

Commercial Advertiser
Tuesday Afternoon, April 8, 1845
New York, New York
Vol. XLVIII, p.2

NEW-YORK COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

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NEW-YORK, TUESDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 8, 1845.

NO. 46 PINE STREET.

FEARFUL DISASTER.
Loss of the Steamer Swallow

The usually safe and peaceful navigation of the Hudson has been marked, since the opening of the present season, by an unusual number of serious accidents; but not for many years have we been startled by an event of such magnitude, and there is perhaps reason to fear, of such distressing consequences, as that which we are now called on to record. We give all the information that we have been able to obtain.

The *Swallow*, it appears, left Albany last evening at six o'clock, having on *board passengers in numbers variously estimated at from 250 to 350*. At *a little after 8 o'clock* she struck upon the point of the island between Hudson and Athens, with such force as to lift the bow entirely out of the water, break the boat in two and render her a complete wreck.

Whether any lives were lost is not certainly established, nor can it be till we hear more fully from the scene of the disaster, which will be to-morrow morning. Some of the gentlemen who came down by the Express or *Rochester*, with whom we have conversed, are of the opinion that many must have drowned, while others are equally confident that all on board were saved.

From the early hour of the evening at which the accident occurred there is reason to hope that few if any of the passengers had betaken themselves to their state rooms or berths, and we think that those who were dressed and stirring, must have had sufficient time to reach the deck, before the waters rushed into their cabins.

About one hundred of the passengers were brought down by the Rochester, and fifty by the Express, the remainder being landed at Hudson, many preferring to stay there for the purpose of making an effort, in the morning, to recover their baggage from the wreck.

The following letter from the correspondent of Mr. Livingston, who was on board the *Rochester*, gives a graphic description of the scene.

Correspondence of C. Livingston

No. 10 Wall street.

STEAMBOAT ROCHESTER, 10 o'clock, P.M.

We left Albany at 6 o'clock this evening, following in the wake of the steamboat *Swallow*. As we neared Athens, opposite Hudson, we observed that the *Swallow* was apparently aground, and as she was well on the West shore, we steered to the Eastward.—When close to her, her bell was rung, but we were under too much headway to come to until we had passed some distance ahead, although it was evident to us that she was sinking.

Every effort was made to bring the *Rochester* about, but being on the Hudson flats, with a strong North-West wind, we were unable to accomplish it until an anchor could be rigged and let go, which enabled the boat to drift round and head toward the wreck. Much credit is due to Capt. Cruttenden and his pilots. They made every effort for dispatch, but our anxiety, and the cries for aid of the sufferers ringing in our ears made each moment seem an hour.

On coming along side of the *Swallow* we found her bow completely out of the water, high up on a rock, the boat broken in two, and her stern under the water, which was over the hurricane

deck. *Capt. Squire[s] was truly in command, "Ah!" said he, "my good fellow, this is better than Lake Erie, for here we have the bottom, and I hope all are safe."*

The ladies' cabin was about ten feet under water, and much anxiety was felt lest some of them were drowned. But from inquiries made among the passengers *I think that all the ladies came upon the upper deck and were saved.*

When the water came up to the furnaces, it caused the flames to rush out, and in the confusion many thought that the boat was on fire and jumped overboard, but we have every reason to suppose that all who did so were rescued.

The evening was extremely dark, so as to require that the boats should be run with less than their usual headway.

The steamer *Express*, which was also in the wake of the *Swallow*, got alongside of her before the *Rochester*. Both boats remained alongside until all the passengers and as much of the baggage as could be got at were taken off.

There was much excitement on board the *Rochester*, and the hundred ready to advise, and the many obstacles in the way of getting the boat about, rendered it at the time of peculiar embarrassment to her commander. The moment when it was supposed that the *Swallow* was on fire was indeed one of trial to Capt. Cruttenden, yet he was cool, calm, and collected, and commanded his vessel in such a manner as showed that he is a man to be depended on in an emergency.

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A more lamentable account is given by a passenger to the editors of the Tribune, which we copy. His description of the catastrophe is appalling:—

STEAMER ROCHESTER, Tuesday, 3 A.M.

MY DEAR FRIEND—You may value a few lines, from an eyewitness, descriptive of the terrible accident which befell the SWALLOW last evening. At about 8 o'clock, when going at a rapid rate, the boat struck on a small rock island abreast the town of Athens and city of Hudson. I was sitting in the upper saloon in conversation. At the first severe shock the passengers rushed below, but fears were calmed for a moment by the outcry that we had only come in contact with a raft.

