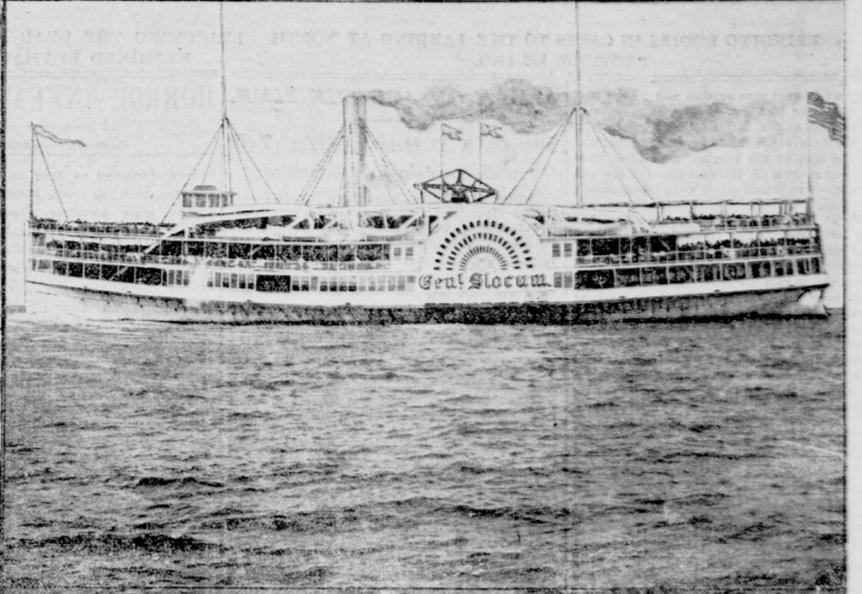




THE BURNING OF THE EXCURSION BOAT GENERAL SLOCUM. BODIES ALONG THE BEACH AT NORTH BROTHER ISLAND.

THE REV. GEORGE C. F. HAAS, Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church.

CAPTAIN VAN SCHAICK.



SEARCHING FOR BODIES IN THE WRECK OF THE SLOCUM.

THE SLOCUM AS SHE STARTED ON HER TRIP.

HORROR IN EAST RIVER

Possibly Seven Hundred Lives Lost by Burning of the General Slocum.

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN WILD PANIC.

The greatest steamboat disaster ever known in this city was the burning of the General Slocum near North Brother Island yesterday morning. Of more than one thousand persons, whom the steamboat was carrying on a Sunday school excursion of the St. Mark's Lutheran Church, of Sixth-st., Manhattan, to Locust Grove, Long Island, only a few hundred were saved. It was estimated, unofficially, last night that more than seven hundred perished, either by burning or drowning. They were mostly women and children.

WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION OF HUMAN LIFE.

The swift and terrible destruction of human life in the burning of the General Slocum yesterday morning created intense excitement in the city and led to widespread expressions of horror and sympathy. Many found in the fact that nearly all of the victims of the disaster were women and children additional cause for sorrow.

when the disaster overtook them. From the stories of survivors the first sign of fire seems to have been noticed as the vessel was passing the Sunken Meadows, off One-hundred-and-twenty-second-st.

THEORIES AS TO ORIGIN.

Accounts differ as to just where the fire started, some declaring it had its origin in the fore-castle, on the main deck, while others, the latter being in the majority, say it started in the boiler room almost amidships. The origin of the fire is also a matter of uncertainty. It was said by several men who were passengers on the boat that a careless bootblack left some oily rags near a vessel filled with benzine or oil, whether in the fore-castle or boiler room they could not say, and that spontaneous combustion started the blaze that had such disastrous results.

The flames spread with great rapidity. Some of the crew said after the disaster that they tried to get water on the flames, and found that the pumps would not work. Some of the survivors say that the crew became demoralized from the start, and did little except save themselves. The panic spread as fast as the flames.

Captain Van Schaick was in the pilot house with Edward L. Van Wart, the pilot. He says that as soon as he was apprised of the fact that the boat was on fire he gave the signal to the crew to report to quarters and fight the flames. The captain at first thought he might beach his vessel on the Sunken Meadows, where the ill-fated Seawanhaka was destroyed by fire in 1880. He found, however, he says, that the wind was blowing in a direction that would cause the fire to spread more quickly if he attempted to reach the Meadows. He therefore signalled the engineer to put on all steam, while he headed the burning boat for North Brother Island, the nearest available place for running her ashore.

The speed of the boat fanned the flames, sending them roaring along the lower deck. Clouds of smoke almost shut the upper decks from view. Hundreds of women and children on those decks began to rush toward the stern of the boat. They became insane with terror as the panic increased. The crush forced many helpless people against the railings of the decks with such force that the stanchions were broken and the railings were swept away.

