

# CAPT. SEALBY TELLS OF REPUBLIC'S LOSS

## Gives a Thrilling Account of His Escape as His Vessel Plunged to the Bottom.

### LIONIZED AT THE PIER

#### Enthusiastic Sailors Carry Him on Their Shoulders and Woman Tries to Kiss Him—Second Officer's Story.

Capt. Inman Sealby, the commander of the lost White Star liner Republic, and his second officer, Lieut. R. J. Williams, came ashore from the United States derelict destroyer Seneca yesterday morning. The now famous skipper modestly received the plaudits of a cheering crowd, among whom were two score of his own seamen, and later told the story of that thrilling last night on the Republic.

Capt. Sealby was received on his landing as a hero, and despite his energetic protests the enthusiastic sailors insisted on parading up and down the White Star pier at the foot of West Tenth Street, bearing on their shoulders the commander they had so willingly served under through all the dangers the Republic met.

Capt. Sealby and Second Officer Williams, together with forty-eight of the crew of the Republic, had passed the night on the derelict destroyer Seneca off Stapleton, S. I., and early yesterday morning they all boarded the revenue cutter Manhattan and came up to New York, landing at the pier from which the Republic sailed last week on what was to be her last voyage. As the Manhattan, with Capt. Sealby and his men and Binns, the Marconi operator on board, came into sight the crowd on the White Star pier began a demonstration of enthusiasm over the efforts of Capt. Sealby to save his ship.

#### "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

Those of the Republic's sailors and firemen who had been brought to New York on the Baltic were there, besides about 500 other persons, who wanted to join in the welcome to the men who had stuck to the sinking Republic until the last minute. There was no band, and the music, if such it may be called, was furnished by a bugle that was blown by the Republic's own official bugler. This man, still wearing the few clothes that were all he had been able to save, trumpeted what sounded like "See the Conquering Hero Comes" as the Manhattan steamed into sight, and as the cutter entered the slip he switched off to "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," while everybody else was cheering and waving hats in welcome to the skipper, who, with moistened eyes, was looking down upon the crowd from the pilot house of the Manhattan.

When the Manhattan was made fast to the pier and those on board began coming ashore the cheering became continuous, and amid the noise could be heard cries of "Where's the skipper?" and "Bring out the Captain," and so on. Finally, after a dozen or so of the sailors had landed, Capt. Sealby, still wearing the cap he had on when he jumped into the water from the bridge of the sinking liner, came ashore. His face was as red as fire.

"Please don't; I appreciate it all so much, but not now," said the lost Republic's commander as a big fireman stepped forward with cap in hand, and before the skipper knew what was up he was on the shoulders of his men, who fairly danced, shouting all the time, up the pier with him on his shoulders.

Somebody shouted "Speech!" but the Captain drew the line there. "Thank you," was all the speech that the crowd could get out of him. The demonstration lasted ten minutes, the Captain making good-natured efforts to get away, and being very much embarrassed when the enthusiastic sailors let him go.

#### Sealby's Thrilling Story.

On the way up the bay Capt. Sealby and Second Officer Williams talked with the reporters about that last watch on the bridge of the Republic. The skipper talked first:

"We could tell it was coming," he said slowly, "and when we realized that at last the time to desert the Republic was close at hand Williams and I just stood there and waited. We knew it was not to be a long wait. Suddenly we heard a rumbling and then a cracking sound aft and the stern of the Republic began to go down rapidly.

"I turned to Williams and said, 'Well, old man, what do you think about it?'

"I have an idea it won't be a long race now," Williams answered, "and when you are ready I am.

"Burn the blue lights," I said, and then, as a signal to the Gresham that it was time to cut the hawsers that bound her to the Republic, I fired five shots into the air from my revolver. That was the beginning of the last few minutes of the Republic. 'Take to the fore rigging; get as high as possible,' I shouted to Williams.

