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SIX HUNDRED PERSONS MEET A HORRIBLE DEATH

The Big Steamer, General Slocum, Burned to Water's Edge

RIVER FILLED WITH THE DEAD

Over a Thousand Excursionists, Forming a Merry Sunday School Party, Were on Their Way to a Sound Resort for a Day of Pleasure, When the Steamer Caught Fire in the Waters of Hell Gate and Six Hundred Persons Were Either Drowned or Burned to Death—The Disaster is the Most Appalling That Ever Occurred in New York Harbor and Most of Those Who Lost Their Lives Were Women and Children of Tender Age—Diligent Effort Will be Made to Fix Responsibility for the Occurrence—Horrible Recital of Events Told by Those on Board—Heart-Rending Scenes Where the Work of Identification Was Attempted—Brave Efforts Were Made to Rescue Those on the Burning Steamer—A Message of Sympathy From the President.

New York, June 16.—Six hundred persons, men, women and children, at a conservative estimate, met death yesterday by the burning, beaching and sinking of the big three decked excursion steamer General Slocum, which took fire in the East river, near the entrance to Long Island sound while on her way to a sound resort with more than a thousand excursionists, the Sunday School pupils of St. Mark's German Lutheran church, their relatives and friends.

At 1 o'clock this morning, according to a statement issued by Coroner O'Gorman. 483 bodies had been recovered from the destroyed vessel, burned to death or drowned, and found on the shores to which they had been washed, or picked up in the river to which they had jumped or fallen from the burning vessel.

Tugs are arriving hourly with bodies from North Brother island.

Coroner O'Gorman said that more bodies had been sighted and that they would be brought in during the night.

New York. June 15.—One of the most appalling disasters in the history of New York, tragic in its immensity, dramatic in its episodes, and deeply pathetic in the tender age of most of its victims, took place today in the East River, at the entrance of Long Island Sound, within a short distance of the New York shore, within sight of thousands of persons, the majority of whom were powerless to minimize the extent of the catastrophe.

By the burning to the water's edge of the General Slocum, a three decked excursion steamer, the largest in these waters, more than six hundred persons, the majority of whom were women and children, were burned to death or drowned by jumping overboard or by being thrown into the whirl-pools by the lurching of the vessel and the frantic rush of the panic stricken passengers.

About 500 Bodies Recovered.

Approximately five hundred bodies have been recovered and are now being tagged at the morgues of Bellevue hospital and Harlem. Divers were still busy at a late hour taking bodies from the hold of the vessel, which they say is choked with the remains of human beings, while the bodies of scores who leaped or were thrown into the river have not been recovered.

It is the season of Sunday school excursions in New York bay and Long Island sound, the latter one of the most picturesque bodies of water in the country.

Between 1,500 and 2,500 Persons on Board.

Great preparations had been made for the seventeenth annual excursion of the Sunday school of St. Mark's German Lutheran church, the congregation of which is drawn from the dense population of the lower east and west sides, and the General Slocum had been chartered to carry the excursion to Locust Grove, one of the many resorts on Long Island sound. It is variously estimated that there were between 1,500 and 2,500 persons on board the General Slocum when she left the pier at Third, East river, though the Knickerbocker Steamship Company, which owns the Slocum, officially states that the number of persons was 873, this being only one-third of the vessel's capacity. It is thought, however, that there were several hundred children in arms for whom fares are not usually charged on these trips, on board.

Breaking Out of the Fire.

The scene on the decks of the steamer as she proceeded up the East river was one of merry-making, customary on such occasions. The mass of flags fluttered in the June breeze, the bands were playing and the children were singing, dancing and waving hankerchiefs and flags in answer to the salutations of those on shore or from passing steamers. At the extreme east end of Randall's Island, off 135th street, there is a stretch of water known as the Sunken Meadows. At this point, just as crowds were watching the gaily decorated steamer from the shore, the General Slocum took fire, and as the age of the vessel—she was built in 1891—had resulted in the well seasoning of the wood, with which she was almost entirely built, she was soon a mass of flames. The fire is said to have broken out in a lunch room on the forward deck through the overturning of a pot of grease. The wind was high, and all efforts to subdue the fire were futile.

At 134th street there are several lumber yards and oil tanks, and as Captain William Van Schaik, in command of the General Slocum, started to turn his vessel towards the shore there, he was warned that it would set fire to the lumber and oil, so he changed his course for North Brother Island, one of the Twin Islands, near the entrance to the sound, some half a mile away, where the boat partially burned, was beached. She sank near this place at 12:15 o'clock this afternoon, two hours and twenty minutes after the fire was discovered.