SWEPT INTO THE WATER.

Then from the decks hundreds of women and children were swept into the water, some falling on one another and sinking together to drown before any help could reach them. Captain Van Schaick was keeping the whistle of the General Slocum going to attract the attention of other boats, and several boats within sight started toward her at full speed. In the race some of the boats picked up people in the water.

In the race for the burning steamer people on the tugboat Easy Times saw two other boats decline assistance. Captain Churchill says he saw the ferryboat Bronx stop on her run to North Beach long enough to allow the General Slocum to pass her bow, and then continue on her trip without attempting to save any of the people who were falling overboard from the steamboat. The ferryboat people, however, deny this. A private yacht, the name of which was not discerned, drew out of the way of the

THE SLOCUM AND OTHER DISASTERS.

Loss of Life by General Slocum Disaster. About 700; Injured and Missing, About 300.

Explosion on Staten Island ferryboat Westfield on July 30, 1871; fifty persons killed and hundreds injured. The Atlantic, of the White Star line, wrecked near Halifax on April 1, 1873; five hundred and sixty persons lost. The Ville de Havre, a French mail steamer, sunk on November 22, 1873, by the Lochearn; three hundred and thirteen persons lost. The excursion steamer Princess Alice, returning from Gravesend to London on September 3, 1898, was run down off Barking by the Bywell Castle; about six hundred persons lost. Burning of steamboat Seawanhaka on June 28, 1880; one hundred and seventy-five persons drowned and burned. Sinking of the steamer Elbe on January 30, 1895; three hundred and thirty persons lost. La Bourgogne sunk on July 2, 1898; five hundred and seventy-one lost. Burning of the Saale, the Bremen and the Main, of the North German Lloyd line, on June 30, 1900; more than one hundred lives lost. Iroquois Theatre fire, December 30, 1903; five hundred and eighty-seven lives lost.

burning steamboat and lowered a launch. Two men got into the launch from the yacht. Instead of making for the General Slocum, however, the launch carried the men to the Bronx shore, while the yacht continued on her way to the Sound.

Most of the boats which joined in the work or rescue could not get near the General Slocum until she ran aground off the north shore of North Brother Island. Among the boats that hurried to the succor of the stricken passengers were several tugs of the New-York Central Railroad Company, the Health Department tug Franklin Edson, and the Charities Department boat Massasoit. These and several rowboats manned by willing hands approached as near the blazing steamboat as was possible and rescued scores of people. Most of these were picked out of the water after they had dropped over the side of the General Slocum. The Franklin Edson went up so close to the burning steamer that her own paint was scorched. The crew of the tug, however, stuck bravely to their task, and snatched many women and children from a terrible death.

DECK CAVES IN.

A strong flood tide was running when the General Slocum went aground on some rocks nearly one hundred feet from the shore of North Brother Island. As she struck the rocks her hurricane deck, on which many of the panic-stricken women and children were clinging, suddenly caved in, precipitating its human freight either into the blazing hold or into the water. The water around the flaming vessel was thick with drowning people, and, notwithstanding the almost superhuman efforts made by the rescuers, a large number of the perishing people had to be left to their fate. Many of those who jumped into the water or were precipitated over the side of the vessel when the hurricane deck collapsed were on fire from head to foot, and they escaped one form of death only to meet another more merciful.

A man who is serving a two months' term on Blackwell's Island for some petty offence, and who was detailed as a "trusty" on the Charities Department boat Massasoit, proved that he had good stuff in him when the emergency arose. He was George Dennis, and when he saw people struggling in the water around

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

THEORY AS TO THE ORIGIN. Cook Says It Started in a Waste Closet.

A WOMAN'S RESCUE WORK.

Mary McCann, a buxom young Irish girl, seventeen years old, who has not been long in this country, and who is working as a ward helper on North Brother Island, also distinguished herself in the work of rescue. With more than a score of nurses she ran to the water's edge, near the stranded vessel, and plunging in, swam to the stern of the boat and brought to shore a woman whom she found clinging to the rudder. She returned three or four times, each time rescuing some person. Remarkable was the heroism of Mrs. Allen, a workwoman employed on North Brother Island, who leaped from the pier and rescued two women who were struggling in the water. Another woman rescuer was Pauline Puetz, a waitress employed on North Brother Island. At the risk of her life she saved five children from drowning. Miss Puetz made an enviable record at Asbury Park as a life saver.

Miss Lulu McGibbon, a telephone operator on the island, after telephoning the Police Department for assistance, ran to the beach and helped in the work of rescue and resuscitation. Among those she dragged from the water alive were two infants three and six months old, respectively.

Twenty-four nurses on duty in the hospitals on the island did creditable work, under the leadership of Mrs. K. L. White, the matron. These women waded into the river up to their necks, and each one of them saved from four to six lives. Then, with their clothing dripping wet, and in spite of a chilly wind that was sweeping across the island, they went to work to resuscitate the half-drowned passengers or to assist the doctors in attending to the wounded.

