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WRECK OF THE LUCY WALKER.

NEW ALBANY, IA., THURSDAY EVENING, NOV. 14TH, 1844.

Rev. and Dear Sir: - I have been requested by Mr. D. Christy who called here this morning, on his way to St. Louis, to give you the particulars of the late Steamboat disaster, near this place. And in doing so, I shall avail myself of the statements of those who were eye-witnesses of, and sufferers in, this awful catastrophe.

It is not known, nor will it in all probability, ever be known, until the waters shall give up their dead, how many passengers were on board the ill-fated vessel; and consequently the number of the lost, cannot be ascertained. The boat was but a few miles from port, and had received an accession of eight or ten from this place. Many of the names had not been registered, and if they had, it would not have removed the difficulty, as the records of the boat were entirely destroyed. It is supposed however that there were at least 130 on board, of whom about 30 were saved, some of them in a dreadfully mangled condition.

But my principal object is to inform you of the sufferings of those with whom you were acquainted. They were (as you are aware) on their way home, from attending a meeting of the Southern Synod. They came to Louisville and were there detained near two days, waiting for a boat; at length they succeeded in finding one, which they supposed would get down the River. Being disappointed in their accommodations, and in the time of starting, they hailed the *Lucy Walker*, which sent out a yawl and took them on board. The little company, with the exception of Mr. Wilson and lady, had scarcely seated themselves and begun to congratulate each other on their happy escape from the other boat,

when the awful explosion buried them in its ruins. They were sitting at the end of the Social Hall near the door by which the Gentlemen's Cabin is entered, and consequently near the boilers. Mr. Wilson and lady were on the guard, aft of the wheelhouse, looking at the steamboat which had just passed. As soon as he (Mr. W.) recovered from the shock, he exclaimed, "Where are my friends?" Looking around he saw Mr. McCrery struggling in the midst of the ruins, and assisted him in extricating himself. He then turned to look for the rest; but they were not to be seen. By this time the flames began to spread rapidly thro' the wreck, and the thought struck him that he had better save himself and wife; which he did by jumping into the water and making his way by the assistance of the fragments of the boat, to the U.S. snagboat *Gopher*, which had approached as near as the flames would permit. Mr. McCrery succeeded in reaching the *Gopher*, by the same means, as also Messrs. Young, Pressly and McCain, after which they were pulled on board by means of ropes and poles. Mr. McCrery was mortally wounded; one of his thighs being literally crushed, and his chest and head considerably injured. He died about five minutes after he was taken on board the *Gopher*, he appeared to be conscious of his situation, remarked that his thigh was broken, and exclaimed some seven or eight times, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," and gave up the ghost. His body was immediately laid out, and buried next day in the citizens burying-ground, in a decent and becoming manner. A stone will be placed on the spot, with a suitable inscription to point out the grave to any friends who may hereafter pay it a visit. The body of Mr. Watt (Elder in Mr. Pressly's church) was recovered the following day, and also decently interred by the side of Mr. McCrery's; it did not appear to be mangled, or but slightly disfigured.

Mr. McCain (Mr. Wilson's Elder) was severely wounded in the head and bruised in one of his hips. The wound in his head was a cut extending in an oblique direction past the lower part of the right ear, severing a small portion of it. The bruise rendered him in a great measure helpless for some days. He was taken from the boat to the Hotel, where he received every attention which kindness and sympathy could command. Mr. Pressly had his hands badly burned and his head slightly scalded on the back part. It is remarkable that while some of the wounded heard the report of the explosion, others did not. Mr. P. says he heard it distinctly. He was able to walk from the river, and was

conducted to a private house, where his hands were dressed and every thing done which could render his situation comfortable. He was attended daily by a kind Physician, and Christian friends ministered to his wants. His hands were burned chiefly on the backs – the left one most severely; it was thought however that they would not be rendered useless, as the burns were not so deep as to make them stiff or to draw the fingers out of their natural position. His general health was good, and he so far recovered in nine days after the accident, as to start home in company with Messrs. McKain and Wilson. He was liberally supplied with clothing and other things necessary for his comfort, by the council and citizens of this city, as were also all the sufferers who remained here. A letter was received two or three days since, from Mr. McCain stating that they arrived safely at Randolph, from whence they would proceed to Portersville, where Mr. P. would remain a few days, until he could get some friends to assist him on his way, by land, to Starkville. Their wounds were doing well; Mr. McC. was able to get about with the help of a crutch; and Mr. P. thought he would be able to use his *right hand* in the course of two weeks.

Mr. Young, after being very badly wounded, had a narrow escape from a watery grave. He states, that the first thing he was conscious of after the explosion was, being covered up in the ruins and endeavoring to clamber out of them. He did not hear the report of the explosion, but it seemed like a terrible dream; he did not even know he was wounded until he extricated himself and saw the horrid gash in his thigh. His first thought was to swim to the shore – he walked up the steps over the wheelhouse on one side of the boat, but had scarcely gained the upper deck, where the flames met him and compelled him to retreat to the other side here, for the first time he saw the *Gopher*, to which he swam by the aid of a piece of the wreck. The men then threw him a rope and drew him part of the way up but his strength failed and he fell back into the water, and having seized hold of a ring in the side of the boat, remained there until all the rest were taken up. At length a rope was let down to him which he succeeded in getting over his shoulders and under his arms and in this way was drawn upon the boat. On arriving at this place, he was taken to the High Street House and his wounds dressed. It was found that his right hand was dreadfully mangled, two fingers – the small one and the one next to it – were dangling by the skin; the back

was badly cut and burned, and he fears that he will not have much use of the hand. The left hand was slightly cut between the thumb and forefinger, but is nearly healed. The wound which has given him the most trouble and confined him to his bed for 21 days and still keeps him confined, is on the outside of the right thigh. When first dressed, it was about six inches in length, two and a half or three inches in breadth, and one and a half deep. From its appearance it was supposed by some that a piece of the flesh was taken out. It has been considerably drawn up since, and now looks healthy and improving in its condition. Below this wound there was a very bad burn, which is now healed. He has been at the Hotel since the accident until yesterday, when he was removed to the house of Rev. Dr. Wood, where he received every attention which Christian sympathy and friendship can bestow. His removal exhausted him very much, as it was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile he had to ride, and consequently he is not so well to-day. He has made his calculations to start home on the 25th of the present month by way of N.O. and Mobile. Rev. P. Monfort and lady are expected to accompany him home. It is somewhat doubtful about their getting off so soon as the 25th; it will depend on the state of his wounds at that time. Mr. M. has not been here yet; but wrote that he could be here in time to start with him.

Yours with great respect, REV. D. MacDILL, W. H. MOORE