

## WRECK OF SAN FRANCISCO

W. E. Partridge



**I**N 1853 there was launched from the yards of William H. Webb, at the foot of East Ninth Street, in New York City, a ship which had one of the shortest but most eventful records to be found in the annals of the ocean. This was the steamship San Francisco, built for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. In the whole history of disasters at sea, it is hardly possible to find a shipwreck so filled with heart-rending features, so filled

with heroic fighting against the inevitable, and so prolonged as that of San Francisco. Unlike the ordinary wreck, usually reaching a consummation within a day or two at most, her shipwreck was practically extended over two long weeks, and during the whole of this anxious time, with scarcely an intermission, the ship experienced frightful gales of wind and terrific seas. Although it is a little more than fifty-five years since the last survivor was taken from the steamship, yet the tale is one whose interest has not been lost by the passage of time. Among the older men there is scarcely one whose heart does not beat the quicker when he recalls the gallant way in which Three Bells and Antarctic stood by the ill-fated steamer, and the heroic seamanship of her commander, Captain Watkins. She was 276 feet long on deck, 39 feet 10 inches moulded breadth, and 23 feet 6 inches depth of hold. She was 2,500 tons Custom House measurement. She was a side-wheel steamer with three decks. Above the main or 24-foot deck she had cabins for officers, etc., and the roof of this formed a light hurricane deck which extended nearly the whole length of the ship. Pacific Mail steamships of those days were somewhat peculiar. They had guards at the level of the main deck; beginning at nothing forward they gradually widened to the full width of the paddle boxes. Going aft from this point they were carried around the stern of somewhat less width. The guards were formed by allowing the main deck timbers to project over or through the sides. They were supported by sponsons not very closely spaced. The ports between the sponsons were large, two feet square, and carried a circle of glass in the center. This gave ample ventilation. The upper works were light and the projecting guards were only excused by the great freeboard she was expected to have and the fact that she was intended for use in the tropics.

Her construction was unusually heavy. She was double diagonally braced with a heavy longitudinal plate at the head of the braces, which were riveted together at each intersection and bolted to the frames. There were

two fore-and-aft bulkheads each side of the engines and boilers, which extended from the bottom to the middle deck, and were also diagonally braced. She had two oscillating engines with cylinders 65 inches in diameter by 8 feet stroke, turning feathering paddle-wheels, an unusual feature in those days, 28 feet in diameter by 10 feet face. The air-pumps were worked by an auxiliary engine. The total horse-power was 2,000. The boilers were 13 feet 8 inches in diameter by 34 feet long. The engine frames were of boiler plate. The Morgan Iron Works built the machinery. She had, in addition, two independent fire pumps with separate boilers, seven tier keelsons and three engine keelsons. The planking was five inches thick, edge bolted and copper fastened. Her bottom was solid timber out to the turn of the bilges and was calked before planking. She had accommodations for three hundred cabin passengers and a thousand in the steerage. For a ship of her day she was fitted out in an unusually luxurious manner. Her ports were large and numerous, as were the skylights. Built under Government inspection, the greatest care was taken with every detail. She had a short bowsprit, but was without a figure or billet-head. There was almost no overhang to the stern. In model she was exceedingly sharp, and it was predicted that she would be a rival of Golden Gate, which had some phenomenal passages between San Francisco and Panama. Her material was the best Maryland oak and she was classed as A-1 at Lloyds. Her cost was \$350,000. A stronger vessel built in wood it would be difficult to imagine. A better model could not be asked. She was put under the command of Captain Watkins, one of the ablest and most experienced men in the merchant marine. It was only through his superb seamanship that any were saved from the wrecked vessel. As the ship was bound for the Pacific coast, the Government took advantage of the fact to charter her for the transportation of eight companies of the Third Regiment, United States Artillery, from New York to San Francisco. Companies C and E were then at Fort Gibson in the Cherokee nation and Fort Snelling, Iowa. Companies F and N had been in California since 1848. The eight remaining companies, with their baggage and supplies, and a few passengers, were to go to San Francisco by way of the Straits of Magellan.

In spite of remonstrance by the Captain, loading was continued long after the limit of safety was passed. She was loaded to an unreasonable depth. The coal, of which there were 750 tons, was stored not only in the bunkers but between decks. Some 3,000 barrels of stores went into the hold, and baggage and supplies for the troops filled the holds and took up much of the steerage space. So deep was the vessel in the water that Captain Watkins expressed a wish that they might escape a gale for five days at least, so that he might burn some of his coal and so lighten the ship. Government officials could take no

advice, and the loading continued to the last, and on December 21st she dropped down to the Quarantine station and took on board a final complement of troops and stores before starting on a 13,000-mile voyage. The last stores were shipped, the last troops embarked by nine in the morning of December 22, 1853, and the ship left her anchorage and sailed out past Sandy Hook, making a little more than  $7\frac{1}{2}$  knots per hour.

Such was the ship and such her cargo that sailed off to Southward with a light breeze from the Southwest. The weather was clear, even brilliant, and everything seemed propitious for a fine voyage. Every one was sanguine that there would be a pleasant time as far as Rio, where the first stop would be made and where they would take on coal for the voyage through the Straits of Magellan. Of the eight hundred persons on board only the Captain had a thought of trouble. The weather was beautiful and every revolution of the engines brought them nearer a warmer, pleasanter climate. None of them noted the slow speed and the wallowing paddle-wheels. Indeed, what was there to fear? With a new ship built by the most celebrated marine architect in the country, full of new devices to secure strength and immunity from accident, what was there to fear? Yet they were within twenty-four hours of a wreck!

All the night of the day of sailing, the weather was fine. Friday, the day following, was all that heart could wish. The civilian passengers enjoyed the fine weather and were becoming acquainted with the beautiful ship. But six o'clock in the afternoon the wind dropped entirely. The speed of the ship had increased and she was making  $8\frac{1}{2}$  knots per hour up to nine o'clock that evening. Then out of the Northwest came a furious gale, bringing with it a heavy sea. Deep in the water though she was she made beautiful weather of it until some time in the night, when she broached-to. The Captain got some sail on her forward and the engineers, putting on more steam, increased the speed of the engines and going ten knots she fell off before the wind. A better sea-boat could not be desired. At eleven the gale increased and the foresail was blown out of the bolt-ropes. One sail after another followed and finally the furler spanker was blown from the gaskets. A little later in the night, the air-pump piston-rod broke off at the head and the engines stopped. In a stupendous sea the ship again broached-to and began laboring heavily. Her shaft was probably within five feet of her load-line and every sea striking with tremendous force sent a flood of water below through the shaft opening. All efforts to get her before the wind were unavailing. They got a lashing on the head of the spanker and an effort was made to get sail upon the ship, but practically everything had been blown away and for the remainder of the night the ship was at the mercy of the gale. The sea was making a clean breach over her at every roll, striking her frightful blows. It was not wonderful that she began making water rapidly. Steam and hand-pumps were put at work. The water gained upon the pumps, and then the Captain called upon the troops and organized them into gangs to pass the water up through the engine room and so overboard.

Although the water was coming into the ship at an alarming rate it does not appear that she leaked at any time. No seams opened. Taking solid water over all and with the openings around the paddle-shafts under water at every roll, there was good reason for the water's gaining.

This was no ordinary gale, for the ships Commerce,

Singapore, and Borneo were lost and the ship Saxony disabled at the same time as San Francisco, and all left the port of New York with her. Toward morning the sea was heavier and the rolling became severe. At seven o'clock the foremast went out of her, breaking off about six feet above the deck. Steadily the sea grew worse and at nine in the morning came the disaster which would have destroyed a ship commanded by a less able seaman than Captain Watkins. A monstrous sea, the culmination of several great waves, struck the vessel aft and amidships at the same time. It carried away the starboard wheelhouse with its after king-post, both smokestacks, and at the same time broke up the guards and carried away the upper saloon aft and all its surrounding staterooms. It took officers, soldiers, several ladies and a number of male passengers into the ocean. In all nearly one hundred and seventy-five persons were swept overboard at this time and of the whole number only two succeeded in regaining the ship. At this time the decks were swept clean. The nine lifeboats, all the cattle, chicken coops and everything movable was carried away. The galleys were destroyed, two men were killed in the crash, and yet a large portion of the hurricane deck remained. The civilian passengers thought the ship had broken in two and was sinking. Well they might, for a tremendous body of water came aboard and went into the ship through the cabins, down the skylights and companionways. A number of passengers rushed upon the upper deck and clung about the mainmast.

