

---

# Commercial Advertiser and Journal.

---

OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY,

---

**BUFFALO:**

---

FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 13, 1841.

---

**MORE OF THE LOST.**—Mr. JONES of the Steamboat Hotel says five or six persons left his house Monday afternoon, and took passage on the Erie. Two of the men, apparently 50 or 60 years of age, were traveling in company. One of them, a tall man from Ontario Co., had with him a checked blanket or coverlet, a valise and umbrella. The two were going to Racine, W. T., and thence about 40 miles into the interior of that territory. The tall man left an old hat, made by *Leonard*, of New Jersey. The shorter man wore a grey coat.

**CORRECTION.**—The publication of our paper yesterday was unavoidably delayed somewhat beyond the usual time, and at last went to press with numerous typographical errors. We trust to the good sense of our readers to correct most of them. In justice to Capt. Tross, we must take notice of one of these errors. The report of his testimony, makes him say that he ordered the wheel to be put "hard to South"—a very unseamanlike order.—For "South," the reader will please substitute "starboard."

---

☞ We learn that JEROME McBRIDE, whose name was published in the list of the saved, has died of his burns, and subsequent exposure in the water. He was buried at Erie yesterday.

## CORONER'S INQUEST.

INVESTIGATION OF THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE STEAMBOAT ERIE.

[Continued.]

*Wm. Hughes sworn.*—My age is 25; I am a seaman; have followed that business seven years, the last three on the lakes; entered as 2d Mate on board the Erie this season.

[Witness described the duties of that station, which are principally stowing away the cargo, &c.]

Previous to leaving port on Monday last, saw a barrel of white lead and a smaller cask of oil, and assisted to stow it forward. There was a female passenger on board who was going to Milwaukie; among her luggage were some jars of pickles or preserves, which I directed the men to put on the boiler deck, and those only; saw no other articles on the boiler deck; if any had been placed there would have seen them; saw no demijohns on board; saw, however, Miller's men come on board with small kegs, having the heads out, and such as are used for paint pots. Being informed that these men were going to Erie, I gave orders that their things should be stowed forward; one of the men said he would look after the things himself; thinks that if any paint pots had been placed on the boiler deck he should certainly have seen them; saw persons lying on the boiler deck; was forward when the fire broke out; saw Capt. T. conversing with a stout gentleman; heard a hissing sound, he jumped aft and saw the skylight windows illuminated from the flames below. The flames came up in a large body through the scuttle instantaneously; jumped forward and informed the captain of the fire; then ran to the passage way and called below for the men to get the buckets and rig the engine immediately; ran to the fire engine and found the flames coming fiercely from below, high as the walking-beam; ran forward to clear away the small boats; there I saw *Mr. Clemens*; saw several others at the bows; many Swiss were in the boats before they were clear of the decks. I ordered them out, but they did not obey, so I jumped in and threw them out; the boat was then lowered, and as she was on her way to the water many persons jumped in, and she soon filled. Heard Capt. T. calling out to "stop her," but could not see him for the smoke; jumped over among the others, and was afterwards picked up by the Clinton; is of opinion that there were 300 persons on board at the time of the accident.



*Edgar Clemens sworn.*—Aged 27 years; is 1st engineer of the steamboat Erie; acted in that capacity three years; was on board on Monday last at the time of the fire; did not see any demijohns of turpentine on board. Half an hour before the fire, went down below to examine under and about the boilers to see if all was safe, as was usual every watch; watch is six hours. There had been some new brick work laid under the boiler or ash pan; while below he could see the under side of the boiler deck; looked up; saw no fire; had no light with him. The side of the boat is covered with whitewash and salt, as a protection against fire; twenty inches between boilers and boiler deck; round the smoke pipe, the boiler deck is lined with tin or zinc; grating in boiler deck to let off heated air; deck gets hot, but could lie upon it. There are holes in the corner of the boiler deck to try water in boilers, which is done every fifteen minutes; he looked into these holes and tried water 15 minutes before; he was standing by the engine by the starting bars, when the fire broke out. There was 2½ inches water in the ash-pan; when fire broke out had just been oiling and fixing machinery framing; a stormy night: heard an explosion like the light blast of rock; instantly after saw fire just aft of the smoke pipe, on boiler deck; he was looking in the direction of boiler deck at the time; attention called by the cry of children; explosion, fire and rolling of paint kegs were all seen and heard at the same instant. Saw painter put the pots on the deck, but nothing else; after black smoke passed off saw fire; smoke had the odor of turpentine; odor was strong; attempted to stop engine; did not; fire burnt his face; bewildered with smoke; something got under the bow; could not see what it was; people rushing past prevented him, and filled up gangway; half minute trying; pulled pin out of throttle lever; effect to shut off steam, make her run slower; went aft to go on to promenade deck; met Capt. T. on stairs, he asked if I could stop the engine; I told him I could not and get back alive. Went on the upper deck, captain came up and said he thought she was lost, there was no chance of saving her; went to get over the yawl boat; captain, 2d mate, 2d engineer and one passenger; got the boat over; passengers jumped in from main deck; she struck a sea; she swamped and carried cranes and tackle with her; thinks the crane struck 2d engineer, if so killed him; flames were now bursting out of the boat in every direction; pulled up a piece of a bench, threw it over; two men seized it and made off; put hands on rail,



it was on fire, and burnt my hands; I intended jumping over; I let go, then run and jumped over; this was at the stern. Explosion was turpentine he thinks; carpenter told him after that he had taken two demijohns off from his tool chest; carpenter wanted to get out his tools; carpenter after the fire told him he did not think turpentine would expand so; thought it was oil; witness directed carpenter to make some plugs; it was now 7 o'clock; it then became necessary for carpenter to go to his chest—tool chest was on boiler deck, under stairs, (so many Dutch people on deck and from the position of the demijohns off the chest and on boiler deck, they would not be discovered) on the chest they would; carpenter said they (the Dutch) were not on chest a short time before; carpenter's name is Harrison Foster, was saved, but is not here; demejohn, if broken, the fluid would run between boilers and into furnace doors; my opinion is that the fire originated from the demijohn of turpentine; believes the expansion of the turpentine burst the demijohn; two persons were laying within two feet of demijohn, two children at their feet; demijohn must have been within two feet of smoke pipe; six families in all, one saved; we ordinarily carry 18 to 20 inches of steam, at this time 17 inches; safety valve weighted for 20 inches, would expand in 15 minutes by such a fire, so as to stop engine; if the boiler had burst, I should have known it; it could not have been the case.

