

# MARBLEHEAD MESSENGER, SEPTEMBER 18, 1896

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## The Gale of '46

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Fiftieth Anniversary To-morrow of  
One of the Worst Disasters  
In the Town's History

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GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF THE STORY  
BY SKIPPER FROST ONE OF THE  
SURVIVORS

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STATISTICS REGARDING THE DEAD  
AND THE LIVING

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To-morrow will be the fiftieth anniversary of the great gale on the Grand Banks on Saturday, September 19, 1846. Half a century since that memorable disaster in which so many of this town's sturdy population found watery graves and the death knell was sounded for Marblehead's sole industry. These years have passed bringing many changes, and all that remains to recall the importance which attached at one time to the hazardous calling is the remembrances of joys and many sorrows of those hard working, perilous times.

Out of thirty-four skippers who sailed to the banks in that year only two are living, Captain Richard Frost and Captain John Proctor. Both these have the most vivid recollections of the September storm. Captain Frost says, "I have as good a recollection and can account for every minute it seems, of that day, as though it was only three months ago instead of half a hundred years." And then he told the story of the season to the reporter, making it a thrilling account which cold type will find it hard to portray. The captain was twenty-three years old and made his first trip as skipper in the spring of 1846, sailing in the eighty-three-ton schooner, Benjamin Franklin, owned by Mr. George Knight.

This first trip on "spring fare" was only moderately successful. It was not a good year for fish and none of the Marblehead fleet did well, some making only one trip instead of coming home in July and August. The Franklin returned about the first of August, discharged, refitted and sailed again for the Banks the end of the month. It was moderate weather and the passage was a long one occupying twelve days. Arriving at the Banks, the schooner was put under bank sails, the new ones being stowed away, according to custom. Fish were scarce and it was dull work. Nothing unusual happened until Saturday, the nineteenth, after the Franklin had been on the fishing ground just a week. On Friday, the eighteenth, the Franklin had drifted into fifty fathoms indicating to skipper Frost that he was working off the southeast edge of the bank. There were about forty sail in sight on that day, the most of them, thirty at least, being Marblehead schooners. The wind was very moderate, so in making back to an anchorage the vessels were unable to secure as wide berths as ordinarily selected. This was fatal to two of the schooners, at least, as after the storm their wreckage was found mixed, indicating that they had come together.

"The next morning", said Capt. Frost, "we called all hands at daylight, had breakfast, and then as the weather looked threatening we hove up at six o'clock and stood away on the wind to the westward in order to get clear of the fleet. We sailed three hours and then came to anchor. The wind was blowing fresh and increasing. Things looked threatening but not unusually so. We paid out all the cable, two hundred and forty fathoms, two-reefed the foresail and furled it on the boom. This was precaution against breaking and drifting, being the only sail

that could be used in bad weather. In this way we rode easily until half-past twelve. The storm was increasing, the sea was getting heavier, and everything was shrouded in "wind food" or fog. At that time our cable parted and we began to drift. We went to the windless and hove in the cable, finding it had parted within fifteen fathoms of the anchor. We stowed the cable below and prepared for the worst by battening down the hatches and setting the reefed foresail. For some unaccountable reason we took an unusual precaution by closing the forecabin and calling all hands aft to the cabin. Our foresail went to pieces in half an hour as if it was a sheet of paper, but then we made pretty good weather of it, lying in pretty well and shipping very little water.

"It was at this time the "wind food" lifted, permitting us to see all around us for a distance of perhaps three miles. Only one schooner was in sight and we were drifting toward her. She was under a double-reefed foresail the same as we had been but hers were her best suit, her skipper having never changed to the second-hand bank suit. We worked for a position to the leeward of her and pretty soon crossed her bow, not more than a couple of hundred yards of water between us. I plainly saw two of her crew holding by the rail and recognized an Odd Fellow signal made by one of them. Just then our mainsail was blown loose and all hands being called to secure it, the Sabine passed from our thoughts for the time. When looking for her again she was nowhere in sight. Mr. Pedrick, one of our crew, was the last man to see her. He noticed that the peak of her foresail had dropped, and the probability is that her peak halyard parted, as no sane man would attempt to lower a sail in such a blow. When this accident happened the Sabine probably shipped a sea which filled her and

sank her. At any rate, we were the last to see her. This was about two o'clock in the afternoon.

