

FEARFUL EXPLOSION.

The Steamer Julia Blown Up in San Francisco Bay.

The Hull Burned to the Water's Edge and Engulfed With a Number of Passengers.

Between Thirty and Forty Lives Estimated to Have Been Lost.

Thirteen Bodies Recovered from the Wreck—The Search for Others Proceeding.

VALLEJO, Cal., Feb. 27.—A disastrous explosion occurred to-day at South Vallejo, on the ferry steamer Julia, plying between South Vallejo and Vallejo station. The steamer was about to leave her moorings a few minutes after 6 o'clock, and had about 70 persons on board, many of whom were going across the strait to work in the lumber yards on the other side.

Just as the deckhands were hauling in the lines there was a loud explosion and

A SHIRT OF FLAME

shot into the air. Those who were on deck at the time were hurled overboard by the force of the explosion and several of them were killed outright by being struck by pieces of the debris, which were sent flying in all directions.

The explosion attracted the attention of persons living in the vicinity and men rushed to the assistance of the unfortunate passengers.

In a few minutes all was confusion, for men, women and children who had relatives on board the ill-fated Julia, were waiting and wringing their hands as they rushed around the wharf.

The men on the wharf were anxious to aid, but there seemed to be but little for them to do, as most of the passengers were below the decks at the time of the explosion, and were

EITHER KILLED OUTRIGHT OR DROWNED,

when the water poured in on them.

It had been customary for all passengers to go below the decks in the morning, as it was cold and foggy.

A few who were on the deck and were not rendered insensible by the force of the shock, were quickly assisted ashore by the people on the wharf.

To add to the intensity of the scene, large vats of petroleum stored on the wharf caught fire and the flames spread rapidly.

The fire companies were unable to accomplish anything, as there was no water, owing to the tide being out, and 15 minutes after the explosion about 600 feet of wharf, freight depot and telegraph offices were burning.

When the tide came in they managed to get a supply of water and at noon had the fire under control.

While the firemen and others were trying to save the wharf a large number of boatmen were rowing around the wreck,

SEEKING TO RECOVER BODIES.

Soon after the explosion occurred the steamer had burned to the water's edge and sunk to the bottom with a great number of the victims buried under the debris in the cabin.

It is believed that between thirty and forty lives were lost. Up to a late hour this afternoon twelve bodies had been recovered, two of which were burned beyond recognition.

The names of the other ten victims are as follows:

Melvin Hodgkins.

Joseph Fragas.

Wm. Samau.

Olef Nelson.

Alfred Madison.

Michael Branley.

John Brevick.

Wm. Stark.

Edward Rule.

A man named Higgins.

The names of probably less than half of the passengers who were on board of the steamer at the time of the explosion are not known, which makes it impossible to tell how many

BANK WITH THE WRECK,

but at least fifteen who are known to have been on the steamer are still missing.

Captain Gedge of the Julia was severely injured, as was also Charles Heath, the pilot. Twelve or fifteen others are also very seriously injured.

The record of the Julia is a bad one, and this is not the first terrible accident on the steamer. In September, 1866, the head of her boiler blew out, killing nine of the crew and scalding the clerk and another officer of the boat so badly that they lingered for only a few days.

The cause of the disaster to-day is not known, though it is generally believed that the explosion occurred in the boilers; but the impression also prevailed that the fire was in some way

COMMUNICATED TO THE PETROLEUM tank, and that the explosion occurred in that quarter. The steamer burned petroleum for fuel.

Vallejo is 20 miles up the bay from San Francisco.

At 4 p. m. the coroner decided to hold an inquest over the bodies that had been recovered for the purpose of identifying them. It was no easy task as the bodies were more or less disfigured.

For instance, in one corner of the shed lay a mass of human remains so charred that it was impossible to identify them except by scraps of clothing on the body. Near by lay another body, the skull cleft in twain and the hands blown off. The face of still any other body was

A MASS OF CHARRED FLESH.

Legs were broken in several places. When the jury suspended their labors thirteen bodies had been identified. The most of the passengers on the ill-fated boat were laborers. Had it been an hour later, several of the heavy capitalists of San Francisco would have been on the boat, as they go up into the valley beyond on Saturday night and return Monday morning.