Life Preservers Could Not Be Secured.

In the meantime the passengers had become panic stricken, and those who were not caught up by the flames rushed to the rear of the vessel, and hundreds jumped overboard into the swiftly running waters. It is alleged that the life preservers were too securely fastened to their holdings to be available, and stories are told of frantic efforts, made by strong men, to cut them loose, but even if they could have been torn down they were too high up for the captain to reach. It is also alleged that no attempt was made to get out the fire apparatus at the first cry of "fire," though Captain Van Schaik says that he immediately rang the bells for getting out the apparatus. According to several statements, no attempt was made to lower boats or life rafts.

Captain Van Schaik and his two pilots, named Edward Van Wart and E. M. Weaver, have been arrested.

The three decked excursion steamer General Slocum, of the Knickerbocker Steamboat Company, was burned to the water's edge off North Brother island, East river, at the entrance to Long Island sound today, resulting in the death, through burning or drowning, of at least six hundred persons, mostly women and children. Four hundred and forty-seven bodies had been recovered tonight and divers were at work taking bodies from the hold of the steamer. The remains of many persons who leaped into the river have not been found, and it will be many hours before the list of dead is any where near complete.

The General Slocum, one of the largest excursion steamers in these waters, left Third street, East river, at 9:30 oclock this morning, having on board the annual Sunday School excursion of St. Mark's German Lutheran church, located in Sixth street.

Her destination was Locust Grove one of the many resorts on Long Island sound. The excursion was in charge of Rev. George S. F. Haas, pastor of the church. The vessel was commanded by Captain William van Schaik one of the best known excursion boat captains in New York harbor. He has commanded the General Slocum for almost the entire time since she was built in 1891. The number of excursionists on board today is variously estimated at from 1,500 to 2,500, but according to an official statement issued by the Knickerbocker Steamboat Company, owners of the Slocum, the number of passengers was 873, that being one-third of the vessel's licensed capacity.

The steamer, after leaving her dock this morning, proceeded up East river, all three of her decks being crowded with merrymakers. Bands played and the great side-wheeler was decorated with flags from stem to stern.

Fire Breaks Out.

The Slocum had reached a point near the Sunken Meadows off 135th street, Manhattan, which is at the extreme eastern end of Randall's Island, when fire broke out in a lunch room on the forward deck. The blaze was caused by the overturning of a pot of grease. The headway of the vessel and a high wind, almost instantly fanned the insignificant flames into fury. Efforts were at once directed to subduing the fire, but they were futile. The blaze spread with almost lightning rapidity. Captain van Schaik in the pilot house, had been informed of the outbreak of the fire and realizing the danger to the hundreds of excursionists, decided to send his vessel to shore at 134th street. At this point there are a number of lumber yards and several huge oil tanks and the captain was warned that to attempt to land at this point would endanger the property and perhaps further imperil the scores of people, who had already been frightened into a state of almost uncontrolable excitement. Changing the big steamer's course slightly, he headed her for North Brother island, half a mile away.

By this time the flames were rushing by leaps and bounds from the forward part of the ship aft.

The great open decks, built for excursionists with little obstruction from bow to stern, offered a clear sweep for the fire. As the Slocum dashed forward, the flames caught stanchion and cabin woodwork, eating and tearing their way across the vessel.

Vain Effort to Quiet the Panic.

The excursionists, but a few moments before in the full enjoyment of an ideal summer's day on Long Island sound, were driven to the after part of the steamer to escape the heat, flames and smoke that were constantly increasing. Policeman and deckhands aboard the boat, struggled hard to quiet the panic, but their efforts were in vain. The wild disorder increased, as frantic mothers sought to find their children, who had been to play about the decks.

Answers to the Call for Assistance.

The steamer's whistle was blowing for assistance and tugs and other nearby craft answered to the call. Before any of the boats could reach the burning steamer, however, the frantic women and children began to jump over board. The current was strong and there are many whirlpools in the channel. The boats that always abound in the vicinity picked many persons from the water, but these were only a small number of those that were seen struggling in the swift current.

On the Slocum the first sweep of the flames cut off escape from the hurricane deck, where a great many of the women and chidren were crowded together, and soon burned away the light wood of the uprights which came down with a crash on those below. It is thought that most of those on the hurricane deck were burned.

Forced Into the Water.

As the fire increased the struggle to gain a point of vantage at the stern became frightful. Women and children crowded against the after rail until it gave way and hundreds were pushed off into the river. After this there was a steady stream of persons who jumped or were thrown into the water.

