

THE DISASTER ON THE OHIO

The Collision Between the Steamers America and United States—The Boats Wrecked and Burned—Details of the Calamity.

From the Cincinnati Enquirer, Dec. 7.

One of the most terrible calamities which ever occurred on Western waters happened about 12 o'clock on Friday night near Warsaw, Ky., about sixty-five miles from Cincinnati. The *United States*, of the Louisville mail line, struck the *America* upon her bow, and in a moment, almost, both vessels were the scene of death in its most appalling shape. Both boats were heavily laden, and crowded by passengers of both sexes and all ages. A part of the cargo of the *United States* consisted of petroleum, ranged in barrels upon the deck, and immediately after the collision the coals from the furnace reached the oil, and the vessel was enveloped in flames. It is difficult to gather details; it is not easy even to write with calmness this dreadful calamity. A mother, when the vessel sank, threw her two children into the water, and then leaped in to swim with them to land, or die with them if she could not save. A husband calmly fastened a life-belt round the waist of his young wife, and then dragged her through fire and water ashore. The *America* drifted, or was driven, to the bank, and a lady sprang from the upper deck and clung to the branch of a tree; her daughter followed, and reached the same branch, and, their united weight breaking it, they both fell back into the water, but again climbed upon the land. But, from the *United States* to the opposite bank the scene was more terrible, the escapes fewer. One passenger informs us that for 200 yards the water was on fire, and in that fiery deluge were women and children, shrieking in the horrors of the last agony. Thirty-five women are said to be lost.

A passenger tells us that upon being awakened by the crash he half dressed and rushed upon the deck. A mixed throng of men and women swayed hither and thither, all confused, and few seeming capable of devising any plan for a struggle for life. Twice he fell under the pressure of the heaving mass, and twice he regained his footing; and then, burned and bruised, he precipitated himself into the burning waters, but, though unable to swim, contrived to reach the shore.

It was not until very late, or rather early this morning, that the boat was cleared of the numerous visitors that rushed down to the wharf to ascertain the fate of friends; but when we left, the orphan girl, almost worn out by grief, was still sobbing out her one cry, "My father! my father!"

The steamer *C. T. Dumont* was sent, about 10 o'clock yesterday morning, to the scene of the disaster, and returned about 12:30 last night. She had scarcely touched the wharf when a young girl, scarcely seventeen years of age, leaped on board and asked for a gentleman whose name we did not catch. The reply was, "He is lost." She screamed, "My father, my father!" It was heart-rending. Above the turmoil of many voices rose the shrill cry, "My father, my father!"

The collision occurred about 11:15 o'clock. The *America* struck the *States* a little aft the capstan, cutting deep into her bow. The forward guards of the *States* were taken up, with coal oil, a quality of freight which requires to be carried where the air will get at it. Almost simultaneously with the collision, the flames arose from the bow of the *States*, reaching up as high as her hurricane roof. It flashed up like the explosion of gunpowder. The fire ran up the boat's stairway, and within a very few moments the whole forward part of the boat was on fire, the flames leaping up as high as the top of her chimney. The wind was blowing up stream, and directly against the head of the *States*, and drove the fire right into the cabin, and it was not more than two minutes until it extended to the aft end of the steamer, and the whole cabin and upper deck of the boat were in flames.

Capt. WADE, of the *States*, remained on the roof of that steamer until he was completely surrounded by flames. He escaped by jumping to the boiler-deck guards of the *America*, when the two boats came together. He says but for the fire he could have run the boat ashore and saved everything.

Capt. WADE says that the boat left here with only sixty-five passengers on board, thirteen of whom were ladies. Seven of these lady passengers are known to be saved. Very few of the passengers on the *States* had retired. There was a wedding party on board, and the passengers tendered them a serenade, and Capt. WADE found it necessary, but a very short time before the collision occurred, to go down from the Texas to the cabin and repress, to a certain extent, the noise of the merriment they were making.