The evidence of Mr. Parmalee was taken after this witness, but did not show any very material or important fact that would tend to throw light upon the cause which led to the disaster.

Mr. HIBBARD wishes the following qualification to be made in his testimony. For the words "nearly all the lake boats have this guard," read "It is not customary for low pressure boats to have this guard, but is proper and necessary for high pressure to have it."

**BENEFIT OF THE SUFFERERS.**—The report which appeared in the Republican this morning, is not sufficiently explicit. The public would doubtless wish to know what were the total receipts and the amount deducted therefrom for the use of the house, throwing out of course the night's salary of the company, who very generously tendered their services.



send the mate, McBain, and the engineer, who were saved, down, that they may be examined.— I hope to be down in the Missouri, to morrow evening myself. I wish the Coroner to be informed immediately of their arrival. I have directed Mr. HARRISON to remain at Silver Creek so long as there was any prospect of recovering any of the bodies, keeping boats out all the time, where the accident took place, to recover any bodies that may rise—he has direction to write daily to you and myself. Our town is filled with mourners.

Yours &c. CHAS. M. REED.

Erie, Aug. 15, 1841.

*Dennis McBride sworn*.—My age is 22; a sea man, have followed that calling seven or eight years on lake Erie; was three seasons on the U. S. Cutter; four seasons on the Erie. The past season I was first mate after 12th June, previously the second. It is the duty of the mate to stow away the freight, shipping the men and when the boat's under way he acts as pilot. Was on board the Erie when she left port, (described her cargo) did not see any paints or oil on board; saw about a dozen empty paint pots, on the boiler deck; saw also a few trunks, &c. belonging to a lady. This luggage was afterward stowed in the baggage room by Mr. Hughes, the 2d mate, by order of Capt. Trrus; saw nothing else on the boiler deck. If other articles had been there I should have seen them, I think. The paint pots were near the middle of the deck, near the forward part; within 5 or 6 feet of the chimney. I saw some of Miller's men on board; the foreman I think. Do not know that these men had paints or varnish with them; was forward of the boilers in the forward part of the boat, in the mate's room asleep, when the fire broke out. Saw fire coming up thro' the sky light of the promenade deck and around or near the pipes; was 12 or 15 feet distant. The flames seemed to arise from the boiler deck, thro' the sky lights; the flames arose 6 feet above the deck; heard no explosion before I heard the cry of fire; heard no noise while lying in my berth, previous to the alarm. Fire might possibly be communicated from the heat of the boilers. If any thing should burst and be spilt upon the boiler deck, it must first run thro' the deck which was not caulked. Paints could not have been placed over the boilers unless carried there by the painters themselves. Do not know that the paints were there; passed along the boiler deck several times during the evening, but did not see any paints; went past half an hour before going into my room. Saw the pots brought on board about 2

o'clock, P. M., a short while before the boat left port; don't remember to have seen them afterward. The conversation between Capt. T. and the 2d mate took place about 5 or 6 o'clock, and after leaving port; frequently put freight over the boiler deck and it remains there during the trip; has known the boiler deck on the Erie to take fire before the new deck and since the new deck was put on; the new deck was put on last August. The new deck differs from the old by being raised midships more; no particular difference between the old and new deck, except the new was made stronger; come out of the berth, went to the after part of the boat, saw the hooking on the starboard small boat; then went to the opposite side of the boat; saw passengers round the boat there, trying to hook the tackles on the boat but did not know how to go to work; took out his knife and cut the rope yarns, and hooked on the tackles; gave orders to hoist the boat; they hoisted bows, one man at the stern tackle and he could not hoist her; then saw the flame rushing through the after skylights; then looked on the side and saw it come out through the quarter deck stanchions. The man let the boat go, and ran to the other side; went to the other side and saw the first boat in the water; jumped down the rail, off the promenade deck and jumped on board; did not see the captain after the fire broke out, till I jumped into the water; saw the first boat lowered away into the water; didn't see any of the officers of the boat getting the small boat away; thinks it was about three or five minutes after he came out of his berth before he jumped into the water; does not know how the old boiler deck took fire; the old boiler deck took fire in all three times, during the time he was on board; the boat has never taken fire in other places since he has been on board as an officer. The 2d mate stowed the freight on the forward part of the boat; was off duty; it was the second mate's watch from Buffalo to Dunkirk; was on board the Erie last summer when the accident occurred to her; says it is common for passengers to sleep on the boiler deck; the smoke pipe does not get red hot where it comes out of the hurricane deck; emigrants are not allowed to move their baggage after it is on the boat; could not know personally all the freight that is placed on the boat; did not see the steamboat Rochester that evening; says there was a fire engine on board, kept forward the wheel house; says the engine was in order; saw it used on Friday before the fire; thinks the engine was enveloped in flames in half a minute after the fire broke out; it can be got ready for use in a moment.

]To be continued.]