

**• MEN-AND-THE-SEA •**  
**TRUE STORIES OF BRAVE OLD DAYS**

**Gallant Deeds of By-Gone Years in The Walter Raleigh Coastland.**



**BARGE SAXON WRECKED NEAR GULL SHOAL**  
**OCTOBER 12, 1907**

The annals of the Life-Saving Service justify the assertion that a considerable number of the marine disasters recorded in the annual reports under the caption "Loss of Life," would find other classification did the imperiled mariners but remain aboard ship until the life-savers could bring them to safety. The wreck of the Saxon is a case in point.

The Saxon was originally a steamer of 1,193 tons. She was built in Philadelphia in 1862. In 1903 she was remodeled into a barge of 555 tons. When she made her last voyage she was valued at \$7,000, owned by the Atlantic Coast Lumber Company, of New York, but her port of registry was Georgetown, South Carolina. On the morning of October 11, 1908, she left her home port in tow of the steamer Katahdin with a cargo of lumber valued at \$6,500 consigned to Philadelphia. She carried a crew of four—the master, Frank Pilong; mate Fred Lund; one seaman (a Negro), and a cook. The names of the seaman and cook could not be ascertained.

On the afternoon of the 12th when the two vessels were off Cape Hatteras, they ran into rough weather, and after laboring in the seas several hours parted their towline, the barge going ashore two and one-half miles south of the Gull Shoal Station on the coast of North Carolina. The total property loss was \$12,800. Only one of the four men on board, the mate (Lund), reached shore alive. Lund's story of what transpired after the parting of the hawser is

as follows:  
"When the towline parted we ran up the forestaysail, fairsail, and mainsail on the barge, and tried to stand offshore on the port tack, but could do nothing, as we lay in the trough of the sea. The Katahdin came up and told our captain to try to get to Hatteras on the starboard tack, but we found that we could not do anything with her. The Katahdin came up again shortly afterwards and tried to pass us a three-inch heaving line, but missed. The second time she tried we got the line and began hauling it in, but the steamer went ahead before we got the hawser on board and the running line parted. The Katahdin then signaled to us to anchor.

"I sounded and found a little over three and one-half fathoms of water. We let go our anchor, running out about 45 fathoms of chain, but it would not hold in the sea and current, and the Saxon dragged in to the breakers and stranded. This was somewhere near midnight. We made no distress signals, as we had only the red and green side lights. We had no anchor light, nor had we any chance to put up any. We started to throw over the deck load, but the seas were breaking over the barge and she was pounding so hard that the captain ordered the boat launched—a 14½ foot metal boat—his intention being to try to get aboard the Katahdin which was lying some distance seaward of us. We got the boat in the water with all hands in it and shoved off. The captain and I had the oars.

"The seaman and cook could not row; no one was steering. We had scarcely got away from the side of the vessel, however, when a sea came along and capsized us. I got clear and swam ashore; I do not know what became of the rest. I was washed back several times but finally got ashore abreast of the lay-house (the half-way house where the patrols meet) and crawled up there very much exhausted. I stayed in the lay house until daylight. I saw the lights of the life-savers on the beach and heard them fire the wreck gun, but was too weak to make my presence known. At daylight I found I was able to walk, and went up abreast of the Saxon where the life-savers were. They looked out for me and sent me to the station."

About nine o'clock on the night of the disaster, when Surfman W. Bembury Miller of the Little Kinnakeet life-saving station, was covering the north patrol, he saw a white light seaward which he took to be the mast-head light of a steamer standing in toward the beach, heading about WSW. No other lights were visible. He continued to watch the light as he went along, and when he neared the half-way house, marking the

northern limit of his beat, he saw from the light that the vessel had come to and headed about NNE, and as he thought, stood off at slow speed. The surfman says, in investigation of the case, that he thought, the vessel acted "very queer" but that he did not think she was in danger of coming ashore, as he had often seen steamers haul up that way in bad weather such as prevailed that night. After finishing his patrol he reported what he had seen to his relief, but neither surfman considered the matter of sufficient importance to mention it to the keeper.