For the time being the soldiers, who had been at the pumps, were demoralized and gave up in despair, and only vigorous work by the officers induced them to go on with the bailing and pumping. How deeply the ship was in the water can be best understood by the fact that gangs of soldiers had to be stationed at the paddle-shaft to hold blankets around it to keep the water from coming in.

The upper saloon was surrounded by staterooms occupied by officers and a few of the passengers. The forward deck and saloon, with its staterooms and cabins, were filled with soldiers' wives and families. Just before the great disaster Colonel Buck had ordered the soldiers into the after cabin, or as many as could find standing room, so that when the saloon and cabins were destroyed the loss of life was tremendous. One of the men who went over the side at this time, was in a stateroom, aft. He said: "A shock, a sudden crash of breaking timbers, and I felt myself rolling over like a top in the water. When I rose to the surface of the ocean, a harrowing sight came before me. I was half a mile from the steamer, and round about me was about half an acre of floating timber. Immediately by my side came up from the deep, Mr. Stockwell, who caught hold of the same stick of timber to which I clung for safety. The stick began to sink and I seized another piece and made the best of my way to the wrecked steamer. Two or three huge swells soon tossed me near the ship, and I grasped a rope, forward of the wheelhouse, to which I clung for refuge, rising and falling with the pitching of the vessel. I saw a man who was standing on a paddle who was plunged into the ocean at every roll of the steamer and who probably perished. Saving my strength I dropped from the rope to which I clung, and fortunately a friendly roll threw me against the guards, which I seized hold of, and the next plunge carrying me still higher on to the guard I was enabled, at last, to crawl upon the forward deck. Then with my hand I broke open a stateroom window and crept into it half-drowned."

Repeatedly, during the wreck, men were dashed overboard and brought back again by the return wave. This experience came to one man four times.

Lieutenant Winder, who had a stateroom on the upper deck, found water in his room a foot deep when the vessel first broached-to. Seeking a drier spot, he went into the lower cabin, where he found a group of ladies at the foot of the stairway. There was much water on the floor, but laying his head on one of the steps and holding on to the banister, he was soon asleep. One of the heavy waves which struck the ship during the night sent a tremendous rush of water down the companion-way. The lieutenant was struck on the head and breast and severely injured. He was swept across the cabin with a force which nearly stunned him. Climbing up the stairs he found the ship rolling at the mercy of the waves, the sea breaking over her completely. Before him were the bodies of two dead soldiers, killed by the fall of the upper cabin. He must have slept late that morning after the night's disturbances, for he said the waves, for a considerable distance about, were still strewn with a great number of soldiers struggling for their lives. These were the men who had been brought into the upper cabin to protect them from the weather.

In the water at this time was a miscellaneous wreckage. The men who went overboard most of them were wounded and bleeding and were fighting for life amid smashed boats, coops, timbers and the live stock. There was a large number of cattle intended for provisions. These had all been washed overboard and the struggles of the drowning animals frustrated the efforts of many to save themselves. Those on the ship were utterly powerless to assist, since everything movable had been washed from the decks.

The number of persons killed outright in the crash of the saloon will never be known. Some bodies went overboard, but there were five or six found in the wreckage of the cabins.

The first officer made an attempt at this time to cut away the mainmast, and those collected about it gathered under the lee of the bulwarks which remained. The ship was rolling so heavily that it was impossible to cut away the mast.

With the ship in the trough of the sea rolling her guards under and the sea making a clean break over her and laboring heavily, there seemed small hope that she could be saved from sinking immediately. The wind was blowing so fiercely that no attempt could be made to handle canvas.

The forward part of the ship was in much better condition than the after part, but the people then knew nothing of what was going on there. Several times the officer thought the ship was breaking in two but that made no difference in the labors; the Captain kept the men steadily at work.

Christmas Day came but brought no abatement of the heavy gale and sea from the Northwest. The pumping and bailing continued and in spite of the laboring of the ship they gained on the water. All hands were busy. Those that were not engaged in pumping and bailing were employed in getting coal and provisions overboard to lighten the vessel. Toward night it became a little more moderate and the water was got down so that the engineers had an opportunity to begin work upon the air-pump. One ray of hope came; about noon they spoke the brig Napoleon, of Portland. She promised to lie by and they were much comforted by the fact, though the

"more moderate" weather was too rough to permit the brig to lower her boats.

On Monday, December 26th, the gale continued heavy from the Northwest, with a high sea. They eagerly scanned the horizon, but no vessel was in sight and Napoleon was not seen afterward.

During the afternoon the weather moderated and the men were employed in clearing the quarter deck and canvassing it in. The projecting timbers of the guards were sawn off, so that the ship was much drier and the comfort of the passengers was greatly increased, if the word comfort could be used in such a connection.

About noon a sail appeared in sight and Maria Freeman, bound for Liverpool, was spoken. Her captain promised to lie by the wreck. Both Maria Freeman and Napoleon were reported to have picked up provisions which were being thrown overboard from the wreck.

The morning of December 27th brought a strong gale from the Northwest and a heavy sea. They looked for Maria Freeman and were again disappointed. She had disappeared and they did not see her again. This was a great aggravation for all on board, but it interfered in no way with the bailing and pumping by both hand and steam-pumps. These iron men continued bailing, throwing coal and provisions overboard and clearing away the wreck. In the meantime the engineers were laboring at the air-pump engines. Every one was hopeful for the moment, as they were reported fit for service and were started. They worked for ten minutes when the air-pump again broke and the ship was again helpless. They then got a storm mizzensail upon the ship, losing a man overboard in doing it, however. Under this sail the ship came up into the wind and rode well. When she had steerageway, or could be brought with the wind, she behaved beautifully and in spite of her deep loading showed herself an excellent sea-boat.

After the loss of the galley, cooking for so large a number of persons was out of the question, and sea biscuit were only available for food. This loss of cooking facilities was incidentally the cause of the so-called "cholera" which began about this time and was most deadly. On throwing over provisions, barrels of "pickled cabbage" (probably sauerkraut) were broached and, with the potted meats, was freely eaten by the soldiers and their families, the waiters and the firemen. There was no sickness among the officers of the ship, the cabin passengers nor the crew. These were under the direct control of Captain Watkins. The disease was a sort of congestive dysentery and was remarkably fatal. To the horrors of the wreck were added the horrors of a plague. Men, women, and children died after a few hours of suffering. A soldier left his wife and children well in the morning to take his place at the pumps. Going back to them at night he found his wife and two children dead in the berth. Another soldier's wife was found dead with a living child on her bosom. Whole families were carried off by the disease, and from this time forward the disease made steady progress and the deaths seem to have been about ten per day.

Every increase of wind made it necessary to continue the bailing more actively. Sometimes the work went on night and day for several days at a time.