"There were no signs of a let up, and the sea grew worse instead of easier. We were all huddled aft in the cabin, leaving only one man on deck, who was lashed to the wheel. We were constantly shipping seas. Mr. John Freeto, one of my crew, the oldest man aboard, and who had been at sea more than any of us, was standing in the companionway. Whenever a sea came aboard, he would pull the slide over the companionway, opening it again when the schooner righted. Being asked if he was frightened, 'Uncle John', as we all called him, replied 'No, I ain't frightened, but I never in all my life saw anything at sea to come up to this. "Look skipper!" This last was in an excited tone, and at the invitation I went to the companionway, looked where he pointed away off to windward, and there beheld a sight no man can accurately describe. I shall never forget it as long as I live. There was a huge monster of a sea already combed at the top, apparently a mile away, coming down upon us a solid wall of water. There was no end to it I could see. The fog had gone and we could see three miles at least, on both sides of us, making that wall of water six miles long at least. 'Come down', I exclaimed to 'Uncle John' "shove over that slide". It was perhaps a minute or so we waited and then we were struck. The Franklin was lifted to a great height apparently. There was a rush and a roar, a cracking and straining, an anxious, breathless minute in our cabin in which no one spoke. The Franklin was rolled over until it seemed her masts must have touched the water, and then the sea passed. Our deck was awash to the top of the rail. We opened the slide as quickly as we dared, and then saw that seething, hissing mountain of water passing away to the leeward where it broke

not half a mile from us. Had it broke over us all would have been at an end. Nothing that ever floated could have withstood the fall and shock of such a sea.”

It was Captain Frost’s opinion then and is today, that it was a tidal wave which they passed through. The water was stirred clear from the bottom and was as discolored as in any dock.

Resuming the narrative the captain continued: “The Franklin behaved well and the only damage was a broken cat head to the sheet anchor. This threw the anchor on the deck but it was quickly secured again. The wind had been from the sou’ sou’ west all day but at about three o’clock in the afternoon shifted directly opposite and blew from the northwest. There was no more than the ordinary uneasiness aboard. We knew it was a hard blow but we had weathered hard blows before. Having suffered no accidents of any consequence, no doubt contributed to this feeling. Shortly after it began to moderate and at midnight it was quite so. The next day we judged by soundings we had been blown about forty-five miles off the edge of the bank and then tried to get back. It took several days on account of head winds. Three days after the blow we fell in with the Marblehead schooner Hope, Skipper Philip Graves, a total wreck. Her two masts and bowsprit were standing but that was all. She was water logged and her pumps were choked. Her rails were gone as well as her quarter-board and every stanchion had been broken off. We sighted her at noon, six miles away, colors down. We beat down to her at about dark. Their boat had been stove and ours had a plank gone and so was unseaworthy. The weather being moderate, both vessels displayed lanterns by which we were enabled to lay by until morning. We then repaired our boat and went and took them off, together with all their dunnage and

everything else we could, and then set fire to her. The Hope had been out four months and had started for home on the day of the storm. She had but six hundred quintals of fish aboard not having wet all of her salt. The next day I hailed the ship Huguenot bound for New York, and her captain readily took the Hope’s crew aboard. They arrived in New York, October 3, and carried the first news of the disaster to Marblehead. We stayed on the bank until November 8, and then came home with a small trip.

This was Captain Frost’s account of the memorable storm. He made many trips to Grand Banks afterwards, going as skipper of the Martha, the Mary Susan and the Annie Hooper, all Marblehead schooners, but never experienced anything as severe as that blow. He sailed thirty-one years continuously, finally settling down to the life and occupations of a landsman.

There was sadness for many a month after that fateful September. Eleven vessels were lost and sixty-five men and boys never came back. Nine of the vessels lost entire crews. The schooner Clinton lost two men, the others being taken off later by Skipper Francis Swett, who put them aboard a ship bound for New York. There was scarcely a family in town which did not mourn the loss of some relative. The suffering was great but considerably lessened by the contributions sent by neighboring towns.

The Seaman’s Charitable Society erected in 1848, a monument on the Old Hill which stands today, a memorial of the disaster and the distressing times which followed in its wake.

