

1
Robert Borland ^{Called} I was master
of Str Bohemian. Left Liverpool bound
for Perth, Feb 4th called at Londodery
Had ^a full cargo. 200 Stge passengers
& about 20 cabin. Had 6 boats, 3 would
hold 100 ^{each} one would hold ^{about} 60 & 2 qr'ter
boats would hold 30 each. Had a very
rough passage up to 19th of Feby.
Up to noon of 22^d it was hazy. Lon.
68°.10' lat 43°.30' by dead recong from
previous day. Before 12 ^{retired} took a cast
of lead; found no bottom. At 1/2 past
12 another cast gave 45 fathoms, hard
bottom; then steerg N.W. by W. Then
we continued soundg till 7 oclock, 48 fathoms
shortly after I went dead slow, engines
movg. ^{In a} few minutes saw Cape
light bear'g N.W. by N. ^{when we} hauled ship's
head out to Northward, judged ourselves
8 or 9 miles from land. It was hazy,
Had 2 lookouts on forecassel-head and
one on topsail jar

Contributed to Maine Memory Network by Maine Historical Society
MMN # 85235

Date: 1864

Description: Capt. Robert Borland described his recollections of the wreck
of the Bohemian on February 22, 1864.

1

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We continued sound'g till 7 oclock ^ 48 fathos
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head out to Northward, judged ourselves
8 or 9 minutes from land. It was hazy,
Had 2 lookouts on forecassel-head and
topsail our topsail jar

Had been run'g N. by E ^{about} up to time
 ship strick. At 8 oclock ^{after} light
 bore N.W. by W nearly 5 miles dist.
 I went off deck at 8 oclock when
 I got bear'g of light went below for
 chart - was gone about 3 minutes
 Chief officer was on the bridge ^{was}
 then goig about a knot and a half ^{per hour}
 It was about ³ five min after buoy
 was reported to Chief Officer before
 she struck. I was then below - buoy
 was reported while I was below. When
 buoy was reported, chief officer stopped
~~boat~~ the engines. I came on deck and
 saw the buoy just as ship struck.
 The buoy was close under the starboard
 bow when she struck.

We commenced fir'g rockets & blue
 lights ^{for a pilot} shortly after saw ^{the cape} lights, about
 6/11 past 7. Continued signalg till
 we struck - Had no pilot on board
 shore came to us

about
 after ^ [?] oclock

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3 to

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I have sailed into this port 9 winters
 Never found my vessel in that locality
 before. There must have been a
 current set to westward. Always
 taken pilot but once. Gog dead slow
 a current would have greater
 effect. Saw Boston boat
 about 5 miles distant about
 20 minutes or $\frac{1}{2}$ hour ^{before we struck} Was then
 steer'g N. by E. Had been steer'g in
 that course since I saw light.
 I have always ^{except once} rec'd pilot when
 co'g into this port. When pilots have
 seen y light they usually throw up
 a blue light to show position and
 we steer for them. Had two American
 masters aboard. Do not know
 whether they were on deck when
 struck. If I had seen the light
 of a pilot boat I should have
 steered for her. As near as I can
 tell the vessel struck about 8 o'clock
 I was then on the bridge

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4

She struck before the bridge near
the middle of vessel. She went right
over the reef and commenced to fill.
After she went over reef ^{the engineer has reported that engine} set on full
^{may have been in case of an accident and reported to me by watch} speed. ~~She soon after filled and~~
headed ship in ashore to beach her
She ran so about 10 minutes when
engineer came up 2^d time and reported
that engine would go no longer
that the fires were drowned out.
Previous to that order was give
to get the boats out, and get the pas-
sengers into them ⁱⁿ which ^{we} were successful
except with one boat. The anchors
were let go in 5 fathoms of water
while boats were getting ready. The
anchors were not let go till a long
time after engines stopped and for
could not get to land — Tide was at
about low tide, ^{part low tide may have been 1st quarter of flood} This was about 9
oclock — might have been later, did
not take out my watch

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past low tide may have been 1st quarter of flood
about low tide ^ This was about 9
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Should think she must have run over 2 miles after striking before we anchored she was settling all the time and had hardly got under headway before fires were put out.