But our ears were speedily assailed by the appalling sounds of the rending of timbers, and the evident destruction of the boat, while the stern settled with frightful rapidity. Those who had "turned in," in the after cabin, had barely time to leap from their berths before the water was upon them. You can imagine the horrors of the scene at this moment, when more than three hundred souls were thus exposed in the midst of falling snow and almost total darkness. As the water reached the boiler fires a sheet of mingled steam, smoke and flame poured into the boat, illuminating the ghastly countenances with a sudden glare of vivid light, and completing the consternation. The conviction that the curse of the fire was to be added to our other imminent perils, curbed the resolution of the stoutest hearts. But the rapid sinking of the boat extinguished the fires, and all was darkness again.

In less than five minutes, by the blessing of God, the stern rested on the bottom, the water being above the windows of the aft saloon state rooms. Several females were drawn out of state rooms by dashing in the windows; two almost exhausted—one very aged and now lying on board this boat in a precarious situation—were taken from the ladies' cabin by cutting through the floor. They had sustained themselves on settees, with only a few inches of breathing room for their faces.

The bow had been forced high and dry upon the rock, and the boat, split open amidships, was left rising almost perpendicularly upward, covered with anxious beings clinging to the

bulwarks. The remainder of the passengers were sadly grouped on the forward upper deck, many bewailing the absence of dear companions and actuated by the most dreadful apprehensions for their fate.

By this time the alarm had been thoroughly communicated to the shore on either side. The bells of the churches began to ring, and the river was soon covered with torches, waving in the fleet of boats that put off to our assistance; while the *Rochester*, which had found it difficult to get to us, and the *Express*, which had now come up, were gradually approaching alongside. The sound of the bells pealing on the air, the shouts of those in the boats, the light of the waving torches and the wailing grief of many on the wreck constituted features of a most impressive scene.

In the course of an hour all were taken off who remained on the *Rochester*, the past seeming like a terrible dream. I am approaching the city. It can scarcely be but that several are lost. Many leaped immediately overboard in that frenzy of the mind which precluded the power of self-preservation in the water. The doors of most of the state rooms were so sprung at once as to be immovable, and examination will probably discover the dead within some of them. I can scarcely hope otherwise.

The boat is a complete wreck. It was a mournful sight as we cast off from her side. The captain behaved nobly—calming fears, and making his voice heard every where in advice, with the most thorough judgment and self-possession. The baggage is almost all deep under water and will be recovered only in a damaged state.

Our hearty thanks are due to the officers of the *Rochester* and *Express* for their prompt assistance, and untiring assiduity to save everything that hand could be laid on.

Friends in the *Rochester* tell me that the yell of a gong, as they describe it, which came to their ears from the sinking boat, was a character never to be forgotten.

Yours truly,

HENRY HARRINGTON.

N.B.—*Morning*—The apprehensions of loss of life which I have expressed above, are fully realized. *Several females were seen to be washed off by the water as it rose above the guards, and all, it is thought, could not have escaped from the cabin.* Several on board our boat have nothing but their night dresses.

Meeting of the Passengers

At a meeting of those persons who were passengers on board the *Swallow*, on her passage down the river, 7th of April, 1845, held on the same evening, on board the steamboat *Rochester*, the Hon. Gideon Hard, of Albion, was appointed chairman, and the Hon. James Jarvis of New York, secretary. John Paine, James Jarvis, Gideon Hard, Day O’Kellogg and Samuel Cary, were appointed a committee to recommend suitable resolutions for the consideration of the meeting.

The committee reported the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That the Steamboat *Swallow*, at the time of the happening of the melancholy accident this evening, in the Athens channel, was *running considerably below her usual speed*, it being at the time very dark and the snow falling in such quantities as to render it very difficult for the pilot to discover the shores.

Resolved, That *Captain Squires, of the Swallow*, during the continuance of the danger to which the passengers were exposed, *conducted himself with a coolness and self-possession worthy of all praise*, and by so doing contributed essentially to the safety of the passengers.

Resolved, That the thanks of this meeting are eminently due to the Captains of the steamboats *Express* and *Rochester*, as well as to the citizens of Athens and Hudson, for a very prompt relief by which we were rescued.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting by signed by the chairman and secretary, and such of the passengers as are present, and be published.

GIDEON HARD, Chairman

JAMES JARVIS, Secretary.