In December 1848 Rev. E. A. Lawrence delivered a discourse from which the following account of the storm is taken:

“The vicissitudes of the season were much as usual until the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. Two days before, in the practical eye of the mariner, the dark clouds lying along the

eastern horizon, and the heavy seas rolling in from the west, were portentous of the approaching storm. The night of the 18<sup>th</sup> was dark and foggy; in the early part of Saturday; the 19<sup>th</sup> a gentle breeze arose and swept from the bosom of the ocean the dense fog which had lain upon it, but which soon filled the air with the thick “wind food”. From nine o’clock in the morning till three in the afternoon, the wind increased from a mild zephyr to a violent gale. In the meantime the men were preparing themselves, as best they could, some to ride out the storm, and some to run before the wind. “They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.” Between three and four o’clock, the wind suddenly changed, creating cross-seas, and bringing them into that most difficult of conditions in which to guide a ship, a place where seas meet. Now came their hour of trial. They were in the midst of a furious gale, and their ships were rolling and leaping and creaking and “staggering like a drunken man.” Dark night was just at hand to wrap them in her sable mantle. Cross seas were striding over the heaving bosom of the angry deep like hostile armies, and the maddened surges “lifting up their hands on high,” now rushing trampling one upon another, now breaking, pouring from their topmast height like a restless cataract, before which the sturdiest ship could no more stand than the frailest bark. Some now cut their cables and drift. Some are thrown upon their vessel’s side and drift. Some ship a sea and are disabled. Some, in the deep dark night are driven and dashed one upon another and founder together. Some are thrown down once, some twice, and one *three times*, and yet come upright again.”

The MESSENGER is indebted to Mr. George B. Humphrey for the following information:

The Marblehead fleet comprised thirty-four schooners aboard which were two hundred and thirty-eight men and boys. It was “fall fare” and most of the vessels had been “spring fare”. The names of the vessels, the date of their sailing so far as could be ascertained, and the names of the skippers are given below.

Sailed August 27

Schooner Trio, Skipper William Bridgeo  
 Schooner Pacific, Skipper John Cross  
 Schooner Liberty, Skipper Eben Lecraw  
 Sch. Wm. Penn, Skipper Henry Paine  
 Sch. Monroe, Skipper Thos. Gregory  
 Sch. Minerva, Skipper Francis Stephens  
 Schooner Essex, Skipper Sans Stanley

Sailed August 31

Sch. James Mugford, Skipper Richard Dixey  
 Sch. Senator, Skipper Charles Chadwick  
 Schooner Hero, Skipper John Chadwick  
 Schooner Clinton, Skipper John White  
 Schooner Warrior, Skipper Sans Standley  
 Schooner Rose, Skipper James Hawkes

Sailed September 1

Sch. Atlantic, Skipper Edward Dixey  
 Sch. Decatur, Skipper Richard Ireson  
 Sch. Bird, Skipper Jeremiah Roundy  
 Schooner Zela, Skipper William Hooper

Sailed September 3

Sch. Samuel Knight, Skipper J. Proctor  
 Schooner Sabine, Skipper Samuel Dodd  
 Schooner Heron, Skipper Samuel Blackler  
 Sch. Gen Jackson, Skipper Wm. Anthony  
 Schooner Robin, Skipper Francis Swett  
 Sch. Rebecca, Skipper Thomas Pedrick  
 Sch. Benj. Franklin, Skipper Rich. Frost

Sailed April 23

Sch Balance, Skipper Thomas Peach

Sailed May 18

Schooner Salus, Skipper John Trefry

Sailed July 11

Sch. Antelope, Skipper Ezekial Russell

Date of Sailing Unknown

Schooner Hope, Skipper Phillip Graves

Sch. Ceres, Skipper Benjamin Swasey

Sch. Marblehead, Skipper John Bridgeo  
Schooner Elizabeth, Skipper John Freeto  
Sch. William Franklin, John Gardner  
Schooner Eliza Ann, Skipper John Peach  
Sch. Leader, Skipper Samuel Cloutman

Eleven vessels, the entire crews of nine of them and two of a tenth crew, in all sixty-five men and boys were lost leaving forty-three widows and a hundred and fifty-five children fatherless.

The list of the lost follows:

In the Schooner Pacific, John Cross, Eleazer Leach, Edward Homan, John Hunt, Isaac Wadden, Robert Devereaux, John Bates.

