

Terrible Steamboat Disaster on Lake Erie.

350 LIVES LOST!

ERIC, N. Y., Aug. 20.

The steamer Atlantic came in collision with the propeller Ogdensburg at 2 o'clock this morning, and sunk in about half an hour. A very dense fog prevailed at the time of the accident. The passengers were in bed and the first mate was on duty. The steamer kept on her course, the officers hoping to be able to reach the port, although the boat was leaking badly. It was found that the vessel was rapidly sinking, the fires in the engine room being extinguished by the water.

A scene of terrible confusion ensued. The emigrants who could not understand a word spoken to them, by their cries and terror added to the horror of the scene. At about half past two o'clock, amidst the wildest shrieks of the passengers, the steamer settled and sunk.

The propeller had kept in the wake of the Atlantic, and those on board of her did all in their power to preserve the lives of the hundreds of the human beings who were now seen struggling in the water. The fog was a sad hindrance to their efforts, but some two hundred and fifty were rescued from the Lake and taken by the propeller to Erie.

[One account states that there were 500 passengers on board, 250 of whom were lost. The Atlantic was on her passage from Buffalo to Detroit, and the accident is supposed to have occurred about fifty miles from the former place. It is believed that all the crew, with the exception of the captain and first mate, were lost.]

[SECOND DISPATCH.]

LAKE ERIE CATASTROPHE.

ERIC, N. Y., Aug. 20—6 P. M.

The steamer Clinton has just returned from the wreck of the Atlantic. She reports her entirely disappeared and sunk in twenty-five fathoms of water. The boat belonged to the Messrs. Ward, owners of the Caspian, lately lost at Cleveland. She was valued at \$80,000, and was not insured.

THE LAKE ERIE DISASTER.

The following were the numbers of tickets issued from the office of the Michigan Central Rail Road in Buffalo.

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Steerage passengers (emigrants)..... | 217 |
| Deck ditto..... | 51 |
| Second class ditto..... | 10 |
| Cabin ditto..... | 48 |

Making a total of.....326

Aside from these, the agent thinks there may have been one hundred and twenty-five persons on board, including the crew—making, in all, about four hundred and fifty—and reducing the probable loss to about two hundred.

The emigrants were Norwegians, who came through by Lake Ontario steamers from Quebec, and about 75 or 80 of them were left on the dock, the agent refusing to suffer them to go on board.

An Express Company had about \$50,000 in money on board the boat.

- The following passengers are known to be saved:
- John W. Murphy, Express Agent.
 - W. Walbridge, of Buffalo.
 - Mrs. F. H. Harris, of Detroit.
 - D. S. Walbridge, Kalamazoo.
 - Richard M. Smith, of Penn Yan, N. Y.
 - Walter Osborn, Milwaukee.
 - A. Reed, Farmington, Ill.
 - Abner C. Ellis, Sandwich, C. W.
 - Miss Meyers, Utica.
 - E. G. Everett, Greenfield, Mass.
 - Mr. Brockway, Kenosha, Wis.
 - Capt. Turner, Oswego.
 - Alfred Clark, Coldwater.
 - L. D. Crippen, Coldwater.
 - Mrs. L. Buckley, Battle Creek, Mich.
 - A. Calkins, Belvidere, Ill.
 - J. L. D. Bissell, Mobile, Ala.
 - S. V. R. Graves, Erie County, N. Y.
 - A. Colvin, Erie County, N. Y.
 - J. Shamber, Clinton, New York.
 - James Russell and Lady, Stratsburgh.
 - C. Huntley, I. L. L. 18, Ill.
 - R. White and Wife, Orwell, Vermont.
 - W. O. Hall, Albany.
 - Mrs. Andrews, Ann Arbor, Mich.
 - Mrs. Cornwell, _____.

Among those known to have been on board, and not yet heard of, were: W. E. Daggert, of Chicago; Alex. Birdell, Agent; and Horace Curley and Jane Carley, of East Randolph.

FURTHER PARTICULARS.

BUFFALO, Aug. 20—9 P. M.

Nine of the crew, and about twenty-five of the cabin passengers, are known to be lost.