By this time the shrieking whistle of the Slocum had attracted the attention of river craft for a considerable distance around and tugs and other small boats were rushing to the assistance of the burning steamer. These small boats rescued all those in the water whom they could reach, but many persons struggled and sunk before any help could reach them. In the wake of the Slocum as she hurried up stream, was a line of little black spots, marking the heads and bodies of those who had sought to escape the roaring furnace on the ship by throwing themselves overboard.

Few of those saved by the small boats had on life preservers. At no time during the rogress of the fire was their an opportunity to either lower the life boats or get the life preservers out from underneath the seats. This perhaps, gives an idea of the rapidity with which the flames swept the decks.

Boat's Crew Remained at Their Post of Duty.

It was an exerience narrowing and terrible and that any escaped alive seems wonderful. Through all the wild panic, during all that inferno, with fire and smoke surrounding them, the officers and men of the doomed boat remained at their posts, but they were powerless to avert the catastrophe.

The Slocum got within fifty feet of the northwest point of North Brother island and there stopped in the shallow water. It was just before she beached that the hurricane deck, the supports of which had burned away, fell with its load of women and children, adding to the panic and horror of those on deck below. Very soon after, parts of the second and third decks also caved in. But before this happened, the tug Walter Tracey had come along side the burning steamer and been lashed to it. Many of the passengers were taken off by the crew of the Tracey, which remained alongside the steamer until the tugs pilot house took fire.

The point where the Slocum beached was just off the Scarlet fever ward on North Brother island. The patients who had been out on the porches and lawns watching the approach of the burning steamer, were ordered indoors, and the physicians on the island hastened to the assistance of those who were being brought ashore through the shallow water. Many of those who leaped from the Slocum were carried away by the current even after she was beached and were drowned.

The Scene a Pitiful One.

The scene on North Brother island as described by the rescuers was a pitiful one. Body after body was washed ashore or brought in by boats and added to the long row on the beach. Fifty three persons died there while the doctors were attending them.

As the bodies of the living and the dead were taken out of the water, those alive were taken to the hospitals on the island or sent across the river to hospitals in Manhattan. Here am-

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GENERAL LEE

Chosen Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Veterans

ROUTINE WORK

The Veterans Decided to Hold Their Next Reunion in Louisville—Memorials on Departed Heroes of the Confederacy. With Special Tributes to the Memory of General Gordon—Corner Stone of a Monument to the Private Soldiers Laid—The Sons of Veterans Meet.

Nashville. Tenn., June 15.—A sweet voiced young woman of Norfolk, Va., Miss Mary K. Ewell, maid of honor for the south, by her singing of "My Old Kentucky Home" today won for Louisville the reunion next year of the United Confederate Veterans. It was after the old veterans had chosen Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee as their commander-in-chief, and had listened to a stirring speech by Colonel Bennett H. Young, of Kentucky, extolling the beauties, capability and hospitality of his home city and people, and their desire to entertain the followers of the stars and bars, that Miss Ewell was escorted to the front of the stage. Her voice thrilled the great crowd that filled the tabernacle, and the last note of the famous song had barely left her lips, when the convention went wild with shouts of "Louisville," "Louisville."

Seconding speeches were unnecessary, although General Lee graciously permitted one from a Virginia delegate and another from Kentucky. The date will be determined later.

In addition to the election of officers the convention disposed of a vast amount of routine business, but did not complete their work, and a final session will be held at four o'clock in the afternoon. The report of Adjutant General Mickle shows that since the last reunion, charters have been issued to forty new camps, making the total 1,563.

General Mickle's predecessor had borrowed money to pay most of the debts on his own personal security. This indebtedness has been cut down to $750 during the year. The expenses for the year were $5,662.

The Women's Monument Association was instructed by the veterans to turn over all funds to the Sons of Veterans, who will complete the work of erecting a monument to the women of the south.

The most interesting part of the committee on resolutions report is as follows:

First, That the section requesting Congress to take appropriate action looking to the care and preservation of the graves of the Confederate dead now in the various cemeteries in the northern states be adopted.

Second, The committee reports to the association that more than one application has been made to this association to fix a permanent place for our annual reunions, but your committee is of the opinion that for the present it would be wise for many reasons to hold our annual reunions as heretofore, at such time and places as the association shall fix from year to year, adopted.

Resolved, That all Confederate veterans regularly enrolled in this association, and none others, shall be eligible to election or appointment in this association. Adopted.

At noon the regular business of the convention was set aside for the memorials, at which Judge Thomas G. Jones, of Montgomery, was the orator. All the departed heroes of the Confederacy were referred to by several speakers, but General John B. Gordon, the last great figure to pass over into the invisible beyond, was made the occasion of special tribute.