In the Schooner Liberty, Ebenezer Lecraw, John Lancey, Samuel Graves, George Lemaster, Thomas Doliber, Robert Blard, Richard Goss.

In the Schooner Sabine, Samuel Dodd, Joseph Homan, David Peirce, Edward H. Dixey, Benjamin Garney, Nicholas Florence, Henry Pitman.

In the Schooner Senator, Charles Chadwick, Joseph Graves, Edward Dixey Jr., Mark H Giles, John Glover, Elisha D Pedrick.

In the Schooner Zela, William Hooper, John White 2d, John D. Bowden, Samuel Blackler Jr., Thomas Caswell Jr., John Wallace, Amos Humphrey.

In the Schooner Minerva, Francis Stevens, Philip Thrasher, Osmyn Stacy, Archibald Sinclair, William Wooldridge, Michael Phillips, Brown Aleanda

In the Schooner Salus, John Trefry, Thomas Pedrick, Benjamin Martin, William Girdler, Joseph Atkins, Fred'e Donaldson Jr., John Green.

In the schooner Warrior, Sans Standley 2d, Benjamin Dodd, Moses Peachy, Edward Humphrey, William Blackler, George Bridgeo, Samuel Goodwin.

In the Schooner Trio, William Bridgeo, Edward F. Trefry, John Roads, Joseph

Bowden, John Curtis, William Harris, James Eastland.

In the Schooner Clinton, John White 3d, Nehemiah Stone 3d.

The schooner Hope was lost but the crew was taken off by Skipper Richard Frost and afterwards put on board of a ship bound for New York where they arrived October 5, the news of the disaster reaching Marblehead on fall training day.

Of the two hundred and thirty-eight men and boys who were in the thirty-four vessels from this town which were out in the gale of September 19, 1846 but twenty seven are known to be living. Mr. Humphrey gives below their names and the vessels upon which they sailed.

John Proctor and Philip A Thornier, Schooner Samuel Knight.

Nahum Warren, Francis E. Pedrick and John Russell, Schooner Rebecca

Edward B. Thompson, William Fredrick and John F, Graves, Schooner Clinton.

William Gardner, Augustus Gregory and Nathaniel P. Adams, Schooner Monroe.

Josiah N. Green and William D. Hammond, Schooner Bird.

Benjamin F. Pitman and John O, Chapman, Schooner Robin.

Peter Martin and Phillip Smith, Sch. Marblehead.

Joseph Bassett and Phillip Freeto, Sch. Elizabeth.

Edmund Parker and Nathaniel stone, Schooner Balance.

Ambrose H. Meservey, Schooner Eliza Ann.

Richard Frost, Schooner Benjamin Franklin.

Peter Martin, Schooner Anteleope.

Samuel D Dixey, Schooner James Mugford.

Victor Britton, Schooner Atlantic.

William Thorner, Schooner Decatur.

# MARBLEHEAD MESSENGER, SEPTEMBER 25, 1896

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## That Fatal Storm

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Further Remembrances of the Great  
Gale of 1846  
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WHAT SKIPPER PROCTOR AND  
THOMPSON REMEMBER ABOUT IT  
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In again devoting space to further information concerning the great gale of 1846 the MESSENGER has no misgiving. The interest expected and shown last week in the account of that terrible time by Skipper Richard Frost, together with repeated requests this week for more, made it a plain duty of the MESSENGER to add the no less thrilling experiences of skipper John Proctor and Skipper Edward B. Thompson. Mr. Proctor will be eighty-seven years old on the sixth day of next month which makes him, we think, the oldest of the twenty-seven survivors of that storm. For twenty-five years he followed the sea, beginning going to Grand Banks with Skipper Benjamin Brown in the schooner Bird. His sea life was continuous until the year 1846, when on returning from the fall fare, after passing through the memorable gale, he renounced the calling and labored ashore. He retains to this day the most vivid recollections of his last experiences. He went skipper for the first time in the Marblehead schooner Barnard in 1835, afterwards taking the Antelope and the Samuel Knight, the last one being the one in which he passed through the gale in that fatal September. On the summer fare of that year he brought home 13,000 fish, and after refitting he sailed again to Grand Bank in company with six other Marblehead schooners on September 3, joining the fleet on the fishing grounds in due season. The story of the trip from this time is given in

Skipper Proctor's own way. Much that was interesting, but which was the same as contained in the story of skipper Frost last week, is omitted to avoid repetition.

