SCORES PERISH IN A COLLISION ON SOUND

Steamer Larchmont Sunk by Schooner Knowlton Off Block Island--Terrible Sufferings of the Few Survivors.

Block Island, R. I.—About 150 persons went to their death in Block Island sound Monday night as a result of a collision between the three-masted schooner Harry Knowlton, and the Loy line steamer Larchmont, bound from Providence to New York.

It is estimated that, including the crew, there were nearly 200 persons on board the steamer when she sailed from Providence. Of these only 19 appear to have survived the disaster, ten members of the crew and nine passengers. Forty-eight bodies have been recovered.

Awakened from their slumbers in their staterooms, the unfortunate passengers were at the mercy of the fates. Many it is believed went down with the ship. Others, temporarily thankful that they had escaped drowning, prayed that they might be relieved of the terrible pain caused by their frozen bodies, and one man, a passenger whose name could not be learned, plunged a knife into his throat and ended his sufferings.

Survivors in Sad Condition.

The few who survived were in a pitiful condition. In almost every case their arms and legs hung helplessly as they were lifted out of the boats in which they reached shore. During the day 48 bodies came ashore, either in boats or thrown up by the sea. Only six of the 48 were identified.

An investigation of the wreck will be instituted by the United States steamboat inspectors of the Providence district.

Each Captain Blames the Other.

The cause of the accident has not been satisfactorily explained. It occurred just off Watch Hill, about 11 o'clock at night, when the schooner Harry Knowlton, bound from South Amboy for Boston with a cargo of coal, crashed into the steamer's port side amidships. Capt. George McVey, of the Larchmont, declares that the Knowlton suddenly swerved from her course, luffed up into the wind and crashed into his vessel.

Capt. Haley of the Knowlton asserts that the steamer did not give his vessel sufficient sea room and that the collision occurred before he could take his schooner out of the path of the oncoming steamer.

The steamer, with a huge hole torn in her side, was so seriously damaged that no attempt was made to run for shore, and she sank to the bottom in less than half an hour. The Knowlton after she backed away from the wreck, began to fill rapidly, but her crew manned the pumps and kept her afloat until she reached a point off Quonochontaug, where they put out in the lifeboat and rowed ashore. There were no fatalities on the schooner, but the men suffered from the extreme cold.

Suffered Terribly from Cold.

There was no comparison, however, between their experiences and those of the passengers and crew of the steamer. A majority of those on the Larchmont had retired for the night and when the collision occurred there were few on board, with the exception of the crew, who were prepared for the weather which prevailed. They hurried from the warm staterooms to the deck of the steamer and into zero atmosphere.

Literally chilled to the bone, many rushed headlong below to secure more clothing, while others, bare-footed, bare-headed and clad only in night gowns, stood on the decks, fearing that to go below would mean certain death.

It now appears certain that the loss of life was heaviest among those who had retired for the night. Despite the efforts which were made to leave no one on board, it would appear to be impossible that of the 200 souls on board none were left behind.

Those who had no opportunity to clothe themselves succumbed long before they reached shore, and even those who were fortunate enough to be fully dressed endured suffering and frostbites of a most serious nature.

Report to the Joy Line.

New York.—Late Tuesday night the officials of the Joy line here received a detailed report from Captain Gray of the steamer Kentucky, which left Fall River, Mass., at 11 o'clock in the morning for the scene of the wreck of the steamer Larchmont, off Block Island.

The crew of the Kentucky immediately upon its arrival near the point where the Larchmont is lying, about five miles west of Watch Hill, R. I., put out in small boats and made an inspection of the wrecked vessel. No one was found aboard and Captain Gray said that there was about five feet of water in the staterooms on the hurricane deck. The sea, the captain reported, was breaking over her and she would undoubtedly be a complete wreck.

The Kentucky then steamed to Block Island and anchored off the spot where the survivors landed in the small boats. Captain Gray again ordered his crew to the boats and he was rowed ashore.

Bodies Cased in Ice.

As he neared the shore, the captain said that he saw huge blocks of ice and wondered at first what they could be. As he neared the beach, he said that he discovered that the blocks of ice covered human bodies.

"It was the most horrible sight I ever saw," the captain reported. "There were 30 bodies strewn along the beach and all of them were encased in ice. The ice was several inches thick."

After making an examination of the bodies, Capt. Gray went to the rowboats in which those who had survived had abandoned the Larchmont. In the bottom of the boats he found 12 bodies and several of them were women. These, the captain said, had been frozen to death in the boat while drifting about in the sound.

Survivors at Lighthouse.

Capt. Gray then hurried to the lighthouse, about half a mile away, where he found the 19 who had been saved. They had been carried from the beach by farmers and those employed in the lighthouse. The names of those who were saved, the captain said, he was unable to get, because of their precarious condition.

Capt. Gray directed his crew and the farmers to carry the bodies from the beach and those which were in the boats to the lighthouse, where they were placed outside. It was first thought advisable to thaw the ice off the bodies, but finally it was decided to allow them to remain as they were until they were taken in charge by the undertakers.

Capt. McVey Unconscious.

Capt. Gray said that Capt. McVey of the ill-fated vessel was in a serious condition. He, with Purser Oscar Young, were the last to leave the Larchmont and during all the night they braved the storm. When they were taken to the lighthouse, both were in an exhausted condition.

Capt. McVey became unconscious soon after he was rescued and had not revived. Purser Young's condition is also serious and the other survivors are all in a precarious condition. Two surgeons from Fall River brought by Capt. Gray administered restoratives.

During the few minutes Purser Young was conscious, Capt. Gray reported, the purser said there were either 75 or 105 passengers on the vessel. He was unable to make out because of the low voice of the purser.

In speaking of the accident after Capt. Gray made his report, Superintendent Noble said:

"I should judge that the Harry Knowlton must have been going at about 13 to 15 knots an hour in a good stiff breeze. She must have struck the Larchmont squarely in the beam. No mention has been made of the engineers and I think that they must have been instantly killed by the steam and water."

Larchmont's Many Mishaps.

The Larchmont has figured in a long list of mishaps since she entered the service of the Joy line. These began on September 4, 1902, when she was on fire in the sound. Her 200 passengers were in a panic, but the crew fought the fire successfully, so that the steamboat reached New York without casualties.

On January 24, 1904, the Larchmont ran ashore off Prudence island. Two weeks later she went aground again in Narragansett bay. There were 150 passengers on board at the time and they were thrown into a panic as the vessel ran high and dry off Warwick light.

The Larchmont collided with and almost cut in two the schooner D. J. Melanson on October 11, 1904, in the sound off Stratford, near Bridgeport. The captain and crew of the schooner were taken aboard the Larchmont.

Fire threatened the Larchmont on January 11, 1906. Deefective electric light wire insulation, it was alleged, caused a blaze that created wild excitement among the 200 passengers.