The flames drove many of the passengers to the aft end of the *States*, and many of them took refuge in the yawl, which was suspended by a derrick at the stern of the boat. So many of them crowded into this boat that the derrick broke down and let the yawl and those who were in it into the river. As many as twenty or twenty-five persons were in the yawl when the derrick fell, and it is supposed most of them were drowned. One of them, Capt. JOE McCAMMOTT, a well-known pilot, held on to the yawl when it fell, and was finally rescued. He was found to be very badly burned, and his strength was almost exhausted when assistance reached him.

Owing to the extraordinary exertions of Capt. WHITTEN and Mr. WM. TAYLOR, head clerk of the *America*, several lives were saved, among them Miss BARTON, of the Ole Bull Concert Troupe. Miss BARTON was in her state-room at the time, and seemed to be completely bewildered. Mr. TAYLOR warned her of the danger, but she seemed to pay no attention to him. Finally he burst open the door, and by main strength carried her aft and down through a small hatchway. It was not until after she had been placed on shore that she realized the awful condition in which, but a few minutes previous, she had been placed.

One man, name unknown, who occupied a room in the aft part of the *America*, became completely bewildered. He was warned of the danger, but paid no attention to it. Mr. TAYLOR, at the last moment, endeavored to rescue him, but it was too late. He became suffocated and fell through the hatchway. Another man, name unknown, also so lost his presence of mind as to entirely forget the terrible predicament in which he was placed, and also perished in the flames.

None of the valuables of the *United States* were saved, the fire spreading with such frightful rapidity as to make it utterly impossible to secure them.

Among the passengers on the *America* coming up to this city, were Mr. W. F. GRISWOLD and W. DAVIDSON, of the firm of E. W. HUGHWAIR & Co., New-York. Mr. DAVIDSON has just retired to his state-room, had divested himself of his clothing and was about to get into his berth when the collision took place. He immediately stepped out upon the cabin guard of the boat, and on seeing the situation, both boats being on fire, he leaped overboard and swam ashore. His money was in his clothes, and his gold watch he had placed under his pillow, all of which were lost. Mr. GRISWOLD had not retired with Mr. DAVIDSON, but was in the cabin when the whistle sounded and the bell gave the alarm, and from the sound he was convinced that something was wrong. He no sooner came to that conclusion than the boats collided, and he passed out upon the cabin guard in time to see the barrels of petroleum on the lower guards of the *United States* burst open, their contents being entirely ignited. He concluded that his safety was in jumping overboard, and he did so, swimming ashore with his overcoat on.

OLE BULL, Mr. GRISWOLD says, followed suit, leaping into the water from the guards of the *United States*, with his overcoat on, into the water, and swimming ashore. Miss BARTON, one of OLE BULL's troops, and two gentlemen *attachés*, one of them having the great musician's case which contained his two famous violins, were also saved.

Additional by Telegraph.

CINCINNATI, Tuesday, Dec. 8.

The excitement relative to the terrible disaster to the steamers *United States* and *America* is still intense. Parties are arriving from all quarters to make inquiries about lost friends or relatives, known to have taken passage on one or the other of the ill-fated boats. The remains of some of the victims will arrive here to-day on the steamer *General Lytle*, for recognition and interment. A dispatch to the *Commercial*, from Florence, Ind., says that thirty-three bodies have been recovered from the wrecks of the *United States* and *America*. The following have been identified:

James Johns, of Louisville; John Fennell, of Newport, Ky.; Emil Moreau, William Johnson and Wallace Farris, of Lexington, Ind.; Mr. Farber, of Hanover, Ind.; Mrs. George W. Griffin, of New-Orleans; Mrs. Mary T. Thompson, of Philadelphia, and sixteen colored men of the crew of the *United States*. There are few bodies remaining unidentified, with the exception of a number of colored persons, supposed to be those of the deck hands who perished. The scene at Warsaw, Ky., is indescribable. The sufferers have been rendered comfortable by the citizens, as far as it has been in their power to bestow relief.

S. P. HAYMAN, formerly a messenger of the American Express Company, was brought to this city yesterday, under arrest, for robbing a safe in his charge of \$20,000 last March.