The fireboat Zophar Mills, responding to a call, stopped long enough at the One-hundred-and-thirty-eighth-st. dock to take aboard a squad of police and an engine company, and she reached the burning steamboat soon after the General Slocum was aground. Most of the policemen and firemen promptly jumped overboard and began rescuing people from the water. Several bodies they took out were lifeless.

LEAVE PATIENTS FOR THE RESCUE.

Physicians, nurses and helpers had run from the pavilions on the island, deserting for the time the patients suffering from contagious diseases, to join in the work of rescue. Several of the women nurses helped save lives by running ladders down into the water from a stone pier. Many acts of bravery and self-sacrifice were recorded. One girl, scarcely more than a child, rescued a baby. The heroine was Louise Gailing, twelve years old, of Nutley, N. J. She had gone on the excursion with Mrs. Gertrude Erking, and in the excitement following the discovery had become separated from Mrs. Erking and left with the latter's two-year-old baby in her arms on the hurricane deck. The little girl did not lose her presence of mind, notwithstanding the fearful scenes that were being enacted before her. She managed to get possession of a life-preserver, which, unaided, she adjusted about her body; then, with the baby in her arms, she went to the extreme end of the

Captain W. H. Van Schaick, who has been in command of the General Slocum ever since she was launched, in 1891, and six other members of the crew were taken to the Lebanon Hospital. Captain Van Schaick and the first and second pilots, Edward Van Wart and E. M. Weaver, were under arrest. Among the others taken to the Lebanon Hospital were several deckhands and the cook, Henry Canfield, a strapping Southern negro, who said he had been on the boat for several seasons.

Captain Van Schaick was suffering from a fractured leg, contusions of the head and a slight burn. The fracture was a result of his jump from the pilot house after the boat was beached. To a Tribune reporter, who saw him for a moment before he was removed to a private room, he said there were 982 passengers, besides the crew of twenty-three men. He was pulled from the water by the heroic women on North Brother Island, he said. Before being taken to the hospital he made the following statement regarding the disaster at the Alexander-ave. station, where he had been detained for the coroner.

The Slocum left the foot of East Twenty-third-st. at 9:20 o'clock this morning. There had been collected on board 982 tickets. The boat passed slowly up the river, through Hell Gate and over toward Sunken Meadows, where the Seawanhaka was burned in 1880. When close to the meadows an alarm of fire was given. At that time I was in the pilot house. I jumped down to the deck and gave immediate orders for fighting the fire. The fire drill was sounded, and the crew of the boat, numbering twenty-three men, worked like mules to get water on that part of the boat which was burning.

UNDER FORWARD BOILERS.

The fire was under the forward boilers on the port side, as I made it out in the excitement. My men were exerting their efforts toward keeping the passengers from jumping. The fire was gaining every instant, and the cries of people suffering from burning to death could be heard above every other discordant sound. I got the boat under way direct for North Brother Island, which was the safest place to attempt to land. The boat was driven on under full speed, and I pulled up sideways to the shore of the island. Many had jumped prior to this. Many were jumping every instant. My pilots, Edward Van Wart and Edward M. Weaver, were doing everything to get safely toward shore, and Engineer B. F. Conklin stuck in the hold. Mate Edward Flannigan had charge of the fire brigade, but when the fire spread over all we had to get off the boat. My hat was burning when I jumped, and I was pulled out of the water and hauled up on shore under a tree before I remembered what had happened.

Canfield, the cook, had a theory as to the origin of the fire. He said to a Tribune reporter:

The first I knew about the fire was when the boat was opposite North Brother Island. I heard two bells and a jingle, and I knew that meant there was "something" doing, for that means back water powerful hard. I ran up and saw there was a fire, and shouted, "Boys, come up!" I put on a life preserver and jumped overboard. I can swim, so when a lot of people got hold of my preserver I unfastened it and helped them into a boat that came along. One woman—a handsome one she was—said, "If you save my life you won't have to wuk the remainder of yo' life." I'd like to helped her, but I couldn't. I don't know where she is. Where did the fire start? I think it started in the porter's closet, where they keeps the waste and oil. That's a little room down below. I have been in it, and I don't think it was lined with zinc, as it ought to have been.

The fire, it is said by William Trembly, a deckhand on the Slocum, undoubtedly was caused by the spontaneous combustion of oil and rags in the forward part of the hold, where oil was stored. The first thing known of the fire was when it burst out in great fury, aided by a

GO TO DEWEY'S When Old Wine or Grape Juice are needed. H. T. Dewey & Sons Co., 138 Fulton-st., N. Y. Advt.

Continued on second page.