

The Herald and News.

VOL. XL. NO. 91.

NEWBERRY, S. C., FRIDAY JUNE 17, 1904

TWICE A WEEK, \$1.50 A YEAR

HUNDREDS PERISHED BY FIRE AND WATER

EXCURSION STEAMER BURNED TO WATER'S EDGE.

One of The Most Appalling Disasters in The History of New York.

New York, June 15.—One of the most appalling disasters in the history of New York, tragic in its immensity, dramatic in its episodes and deeply pathetic in the tender age of most of its victims, took place today in the East River, at the entrance to Long Island Sound, within a short distance of the New York shore, within sight of thousands of persons, the majority of whom were powerless to minimize the extent of the catastrophe.

By the burning to the water's edge of the General Slocum, three-decked excursion steamer, the largest in these waters, six hundred persons, the majority of whom were women and children, were burned to death or drowned by jumping overboard or by being thrown into the whirlpools by the lurching of the vessel and the frantic rush of the panic-stricken passengers.

It is the season of Sunday-school excursions in New York Bay and Long Island Sound, the latter one of the most picturesque bodies of water in the country.

Great preparation had been made for the seventeenth annual excursion of the Sunday-school of St. Mark's German Lutheran church, the congregation of which is drawn from the dense population of the lower East and West sides, and the General Slocum had been chartered to carry the excursionists to Locust Grove, one of the many resorts on Long Island Sound.

The number of excursionists on board today is variously estimated at from 1,500 to 2,500, but according to an official statement issued by the Knickerbocker Steamboat company, owners of the Slocum, the number of passengers was 873, that being one-third of the vessels licensed capacity.

The fire broke out in a lunch room on the forward deck. The blaze was caused by the overturning of a pot of grease.

The excursionists, but a few moments before in the full enjoyment of an ideal summer's day on Long Island Sound, were driven to the after part of the steamer to escape the heat flames and smoke that were constantly increasing. Policemen and deck hands aboard the boat struggled hard to quiet the panic, but their efforts were in vain. The wild disorder increased, as frantic mothers sought their children, who had been at play about the decks.

The steamer's whistle was blowing for assistance and tugs and other nearby craft answered to the call. Before any of the boats could reach the burning steamer, however, the frantic women and children began to jump overboard. The current was strong and there are many whirlpools in the channel. The boats that always abound in the vicinity picked many persons from the water, but these were only a small number of those that were seen struggling in the swift current.

These small boats rescued all those in the water whom they could reach, but many persons struggled and sank before any help could reach them. In the wake of the Slocum as she hurried up stream was a line of little black spots, marking the heads and bodies of those who had sought to escape the roaring furnace on the ship by throwing themselves overboard.

The Slocum got within fifty feet of the northwest point of North Brothers Island and there stopped in the shallow water.

A Day of Gloom Yesterday.

New York, June 16.—About two hundred and fifty yards from the New York shore, off the place known as

Hunt's Point, the upper part of a paddle box, two smoke stacks, a flagstaff, and twisted, bent iron work lie, the remnants of the ill-fated steamboat General Slocum.

It is a temporary and hideous monument of the scene where nearly a thousand persons, most of whom were women and children, lost their lives in fire and water.

Today there are grave murmurings and charges that the horrible sacrifice of life was needless, and that the officers of the boat, though brave, admittedly erred when they drove the vessel a half mile before beaching her.

There is also the charge that the life belts were rotten and unserviceable and that the construction of the upper works of the boat was faulty, inasmuch as they were all of wood so as to give free sweep to the flames.

Today all is gloom and the people refuse to be comforted, for five hundred homes have been visited by the Angel of Death, while as many others contained loved ones burned and otherwise injured.

Crepe, some white and some black, hangs from many doors today, and the death emblem is constantly being added to.

539 Recovered at Noon.

New York, June 16.—Up to noon today four hundred and sixty-nine bodies had been received at the morgue, and seventy more were on their way there aboard the city tug "Fidelity."

This brings the list of recovered dead up to 539.

There have been 165 identifications up to the noon hour, and permits for the removal of these bodies have been granted.

Early Yesterday Morning.

New York, June 16.—Up to 8.30 o'clock this morning four hundred and eighty-nine bodies of victims of the disaster on the steamboat General Slocum had been recovered. Eight bodies in one group were picked up on North Brothers island.

The divers at dawn resumed their work in the sunken hold.

They have by their efforts added to the ghastly horror, which steadily grew during the night.