"Nothing of note occurred until Friday the eighteenth of September, which day and Thursday, the seventeenth, were two of the most beautiful that ever shone, Skipper Ezekiel Stone in the Antelope and Skipper Sans Standley in the Warrior were close by us, and on Thursday I remember we had "board and board", which you will understand was an exchange of men, quite a common proceeding on the Banks when conditions were favorable. Some of my crew went aboard the Warrior and the Antelope and men from these vessels came aboard the Samuel Knight. Fish were scarce, so on Friday morning we sought another berth, going along to the westward, leaving the Warrior and Antelope where they were on Thursday. We had no sooner made a new berth well along in the afternoon than the Warrior and also the Sabine appeared, the Warrior bending her foresail and anchoring close off our bow, the Sabine anchoring off our starboard quarter. The weather was so moderate that neither gave us as wide a berth as they would have done under ordinary conditions."

Skipper Proctor saw the Warrior drift during the storm the next day, and while he could not be positive, it is his opinion that she collided with the Sabine. In last week's article Skipper Frost told of seeing the Sabine just before she was lost, and putting the two accounts together one of two things seem not unlikely. The Sabine may have been cut adrift to prevent a collision, or the two may have come together, causing her to break away. In either case she may have been blown past the Benjamin Franklin later before she was finally lost.

Continuing the narrative, Skipper Proctor repeated: "It was a remarkably pleasant day. There was no tide at all from early morning to sundown. We caught most of our fish, you know, after dark in those days, and at sundown upon heaving a line we found a tide had set in which was so strong that a seven pound lead could not find bottom. Along with the tide came a strong counter swell from the north which made us roll and pitch tremendously. This was to me a sure indication of a bad spell of weather, and I stated my belief to the men saying I had never known these signs to fail. The schooner was rocked so by the swell that her masts and rigging made a noise as they cut the air louder than the whistling of an ordinary gale. So we rode, with seventy fathoms of cable out. No change was noted until about four o'clock in the morning, Saturday, the nineteenth when the gale really began. The Samuel Knight drifted soon after and we were compelled to take precautionary measures. We hove up the dragging anchor and set a reefed jib, which wore her round, and then laid her head to the wind under balance mainsail and the reefed jib. We laid on all day until late in the afternoon, with the gale still increasing we were obliged to wear round once more to set a three reefed foresail. We then laid her head to the wind. It was not more than ten minutes after this that we shipped a tremendous sea which carried away our foresail so clean that nothing was left but the leech ropes. Even this was not the heaviest of the blow, for it kept on growing worse as it got dark. The worst, as I remember it, came between the hours of eight and ten o'clock in the evening, at which time it amounted to a regular hurricane.

"Our closest call came during this part of the storm. We were all below except one man who was standing in the companionway with the slide open only wide enough to get

his head out. It was the wildest night any of us had ever seen. Suddenly there was an excited call from the lookout in the companionway: 'Quick, quick, there's a light right under our lee bow!' That was the worst kind of danger and demanded prompt action. I sprang by the man, clinched the tiller and shoved it hard up and had no sooner done so than I saw the light and the black shape of some vessel dash by us in safety, but so close that I could have touched her with a handspike. We never knew what vessel it was, and could not tell in the pitchy darkness whether it was a schooner or ship.

"The storm began to abate between eleven and twelve that night. We knew this by the man in the companionway who kept reporting there were longer lulls between the blows. At two o'clock it was only an ordinary gale and Sunday there was no wind at all. There was a tremendous swell, however. We did not do much that day but straighten things out and restore order. We bent on a new foresail Monday and that night tried to work back to the Bank, but soon ran into so much drift stuff that it was dangerous to go ahead in the darkness. We therefore hauled the sheet aft, put her helm hard down and let her lay till morning. Wreckage everywhere, whole fields of it, telling more plainly than we had dared to fear, the fearful havoc that had been done by the gale we had come through so fortunately. We saw three masts of a ship which had apparently been cut away, with the sails and rigging all on them, butts and casks, pails and planks and what not. We sighted what appeared to be a wrecked schooner, and luffing, we bore down on it and shoved our nose right into it. It was the remains of a schooner and one of the first things we saw was the stern of her moses boat turned so that the name was turned toward us. Then we knew we had run upon the schooner Warrior of Marblehead and

that Skipper Sans Standley and six other Marblehead men had been lost. We took the Boat's stern aboard and brought it home with us. It is now hung up in the old Town House just as it was when we picked it up. What happened to the Warrior we could not tell. Her deck had been torn off completely, whether by shipping a sea or in a collision there was nothing to indicate. The greater part of her had sunk.

