and the

remainder of my yarn, will be about Coffee Taverns and the Bands which

I have had the honour of conducting for twenty or more years. So will have

another little rest, and if I am spared will start another book in a week or

two. I am just thinking of spending a few days at Berk’ with my dear

daughter Annie, and no doubt will be able to take a few notes of things

that otherwise might slip my memory. I must again ask you to excuse

the writing and no doubt in many places the spelling. I have got one

or two more pictures to do, and you must also make very much allowance

for them, as my eyesight is not quite so good as it was fifty years ago.



