LIFE SAVERS OF THE GREAT LAKES: THE BUFFALO CREW AT BOAT DRILL.—Photograph by Walter B. Starr.

Fighting the Storm

Few people know the wide range and systematic organization of the United States life-saving service. Superintendent Sumner I. Kimball has placed upon 10,000 miles of our coast nearly 500 life-saving stations, fitted up with rescuing apparatus, and taken care of by 2,000 men, under semimilitary discipline. Twenty-five thousand vessels have been given aid, and property valued at $240,000,000 has been saved, with far less loss of life than in the single case of the Titanic, which was sunk in midocean.

Whereas the shoals of the Atlantic sometimes reach out for many miles, Cape Cod alone having ten stations on this account, the Pacific has a precipitous slope that affords ships plying up and down its coast a course close to shore. Fogs are common, and it is easy for ships to lose their bearings where a river meets the sea.

The Mimi, when practically at the end of a long, monotonous voyage from Valparaiso, Chili, to Portland, Ore., lost her way in a bad fog on the Oregon coast the night of February 13, 1913, and stranded near the mouth of the Nehalem river. It was a German ship, which had sailed the worst waters of the globe. Her crew numbered 28. And here, within sight of the port, after 10,000 miles, the big four-masted bark, seeking cargo northward, was stranded less than 1,000 feet from the beach. Tillamook Bay station was ten miles away, but two flat cars, a surfboat and the crew reached the bark soon after midnight. The sea was calm, and they laid over until daybreak, knowing she was safe. She worked in closer, before morning, and the crew waded to shore at low tide, whereupon the life-savers returned to their station.

Not until April 5th were wreckers there trying to work the Mimi off the bar. Twenty men had succeeded in pushing her perhaps 2,000 feet. It was high water, the surf was very heavy, the night black, when the Mimi suddenly darted into the air, dropped sharply, bumping the bottom and came up again, as though she were a monster rubber ball, only to be swung broadside to the sea by a violent current. She began to roll heavily, and, the engines not being able to take up the slack rapidly the big thing went down in deep water.

The captain and two Scandinavians of the crew reached the forecastle as her side grated on the sands. One of them jumped and was drowned. Other men were struggling for life in the wreckage. The forecastle snapped and the two aloft half fell, half climbed to the starboard rail. Three others managed to get there, while they huddled together and hung to the iron stanchions until dawn. At the first trace of light the captain crawled toward the cabin, hoping to save his papers. He failed, but he found without the door the president of the wrecking company and one of his crew fairly hanging by their fingers to a lifeboat that threatened to leave its holdings. One of them was almost dead. It was too much for nearly lifeless flesh to do. They could only lash him where he had clung so long. A moment later he was dead. Soon after this the end of a boat without oars was seen protruding from the water. They got it loose and climbed in, only to find on launching it that they were daring death in a worse form. So they somehow blundered back to the wreckage.

The wife of the keeper of Tillamook Bay station was alone when the messags of the Mimi's capsizing came. The crew was working far down the beach and the night was impenetrable, but she was the kind of woman that is born and bred on the desolate shores of great seas. She had the apparatus placed aboard a train, went with it as far as the river and was having it put in a boat to go to the wreck when she met her husband, who had heard and had come back for the boat. It was distressingly slow travel, with men and boat and teams. They made a raft of driftwood as they reached the mouth of the Nehalem, three miles from the disaster, and on this they floated their wagon across. News of the horror had gone from one station to another now, and many volunteers joined the life-savers. The surf was raging as they arrived, and as they watched it fall over the big thing lying there half submerged Farley refused to risk the lives of his men where there were no signs of life.

One man standing near the water's edge hurried to Farley with the news of a cry heard from the wreck. Farley thought it a mistake. But, realizing there was only one course to take to avoid censure, launched a boat and sent his men into that terrible sea to prove that his judgment was right. Half way out they began to shout. Not one of the throng on the sands could hear, and when the return to shore was made the man who had been so certain of the cry from the wreck slunk away. Horses and team were kept in readiness for the trial all day, should a sign of life appear. The crew's eyes never left the seas, and the crowd watched with them that great hole in the side of the hull which was hardly visible above the surface of the waters.

It was just at sunset when a man was seen thrusting an arm from the ship's great wound. A boat was launched, but got no closer than 150 feet. Dusk was coming on, and the rescued and rescuing despaired of reaching one another. There were four men with the one who had waved and been seen, and they lashed themselves to that starboard rail which had acted as anchorage from midnight until dawn.

Before another dawn there were only four men there. As the sun rose and the lifesaving crew was seen waiting for it on the shore, one of the four, so close now to rescue, gave up his hold and dropped into the water. The strongest of the three got a rope around his mates and managed to hold one end of the rope until the boat that was putting off arrived.