"The first Marblehead schooner we spoke after the gale was the schooner Heron, Skipper Samuel Blackler, whose son we knew had been lost with the Warrior. None of us had the heart to tell him of his loss, however. We had seen one other schooner before this which we supposed to be the schooner Eliza Ann, but we were not near enough to speak."

This was Captain Proctor's Story, leaving out as before stated, much that was common experience and therefore printed last week. His schooner, the Samuel Knight, Probably passed through the gale as comfortably as any other vessel in the fleet. Everything was battened down tight and the forecastle closed. While the storm lasted the schooner was continually shipping seas, making it impossible to lift the forward hatch long enough to make a cup of tea. To a question as to whether there was any rain or not, skipper Proctor said there was not much. There was a great deal of "wind food" and fog but only a little occasional rain. One of the queerest things about the storm, he said, was the appearance of the sun several times during the day through rifts in the heavy black clouds.

The Samuel Knight remained on the Bank, notwithstanding that every man was ready to go home the day after the storm, had good luck and brought home a fare of 15,000 fish.

Of all the survivors of the gale there are none, probably, who can tell of a more

thrilling escape than the three who remain of the crew of the Schooner Clinton, Which left Marblehead with Skipper John White 2d in command. She never came back, but unlike other vessels, in which whole crews went down, two were lost and five were saved. Skipper Edward B. Thompson, who was the last in command of the Clinton permits the addition of his experience and thereby enables the MESSENGER to present what is doubtless the most complete and most accurately detailed account of that devastating storm that has ever been made public. Mr. Thompson's description of the weather tallies well with the descriptions given by Skippers Frost and Proctor, therefore only what actually befell the Clinton will be related.

"We were obliged to heave up", said he, "about eight or ten o'clock in that morning, when we were in a position well away toward the eastern edge of the bank. We set a three reefed foresail under which we lay like a book until perhaps two o'clock in the afternoon, when the wind hauled. It was at this time, when the storm was well on us, but rapidly increasing that we sighted a small boat with seven men aboard, driving towards us, bound for destruction, or to temporary safety provided they could reach us. They reached the Clinton and succeeded in boarding us, coming over our lee quarter, proving to be a crew of Frenchmen who had been hauling their trawls, and with the gale coming on they could not make their own schooner. We made them welcome, of course, and sent them below for something to eat. It was shortly after this incident that our first calamity befell us. The sea had been steadily making and great seas were tumbling toward us. Skipper White and myself were the only ones on deck. I was aft at the side of the companionway when we shipped a sea which struck us on the quarter and swept the deck. Skipper White



went with it. He was washed against the main boom, where, he must have been stunned or possibly killed outright. The schooner was thrown down, her main boom was broken in three places, and the cable was run overboard. I remember the mast heads as they dragged up through the water. One large piece of the main boom was left hanging and swinging by the top lift making it necessary to go aloft to cut it away. This was done and we righted. We were without ballast that fall and therefore light, which was fortunate for us, for had it been otherwise she never would have righted again after being thrown down in that way. Skipper White was without a word and with not a chance on our part to attempt his rescue. It was all done in a minute and he was lost to sight forever.

“Nehemiah Stone then took charge. We got up a jib and she paid off. This was almost instantly blown away, leaving us no sail whatever, and we then scudded before it under bare poles for two hours or more. We passed a large unknown vessel which was making no worse weather than we were. It was then getting dusk and Skipper Stone was at the helm when another tremendous sea, a mountain of water, made up and took us over our stern, once more sweeping our deck, again carrying away the acting skipper and for the second time in three hours the Clinton was without a master. This sea stove off our after hatch and filled us. The pumps were found to be choked and it became necessary to turn to and all hands bail. Sugar pails and every other vessel that could be used to bail with were brought into service and then it was that the French crew of seven proved a good help to us and possibly our salvation. They could not talk our language and none of the Clinton’s crew understood French, but that wasn’t necessary. They knew as well as we what must be done for their own preservation as

well as ours and they turned as readily as any. The Schooner was a third to a half full of water. We bailed all night and the next day and succeeded in getting clear in the afternoon.”