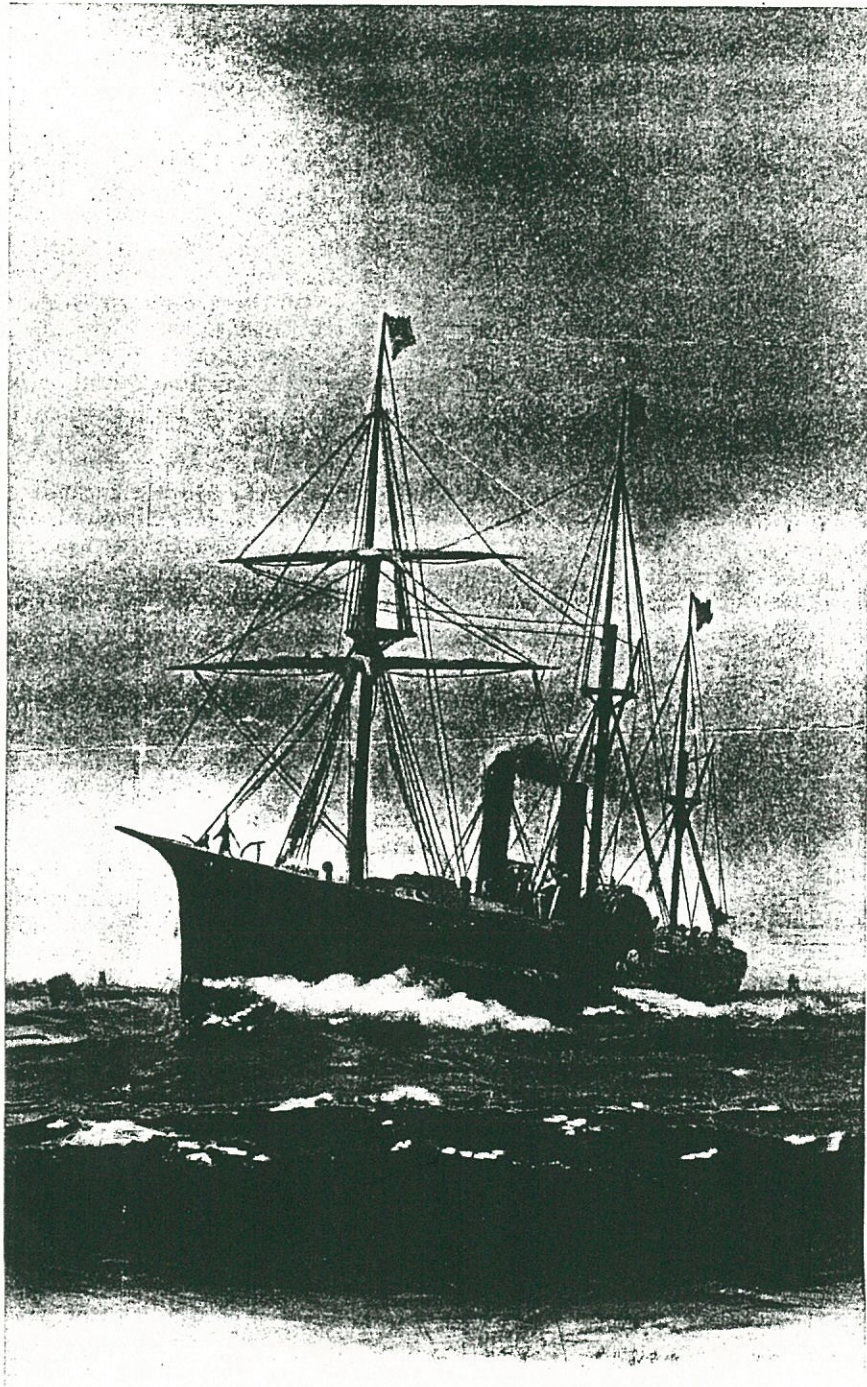
On the morning of Wednesday, the 28th, they spoke the bark Kilby, of Boston, bound for Liverpool. The Northwest gale continued strong with a heavy sea and nothing could be done to transfer passengers. Kilby promised to lie by the wreck and the people were en-

couraged as the weather became more moderate, and they began to make preparations to embark passengers. When morning came the bark was still in sight but a long way to windward. The weather was quite pleasant and the sea was going down rapidly. The bark sent a boat and Captain Watkins went on board to arrange for a transfer of passengers. Although short of provisions, Kilby agreed to take a portion of the passengers and carry them to port. Kilby was loaded with cotton and corn. She had scant accommodations for passengers and seems to have been badly found in every way. Twenty soldiers, under the command of an officer, were first sent on board of her. They began breaking out her cargo to make room for passengers. By throwing overboard one hundred bales of cotton they cleared a space in the hold about twenty feet by thirty but not high enough for a man to stand erect. This was the space into which about one hundred and twenty persons were crowded. The embarkation of passengers began about half-past ten. At this time they ran a hawser to Kilby, by which she held on. Before night they succeeded in getting on board more than one hundred persons, including all the women and children and civilian passengers. They also sent a quantity of stores. After dark the wind increased and at ten o'clock Kilby let go the hawser and the people on the wreck saw no more of her.

After one hundred and twenty passengers were on the way to safety the troubles on the wreck increased. The ship was on fire repeatedly, and was each time put out. The men worked heroically, and it is on record that

Sergeant Brown, of Company G, worked continuously for five days and nights without sleep and ceased his efforts only from sheer exhaustion. From the first appearance of the cholera, deaths increased rapidly.

On Friday, the 30th, the weather became cloudy and they had strong Southwesterly gales. The ship labored



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heavily. They were busy stopping leaks and canvassing over the quarter-deck, while throwing coal and provisions over to lighten the ship. A dull routine of incessant, exhausting labor, cold, insufficient food and suffering. The tale of the day was varied by the death of a corporal, his wife and two children. The mother was found dead in her stateroom, with a living child on her bosom, and a sister by her side insensible from exhaustion. The bailing and pumping by both steam and hand-pumps went on with eager haste to keep the water down so that the engineers could get at the air-pump, for in spite of their failures it appears that they kept heroically at it until the day the ship was abandoned. The reports which came to us were written by men not familiar with mechanical matters, and it is difficult to understand just what happened; but it seems evident that there was a radical defect in the design or construction of the air-pump. With the moderate pressures of steam then in use it

was out of the question to run the engines non-condensing. This was an expedient which had probably never been thought of at that time.

On December 31st, in the night apparently a ship was made out standing to the Westward. They fired guns throughout the night and at nine in the morning they

were spoken by the ship Three Bells, Captain Robert Creighton, of Glasgow. He told them to be of good cheer, for he would lie by them. This day they had only moderate gales, but all hands were hard at work "stopping water out of the ship" and throwing over coal. The gale was too strong to enable anything to be done toward transferring people to the ship, but her presence was a great comfort to both troops and crew.

Sunday, New Year's Day, 1854, opened with a strong Northwest gale and a heavy sea, which continued all day. The wreck labored heavily. Three Bells remained in company, occasionally passing close to leeward. The wind was blowing so hard they could not speak, but in the afternoon as Three Bells passed she put up a board on which was chalked "I'll stand by you till the morning."

January 2d was Monday and opened with a strong gale from the Northwest. The sea was high though the wind was somewhat abated. The hope of keeping the ship afloat was growing small, and they built two rafts and succeeded in launching one of them, and made it fast, but at daylight the next morning it was gone. With rescue in sight and hope growing strong, there were many deaths among the troops and firemen. In spite of the very heavy weather Three Bells remained in company, several times passing quite close.

On Tuesday, January 3d, there was only a moderate gale and Three Bells sent a boat. Mr. Gratton, the second officer, was sent on board by Mr. Wyse, senior United States officer, to charter Three Bells for the Government to take off the remaining troops. This day there were ten or twelve deaths in all. During the night a fresh gale from the Northwest made the officers anxious lest the ship should leave them, and guns were fired throughout the night. In the morning they were much encouraged to find Three Bells holding on to windward.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the fourth they made another sail running before the wind and apparently coming directly for them. San Francisco hoisted her colors, union down, and the stranger shortened sail and passed close astern. She proved to be the ship Antarctic, Captain Stoufer. He spoke the wreck and asked if the people wished to leave the ship. Captain Watkins replied that they did. Captain Stoufer in reply told them to be of good cheer, he would take them all off. He at once lowered two boats and Three Bells sent her boats, and before nightfall they succeeded in embarking seventy or eighty of the troops. In this work Antarctic had two boats stove, but fortunately there was no loss of life.

That night, when their troubles seemed to be at an end, ten of those transferred to Three Bells died of cholera, and before the day was completed the death roll on board of that ship amounted to twenty-four.

Although Three Bells was short of both water and provisions for her own crew, Captain Creighton had no hesitation in standing by for six days and offering to take all passengers and the crew. Much time was of necessity used in sending provisions on board of her. Her long-boat was engaged in this work and they also succeeded in getting 700 or 800 gallons of water on board in addition to the provisions. The work of transferring people was slow, for at this time Antarctic had but one boat left.