The association of medical officers of the army and navy of the Confederacy today elected these officers:

President, Dr. John S. Cain, Nashville; First Vice-President, Dr. J. D. Plunkett, Nashville; Second Vice-President, Dr. D. H. Rev of Monroe, Ala.; Third Vice-President, Dr. W. M. Martin, Kinston, Ky.; Fourth Vice-President, Dr. Peter B. Bocat, of Florence, S. C.

The survivors of the Confederate navy chose Captain H. B. Littlepage, of Washington, D. C., as commander. In succession to Commander Dabney H. Scales, of Memphis, and elected Captain W. F. Clayton, of Florence, S. C., secretary.

The Southern Confederate Memorial Association met, heard numerous welcoming addresses and responses and adjourned until tomorrow.

The veterans will have their annual parade tomorrow morning, the start to be made at 10 o'clock. Owing to the increasing infirmities of the old soldiers, the route was almost cut in two today by those having the parade in charge.

The Sons of Veterans will elect officers tomorrow.

The most brilliant function of the reunion occurred tonight at the Golf and Country Club. It was a reception and ball complimentary to the sponsors and maids of honor, by the Sons of Veterans.

THE SONS OF VETERANS.

Reports of Different Committees—Headquarters in New Orleans.

Nashville, Tenn., June 15.—The Sons of United Confederate Veterans met today, Commander-in-Chief Fayssou presiding. Reports of different committees were heard. It was recommended that headquarters of the organization in New Orleans be accepted and that a permanent secretary be employed. The total number of camps was announced as 481, but only 104 are in good standing. The quartermaster announced that after paying the expenses of the year the cash on hand was $13. Former Governor McMillan addressed the Sons, congratulating them on the fact that the histories being taught in the Tennessee public schools were written by Confederates.

Chairman Owen submitted the report of the historical committee and it was adopted. It showed that the north was showing a spirit of cooperation in the matter of southern history and was returning torphies to the south.

Louisville invited the Sons to meet there next year.

THE NEW OFFICERS.

General Stephen D. Lee Elected Commander-in-Chief—Reports of Committees.

Nashville, Tenn., June 15.—The United Confederate Veterans today elected the following officers:

Commander in Chief, Lieutenant General Stephen D. Lee, of Columbus, Miss.

Commander of the Department of Northern Virginia, General G. Irvine, of Greenville, S. C.

Commander of the Department of Tennessee, General Clement A. Evans, of Atlanta, Ga.

Commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, General W. L. Cabell, of Dallas, Texas.

Chaplain General Jones' report of the board of trustees of Battle Abbey dealt with the financial condition of the Abbey and the Underwood suit, and was substantially as given out by the committee Monday night.

General A. Clement Overts, of Georgia, read the report of the historical committee, which said the south was now assured of fair treatment in history and that the youth of the country would not grow up under a false impression. The report was adopted.

A resolution favoring the erection at Richmond, Virginia, of a home for needy Confederate women was adopted.

INSTRUCTED FOR PARKER.

Delegates From Mississippi Will Vote for the New York Judge—The Convention Hears Rousing Speeches.

Jackson, Miss., June 15.—The Democratic state convention late this afternoon instructed the delegates from Mississippi to the national convention to vote for Alton B. Parker, as long as there was any chance for his nomination. Little or no work was done by the convention this morning, most of the time being taken up in speech making.

The permanent chairman of the convention was former Congressman A. F. Fox, of West Point. During the morning hours rousing speeches were made by Congressman Williams, Senators H. D. Money and McLaurin and Governor Vardaman. After the speeches the convention adjourned until 5 o'clock in order to give the districts time in which to bring in their nominations for delegates to the natonal convention and for state committeemen. The following is the delegation from the state at large:

Congressman Williams, Senators Money and McLaurin, Governor Vardaman, former Congressman T. C. Catchings and former Congressman Hooker.

ARKANSAS FOR PARKER.

Great Demonstration Occurs When the Victory for Parker Was Announced. A Full State.

Hot Springs, Ark., June 16.—The state Democratic convention today instructed for Judge Alton B. Parker of New York as the choice of the Arkansas Democracy for presidential candidate. The vote was Parker 258½; Hearst 182½; John Sharp Williams one.

United States Senator James H. Berry, United States Senator James P. Clarke,, Governor Jefferson Davis and Secretary of State J. W. Crockett were named as delegates at large from the state to the national Democratic convention at St. Louis. W. H. Martin of this city was named as national committeeman.