Surfman Arthur V. Midgett, of Little Kinnakeet Station, who covered the north patrol from midnight to three a.m., also saw the masthead light of the steamer offshore standing about northeast as he was starting out along the beach. When he had gone about half a mile on the trip outward he saw the two side lights of another vessel in the same general direction, and from the range he thought this last vessel must be ashore. He was making his patrol mounted, and he urged his horse forward that he might verify or disprove his suspicion. When he reached the half-way house he found that the vessel was some distance farther north. Continuing, he discovered her in the breakers some 250 yards from the beach. This was about 12:30 a.m. As he stood watching the vessel he saw a rocket go up in the direction of Gull Shoal and knew that the crew of the station at that place had also discovered the wreck.

As the scene of the stranding was nearer Gull Shoal than his own station, Surfman Midgett rode northward with the intention of assisting the Gull Shoal crew in getting out their wreck apparatus and bringing it down the beach, they having no team available for that purpose. Before reaching the Gull Shoal Station he met three surfmen on their way to the wreck, who informed him that their keeper, Capt. Zora G. Burrus of Gull Shoal, had telephoned for the team at the Chicamacomico Station, several miles above Gull Shoal. Midgett therefore turned back with the surfmen, and on coming again to the wreck found Capt. Edward O. Hooper, of Little Kinnakeet on the scene with his crew, he having been apprised of the disaster by telephone from Gull Shoal.

When Captain Hooper reached the vessel he had a fire made to show anyone aboard the wreck that help was at hand, and sent some of the surfmen down along the beach to look for anybody who might come ashore. "At this time," says Captain Hooper in his testimony, "the wind was strong from the NNE, the weather was clear and cold, the sea and surf high and there was a strong southerly current running. The stranded vessel could be seen about 200 yards offshore on the outer bar heading southward, the seas breaking over her, lumber washing overboard, sails lowered, and two side lights burning. A light could also be seen through the cabin windows, but there were no signs of life on board."

The south patrol from Gull Shoal reported a light off-shore down the beach about 11:30 p.m. Keeper Burrus at once ordered all hands to stand by and be ready, and sent Surfman R. D. Gray out to make a closer investigation. The surfman came back a little after midnight and reported a wreck. As already shown, upon learning of the wreck, Captain Burrus sent up a rocket and telephoned to Keeper Bannister Midgett, at Chicamacomico, for a team to haul his apparatus. He then notified Keeper E. C. Hooper, at Little Kinnakeet, and sent three of his surfmen on ahead to stand by the vessel while he and the rest of his crew made everything ready to start when the horses should arrive. The team came at one o'clock a.m. and the apparatus cart, loaded with wreck gun, lines, and breeches buoy, was on the beach abreast of the vessel on hour later.

A number nine line, projected by six ounces of powder, was first fired toward the wreck at an elevation of 22 degrees, but missed the mark, falling to leeward. A second line (a number seven), carried by a five-ounce charge, was aimed at 18 degrees elevation was next over the wreck, calling abaft of the

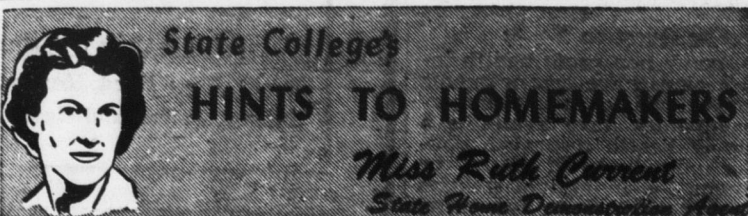
**HATS OFF TO THE POLICEMAN**

I doff my chapeau today to the police of the land—and the highway patrol. Last night here at Hickory a misguided and AWOL marine, loaded down with heavy artillery, held up a cigar store. A night officer cornered the tough egg—told him to drop his shootin' machinery, quick. The hold-up guy decided it was best to do so, but he might just as likely have started shootin'.