The Margaret, a seagoing tug, was taking three heavily laden barges from New York to Norfolk. It was on December 20, 1912, and a vigorous gale began blowing at the rate of 45 miles an hour, as she started down the New Jersey coast. Half blinded, she struck a submerged wreck and had to run to shore, as the only chance of saving herself. The breakers caught her, but the lookout of Avalon station, several miles to the northeast, discovered her the next minute and telephoned the news down to Tathams station, south of the disaster, and where a boat could leave with the wind behind it.

The storm was increasing, and launching even at Tathams was next to impossible. After starting, however, they arrived quickly. The tug was, even there, hardly visible; there was no after house, no tackle on her boats, and only enough of the bow and pilot-house to prove she had been a ship.

Every ounce of power in the engine of the Tathams lifeboat was released, and Keeper McGinley and his crew got within 50 yards when a sudden high sea drenched and blinded the men and sent the boat diving. She rose, and a second sea tried the fun. This time the men, who stayed at the oars as if they had been locked there, found themselves as far off shore as they were when they left it. Just as the life-savers dared to dash over the rolling strip of water that remained they were caught up by the crest of a comber and turned over.

McGinley and four of his fellows got to the boat. The rest of them, when they came to the surface, were against the shore. The five who clung to their upturned boat, unable to turn it back again, now did their best to keep hope stirring in the hearts of the despairing men on the Margaret, who were so near, yet so far away. In an effort to regain the steering oar, which loosened and shot away, McGinley swam some distance out. A comber tossed him like a toy not a great distance from the shore. Since he, too, could not return and as there was nothing to be gained by the four men clinging to the overturned boat they could not set right, they made a strike for land. When they reached it the Avalon station men had to haul them out and carry them to the fire that had been built for those they had hoped to rescue.

In the afternoon Keeper Nichols of Avalon, believing the wind would die down somewhat, sent back to his station for their surfboat. (He and his men had walked down the ten miles of beach immediately after telephoning Tathams). When the boat arrived, even the exhausted Tathams men, who had had to be carried from the surf a few hours before, begged to have some of their number among the eight that must make up the crew for the final trial. The Avalon giants were fresh and, naturally, impatient. But Tathams would not be denied the right to dare again.

The white faces of ten men lined the lookout of the Margaret's pilot-house. Timbers were heard snapping by those who saw the faces pressed against the windows. Notwithstanding, the crew darted under the bow, and the hands within the windows caught at the line thrown them. The gale had subsided very little. The tugging on the line swept the boat around and the current hurled five oars from the hands of the crew into the foam. The steering oars held good this time, and the faces at the window saw there was one chance left. The keepers held the boat taut and then, with one mighty effort, swung it alongside the tug's bow, and the ten men at the window stumbled in. Another comber came and flung them against the breaking timbers. Three planks of the lifeboat crashed in, and even the men themselves could never tell how every one of the eighteen reached the shore, with only three oars and a part of a boat.

Supt. Kimball, when asked once, deliberated a long time before deciding which individual act of heroism stands out, in his opinion, as the bravest in his 40 years' association with the United States lifesaving station. But here it is.

Rasmus Midgett of the Gull Shoal station, Captain W. W. Griesser of the Buffalo station and Fred Hatch of the Cleveland station, he believes, ran the greatest risk of death.

"There have been so many notable instances of heroism in the service that it is very hard for me to say which I consider the most distinguished. These three men ran a close second to each other, said Mr. Kimball. "But I believe that Fred Hatch did the bravest thing ever recorded on the records of the department.

"It was in 1883, on the night of October 7th. A vessel called the Sophia Minch was nearing the harbor at Cleveland where Hatch was a member of the lifesaving-station crew. There was a bad gale on the lake, and the schooner ran in for anchor. She got beyond their control in the attempt, and a couple of tugs responded to her distress signals, with all the lifesaving crews of Cleveland harbor aboard. When the vessel was fastened by a line to each tug a rush was made for harbor behind the breakwater. But the hawsers from the tugs separated, and a sudden rising sea shot the Sophia Minch and her rescuers into the open lake. The tugs became strictly attentive to their own business and the schooner was swiftly taken toward the rocks. She sprank a leak and the captain ordered holes broken in her side and all men to take to the fore-rigging. She sank, as expected, with only a few feet of water above her decks. When the sole member of the lifesaving crew left on shore learned of the state of affairs from the returning tugs he got the wreck gun and breeches buoy abreast of the sunken vessel. Then, with a number of volunteers helping, he shot lines to the men.