Thursday, the 5th, the weather was moderate and pleasant and the work went on quite rapidly. They

transferred all the troops and a considerable quantity of provisions and water.

Early Friday morning, January 6th, they began sending more water and provisions on board Three Bells, realizing that there were many mouths to feed; yet with all their efforts when the ship reached port she had but a day's short rations left.

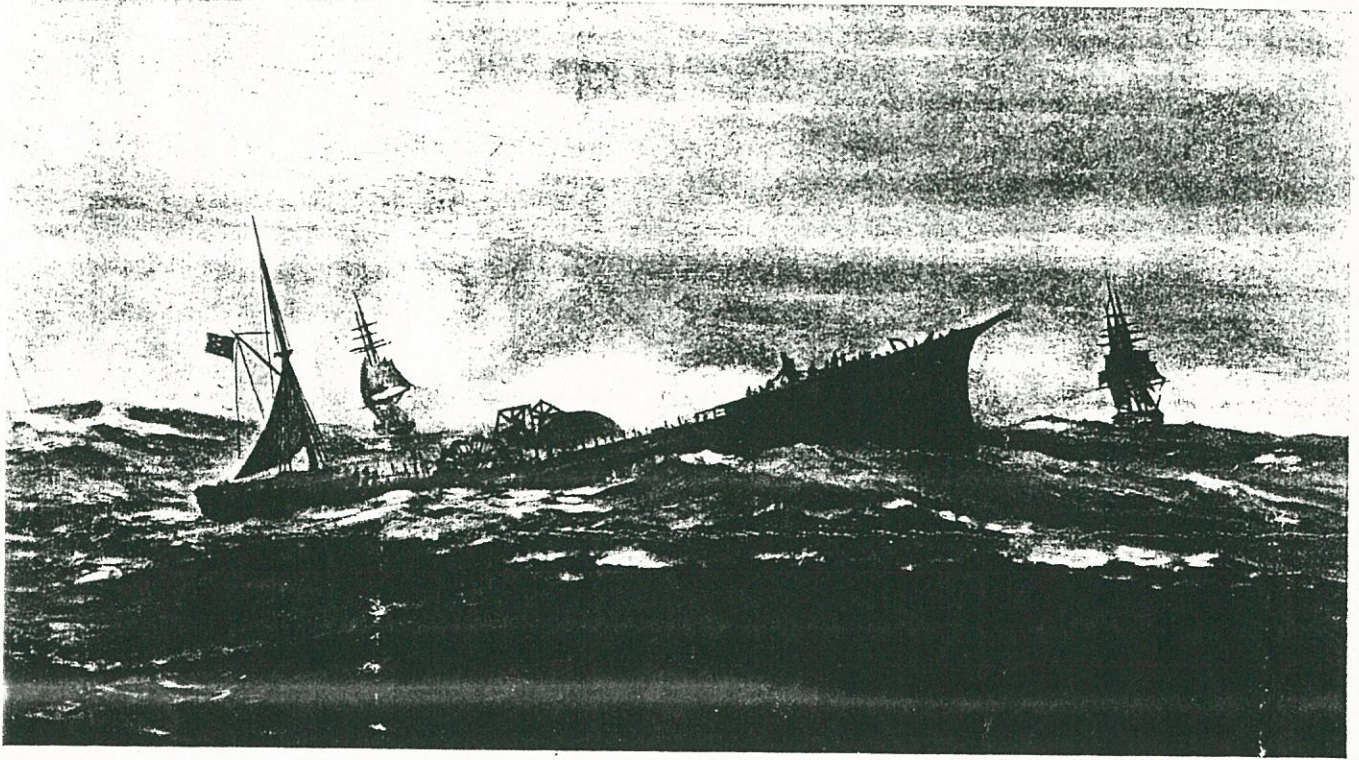
They were in haste, fearing more gales, and worked rapidly. By half-past ten all were out of the ship save Captain Watkins and two of the officers. These went over the side and Captain Watkins was the last man to leave the vessel.

The wreck was in the track of ships crossing the Atlantic and if left afloat would be dangerous. She was therefore scuttled and before Antarctic was out of sight San Francisco sank stern foremost. And so the long and most heroic fight was ended.

The first news of San Francisco, after she sailed from New York, came from Halifax, Nova Scotia, by telegraph. It said that a message had been received from Liverpool announcing that Maria Freeman had arrived at that port and reported that on December 26th, N. lat. 38° 20', she fell in with San Francisco in a disabled state. She could offer no assistance and during the night the wreck drifted out of sight. This dispatch came to Halifax by steamer and was there forwarded by telegraph. (In those days all steamers called at that port for coal.) It caused great excitement and steamers were at once sent in search of the wreck. A few days later rescued passengers taken off by Three Bells arrived in New York, when the details of the disaster became known, and the excitement, which had been great before, became intense all along the seaboard of the country. Definite news was not published until January 14, 1854.

Although the passengers had been removed from the wreck and were on their way back to the United States, their sufferings were by no means over. Their condition had changed for the better only to the extent of being in manageable ships.

Those who went on board Kilby were crowded in a space where they were not able to stand erect, and had the additional discomfort of being on short rations. The officers, with families and the camp women, together with some sixty men and passengers with their wives and children, were on board of her. Kilby was leaking and men were at the pumps constantly. She was sixty-eight days from New Orleans when she spoke San Francisco, and was so short of provisions that she had to depend on those which were put on board of her from the wreck. The supply of water was also quite insufficient. One account says they were put on an allowance of half a pint of water per day, and they would probably have died had it not been for the heavy rains which were almost constant for the twelve days during which they were on board of her. The food was exceedingly scanty, being barely enough to prolong life. After a day or two, however, it became known that part of the cargo consisted of corn, as well as cotton, and this was broken into, and parched corn was added to their meagre diet, and scant as this was, it saved life. In addition to the troubles in regard to provisions and water, the ship's sails were old and insufficient in number. Hence, her progress was slow. They were so badly off and suffering was so great that the crew wished to run the ship ashore. It was nearly a mutiny. During this anxious time Lieutenant F. R. Murray, of the United States Navy, seemed to be



San Francisco Nearing Her End

the "good angel." He quelled the mutiny and served both ship and people in many ways. He it was who superintended the reception of the women and children to Kilby. When they were in distress he looked after them, and did everything that was possible in restoring their courage and calming their fears.

On the 12th, Lucy Thompson, sixty miles East by South of Sandy Hook, spoke Kilby and took off ninety-one of the passengers of the San Francisco. Heavy seas were rolling and the women and children were hoisted on board by ropes under the arms. Many of them were dashed against the sides of the ship and severely bruised. Kilby had but two boats. These were leaking badly. Here Lieutenant Murray again showed himself to be the good angel. He lowered the ladies in a bowline from the spanker boom into the boats and himself commanded the boat which took the ladies. After all had been hoisted on board, the boat itself swamped. On board Lucy Thompson the survivors were much more comfortable and were soon safely landed in New York City. Thirteen soldiers and some of the passengers remained on Kilby, the soldiers volunteering, in order to help work the ship into port.

Those who went on board Three Bells were very little better off. When Captain Creighton spied the San Francisco he was, as we have said, short of provisions, and the quantity which they were able to secure from the San Francisco was barely enough to save them from actual starvation. When Three Bells reached the vicinity of New York harbor, although all hands had been on an extremely scanty allowance, she had on board but one day's provisions and water.

The officers and crew of San Francisco were all embarked on Antarctic and were taken to Liverpool. No particular mention is made of their voyage, but it seems probable that there was no little suffering on account of crowding and shortness of provisions. The fact that

there was an abundance of stores of all kinds on board San Francisco and that she was able to put considerable quantities on board the rescuing vessels, accounts for the fact that so many passengers were saved. Otherwise many on both Kilby and Three Bells would have perished from want of food and water.