"From the bridge deck to the saloon deck, both of us, carrying blue lights, Williams and I ran. When we got to the saloon deck the water was already coming over that deck, aft, and we could see the stern sinking rapidly, the incline of the deck, as we ran forward, becoming so steep that we began to slip with every step forward.

"About that time I saw Williams for the last time on the Republic. He was hanging on to the port rail, and dim as was the light, I saw he was as game as ever. I took to the fore rigging and climbed up about 100 feet. In my pocket was a blue light, and I took it out, but it would not go off. There was still one more shell in my pistol, however, and I fired that.

"Down, down, down, went the Republic, and soon she was entirely submerged, and a moment later I was in the water. I wore my greatcoat, and the air getting under that made it support me, while the binocular, the revolver, and the cartridges that were in my pockets acted as a sort of ballast, so to speak. The water around me by this time was seething and roaring, due to the suction caused by the Republic as she sank, and several times I was carried down, only to be churned back to the surface again. I was wet through and through now, and my greatcoat had become a perilous burden instead of a support, and I tried to get it off, but it could not be done. Fortunately there was much debris around, and I found a stout piece of lumber, and to this I made fast as best I could.

#### Guides Rescuers by Pistol Shots.

"All this time the powerful searchlights on the Seneca and the Gresham were playing around me. I fumbled in my pocket and got out my pistol, and then I got a cartridge and put it in the cylinder. I had no idea it would go off, but it did. Finally the searchlights located the place where the Republic had gone down. The life crews of the Gresham and the Seneca were looking for us all this time, and were, of course, being guided by the

searchlights. It seemed as if they would never find me, and once more I got out my revolver and fired, and once again, to my surprise, the cartridge exploded.

"I was getting numb now, and knew that I could not hold out for a very long time. I looked about me and saw something white in the water. It was a towel. My strength was going fast, and I was chilled to the bone, yet I managed to wave that towel, and maybe that was what saved my life, for a few minutes later a lifeboat, under command of Gunner Johansen of the Gresham, came up, and Johansen, a big, strapping sailor of the type that does your heart good to see, picked me up and laid me in the bottom of his boat. A few minutes later I was on the Gresham. I was almost in, too."

#### Silent About the Collision.

Capt. Sealby refused to discuss in any way the collision with the Florida. The owners of the White Star Line, he said, were the people who would give out information, if any was given out, about the collision. But for his officers and men and for the United States vessels and the Anchor liner Furnessia he had much praise to give. Of the Seneca, the only vessel of her type afloat, a vessel built to destroy obstacles to navigation and to assist vessels in distress, Capt. Sealby said she was one of the finest vessels he had ever seen, while as for her crew a better one, he added, does not sail the seas.

"The derelict destroyer Seneca," he said, "has proved beyond all doubt the necessity of such a vessel. Some day I hope other nations will own vessels of that type. And then there was the wireless. Such men as Binns—and Binns stuck to his post despite the fact that his cabin was almost carried away—do work that is invaluable. Then the work of the crews that transferred the passengers. That kind of work was never done better than it was on Saturday. At no time did I have any doubt of my men. I knew they would never fail me, and they didn't. To the men passengers is also due great credit for the way they acted in the emergency. In fact everybody did his or her part."

That was all the skipper had to say, and he turned to where Williams, who was puffing at his pipe, was standing and nodded. Then Williams told the story as it had impressed him. Williams had listened intently to all his skipper had said, and he endeavored with good success to tell some of the things that Capt. Sealby forgot about.

#### Second Officer Williams's Escape.

"When the Republic was sinking," he said, "and the rail was near the water line, Capt. Sealby climbed up the rigging and I went over the rail. I hung on the rail with my elbows and I could see the Captain clamber up the mast with the agility of a monkey. Searchlights from three vessels were playing on us, and one light was kept on the Captain. Finally it was turned away and he was lost to view to me. The ship was sinking fast, and the stern commenced to settle first. The bow was pointed up in the air, and the Republic lay nearly on edge. She is 100 fathoms long, and with the stern down it impressed me that it had struck the bottom before she disappeared. I am fairly sure that the stern did strike bottom, as it seemed to hold for a moment as though resting. Then there was a violent roar and a jar, and down went the bow. It is my impression that the Republic split in two amidships, 'logged' as we call it, as she sank. When I felt her part I released my hold on the rail and was pitched into the water.

