

# A RIVER STEAMER BURNED

## ELEVEN PERSONS KNOWN TO HAVE PERISHED.

FIRED FROM AN ELECTRIC LIGHT—HEROIC CONDUCT OF THE PILOT AND HIS YOUTHFUL SON.

EUFULA, Ala., April 3.—The steamer Rebecca Everingham, one of the Central Line boats plying between Columbus, Ga., and Apalachicola, Fla., was burned to the water's edge at Fitzgerald's Landing, four miles above Florence, Ga., and 28 miles above Eufaula, at 4:05 o'clock this morning. She was loaded with 350 bales of cotton and carried about 30 passengers. The fire is supposed to have been caused by a falling particle of carbon from an electric light. The boat was mid-stream when the alarm was given, and she was quickly enveloped in smoke and flame, lighting up the sky for miles around. The shrieks of the terrified passengers and crew mingled with the roar of the flames were heart piercing. Men and women rushed hither and thither in their night garments imploring help. The boat was headed for the land by the pilot, but before a landing was effected, nearly every part of the vessel was surrounded by fire. Within 30 minutes after the bank was touched, and the few that it was possible to save had landed, the boat was burned down to the hull. The flames severing the moorings, the hull drifted into the stream and sank half a mile below.

Among those known to be lost are W. L. Kennedy, of Eufaula; Mrs. Avant, of Cuthbert, Ga.; Miss Simpson and her sister, of Fort Gaines, Ga.; Julia Adams, the colored chamber-maid; Adolph Thomas, Randall Singer, and A. S. Stephens, colored deck-hands; Robert Griffin, a colored stevedore; a colored woman, name unknown, and a child. The missing are J. H. Hightower, of Eufaula, and two other white passengers whose names are unknown. E. B. Williams, of Lagrange, is fatally burned. Capt. George Whiteside, who commanded the steamer, and Second Engineer J. T. Carey, are seriously burned.

Two wagon and two bateau loads of survivors and effects reached Eufaula at 2 o'clock, among whom was Pilot G. H. Lapham, to whose heroism, and that of his young son, those who did escape are indebted for their lives. When the pilot saw the danger they were in he did not wait for the boat to make a landing to make fast, but ordered his son overboard with a rope. He swam ashore with the rope, made it fast, then swam back to the boat and heroically went to work to save life. The noble pilot was the last to desert the deck, and then only after saving the lives of two women and his wounded Captain, besides aiding others.

Pilot Lapham gave the gloomy report that it was impossible at present to arrive at the number that may have perished, as the names given above, received from him, and the small number seen alive after the disaster, make it apparent that the roll of missing is larger. Among the missing may be others burned or drowned. One lady saved herself by jumping from the cabin to the deck below, 25 feet, and another by clinging to the motionless wheel. One of the passengers, Mr. J. B. Yates, had a presentiment of disaster, and spoke of it the preceding night. So strongly impressed was he that when retiring he refused to disrobe, but slept in a rubber coat with his valise at hand. Sleeping nervously, when the alarm was sounded, he was quickly on his feet. He reached for his grip sack, and looked for shore with no thought of the safety of others. None of the officers were lost or seriously hurt.

The Everingham had a cargo of 350 bales of cotton, which was valued at \$18,000. Of the number 234 belonged to H. L. Hull & Co., of Eufaula, and was covered by insurance in the Sea Insurance Company of Liverpool. The remainder of the cotton was not insured. The steamer Everingham was built about two years ago and was the newest and handsomest craft on the Chattahoochee River. She belonged to the Central Railroad and was valued at about \$20,000; probably insured.

The almost nude lady and gentlemen passengers were provided as well as possible with raiment at Fitzgerald's Landing, and, together with the under officers in command of the heroic pilot Lapham, spent the afternoon in the city, and left there by the night train for their respective homes, the officers going to Columbus, Ga. This is the most shocking river disaster that has occurred for years, in fact since the explosion of the Confederate gun-boat near Fort Gaines, when 18 lives were lost.