Much fierce criticism was occasioned by the desertions of the wreck by Napoleon and Maria Freeman. Both laid to during the night as promised but in the morning San Francisco was out of sight. Napoleon cruised about for two and a half days in search but saw nothing and at last gave up the search and continued on her way. She did not deserve the abuse which was given, because the wreck was drifting to the Eastward at the rate of  $1\frac{5}{8}$  knots per hour. Laid to, both vessels probably held their positions pretty well, while the wreck, low in the water, was going to the Eastward. From dark to daylight the wreck probably drifted not less than twenty-three miles. Being low in the water and without spars, she was quite out of sight. Kilby also lost the wreck in the night after the people were put on board of her.

Because of the promises and the fact that the two vessels picked up some of the provisions thrown overboard from San Francisco made the abandonment seem intentional.

Among those lost when the ship first broached-to was Colonel J. M. Washington. He was a direct descendant of George Washington, and served with much skill and effect during the battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War. In the accounts of the wreck it was noted as a matter of some interest that a sword which had belonged to General Washington was lost with the colonel's effects.

There was a large number of cattle on board carried to furnish fresh meat. When the decks were swept and they went overboard, their struggles seem to have carried down many soldiers who were swimming for their lives.

After the upper cabin had been swept away many officers and their wives went up on the upper deck. Some ladies were in their night clothes and gathered around the mainmast to secure themselves from being washed overboard. A Rev. Mr. Cooper, an Episcopalian clergyman, was on board, who had his wife and several children with him. When the attempt was made to cut away the mast the little group of persons sought another refuge on the upper deck and at this time Mr. Cooper engaged in earnest prayer. On several occasions afterward he gathered groups around him and his fervent prayers gave much consolation to those about him.

At the time when very many supposed the ship had broken in two and was sinking, a life-preserver was offered to one of the officers. He refused it with the remark that it would only serve to prolong life for a few moments if the ship went down.

For the first two days and nights the men worked incessantly, and for four days with only trifling intermissions. On the fifth day and later they were working in regular gangs, bailing, at the pumps and throwing overboard provisions and coal. Their first effort was directed to lowering the water sufficiently to enable the engineers to reach the auxiliary air-pump engines.

When the hurricane deck was wrecked a number of persons, both men and women, immediately gained the upper deck under the impression that the ship was fast foundering. Under that supposition, they clung together, some with life-preservers, "and were ready to be precipitated, at a moment's notice, into the angry seas around them."

The arrival of the rescued passengers in New York caused the greatest excitement, not only in the city, but all over the country. A public meeting was called on

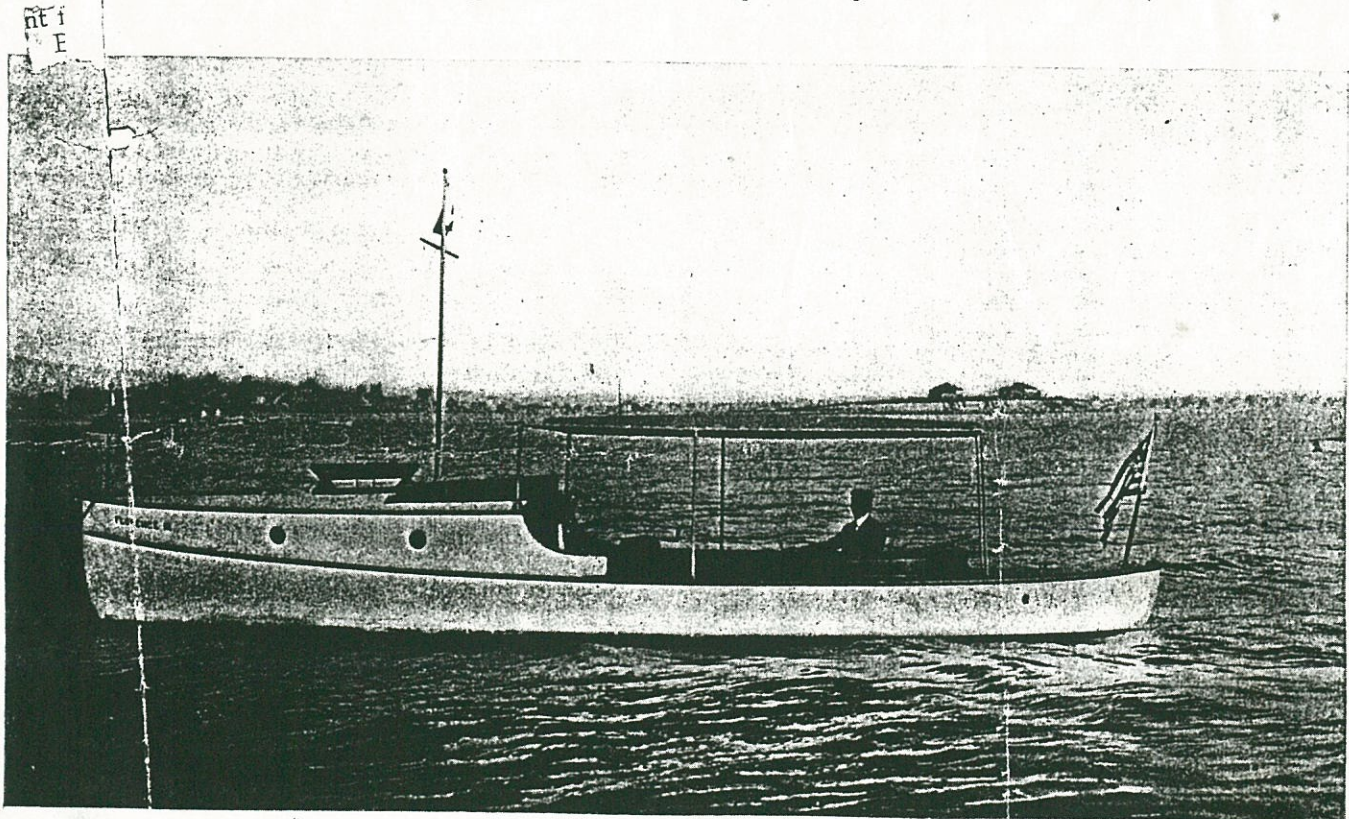
Saturday, January — with George Griswold, president. Among the vice-presidents were Moses H. Grenell and Mortimer Livingston. Resolutions of praise to the three captains were adopted. It was resolved also to present pieces of plate to them, and funds were to be collected. A petition was sent to Congress asking that provisions be made to indemnify those who had secured the rescue, and Congress was asked to provide gold medals for the captains and silver medals for the sailors of the ships.

It was noted as one of the strange incidents that when the sea struck San Francisco's stern, carrying away the cabins and so many persons, many went to the upper deck, and while there, with a very high sea and the gale howling about them, the sun came out with great brilliancy.

The extraordinary praise bestowed upon Captain Creighton seems almost marvelous in these days, but it must be remembered that he lay by the sinking ship six days, most of the time in terrific gales, his own vessel leaking and short not only of provisions, but water also, and notwithstanding that, he determined to do everything possible to save life.

One man remarked in regard to the moments following the great disaster, "We all had acquaintances in the waves. Some struggled and some sank at once, and every one of us tried to shut both eyes and heart to what was around us."

The great number of deaths would be unaccountable, except for the fact that all medicines were washed overboard. The doctors left the ship on Kilby so that the dysentery was practically unchecked from the first. One passenger remarked, "A cup of hot tea with one hard biscuit was a treat, but when a roasted potato and a piece of fried pork were added to our bill of fare, it became a sumptuous repast."



6-H.P. Globe Engine

Florence III

Owned by J. A. Reddy

Key Murray  
PO Box 217  
Mendenhall, PA  
19357

July 30, 1992

Mr. Charles A. Whitaker  
Charles A. Whitaker Auction Co.  
7105 Emlen Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Mr. Whitaker:

This letter should convey the information requested by Mr. Stephen Hughes, the purchaser of the Tiffany presentation piece awarded to my great grandfather, Lieutenant Francis K. Murray, U.S. Navy in 1854.

The ewer passed on to his son, Daniel Murray and thence to his son Daniel, my first cousin once removed. The latter passed it on to me.

Enclosed are a copy of an account from *The Rudder*, a sailing magazine written, I surmise, in the early 1900's and an account written by a passenger, Mrs. Wyse, some time after the event.