Captain Petty, of the Atlantic, while lowering a life boat, fell a distance of eleven feet, into the water, striking his head, and cutting it badly. He was precipitated into the water, and supposed to be lost, but was picked up by a boat from the propeller, after clinging for fifteen minutes to floating pieces of timber. He is much injured, and now lies in this city, in a precarious state.

Mr. Dana, who was lost, was very efficient in saving the lives of passengers, and exhorted them to cling to the life preservers, when in the water. When the boat went down he took a settee and plunged overboard, but at the same moment some twenty or thirty emigrants jumped over to him, and he went under.

The last persons taken from the boat were Mr. Givan, clerk of the boat, and Mr. Buell, first engineer. The steamer had then sunk, all but her stern, and they, with some Illinois passengers, were clinging to a rope attached to a floating mast and the wreck, being up to their shoulders in water.

As soon as the shrieks of the drowning passengers were hushed, the voice of a little boy was heard, and it was then first discovered that a child, about eight years old, was also clinging to a rope a short distance off. The little fellow, talking to himself, was saying: 'Oh! I can't hold on much longer. If papa was here he would hold me up.' A man from Illinois, a fine powerful fellow, immediately moved a long rope, and seized the boy as he was about to sink. He held him for some time, and called out to Givan to come to his relief, as he was nearly exhausted by the weight. Givan made an attempt to reach him, but in vain. At that moment the boat of the propeller, loaded to the water's edge with rescued passengers, passed and Givan hailed them, and entreated them to save the boy. Mr. Blodgett, first mate of the Atlantic who was on board, jumped out and swam to the rope, took the boy off, and returned to the boat. He was thus saved. The little fellow was from Massachusetts, and was with his uncle who was drowned. His name was not recollecting by the clerk.

The next boat from the propeller took off the clerk, first engineer, and the Illinois passenger.

THE DISASTER ON LAKE ERIE.

New York, Aug. 21.

The following persons are supposed to be lost:

- Mr. Field, wife and two children, New York.
- Mr. Frost, Boston.
- Messrs. Lake and Fairbrother, Albany.
- Horace Carley and sister, East Randolph, Vt.
- Mr. Le-fever, Troy, N. Y.
- Mr. Hartley and wife Albany.
- Mr. Birch and wife, Albany.

The following are additional names of cabin passengers known to be saved:

- L. D. Chippen, Coldwater, Mich.; James Russell, New York; G. E. Bushnell, Green Co., N. Y.; Robert Montgomery, New York City; J. W. Snook, Madison, N. Y.; C. K. Horn, Chester Co., Pa.; C. H. Green, Green Bay, Wis.; Wm. Hogan, Detroit; J. L. Wright, Brooklyn, N. Y.; John S. Blake, Meriden, Conn.; Miss Auld, Frankfort, N. Y.; Mr. Titus and son Detroit; Mrs. Ellis, Chicago; E. J. Wilson, Mr. Kitley, and J. Haskell, Detroit; B. F. Lawrence and wife Belvidere; J. Paddock and wife, Oakland; W. Birdsall, Grand Rapids; Wm. J. Hull, Albany; Miss Bunya, Henrietta, N. Y.; Josiah Brock, Wright Broeky; L. J. C. L. Peck, Rome.

Among those on board supposed to be lost are Miss Lathrop, Lieut. Langdon, and Master Rollins, Buffalo; Miss Abigail Staunley, aged 18, New York; Mary J. Scammon, Milwaukee, aged 12; Miss Duff, Canada.

Capt. Petty of the Atlantic still remains in a dangerous condition.

No bodies have been yet recovered.

THE CATASTROPHE ON LAKE ERIE.

INTERESTING INCIDENTS.

Among the incidents of the calamity are the following:

Mr. Aaron Sutton of New York City, was provided with two life-preservers; one of these he fastened on his wife, and while so doing, some one snatched the other one away. Mr. Sutton, seeing the boat sinking, got his wife off into the Lake, and taking his two little children, followed her. Mrs. Sutton was buoyed up by the life preserver, and partly by swimming and clinging to floating articles. Mr. Sutton preserved his children until all were picked up by boats.

One young lady jumped from the steamer, and would

also without the reach of those who were drowning around me, of whose cries I will not attempt to speak, I lay still, and watched the motion of both steamers, calculating my chance of escape, which I did not, at any one time, lose sight of.