The total number of dead, it is now estimated, will reach at least eight hundred. Some estimate that the list will go as high as one thousand.

Grief-stricken crowds thronged the morgue and the vicinity of St. Mark's church and the shores near the wreck all night last night looking for loved ones.

One mother who identified the burned body of her child at the morgue this morning tried to jump from the pier on which the body lay.

She was restrained with difficulty from uttering the serious charges made by the supervisor that the steamboat was supplied with rotten life preservers.

The authorities are investigating these charges.

Among the bodies identified at St. Mark's church last night was that of Mrs. Anna Haas, the wife of the pastor of the church.

Dr. Haas is among the rescued. He and his wife and daughter got outside the rail of the Slocum before the steamer beached. He cannot say whether they jumped or fell or were pushed into the water. He sank and when he rose he found scores about him fighting for life. He failed to find his wife and daughter. With great effort he kept afloat and was about to give up in despair when a man on one of the tugs picked him up. Of the scores he saw about him when he rose, one by one sank.

The following telegraphic message from President Roosevelt has been received by Pastor Haas:

"Accept my profound sympathy for yourself, your church and your congregation.

(Signed) "Theodore Roosevelt."

THE COMMISSIONERS TO CITY COUNCIL

PROPOSITION TO IMPROVE THE PLANT.

The Cost of the Desired Improvements—No Action By Council As Yet.

The following communication from the board of commissioners of public works was received by city council at its meeting Wednesday night. Council postponed action on the whole matter:

Newberry, S. C., June 3d, 1904.
To the Mayor and City Council of Newberry, S. C.

Gentlemen: We, the commissioners of public works, beg to submit for your most careful consideration the following:

The water works system here is as reliable for fire protection as any other town in its class, but recent events have proven that too many precautions cannot be taken and that the system can never be too well prepared for an emergency, and to this end we would suggest certain changes in our system.

With the daily average height of water in the standpipe we have sufficient pressure to cope with any fire which might occur in most any part of the city, but an emergency might arise whereby it should become necessary to have greater pressure at the hydrants than that afforded by the water in the stand pipe. In order to increase the pressure, the valve at the base of the stand pipe must be closed and the force pump started. This will increase the pressure in every part of the pipe system to as high a point as may be necessary up to 125 pounds per square inch, and will be maintained as long as the pump is kept running. With the pump in operation and this main valve open the pressure at the hydrants is not materially increased, the greater volume of water flows along the main pipe and up in the stand pipe, simply accumulating water in the stand pipe and not increasing appreciably at the time the pressure at hydrants.

The stand pipe being located quite a good distance from the power house, it would be impracticable for the engineer in charge to leave the station to close this valve, and even if any one was at hand at the instant would require some ten minutes, or more perhaps, for him to run and close it. So you can readily understand that some other method of closing this valve must be adopted. A valve directly connected to an electric motor and operated from the switchboard at the power house is nearest to the ideal which we can get. Simply closing a switch at the power house will start the motor and in perhaps thirty seconds the valve is closed, and reversing the switch, the valve is again opened—a very neat, simple, reliable arrangement. This valve with all necessary machinery or equipment which will have to be made will cost about \$800.00.

Now this electric motor must have electric current to operate it and our present electrical equipment will hardly operate it successfully, since it is too small for the work required of it now. The proposed addition to our electrical equipment will be just suited successfully to operate this valve.

Our electric lighting plant also is in such condition as to require immediate attention.

Our alternator, or house lighting machine, has connected on its circuits now nearly 2,000 lights, and it will only carry without danger 1,000 lights. There is serious danger that during the heavy lighting season this winter this machine will be compelled to carry more than it can do and completely wreck it, thereby causing untold inconvenience to our numerous patrons and an enormous and waste-

ful expense to the city.

Our street lighting system also is as unsatisfactory to us as it is to the citizens generally, and the dynamo being loaded to its fullest capacity, it is impossible to make any of the much needed extensions or additions to the number of lamps which we would like to make.

The proposed new type of street lamp is in general use all over the country. Its light is better diffused and has not that blinding glare which characterizes the open arc (our present type), its light does not flicker, and is almost as steady as the light of an incandescent lamp, and above all other reasons, it is much less expensive in operation. There are many other reasons why this change in our plant should be made and be made at once.

The board, from the revenue derived from the sale of water and lights from July 1st, 1903, to June 1st 1904, at the increased rate to patrons, have bought and paid for a complete deep well pumping outfit, an air compressor, and all necessary piping and equipment at a cost of \$1,525.00, and on July 1st expect to have on hand \$1,500.00 in cash. (This includes \$600 we had on hand June 30th, 1903, before the raise in rates went into effect.)