"I think I fell about forty feet, and I struck the water legs downward. I am a good swimmer, and fearing that the great suction caused by the sinking of the boat might draw me under the water, I struck out swimming backward, after ripping off my overcoat. I managed to get clear of the ship before the suction could catch me, and the suction was weaker than I imagined it would be. When the water closed over the vessel there seemed to be a great hole in the water, and there was a roar like thunder. By this time I was thirty feet off, and the water appeared white and foamy. I swam for quite a time until I came across a grating hatch floating in the water. It was about five feet by three, and I seized hold of it. After resting for a moment I tried to climb on the hatch, but it capsized each time, and I finally became exhausted and gave up the effort. I had been clinging to it for a few moments when I saw another hatch of the same size floating some feet away, and, holding on to the first hatch, I struck out with one arm until I had reached the other. I then kept myself above water by holding myself between the hatches with my legs hanging down in the water. "Suddenly I saw a light, and I knew that a search was being made for me and Capt. Sealby, for it was known that when the Republic sunk we were the only men aboard her.

"I heard three pistol shots, and I knew that they had been fired by Capt. Sealby. I learned later that he had fired the signals from his pistol. He also had been supporting himself in the water by the aid of a hatch.

"I had been in the water probably twenty-five minutes, when I saw a lifeboat approaching, and I shouted to its crew. Soon the boat had reached me and I was quickly hauled into her and put on a seat in the stern.

#### Directs the Search for Sealby.

"I told the crew that I heard three shots fired, and pointing to the direction from which the shots came, I directed the crew to make haste to see if Capt. Sealby had managed to keep afloat. After a time I don't know just how long, we found him clinging to a hatch, and two of the crew seized him under the shoulders and lifted him into the boat. After a moment he saw me, and with tears in his eyes embraced me and said, 'Williams, you were game to the last.' It was the first sign of emotion he had displayed.

"Before the Republic sank Capt. Sealby and I were on the bridge. When I found that the vessel would soon be entirely submerged, I descended to the pantry, and groping about in the darkness I managed to get hold of some cake and marmalade. This was at 8 o'clock. I returned to the bridge, and Capt. Sealby and I spread the marmalade on the cake with our fingers and ate all of it. It was the best meal I ever remember eating."

Several women who were aboard the Republic at the time of the disaster congratulated Capt. Sealby, and one woman in particular tried to put her arms around his neck. The Captain bashfully avoided her, however.

"Captain, you did splendidly," she exclaimed.

"And so did every one of you," replied Capt. Sealby.

When the demonstration on the pier ended Capt. Sealby, Williams, and Binns, the wireless operator, went to the White Star Line offices. There Capt. Sealby made his official report of the accident. The line would not make it public. There was another mild demonstration at the line office, and it was plain to see that Inman Sealby is still considered a splendid seaman there. Capt. Sealby refused to make any additional statements to the newspapers at the line's office.

"When I get the proper permission to talk," he said, "maybe I will tell you something else. Until that time you must excuse me."

Capt. Sealby will remain in New York several days, perhaps a week, and will then proceed. It was said, to Liverpool, where he will appear before the British maritime authorities for examination in the inquiry to establish the cause and fix the blame for the loss of the Republic.

In a long conference at the White Star Line offices yesterday afternoon Capt. Sealby gave a complete history of the loss of the Republic to Vice Presidents Lee and Franklin of the International Mercantile Marine. At the close of the conference it was said a statement would probably be given out to-day.

