

Late General News

New York, June 15—The Steamboat General Slocum is ashore off North Brothers island. A telephone message says that many persons lost their lives. The vessel took fire and the pilot steered for shore, but before the ship could be beached, the flames had spread from stem to stern. The Slocum carried an excursion party of sixteen hundred, half of whom were children. Many jumped overboard and were drowned while others were burned to death on board. The telephone operator at Brothers island states that the water near the island is full of dead bodies. The Slocum was an immense triple decker plying between New York and Rockaway beach.

It is now reported that five hundred lives were lost.

New York, June 15—The Slocum left the foot of East Third street for Locust grove at nine this morning.

She was engaged by the Sunday School classes at St. Marks Lutheran church on 6th street between 2nd and the Boverly.

The Knickerbocker Steamboat Co., owners of the Slocum, have received a message stating that the boat burned to the water's edge and the hulk is still burning.

Their message says that a number of persons jumped overboard, and that some were picked up by small boats. No estimate of the loss of life is given by the company. The police have recovered eleven bodies, thus far. They are adults, mostly women. Ambulances and surgeons have been sent to the scene.

New York, June 15—At noon the best estimate placed the number of lives lost between two and three hundred. About fifty bodies had been recovered at that time, and the police and tug boats, steamers and small boats were out in the sound looking for others. A dozen ambulances and scores of physicians and nurses, and all the reserves in the city were on the scene to rescue the bodies of the dead, and succor the living and injured.

This was the annual Sunday School excursion party, made up largely of women and children, who commenced boarding the steamer at the foot of East 3rd st. at 7 this morning. With the triple decks of the steamer well filled, Captain Vanschaick, a veteran navigator, gave the signal and the boat pulled out from the pier, bound for Locust grove, Long Island sound. She headed up the east river and all went well until the boat passed through Hell Gate, and was nearing Brothers island. Then the joy and merriment were quickly turned into panic by the cry of "Fire." Flames had been discovered among the life preservers but how or when they started no one has yet been found who can say.

The burning life preservers were torn from their resting places and thrown overboard in an endeavor to smother the flames, and this added greatly to the loss of life, as it was noticed afterwards that the bodies recovered from the water had no life saving apparatus on.

Captain Vanschaick, when the dreadful cry arose, called for full speed and headed for the rock bound shores of North Brothers island. In the meantime the scenes aboard were frightful. The flames spread with fearful rapidity and men, women and children were running about, wild with fear, shrieking and in tears,

seeking a haven of safety.

Mothers gathered their children in their arms and leaped overboard. Others seemed too dazed to move and the flames licked up about them and burned them to death.

The great bulk stood by the boat until she neared the shores of the island where the water was shallower, thinking here they might find a chance for life.

Eye witnesses say that as the boat neared the shore she was surrounded on all sides by floating bodies of passengers who had jumped overboard.

On North Brothers island is located a hospital for contagious diseases, and other city institutions.

Employees and other people of the island did what they could with small boats, grappling hooks and rafts, pulling ashore scores of people, many of whom were blackened and burned by the fire.

The city was telephoned for aid, but it was more than an hour before it arrived. The steamer Massasoit and a few tug boats in the vicinity saved a number of lives of those who jumped overboard. Later the Massasoit was pressed into service by the police and, took from the island a number of the dead and injured and others saved and hurried them to the New York side of the river. Here the first trip of the steamer carried 80 dead and 75 rescued.

On shore were squads of police, ambulances and surgeons who administered to the needs of the injured. On one street car alone were five infant bodies.

Describing in a vivid manner the terrible catastrophe, Capt. Vanschaick said the boat was off 135th street, just at the point known as Sunken Meadows, and was two hundred feet from the shore, when he heard the cry of fire.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

Without further warning he rang the bells for getting out the fire apparatus, and leaving the wheel in charge of Pilot Van Work, he started for the cabin to see what was the matter. By the time he reached the stairs, the passageway was jammed with people, mostly women, many of them with babies in their arms. The captain tried to calm them, but the flames by this time were all about them, and he was compelled to rush for water as his hat and clothing were afire.

When the captain saw it getting beyond control, he shouted to the pilot to beach the boat, which was done. Before the vessel reached shore the panic stricken people were trampling one another under foot, and such as could reach the side of the boat jumped overboard.

When the boat was fifty feet from shore, the captain himself was burning in several places, so he jumped overboard and swam ashore.

As to the number of lost, he could not say, but there is little question that the result will be appalling.

Capt. Vanschaick, First Pilot Van Wort and Second Pilot Edwin N. Leader have been arrested.