It has been said we went some three miles after the collision took place. If so, then for me to be able to see that distance, one of two things must be false—either it was not very foggy, or we did not run that distance. It is true I did, at one time, almost lose sight of the propeller—I supposed she was leaving us to perish. It was then for the first time I lost my fortitude—I gave up for lost; but I yet hoped for help from that quarter, and I did not look in vain, for soon I saw her bearing down towards us, and then God only knows my feelings of gratitude. I made for her as fast as my strength would permit, and was soon taken on board.

From my observations of the drowning persons around me, I fear the loss of life will prove greater than can be known.

That it was to the still, calm, and almost clear night, and the interposition of Divine Providence, we are indebted for the preservation of so many lives, there can be no doubt. Had it been dark or rough, God only knows what would have been the result.

And now, that such an accident should happen, must remain a matter of speculation to those not present; but as for me, I believe it to be one deserving the strongest censure. That there was a reckless spirit manifested, I fairly believe—other wise, how, on an almost clear night, could it have taken place?

JOHN S. BLAKE, Meriden, Ct.

STATEMENT OF THE MATE OF THE OGDENSBURG.

The following is the evidence of the first Mate of the Ogdensburg, the propeller which came in collision with the Atlantic.

Dr. Grass McNell, sworn—Am first mate of the propeller Ogdensburg; commenced my watch at midnight; about half-past one saw the steamer; she had a red light aloft, and two lights below; we had two lights at the cross-strees, and another signal light in front; when I saw her, three miles distant, we were steering for the Welland Canal, and I judged from her course, we should pass half a mile north of her; upon nearing her, she appeared to have changed her course, and to be making across our bows; I now ordered the engines to be stopped; this was about ten minutes before the collision; seeing that we were likely to strike together, I ordered the engine to back, and the wheel put hard starboard; shouted as hard as I well could; our whistle was out of order; in about two minutes we struck; the bow of our vessel striking her between the forward gangway and wheel house, on the larboard side; did not see or hear any person on board the steamer when we struck; we had nearly stopped; the Atlantic was under full headway; after ascertaining that our vessel would not sink, we went to her relief, although we did not see any signal of distress, or hear her bell ringing; upon nearing, we heard the cries of persons on board and in the water; came up to her in about an hour; her lights had disappeared and her bow was under water; though her stern was in sight and all three of her decks; came alongside and took off all the persons who had remained on her till now; our boats were engaged in picking up those in the water; afterwards made a circle of a mile in circumference around the wreck, keeping boats inside the circle, and think we got on board all living persons who were in the water and on the steamer; took probably two hundred off the steamer, and one hundred from the lake; the Atlantic remained in the same position when we left her.

Question by a Juror—If you had given an order to starboard the helm five minutes sooner, would the collision have taken place?

Answer—It undoubtedly would not.

STATEMENT OF THE SECOND MATE OF THE ATLANTIC.

The following is a statement of James Carney, the second mate of the Atlantic, who was on watch at the time of the collision:

Mr. Carney, sworn—I was second mate of the Atlantic on the night of the collision; it was my watch on deck; the weather was smoky from the time of leaving; saw Long Point about two miles off; think I could have seen a steamer's light one mile; fifteen minutes after leaving Long Point, made the propeller's light nearly a point on the larboard bow; were steering southwest by west, our usual course, when I saw the propeller's light, which was dim; put the wheel a-port, and kept her off west southwest; two minutes after, the propeller struck us twenty feet forward of the wheel, on the larboard side; heard the engine bell of the propeller ring about this time; as soon as we struck, gave orders to the helm-man to steer her for the shore, which was within four miles; I then ran down on the main deck to see if I could discover the extent of the injury, and returned immediately to the upper deck; Mr. Blodgett, first mate, was then at the pilot house, and I told him she was sinking, and he ordered me to run below and see if she was filling; then went into the steerage, which is not forward; found no water on the floors, but could not get up the hatch to look below; then returned to the fire-hold, and saw water rushing in in torrents, carrying with it coal-balls, &c.; then went to lifting her with passengers and freight to the starboard, in hope to relieve the leak; found it impossible, as she was settling forward; then returned to the hurricane deck, and heard Captain Petty giving orders to those congregated there to keep quiet; orders were then given to get the two boats, which were on the hurricane deck ready, and also the working boat; the steamer settled gradually, and I should judge it was all of twenty minutes before the water came up to the hurricane deck; I should think it was at least half an hour after we were struck before the propeller came within hailing distance; had the propeller, when we first saw her, put her wheel a-port, we should have cleared her.