With an enlarged new up-to-date electrical equipment and an engine, we are positive that we can serve the city and all our present patrons with much better service at at least \$1,000.00 a year less expense, as well as enabling the board to increase the present number of lights very materially, and with this increased lighting increase the revenue therefrom.

Our superintendent estimates that the cost of this equipment will be about \$5,000.00 for electrical equipment, and a new engine about \$2,000.00. The board has every reason to believe that they can arrange terms with the manufacturers whereby they can get this apparatus by making a cash payment and having them carry the balance for terms of one or two years at 6 per cent.

Now, our proposition to you is this:

That if you will authorize the board to make these purchases and will give the manufacturers from whom we are to buy this equipment such securities as they require that we will, out of the income from the sale of water and lights, make the cash payment and guarantee to meet each time payment with the interest thereon as they become due. This debt can be paid in three years or possibly sooner and the sooner this equipment is installed, the sooner will the city of Newberry be placed as regards its public works, on an equal footing with any town in the state, and the sooner will the rates be lowered and the debt for same be paid.

Very truly yours,
James McIntosh,
C. E. Summer,
W. F. Ewart,

Commissioners of Public Works.

Big Oil War.

Augusta, Ga., June 16.—There is a big fight on here between the Standard Oil Co. and the People's Oil Co., in which the Standard Oil people have forced the price down to three cents a gallon in thousand gallon lots.

This oil sold five days ago for fourteen and a half cents.

Forty thousand dollars worth was sold yesterday.

Clemson College Scholarships.

All applicants for the scholarships will apply to the County Superintendent of Education, who will give full information concerning the terms of the law and the conditions required for entrance to the College.

The examinations will be held in July, before the County Boards of Education.

P. H. Mell, President.

STEPHEN D. LEE IS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

SUCCEEDS THE LAMENTED JOHN B. GORDON.

The Old Soldiers Have Been Having A Glorious Time In Nashville.

Nashville, Tenn., June 14.—Under every condition tending to a successful reunion, Nashville today officially welcomed the United Confederate Veterans and their friends constituting a host conservatively estimated at 30,000 people.

The exercises of the day took place in the tabernacle and every bit of space was taken long before the veterans were called to order by Gen. W. Gordon, of Memphis, commander of the Tennessee division. It was the first convention in the history of the organization that the Sons of Veterans sat with their fathers, and the cheers from the throats of the younger generation at almost every expression by those who took part in the strife 40 years ago made it plain that the spirit of '61 would be perpetuated in generations to come.

After General Gordon had called the veterans to order, Chaplain Jones delivered the invocation. Governor J. B. Frazier welcomed the delegates to Tennessee in a splendid address. Twice he started to his seat only to be recalled and urged in behalf of the veterans.

After Col. A. S. Williams, mayor of Nashville, had extended the city's welcome, Gen. Gordon brought forward Gen. Stephen D. Lee as the permanent presiding officer and commander-in-chief. Gen. Lee's appearance was the signal for a remarkable outburst of enthusiasm. Cheer after cheer greeted him. Hats, canes, handkerchiefs and coats went into the air in all parts of the auditorium and the gallery added its vociferous voice to the demonstration. The band took up the spirit of the occasion and Gen. Lee was kept bowing from side to side for several minutes.

Hon. Thomas M. Owen, of Montgomery, Ala., commander of the Alabama division, Sons of Veterans, spoke in response to the welcoming for the Sons. He was heartily applauded.

General Stephen D. Lee was on Wednesday chosen commander-in-chief, and Louisville, Ky., was named as the place of next reunion.

Col. O. L. Schumpert.

Col. O. L. Schumpert, was appointed South Carolina's representative on the committee on resolutions.

RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR.

Port Arthur Harbor Open Again—Several Engagements Reported.

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

The presence of the cruiser Novik outside Port Arthur indicate that the entrance to Port Arthur is clear.

London, June 16.—The Tokio correspondent of the Reuter Telegram company says that in a fight at Telissa, near Fort Chow, the Russians lost five hundred killed and three hundred taken prisoners.

They also lost fourteen guns. The Japanese casualties are placed at one thousand.

"What do you consider the hardest scene you have ever acted?"

"It is difficult to say off-hand," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes. "One of the most difficult was the scene in 'The Merchant of Venice' recently when I had to refuse thousands of imaginary ducats when I didn't have thirty real cents in my pocket."