New York June 16—At 8:30 this morning four hundred and eighty-nine bodies of victims of the Slocum disaster had been recovered. Divers at dawn resumed work in the sunken hull adding to the ghastly list. The horror grew during the night and the total number of dead it is now estimated will reach at least 800. Some estimates reach a thousand. Grief stricken crowds thronged the morgue and vicinity of St. Marks church and the

shores near the wreck all night looking for their loved ones. One mother who identified the burned body of her child this morning tried to jump from the pier on which the body lay.

Health Commissioner Darlington who has been on North Brothers island most of the night came down on a boat load of the dead this morning. He said he felt satisfied that fully 1000 had lost their lives. Of the bodies recovered one hundred and a few odd had been identified up to noon.

District Attorney Jerome has engaged Fire Marshal Frel to assist him in making an investigation of the causes and the allegations that the life preservers were rotten. Several victims report ineffectual efforts to secure the service of an able cork support.

Supervising Inspector Rodie said that within a few days an exhaustive inquiry will be held. He said that the records showed the boat to be properly equipped.

The day of the disaster was followed by a night of horror and grief at the morgue where between 50 and 100 bodies lay silent in the rooms awaiting identification. Fifty police assisted the relatives and friends in their work of finding the dead. Scenes were of the most heartbreaking kind fathers and mothers in some cases trying to do themselves harm. Hundreds however were drawn to the morgue by morbid curiosity many of whom were hustled unceremoniously away by the police.

At noon 469 bodies were at the morgue and seventy more on the way making the total number of dead recovered 539. One hundred and sixty-five were identified at that time.

New York June 16—At 3 p. m. 577 bodies had reached the morgue. Fourteen launches manned by harbor police and equipped with drags and other appliances are at work looking for more victims. Peter Gilligan and Samuel Cullock, divers, made a careful examination of the hull of the Slocum during the morning and reported not less than 100 bodies penned under the wreck of the superstructure.

New York June 16—Long Island Sound this morning was covered with a thick white mist that settled around the wreck of the Slocum as if in an endeavor to cover the horror of the spot with a huge white mantle.

All through the night wrecking tugs hovered about the wreck but the work of taking out bodies which was suspended at midnight was not resumed until the sun was well up in the heavens.

On shore during the night there was always an ever-changing crowd of anxious fathers mothers and other relatives of the dead.

Half a dozen divers were at work this morning led by John Rice hero of the Hooton catastrophe in which Diver Olsen lost his life. As the divers brought the bodies to the surface with a grappling hook a hook was placed under them and they were raised to the deck. Generally the bodies were turned beyond recognition. When several had been recovered the tug would steam along side and they were transferred. There the coroner would take the number of the corpse after which it was placed in a plain white wooden box. With a load completed the tug brought it to the foot of East 28th street, where the pier was transformed into a temporary morgue.

Out in the sound numerous small boats patrolled constantly finding bodies and taking them to North Brothers island.

Related

New York, June 5—Captain Wm Churchill, commander of the auxiliary sloop Bay Times, witnessed the disaster practically from its inception. When he saw the Slocum first she was off the Harlem river bridge and the flames were pouring forth from the port paddlebox of the ship as she moved along, and the smoke and flames, under the strength of the west wind, were blown over the decks. The scene was terrible. Women and children rushed frantically back and forth, screaming and crying, and scores jumped overboard.

"I cannot understand", says Captain Churchill, "why the Slocum was not docked or beached before she reached North Brothers island. There were no small boats near her and we steamed along side as soon as we could, saving many. The blazing steamer rounded the island and turning to port grounded on the north west point of the island."

"By this time the lower decks were crowded with women and children, screaming with terror. As the heat became more intense those nearest the rail dropped shrieking into the water. Some were able to keep afloat by grabbing the paddle boxes' supports and wheel. I took the boat alongside the paddle box, and took off every man I could, when the heat became too intense and I was forced away."

Churchill says as the blazing steamer neared the island, whistling for help, a ferry boat crossing the island paid no attention.

The Slocum burned practically to the water's edge, and the fire boats this afternoon flooded her hull which is to be searched for bodies.

The Sound shore from Oak Point to 138th street is lined with people watching the efforts of the police rescuing bodies. At 1 o'clock about 75 bodies had been landed on the New York shore.

It is learned that nine hundred tickets for the excursion were sold to adults. It is estimated that the mothers had from 500 to 800 children along for whom there was no charge. There were very few men aboard with the party and of 36 bodies taken to Alexander avenue station house, up to 2 p. m., 30 were women, and 6 children. The police say that fully 125 bodies have been landed on the New York side piers and among them 26 babies.

As near as can be learned, the fire broke out at 9:45. The first notice to the police came half an hour later. Comment on all sides is adverse to the officers of the boat because they did not land further down stream.

Fire chief Crocker, at 1:30 this afternoon, said he believed the dead numbered between 4 and 5 hundred, and that the injured included about every body that had been saved. The flames are still raging in the hull and the bodies of three children can be seen hanging over the rail. It is feared that many corpses will be found in the hull.