All day long and night long the police and the patrol devote their time to making it safe for Mr. and Mrs. Citizen to venture forth. Their pay don't hold a candle to the pay of many jobs that carry no hazards such as facin' loaded guns. A patrolman stopping a speeding driver don't know if the driver is comin' out blazin' or what, but he stops the guy. It is his frequent chore. He deserves high praise—he is your friend, even if you don't know it. He don't flag you down for his own pleasure when you hit it up to 70—he just postpones for you the day that such kind of fool will put you in the mortician ante room.

Before the city manager or the mayor of a 100 other cushioned chair jobs have their salary boosted, some heed and thought and more dinero should come the way of the men whose job it is to tame the unruly.

Yours with the low down,  
—Jo Serra of Hickory Grove



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To separate utensils and keep

painmast. Captain Burrus then gave the signal to haul off, but could get no answer. He thereupon sent two surfmen south along the beach to see if anyone had come ashore or if any bodies had been washed up, but all they found was the little boat in which, as it afterward proved, the sailors had undertaken to leave the ship. Captain Burrus then sent the team back to Gull Shoal for the surfboat, thinking to board the wreck upon its arrival.

While the perplexed life-savers were grouped on the beach awaiting the coming of the surfboat, Mate Lund put in his appearance and soon cleared up the mysterious features of the night's tragic event. The service crews returned to their stations about seven-thirty a.m. The Katahdin, whose lights could be seen offshore while the life-savers were trying to establish communication with the wreck, came in near the Saxon after daylight, and seeing that the vessel was lost, turned about and steamed northward.

Asked by the investigating officer whether or not the crew of the Saxon could have been saved had they stayed aboard their vessel, Keeper Burrus replied: "Yes, we would have saved them, every one, without any trouble. The second shot put the line across abaft the mainmast, and the gear could have been rigged in a few minutes. The masts stood until about two p.m. October 14. If the anchor chain had been slipped, the Saxon would have come over the reef and on the beach. On the 14th the mate and myself went aboard of the wreck, but could find no papers or anything regarding the crew. Everything movable had been washed away."

The barge became a total loss, but a considerable portion of the lumber carried was saved. The body of the cook was found by members of the Cape Hatteras life-saving crew on October 16, a dozen miles from the scene of the disaster. The body of the Negro seaman was picked up by the Big Kinnakeet crew on the 18th.

**PASSING of the CHINQUAPIN**

(Dothan, Alabama, Eagle)  
The average youngster of today wouldn't know a chinquapin if he were to see one.

But the time was when the chinquapin abounded. A dwarf chestnut, it grew wild and was free for the taking. Chinquapin hunting was an autumn sport and, of course, the novices were always led first to acorns, since the inexperienced couldn't tell the two apart except by a taste test. One test was sufficient. The next time he knew what he had before taking a bite.

A few decades ago the chestnut blight overtook the chinquapin and it began disappearing. Now, so far as quantity is concerned, it is gone.

Its disappearance is not an unmixed blessing. It was always hard to spell.

meeting Thursday night.

Misses Joyce and Nita Faye Ambrose are visiting Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Bratten in Elizabeth City.

Mr. and Mrs. Willie Crain went to Manteo Friday on business.

Mrs. Wilson Ambrose went to Elizabeth City Friday to take her mother to the hospital.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernie Ambrose and children, Bill and Hope, are visiting Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hassell.

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Creel visited Mr. and Mrs. Chester Tillett Saturday afternoon.

Mr. and Mrs. Melvin White and children, of Norfolk, spent the week end here.

Albert Mann of Norfolk spent the week end here.

Lester Sawyer, U. S. C. G., of Portsmouth, Va., spent the week end with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Sawyer.

Shelbert Twiford brought his wife and baby home from Columbia hospital Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Early Armstrong of Hickory, Va., spent the week end with Mr. and Mrs. Tom Sutton.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Brinn visited Mr. and Mrs. Will Tillett for the week end.

The juice of grapes before it becomes wine is called "must" by winemakers.

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