The vote for instruction of delegates was accompanied by enthusiastic demonstrations by the Parker and Hearst supporters and when the victory for Parker was announced, the enthusiasm was unbounded. The opposition of Senator Berry as a national delegate did not materialize and when the selection of these delegates came up, Hamp Smead, who had been selected by the Davis-Clarke faction to oppose Berry, withdrew his name.

Final Commencement Exercises of Washington and Lee.

Lexington, Va., June 15.—The final commencement exercises of Washington and Lee University took place today. John Temple Graves, of Georgia, who was to deliver the address before the literary societies of the University, was absent owing to illness.

New President of Roanoke College.

Salem, Va., June 15.—The 51st annual commencement of Roanoke College was marked by the inauguration of President J. A. Morehead, newly elected. The installation address was delivered by Hon. A. M. Bowman, of Salem, vice-president of the board of trustees, after which came the inaugural address by President Morehead.

NAVAL FIGHT

Japanese and Russian Squadrons Have Recently Met

AT PORT ARTHUR

The Russian Vladivostok Squadron Met a Japanese Squadron in the Korean Straits—There is Great Anxiety Felt for the Safety of Japanese Shipping—A Russian War Vessel, Convoying Torpedo Boats, Came Out Form Port Arthur and Compelled a Japanese Flotilla to Retreat.

Tokio, June 15.—4 p. m.—A flotilla of torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers, under the command of Captain Tschiva and in co-operation with the army, made a reconnassance in force near Shao-Ping island yesterday and bombarded the Russian outposts on the coast to the west of the island (Shao-Ping island is 12 miles to the west of Port Arthur). At noon, the Russian cruiser Novik, convoying ten torpedo boat destroyers, steamed out from Port Arthur. The Russian shore batteries protected these vessels with a heavy cannonade. The Japanese flotilla retreated slowly, firing as it went, for the purpose of decoying the enemy to sea. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Russian ships returned to the entrance of Port Arthur. The fact that the Novik came out of Port Arthur makes it certain that the Russians have succeeded in blasting a channel through the cement laden merchantmen sunk by the Japanese in the entrance to the harbor.

This freedom of egress comes too late to permit of any effect on the operations of the Japanese army, for men, guns and stores have practically all been landed, and Admiral Togo is capable of keeping the remnants of the Russian fleet imprisoned in Port Arthur. Last Monday night Japanese Vidette boats, protected by torpedo boats and torpedo destroyers, succeeded in reaching the entrance to Port Arthur and planted a series of mines. The darkness of midnight favored the operation. The Japanese vessels were not observed and they returned to the rest of the squadron without having sustained any damage.

A Naval Engagement May Soon Take Place.

Tokio, June 15.—3:30 p. m.—Reports of cannonading have been received here from various points, such as Chi-Kuzen province, Oki island and Tsuzhima, but the exact nature of the operations of the Russian Vladivostok squadron is not disclosed.

The Japanese warships in the vicinity are hurrying to the scene. There is a strong possibility that a naval engagement will take place soon. No southern city in Japan is exposed to attack, but this Russian raid may prove expensive to shipping.

Shipping in Danger.

London, June 15.—A dispatch to The Central News from Tokio, filed at 6 p. m. today says:

"A dispatch just received from Moji, says the cannonading at sea stopped at 1 p. m. There was a heavy sea in the straits all day. Ten Japanese Merchant steamers are known to have left various ports for Moji and there is much anxiety about their fate."

It is rumored tonight that the Russian warships have gone eastward.

Activities of the Vladivostok Squadron.

Tokio, June 15.—6 p. m.—It is reported here that the Japanese protected cruiser Niitaka engaged the Russian Vladivostok squadron off Tsu island in the strait between Korea and Japan. This report, however, lacks confirmation.

The Japanese transports Ugo and Fuyo, homeward bound, met the Russian vessels, near Oki island. The Russians pursued them and fired 16 shots at the Japanese ships. The transports escaped and reached Kartrusomorto.

Russians Fire on Japanese Transports.

Tokio, June 15.—Three Japanese transports, outward bound from Shimonoseki, met the Russian warships this morning outside the strait of Korea. The Russians fired 18 shots at the Japanese ships. One transport escaped. The fate of the other two is not known.

Fighting Still in Progress at Vafangow.

London, June 15.—The correspont of The Central News at Liao Yang telegraphed today as follows:

"The fighting at Vafangow (about 55 miles north of Port Arthur) was renewed today and is still proceeding. No details are obtainable but there are persistent rumors that the Russians were partly successful, destroying squadrons of cavalry and making prisoners sixty men. The Russian casualties in the fighting yesterday were

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