Refer to Plate 20 The Wreck of the Steamship "San Francisco" in *Currier & Ives Printmakers to the American People* by Harry T. Peters, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc. 1942. The print is after an oil painting by F.E. Butterworth. The scene of the distressed dismasted hull is identical to that on the ewer.

Sincerely yours,

*Key Murray*  
Key Murray

encs.

Mendenhall, PA  
19357

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## The "SAN FRANCISCO" WRECK.

By a Survivor.

In the summer of 1854 we were stationed at Fort Independence in Boston Harbor, where we had been over a year. In August or September of the same year, my husband Capt. and Brevet-Major F. O. Wyse, 3rd Regiment of Artillery U.S. Army, was ordered to proceed with his Company (D) to New York City and take the Steamer "San Francisco" for California via the Horn.

The order seemed so peremptory that we should start without delay, that our only thought was to leave as soon as possible. I was, of course, sad at the idea of leaving my dear family and friends, but my father was a Naval Officer, and I was so accustomed to his coming and going on ships at sea, that not one thought of danger suggested itself to my mind, and I rather looked upon it as a pleasure excursion, especially as the ship was said to be such a fine one and so many were wishing and hoping to go. One lady whose husband was an Officer of the Regiment, made herself quite miserable and unhappy because she could not go, as her husband was detailed for other duty, but she was afterwards most thankful that he was kept from going.

Our home was broken up, our Lares and Penates with most of our necessary articles were disposed of as best we could; I remember a very pretty set of Dresden china we sold for a mere song, much to my regret, for I was fond of the little rose buds on it. I think we parted with everything but household linen, some bedding and of course, our own wearing apparel. We had one tierce to be sent on as freight by steamer. Major Wyse, in a hurry to obey orders, left us but a few days for packing; so leaving much in our quarters to the mercy of the next occupant, we left for New York with Major Wyse's Company. We went to the Astor House, the Company to Governor's Island (Fort Columbus). We were in New York but a few days when my sister, wife of a Naval Officer, being in Albany, wrote me, urging me to visit her as the "San Francisco" seemed far from being ready for sea.

Major Wyse took me up there but he was obliged to soon leave and join his Company. I was there a few weeks when my husband seemed to think he needed me, he came on and took me again to the Astor House. While there, Major and Mrs. Sprague called and urged me so strongly to go over to Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, where he was in command, and where also Major Wyse's Company was quartered, that we decided to go.

Major and Mrs. Sprague were charming people, making us feel one of the family. I was young and inexperienced and so glad of her advice and kind sisterly ways to me. Her own family consisted of herself and husband, three children, her mother, widow of General Worth, her two sisters and a young brother. They were all so kind and loving to me and my young child. We were with them until we sailed.

Day after day passed, then weeks, still the ship was not ready for sea until in December, I think, she started on her first trial trip. We could see her as she passed the Fort, going so slowly, it almost seemed as if she were crippled; after some hours she returned, but this trip was not considered satisfactory. I think she made other trips before she was pronounced ready to sail. She was a large new ship, chartered from Howland & Aspinwall by the Government to carry the 3rd Regiment of Artillery to California.

The Colonel commanding was William Gates, other Officers, Major and Brevet-Colonel J. M. Washington, Colonel Burke, Colonel Merchant, Major Taylor, Major F. O. Wyse, Capt. Field, Capt. Judd, Lieut. R. H. Smith, Lieut. Wm. W. Winder, Lieut. Chandler, Van Voast Loiser, Fremont, Lieut. Charles Winder, Capt. Gardiner of 1st Dragoons, Surgeon Salterlee, Dr. Wirtz and Lieut. Francis K. Murray of the United States Navy going as passenger to join Naval ship at Rio.

Other cabin passengers were St. Jacinto Demarrz (Brazilian Consul), wife and servant, Capt. Battle, Brazilian Army, and wife, Mr. George W. Askinwall taking the sea voyage, hoping to regain his health, as he was a great invalid, he was a brother of one of the owners of the "San Francisco". The hardships he endured, want of good food and comforts I fear only hastened his end as I think he did not live long after the wreck. We all felt great sympathy for him so weak and delicate, but always patient and uncomplaining. Then there were also some citizens, Mr. J. Lorimer Graham, Rev. Mr. Cooper and family, Mr. Tenny, Mr. Gates, son of Colonel Gates (who by the way was lost.) I think with soldiers camp, women and ships company there were one thousand on board. The San Francisco was commanded by Capt. Watkins one of the best men that ever lived.

I think we sailed from New York on December the twenty-second, it was a cold grey day when we said good bye to our friends the Spragues, on Governors Island. As we left dear Mrs. Sprague said "Major Wyse you'd better leave your young wife and child with me, I hate her to go such a gloomy day". I think we went on board near twelve o'clock, and sailed in the afternoon.

The first night out was not very rough, but disagreeable and cold; the next day was stormy, and the weather grew worse during the day, when at night it blew very fresh. I had been quite sea sick, some of the ladies, not sick, came in my room and we talked of the storm, and none of us enjoyed the gale which seemed to be coming on, and I think there was but little sleeping for the storm increased in fury as night went on.

Major Wyse had taken a state room below, though the upper deck rooms were so attractive that I was dreadfully disappointed when I found we were not to be there. I said I thought it very hard; he said that in bad weather we might be very uncomfortable on deck in a storm, and sometimes upper deck state rooms were washed away, how prophetic were his words, I thought at the time the idea was absurd. Major Taylor and wife for some reason were late and when we sailed they were not on ship and were obliged to take a steamer and overtake us. It was late when they arrived; they took an upper state room and were never seen after the first night of their arrival.

Our room was quite large, and we were near the stairs going on deck. Major Wyse was constantly going up there to look after his men quartered on deck who with no protection were getting wet and cold. He was devoted to the soldiers and regretted so much he could not make them comfortable. Capt. Watkins came in our room several times and looked out of the port, I asked him if we were in danger, he tried to make me think we were all right. As the storm increased Major Wyse was often going to see his men, I told him I did not like to be alone, he said Lieut. Murray was just outside our door, and he would ask him to stay with me while he was away.

Mr. Murray so fearless and brave at once inspired confidence. He told me the ship was very strongly built, and he felt could outride the storm. He did not tell me the engines had given out, and we were in the trough of the sea, and at the mercy of the waves. During the night Major Wyse tore a sheet in strips, saying he could fasten our little girl to him so she could not be separated from us, and he could hold on to me.

About daylight there was a most terrific noise like many canons being fired, then the water washed in our state room about a foot deep it seemed to me. We started to go up on deck, Major Wyse holding my hand and carrying the baby. As we went out the sight was pitiful, old and young clamoring to get on deck thinking the ship was sinking, water many inches deep, barrels of flour broken loose, bannisters broken off, children crying, soldiers lying dead, some people groaning, others praying, despair on faces of all, I had a dress on, but the skirt was torn off all but one width.

When we reached the deck on hands and knees, we crawled where we saw steam coming up and tried to get warm for we were wet and cold. Oh! what desolation was around us. All the deck state rooms were gone, large smoke stacks went down like straws, planks and all kinds of debris lying around.

As we sat there, the ship would go way down, and seem as if she could not come up; then she would side up and prepare for another plunge, throwing water over us, in mouth, eyes and ears. The sea looked like a large mountain trying to bury us, I thought every moment would be our last. My baby was in my arms, then suddenly she was convulsed, froth coming forth from her mouth, I said "Oh! our child is dying and I feel thankful if she dies before we are drowned, it will not be so hard as to see her struggling in the water".

As we were sitting there our dear friend Lieut. Murray came to us advising us to go below, as the ship was not sinking and we would be more comfortable. He kindly helped us down the stairs, for the ship was rolling and pitching terribly. As we reached the saloon we found all the ladies and many of the officers lying on the mattresses, wrapped in blankets, some had been injured by falling wood or in other ways, some one kindly wrapped a blanket about me and I laid down. It was so rough we could not sit nor stand.