Meeting of the Survivors of the Atlantic.

Much feeling prevails at Erie, and great excitement exists against the steamer. At a meeting of the survivors, the following, among other resolutions, were passed:

Resolved, That we would call the attention of the public in particular to the inefficiency of so-called life-preservers, which are totally useless; the truth of which was too bitterly proved to some of the unfortunates, who trusted themselves to their fancied security.

Resolved, That we express our indignation at the gross neglect and criminal misconduct of the owners of the steamer Atlantic, in not providing proper facilities to afford passengers on board the means of saving their lives; we consider the want of a sufficient number of boats to hold the passengers, in a contingency like the present, and want of other loose materials, to be a wanton tampering with human life; and that the owners of the unfortunate boat should be held up to the public's men who have cast aside these considerations, from indifference to the lives placed in their care.

Resolved, That the loss of the steamer Atlantic, on the night of the 20th August, is a calamity of such an overwhelming and heart-rending character, that the voice of an outraged public is inadequate to its expression; and that, as citizens of Erie, we desire the proper authorities at once to proceed to arrest the officers and men who are to be found within the limits of this county, who were employed upon the Atlantic or propeller Ogdensburg, that the cause of the collision may be correctly ascertained.

LAKE ERIE DISASTER.

STATEMENT OF JOHN S. BLAKE.—The following statement of Mr. John S. Blake, of Meriden, who was a passenger on board of the Atlantic, is copied from the New York Herald:

You are aware that the calamity happened about two o'clock on Friday morning, August 20th, at which time I was sleeping in my berth in state room No. 1, (with two other gentlemen whom I have not seen since, and fear they are lost,) which room was on the larboard side, and within from four to six feet from where the propeller struck the Atlantic, and as near as I can judge about midway between the paddle wheel and the stern of the vessel.

At the moment she struck us, and while the timbers were still moving and crushing me down in my berth, I struggled and succeeded in extricating myself, and in a moment was upon the forward part of the hurricane deck, alongside of the pilot's wheel, feeling assured that from that position I could gain more information in regard to our danger, than from any other point, as the orders would be given from that quarter. At this time the propeller was slowly falling astern of us.

I had occupied that position but a few moments before the appalling cry was heard that she was sinking. All was confusion, and the next moment the command was given, in a very stifled and agitated voice, to head her in for shore, and ring the bell, both of which commands were soon obeyed and some exertions were made to career her over on her starboard side, to keep the water from rushing in, but without much effect.

All this time her engine was in motion, as it had been all the while, and we were fast leaving the propeller.

I then thought it time to make an effort to save my life—I made for the door of the saloon in order to reach the main deck. I found it dark there, and no light to be seen, and I do not believe there was one on that part of the boat; however, I succeeded in getting down, and tried to find something to float upon.

At this moment I thought of the life preserver stools, and climbed over the railing upon the hurricane deck to secure one, but I did not like their appearance, and I made my way down again and secured the after gangway door. I placed it over the rails on the guards outside, intending it for future use, concluding to remain upon the wreck as long as I could, giving myself sufficient time to clear the vessel when she should go down.

But very soon the cry of fire was heard, at which time, the emigrants were jumping off the forward deck, as they had been doing previously, by dozens; some sinking under the wheels, and some passing astern, uttering such fearful cries for help, in their own language, as to render the scene, which it is impossible to describe, doubly appalling.

Some fifteen or twenty minutes after the collision, the main deck sank; and then I launched my frail support, and struck out to clear the vortex which I supposed would soon be made by the sinking vessel.

When I was sufficiently clear from her and her wake,

and also without the reach of those who were drowning around me, of whose cries I will not attempt to speak, I lay still, and watched the motion of both steamers, calculating my chance of escape, which I did not, at any one time, lose sight of.

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