"They all got safely ashore but Hatch and two sailors who had taken to the main rigging. Between them and Hatch, on the fore-rigging, was a roaring caldron that would have swept any living thing off its feet. The boom beneath Hatch was swaying back and forth over the deck in motion with the lurching of the sunken hull. Hatch calculated that the boom, keeping time as it was with the play of the sea must, as it swung in, come not so very

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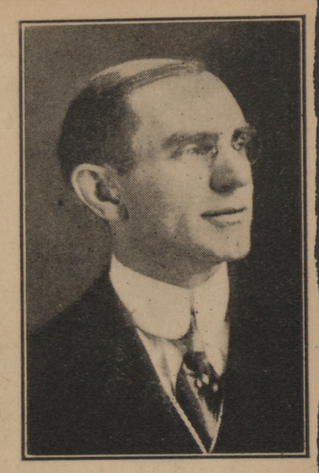
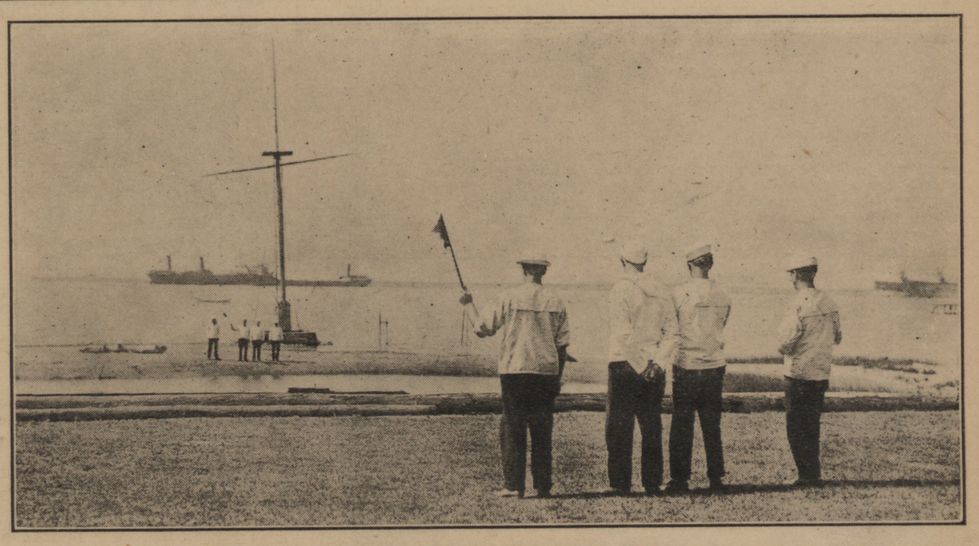
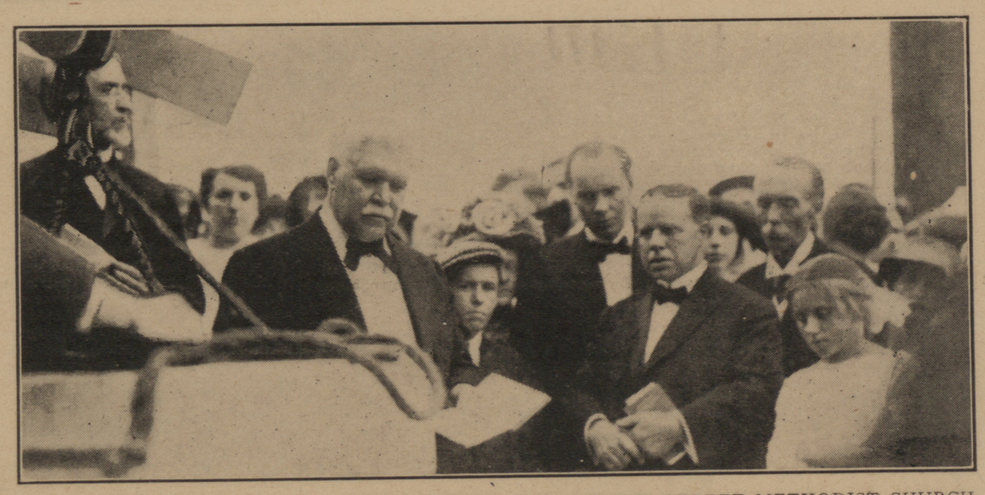


DR. C. A. POTTER.
Appointed superintendent of the Gowanda State Hospital.



LIFE SAVERS AT DRILL: SIGNALING WITH FLAGS.—Starr, photo.

A RELIC OF A STORM.—Photograph by W. A. Gordon, Port Dover, Ont.
The notice was posted after the great storm on Lake Huron last fall, when many lives were lost. It says: "It has been reported that some persons are removing and destroying wreckage on the east shore of Lake Huron, between the Grand Bend and Amberley. Any person or persons caught doing so will be punished as the law directs."



BISHOP BURT LAYING THE CORNER-STONE OF THE ONTARIO STREET METHODIST CHURCH.
The stone was laid last Sunday. Two bishops were present—Bishop Burt and Bishop Smith. The picture shows, facing Bishop Burt, the Reverend A. H. Mason, pastor of the church; behind him is the Reverend Decatur N. Lacy of the Riverside Church.

LIFE-SAVING CREW AT DRILL: BOAT DRILL IN THE HARBOR.—Starr, photo.

LAYING THE CORNER-STONE OF THE NEW ONTARIO STREET METHODIST CHURCH.

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