My nurse, whom I had not seen since the night before, came to me. I was delighted to see her alive and uninjured, though she told me the state room where she was sleeping had broken in the ceiling and blood had poured over her from the state room above. She was so glad to get the baby she wrapped her up, and some one gave the child a few drops of brandy and water when she fell asleep for some hours, when she awoke she seemed bright and well as ever. One of the ladies in speaking of her said "I feel we shall not be lost while that angel child lives." She was a great pet and favorite with all on board and helped cheer us, when but little hope was left.

I think after a time we had some crackers and canned things, though there was nothing warm as all the fires were out. The Captain and officers were detailing parties to pump and bale ship, and get some of the water out of her to keep from sinking. Our officers worked hard and regular parties were detailed to relieve each other. The ship creaked frightfully and it seemed as she went up and down as if the timbers must be separating. Men were sent on deck to a jury mast, but it was too rough, so for the time it was given up.

How shall I describe the first night after we were wrecked. We were, as I said before, lying down, some sick, all more or less uncomfortable. When darkness came on we had no lights, and though over thankful to be alive it seemed very forlorn, feeling any moment we might go to the bottom of the sea.

During this time some negro preacher started to pray that we might all be ready to sink, and that our dear ones at home might be given resignation to bear their loss. He prayed particularly for the wife of Capt. Watkins, and it was so doleful that we begged for him to be stopped. The long, long night passed slowly away and we saw another day though there seemed no abatement of the storm, and with heavy seas splashing and thundering over us volumes of water, we fully realized the littleness and insignificance of ourselves.

I think on the third day a ship was hailed, the Brig Napoleon, she after learning our condition promised to stay by us, but in the morning she was gone. A day or two after another ship was sighted, the Brig Maria, she too would stay by us, but she left us in our desolation, and we felt so disappointed and thought them most heartless.

The night, I remember, seemed so fearful, the dreadful creaking allowed little sleeping. We were calling to Lieut. Murray all the time. We would ask him "What are the chances now"? Will the ship be saved"? He always cheery, and giving us hopeful words in hours of danger, would say "I feel we shall all be saved, the hull of the ship is magnificent, she can stand worse weather than this, I watched her when she was building", and his kind encouraging words always made us much happier, but he told us afterwards he always feared our asking him what would happen if we shipped another sea. For had we done so we would have gone down at once.

The officers and crew had been bailing and pumping for some days when the Barque Kilby was seen and she promised to stay by us. The next day she was there still, and the Captain said they would take on board as many of the San Francisco passengers as they could. The name of the Captain of the Kilby was Low. They had been forty days from New Orleans to Boston, the Captain had died, and Low had been first mate.

The storm had moderated so much that a boat from the Kilby came along side. Our own boats had all been washed away, and the only one of the Kilby needed so much caulking, that it took hours to make her fit to take the passengers over. When she was ready Lieut. Murray kindly volunteered to command the boat taking passengers to the Kilby.

This was a great responsibility that he assumed. The boat required bailing all the time and the sea was not smooth, he told me the strain on his nerves was very great. Colonel Gates most gladly accepted his kind offer, he ordered Major Wyse to superintend disembarkment of those to go on the Kilby.

I think a rope was fixed up in the stern of the ship like a swing, though there was no seat, and we sat on the rope and held on with both hands. The boat was just below in the water, as it would rise each one in the swing was told to let go and we dropped into the boat. When as many as she could carry were in the boat they started rowing for the Kilby.

I think the officers went mostly with their families, Colonel Gates and family went in the first boat. Colonel Merchant and Mrs. Merchant went in the first boats, I think they were both quite sick, she was a beautiful woman and had a most attractive family.

The boats had gone several times over with all the officers whose families were with them, when Major Wyse said to me "Now you must go", I said "You will come too", he said "Yes after a while", I wanted to wait until he could come, he said "No, if he could feel we were safe he should get on much better". So my baby, nurse and myself were put in the boat. Major Wyse called to Mr. Murray as we pushed off, that he put Mrs. Wyse in his care, and most nobly he cared for me, for though Major Wyse said he would come over he knew he could not leave the command unless the superior officer came back.

We had no idea what the ship was where we were going, we were only thinking it was not a wreck, it was a small ship with but few comforts. Colonel Gates with his family had the Captain's cabin, some of the other ladies were made as comfortable as possible. There was no place for me to sleep, so the first night I sat on a floor of oil cloth with my child in my arms. I think the boat I went over in was the last as it was getting rough and dark. It did not return to the San Francisco.

I was constantly asking about the wreck. We were connected to her

by a hawser, but after a time we could see the lights no longer, a violent storm arose and they were obliged to batten down the hatches, (where some of the soldiers were) to keep the water out. In the night the ship went on her beam ends twice, and I slid across the floor to the side of the vessel. I often wonder how we lived through those fearful times.

In the morning a mate came in with some hot tea and I think some bacon. I asked him what he thought of the San Francisco, he said "She was a goner last night". Dear Mr. Murray said "Why do you talk so, you know nothing about it, she can live for weeks, and this lady has a husband on board". He made some excuse. It was this same man that told me he was taking home to his wife a splendid matilda, meaning mantilla.

The weather was still rough and stormy, and everything seemed hopeless, our condition did not seem much improved. The Kilby had few sails, scarcely any provisions, no lights, only a box of candles we had taken, and a few things which were soon gone. I was made more comfortable as a seaman gave us his berth, and I shared it with another lady she at one end, I at the other with my baby. We scarcely knew where we were, so seldom could they get the sun, and we sailed and drifted here and there.

Soon the only food was hard tack and the drinking water was low, it was decided to ration us all, a bottle of water and two ship biscuits a day, some corn was found, it was parched and helped to keep us alive.

The Kilby was short of sails and I think of most everything. She had no provisions when she stayed by us. We made but little headway for Boston, her destination, and the day seemed long and drear. There was some talk of starvation and many people hoarded up their ship bread, fearing a time when they might be more hungry than the present. I often chewed up the crackers for my baby. I wonder she lived through it all.

Lieut. Murray was still our main stay never losing his cheerfulness and comforting word. We felt he was keeping watch over the Kilby as Captain Low seemed to have no control over his crew or himself, but he knew it was all right, as Mr. Murray was there.

We were on this ship seventeen days, we were most thankful there were no more storms, but we were weary and heart sick. I was the youngest married lady on board, separated from my husband not knowing if he were alive or dead, and I felt so sad and alone, though every one was most kind to me and realized my sad situation.

At times, Sunday night, if it were calm some of the ladies would sing. One hymn they sang seemed very appropriate "My soul above the wreck shall rise", this and others were sung and were quite a comfort. I think we had been on the Kilby seventeen days when after a day of heavy fog, it suddenly lifted and we saw almost within speaking distance a fine ship.

Imagine what a delightful sight she was for us. We were so excited we scarcely knew what we were doing. She proved to be a packet ship, Captain Pendleton from Liverpool bound for New York. She had come out of her way, the Captain scarcely knowing why, and he felt that a good God had sent him to our relief. You may be sure many prayers went to the Throne of Heaven that we should be saved.

Colonel Gates sent Lieut. Fremont to the ship asking the Captain to take us on-board. The Government would reimburse him. Captain Pendleton most warmly received Mr. Fremont saying he would gladly take us just as soon as we could get on the Lucy Thompson, and he would aid us in every way. He would not hear of any recompense, he hoped we would soon be on board.

He sent his own good strong boats to take us over, manned by strong warm-hearted sailors, who helped lift the weak in the boats. We were soon ready, no trunks to pack, only to smooth our dresses with our hands

hoping to look a little better, though our looks affected us not at all. We were a cadaverous looking party.

We were taken in the boats to the side of the Lucy Thompson. I had a rope tied around my waist and was pulled up like a bale of goods, my baby handed me by kind sailors. As we stepped on the deck poor emigrants with tears in their eyes, walked up and offered us some of their bread, it was kind of them.

Captain Pendleton commanded the Lucy Thompson- One of my daughters, when in Brooklyn some years ago, I think in the Fall of 1881, seeing the account of the death of Capt. Pendleton in the newspaper, went to his house and saw members of the family. She found from them that the only recompense that he would accept for his kindness in rescuing the passengers from the Kilby, was a painting of the Lucy Thompson, done in England. The painting represented the Kilby a little way off, the forlorn passengers brought up alongside the Lucy Thompson in a small boat. This boat had to await its rise on the waves, the sea being very rough, bringing the boat up sufficiently close to have the passengers hoisted aboard the Lucy Thompson. I had a rope around my waist and was drawn up over the side of the ship. A daughter of Capt. Pendleton told her that was the only way they could rescue them.