At 2:30 o'clock one hundred and seventy-five bodies, nearly all women and children, were recovered. Hundreds of policemen in small boats continue to be rewarded in their search for bodies, every few minutes. The bodies are tagged by the coroner, who is at the island.

The excursion was in charge of the Rev. Geo. Bass, who was accompanied by his family, and Assistant Supts. Carl Anger, and W. B. Tetamore. The pastor lost his wife and daughter. He says the fire started in the kitchen from fat boiling over.

The Slocum was inspected May 5th and was reported thoroughly conditioned.

News of the War

RUMORS — DIVERS AND DIS-TRACTING

Tokio, June 15—Various reports are current today concerning a sea engagement near Port Arthur.

One has it that the Russian fleet escaped from Vladivostok and gave battle to the Japanese off the island of Tsushima.

The captain of a Japanese steamer which arrived here this morning says his boat was fired on by the Russian squadron. Heavy cannonading was heard this morning in the neighborhood of Ikiabimi island, not far from Tsushima. A dispatch received today states that the entrance to the Fort Arthur harbor is again open, and that the Russian cruiser Novik sailed out and engaged the Japanese fleet.

SUFFERING FROM HEAT

Rome, June 14—The Agenzia Libera's Mukden correspondent states

JAPS' PREPARATIONS DESTROYED

Rome, June 16—A Tokio telegram reports that the Russian squadron, including the Novik, has destroyed all the Japanese preparations for landing troops and stores near Lung Wang Tung for an attack on Port Arthur from the east.

JAPS LOSE TRANSPORTS

Tokio, June 16—The transport Hine Maru which today returned from Moji, reports that at 11:20 on Wednesday morning she encountered the Russian squadron twenty miles west of Shimashima. The Hine Maru fled, signaling the other transports the news of their danger.

Three of the transports escaped, but the Hine Maru saw the Hilachi Maru and Sado Maru surrounded by Russian ships. Their fate is not known, but it is feared that the loss of life will be heavy.

RUSSIAN LOSSES

London, June 16—Reuters' Tokio correspondent says that in a fight at Telissa, near Fouchow, the Russians lost 500 killed, 800 taken prisoners and fourteen guns. The Japanese casualties are placed at 1000.

HEAVY FIGHTING

St. Petersburg, June 16—An official

Cripple Creek, June 14—The Citizens' Alliance and the Mine Owners' Association today issued a statement regarding their positions towards union labor which means that all unions must eventually be disbanded in this county. In future, says the statement, neither walking delegates, agitators nor labor unions will be allowed to say who may and who may not labor in Teller county, and who may or may not do business here. The source of all the strife is the Western Federation, declares the statement, and its existence is no longer to be tolerated. Unions of various crafts, already organized, will not be interfered with as to their local or international affiliations, provided the trades assembly be forthwith disbanded and no similar boycott agency organized.

San Francisco, June 15—Robert Dunham, president of the California Business College, was shot and probably fatally wounded at noon today, by B. C. Coateel, solicitor for the Western School of Correspondence during a quarrel over money matters. The shooting occurred at Dunham's office. Coateel immediately surrendered and claims that he acted in self defense.

that the extreme heat there has resulted in a serious epidemic of dysentery among the Russian troops.

The Cossacks have disposed of two thousand Chuchuses, eighty versts from Mukden.

STANDS IN WITH POPE

Rome, June 15—The Pope has received an autograph letter from the Mikado in which the Japanese ruler states that he has given instructions for the protection of the Catholic missionaries where the Japanese influence extends.

JAPANESE REVERSES RUMORED

Chefoo, June 15—A report from Russian sources states that the Japanese have suffered severe reverses north of Kinchow, but there is no confirmation. The Japanese have placed fifty two siege guns on the heights north of Port Arthur.

Refugees say that only conscripts remain at Port Arthur, with provisions for only six weeks.

dispatch today states that the fighting between the Russians and Japanese at Vafangow continues. The Russian losses on the 14th, says the dispatch, were two generals wounded, twenty officers and three hundred men killed and wounded.

On the 15th the Russians attacked the Japanese, who returned the attack at several points. Heavy Japanese reinforcements have been received and the Japanese have three divisions in the vicinity.

CONFIRMATION

Tokio, June 16—The capture of Telissa between Kaichon and Seoul Antien by the Japanese is confirmed. The Russians lost six guns and many regimental colors.

The sinking of the transports Hitachi and Sado by the Russian is also confirmed. Three hundred and ninety survivors of the Sado have reached Kukur. Further details of the sinking are not obtainable.

RUSSIAN WARSHIPS CAPTURED

London, June 16—Reuters' Tokio correspondent sends a report via Cologne that three Russian warships, which engaged the Japanese west of the island of Tsushima Wednesday and Thursday, were captured by Admiral Kamimura.

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