After anchors were let go we got passengers into boats as quick as possible. Before this all the passengers were all on deck and there was much confusion. Every officer went to his own boat - the passengers rushed into the boats and I saw the officers endeavoring to keep passengers out of boats when they were over crowded. All the boats are numbered all the crew are tallied off into boats crews - in case of accident each crew are to look after their own boat. All were at their places I sent the chief officer from his boat to let go the anchor - The chief officer was in place when at his boat and also when let go the anchor

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In the swampg of the boat she filled
 with water and a great number of
 the passegrs were washed out.
 Other boats were filled ^{or partially} with passegrs
 and went away which left us with
 about 40 or 80 passegrs on deck.
 The chief officer asked me when his
 boat was swamped if he should
 get into a boat and try to bring
 the other boats along side to take
 more passegrs which he did by
 y permission and succeeded in
 bring one boat alongside on the
 starboard bow. At this time she was
 careen'g to port. He succeed in takg
 some passegrs aboard when he
 left. Don't know the number of pas-
 segers who got in. At that time a
 dense fog and ship fast settlg
 down. All the boats were away from
 ship. I was left on board with 70 or
 80 passegrs, the boatswain & 3 of crew

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 80 passengers, the boatswain & 3 of crew

Our only alternative was to take to rigging. Succeeded in getting about 50 women & children into foretop. The water was then over the forecattle head & over top of poop. No 4 boat had not her full complement they were ordered back several times but the men refused to come along side. Boat No. 2 was swamped by one end's giving way either by the fall beg' let go or by some break and a number of passengers were thrown into water. No 4, 5, 6 boats came back two or three hours after wards and took off the rest of the passengers with the exception of 4 stewards who were on forecattle head. Durg time boats were gone got the boatswain down, the forestays to the forecattle head and swung two women up into fore top. When we got the last woman up one boat was making her appearance

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We got all the passengers safe to
land who were in the rigg'g safe
to shore.

Can't tell how many were lost
judge about 20 - saved list of names,
Think ship would not have drifted
ashore if we had not anchored
Wind was S.E. very slight
Could not see land - was not certain
that ship was driftg out when anchored
thought that best course.

I was the first man on the ship
in the morn'g.

She sunk in same position as now
Never had any conversatiⁿ with Capt
Stone about coast. Not with any one
Have usually taken pilot off Port
light sometimes farther out.
When we struck I was not certain
where we were.

Fired no guns before struck - one gun
was fire afterwards

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I did everyth'g in my power to save the passengers

When I saw the light I judged myself outside the rock.

At 7 o'clock I judged myself about 8 miles of the light.

I thought the Boston boat about 5 miles to the westward - was not acquainted with the route of Boston boat, whether inside or outside the rock - knew that there was such a rock as Ayer's rock - no one on board told me I was near it. ~~Think~~ It was pretty clear on the water cannot tell whether the lights were deceptive or not.

Got a glimpse of Portland light bear'g N. before ship ~~struck~~ sunk

Had been on deck since 8 o'clock on the morn'g off & on, not off at all after 3 o'clock save the 3 minutes when I went to examine the chart. Did not go to dinner. I supposed myself farther to eastward than I was

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When made the light the fog was not as thick as afterwards. Accord'g to my chart ^{if} in the position I supposed myself to be ~~my~~ the course steered would carry me outside of all the buoys.

Alden's rock is submerged, a buoy is visible, not seen by lookout till we were ^{right} on the rock, The buoy was reported 2 or 3 minutes before we struck, I was below when the buoy was reported. Never was near the rock before, have often seen the buoy at a distance when away to the eastward of it.

Mr Willard ^{& Mr Neal the stevedore} the pilot have had charge of the vessel since ~~the~~ her loss. No baggage was taken off in boats - some has washed ashore - most of it is below - The mail master was gett'g up the mails. Mr Bowes was Mail Master. I take no charge of the mails unless assistance is required

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The only way I can account for being so deceived is on account of the haze. Have sometimes waited all night for a pilot. I should have done so ^{again} if we had not struck.

Robert Borland

(Additional) I have been employed 22 years by this same company and never have met with an accident before. I did not intend to enter the harbor if I had not got a pilot but to keep up till I could get the proper bearings of Portland light

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