Upon the loss of Mr. Stone, Mr. Thompson took command and remained in charge until it became necessary to leave her. They rode out the storm after the second knock down, shipping no more such seas as had boarded them twice before.

“The next day, that is Sunday, we bent on a jib to keep her steady. Monday we were east of the Bank with about a dozen sail in sight. We got a foresail on and tried to work to the westward. We spoke a French brig with her bulwarks gone and lay by for our French crew to go aboard. Their own boat was out and the way we managed was in this manner. They took our boat which was practically unharmed and paddled themselves to the brig, towing a trawling line which we had made fast to the stern. When they got aboard the brig we pulled our boat back by the line.

“There’s a souvenir of that occasion, a reminder of those Frenchmen”, said Thompson, pointing to an old fashioned silver watch hanging on the wall. “I bought that of one of them before they left us. I didn’t know French but I went up to him and pointed to his watch holding out eight silver dollars. He understood quickly enough and we closed the bargain. The watch is in running order now, except that it has lost its hands.

“I tried to reach St. Johns and sailed four or five days getting, I think, within twenty or twenty-five miles of land when it began to blow hard, and we being light and not able to stand it were blown back to the Bank again. Here we fortunately fell in with the schooner Robin, and Skipper Francis Swett took us aboard with all our dunnage and whatever else there was worth taking. In

about a fortnight we were put aboard a ship bound from Malaga to New York and about November 2 or 3 reached home-five of out of the seven.

“Previous to boarding the ship and several days after being rescued by Skipper Swett we fell in with the Clinton again. She was on her broadside and her bulwarks were gone. I could just see enough of her stern to make out CL the first two letters of her name.”

The sorrow among the townspeople which necessarily followed upon the first news of the disaster was great, almost overwhelming, and is to this day one of the most painful reminders of the youth of many of our older people. The words of Rev. E. A. Lawrence at that time, which have been preserved, are not an exaggeration and the picture of woe he portrays is not one whit overdrawn. He spoke as follows:

“With what eager solicitude, on the return of a vessel from the scene of disaster, did they seek to know if their friends had been spoken with or seen since the gale. And, as intelligence of the loss of one and another of our little fleet is brought home, there came on in the hour of grief, that painful *suspense*,—distressing alternation between hope and fear,—in which now hope, now fear, prevails and in which hope a thousand times buried, is as often exhumed. How eagerly do wives and mothers *seek* for tidings, and yet almost *shrink* from what they seek. Children, too,—with what impatience do they hasten to the wharves to inquire if anything has been seen or heard of their fathers or brothers. Early one morning after an arrival, as a lad who had sought in vain eager hope of hearing something wherewith to relieve his anxious mother, he learned *that he had no father*; that the vessel in which he sailed had been a wreck. He can now no more cheer his sorrowing mother by repeating those sweet words “*My father*”. That father

lies sleeping in the dark bosom of yonder deep sea. With a heart bursting with grief, he turns his steps towards his desolate home. But what shall he do? How can he be the bearer of such tidings to his disconsolate mother? Yet know it, he feels she must; what can he do? Restraining his grief, he wipes away his tears and enters his house. Scarcely has he laid by his little cap and seated himself at his morning repast, ere the big tears streaming from his eyes, tell the grief he cannot speak, in which that now despairing mother reads, what, of all things woman most dreads to know—I am a *widow*; my children are *fatherless*. Thus the stroke has fallen many among us. Their husbands, and fathers, and sons, and brothers are gone, they scarcely know how or where or when. They have witnessed upon them a wasting disease; have listened to no last words of love. They have seen no solemn *funeral* procession; they have heard no mournful tolling bell, nor looked down upon them when consigned to the silent tomb. And although told that the watery winding sheet has wrapped them in its capacious folds, yet how can they *believe* so sad a tale?