By a singular coincidence the Captain had deviated that morning from his usual course, saying that something prompted him to make this change, otherwise he would not have found the Kilby. The Captain always felt that this was Providential and until the end of his life was grateful to God for enabling him to thus effect the rescue.

Captain Pendleton met us and so kindly welcomed us and led us to his cabin, I don't think he ever before or since had such a sorry looking set of passengers. Many of the officers had on soldiers trousers, a piece of blanket twisted round their heads for caps, others with nothing to represent even a cap.

As we entered the cabin, the table was set with every delicacy and many exclaimed "Oh, bread and butter" we were soon seated at the table, and I feared we would be sick eating after such a long fast and so much suffering, as for myself, I was getting weak and had but little appetite.

We were about twenty four hours from Sandy Hook. Some of the citizens stayed on the Kilby and went to Boston, I think perhaps they got sails from the Lucy Thompson. Imagine how delightful to be on such a lovely ship so clean and safe and a fast sailer. I asked Mr. Murray something about the ship, he said "I gave up my command when we left the Kilby".

We reached Sandy Hook about eight o'clock the next night, a telegram was sent to the city and soon small steam boats came to us, they sent shawls and wraps, as it was cold. They brought newspapers telling us the Three Bells had come with passengers from the San Francisco and the fearful time they had after we left them.

As the newspapers were brought on board, and they heard Major Wyse had been on Three Bells, the ladies rushed to tell me my husband was safe, and I think we all cried and laughed at once.

Some one read aloud the fearful time they had after we left. At one time the ship took fire, but they managed to put it out. Many of the women, children and soldiers got sick and died from eating so much canned food, and wet and dampness everywhere. Major Wyse told me one of the soldiers wives was very ill, he put her in one of the state rooms, and a woman to take care of her, he noticed her little child lying on her arm seemed restless, and he went in and found the sick woman had died, the other had fallen asleep.

Finally when hope seemed almost dead the Three Bells, and The Antarctic spoke them and promised to stay by them until the weather moderated and they could take them off. The Three Bells was from Liverpool bound to New York. Capt. Creighton. The Antarctic. Capt. Steuffer

on her way to Liverpool, they both bade them be of good cheer, they would stand by them.

Capt. Creighton seemed to have sighted the doomed ship too, at the approach of night, and was unable to take the people off in the storm and darkness, but stood by until morning, and ran down often during the night as close as he dared, and when in hailing distance, shouted through his trumpet, "Never fear, hold on--I'll stand by you."

In this connection was published in the Atlantic Monthly a few years after the following poem by J. G. Whittier:

#### THE THREE BELLS.

Beneath the low-hung night cloud,  
That raked her splintering mast,  
The good ship settled slowly,  
The cruel leak gained fast.

Over the awful ocean  
Her signal gun pealed out,  
Dear God, was that Thy answer,  
From the horrors round about?

A voice came down the wild-wind,  
Ho, Ship ahoy"- its cry;  
"Our stout Three Bells of Glasgow  
Shall stand till daylight by.

Hour after hour crept slowly,  
Yet on the heavy swells  
Tossed up and down the ship lights  
The lights of the Three Bells.

And ship to ship made signals,  
Man answered back to man,  
While oft to cheer and hearten  
The Three Bells nearer rang.

And the Captain from the taffrail  
Sent down his hopeful cry,  
"Take heart, hold on", he shouted,  
"The Three Bells shall stand by."

All night across the waters  
The tossing lights shone clear,  
All night from reeling taffrail  
The Three Bells sent her cheer.

And when the dreary watches  
Of storm and darkness passed,  
Just as the wreck lurched under,  
All souls were saved at last.

Sail on, Three Bells, forever,  
In grateful memory sail;  
Ring on Three Bells of rescue,  
Above the wave and gale.

As then, in night and tempest.

We were soon on the steam boat and not long in reaching New York. The excitement in the city was great as so much anxiety had been felt for the San Francisco, and everyone was wild for news, so the steam boat Captain did not let it be known where he would land, as the crowd was great.

When we landed we were taken at once to the Astor House, where I had been when first reaching New York, we went up to the reception room on the same floor as the dining room, the guests were at dinner, but many soon heard we were there and came to look at us while we waited for our rooms. We were a strange sight. Mr. Stetson, the proprietor welcomed us most warmly and we were soon given a nice room, bright fire in the grate. It was delightful and my baby so enjoyed it.

Major Wyse with his company, or I should say the remnants of it, for many had been lost, were at Bedloes Island. Word was sent to him, and after some hours he arrived. We were a thankful, happy set of people, though none of us were very strong.

The next morning so many of our friends came to see us, all wanting to take us to their hearts and homes, my dear friends the Spragues insisted on taking us to Fort Columbus, saying my room was waiting for me, and they insisted on taking us there.

As we went down to go over, crowds were in the hall of the Astor House, people I had never seen took my hand shaking it warmly. We went over to the Fort, in a boat rowed by soldiers. As we reached the wharf they stood up and gave three cheers for "Major Wyse who did not desert the soldiers". I was so weak and unnerved I nearly fainted.

Oh, how sweet it was to be once more in my old room surrounded by dear ones, but the next day I was very ill and dangerously so for some time. Major Wyse was then ordered to Washington to report to the department. The telegraph officers said he should be telegraphed my condition all the time, free of cost.

My little child had been bathed constantly in this room before we went, but now when they tried to put her in the same tub she shrieked so the Doctor said we must not attempt putting her in the water, it would throw her in convulsions, as she remembered when the water was washing over her. Poor little thing she looked so white and thin, it was months before we could bathe her in a tub.

Major Wyse told me he felt we were so well off on the Kilby, and his disappointment was so great when the Three Bells landed them in New York, to find nothing had been heard of the Kilby. All were anxiously hoping for news of us and when the Lucy Thompson came in of course all were overjoyed, the excitement was very great, and everyone was trying to help the poor shipwrecked people. Any one purchasing for a San Francisco sufferer was given the goods for half price and many clothes were sent to the different persons.

Major Wyse was presented with a very handsome sword, sash, a pair of epaulettes and colts revolvers, the sword had his family motto on it "sapere aude", and engraved "Presented to Brevet Major Francis O. Wyse U.S.A. by Citizens of New York, in testimony of their appreciation of his devotedness to the Soldiers, and fidelity to the interest of the Service. New York, Dec. 1854.

Lieut. Murray was presented with many handsome sets of silver from different cities, and a large goblet from the ladies on the San Francisco. I think with this inscription "Presented to Francis Key Murray by the ladies of the San Francisco, for his bravery and ever cheering words in the hour of danger".

33 Congress  
1st. Session

House of Rep.  
Feb. 16th, 1854.

Rep. 113.

SAN FRANCISCO RESCUE.

See Complimentary notice of Major Wyse on the 3rd page of the report of  
"The Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives, to  
whom was referred the resolution of the Senate and House of Representa-  
tives, to enquire and report in what form the acknowledgement of Con-  
gress may be most appropriately expressed to those benevolent and cour-  
ageous men who, under Providence were the means of rescuing from death  
so many citizens of this Republic, have had the same under considera-  
tion and submit to the respective Houses the following report.....

.....  
Major Wyse and his officers deserve great credit for their effi-  
cient conduct, in the absence of their superior officers.....

James Shields,

Chairman of the Com. on the part of the Senate.

Joseph R. Chandler,

Chairman of the Com. on the part of the House of Reps.

An account written by Mrs West of  
the wreck of the Steamer San Francisco  
in the year 1854. Lieutenant Murray  
spoke of in this account was the father  
of Samuel Maynard's Murray of Rockwood  
& Bonnewood. In recognition of his service  
on this occasion, a gift of silver was  
presented to him pieces of which are  
now in possession of various members  
of the family.

June 1911.