It was said yesterday that one result of the accident was the immediate revocation of Capt. Sealby's license as a master in the transatlantic passenger trade. Under the rules of the British Board of Trade, where vessels are lost, the masters' licenses are suspended pending the outcome of the inquiry that always follows. That does not mean that Capt. Sealby will of necessity lose his master's certificate. If he is found blameless his

status in the merchant marine will be the same as before the accident.

## EUGENE LYNCH DIES OF HURTS. His Is the Sixth Death Due to the Collision.

Eugene Lynch of Boston, a passenger on the Republic, who was severely injured in the collision between that vessel and the Florida, and whose wife was killed, died yesterday morning in the Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn. Although his leg and thigh were broken and he was injured internally, Mr. Lynch showed great fortitude. His condition became such after his transfer to the Florida that it was deemed wisest not to remove him again to the Baltic, and he came into port on the Florida.

A number of Mr. Lynch's friends were at his bedside when he died yesterday. Among them who had come to see him were the Rev. Father Hill of Revere, Mass.; the Rev. Father Prendergast of Worcester, William Tuttle, and J. Casey of Boston, and James McGinnis, a nephew of Mr. Lynch. Mr. McGinnis took charge of the body of his uncle and had it taken to an undertaker's establishment in Court Street. Later it was shipped to Boston, where for many years Mr. Lynch had been in the wholesale liquor business. Mr. Lynch's death makes the sixth as the result of the collision. His wife and Banker Mooney of Langdon, S. D., were killed on the Republic and three sailors were killed on the Florida.

Mrs. John T. Davis and her two children, Halle Elkins Davis and Henry Gassaway Davis, were among the passengers of the Republic who lost all their baggage, and in consequence have been put to sore straits since their return to New York until new raiment can be obtained for them.

Mrs. Davis is a sister-in-law of United States Senator Stephen B. Elkins of West Virginia, and a daughter-in-law of Henry Gassaway Davis, who ran for the Vice Presidency with Alton B. Parker in 1904.

Asked last night as to her future plans Mrs. Davis said: "I have no plan on earth beyond new clothes, just at present. When these are procured and we are once more presentable, we will think about continuing the voyage to the Mediterranean."

The condition of Mrs. M. J. Murphy, who is in St. Vincent's Hospital, was said to be improved yesterday. Mrs. Murphy has a fractured thigh, and a wound in her side. Her husband is with her.

Mrs. Herbert L. Griggs, another of the injured passengers, who is at the St. Regis, was much improved yesterday. Mr. Griggs said yesterday that he was certain his wife would have no permanent ill effects from her experience.

## THE QUESTION OF INSURANCE.

### White Star Fund Carried Bulk of Its Risk—Passengers' Losses Heavy.

Marine insurance companies will be called upon to stand little and eventually perhaps none of the loss resulting from the Republic disaster, according to information obtained yesterday. On the other hand, the loss to those companies which carried risks on the Florida may be very heavy, for if the responsibility for causing the collision is finally laid against the Florida the underwriters of the Florida will be called upon to pay to the full extent of their risks.

The Florida's insurance was placed part in Italian and part in British companies, and, so far as could be learned yesterday, no American companies had risks upon her of any considerable amount. Marine insurance men here yesterday were disposed to estimate the value of the Republic at \$1,500,000. Of this amount \$1,000,000 was carried through the insurance fund of the White Star Line itself, and the balance was distributed in small amounts through six or eight companies.

The actual damage to the Florida is not estimated at over \$50,000 or \$75,000 at the most, and, with cargo damage added in, the total would not probably be in excess of \$100,000. It happens, curiously, that the Republic's cargo damage will also be small. She sailed from this port with about \$40,000 of Government supplies on board, bound for the home-coming Atlantic fleet, and with practically no other cargo of consequence.

The loss of personal effects suffered by the Republic's passengers will, according to the estimates of well-informed marine insurance men, be for the 300 passengers from \$250,000 to \$300,000. Little insurance was carried on this personality. The liability of the White Star Line is limited on the majority of its tickets to a small amount—say \$100—on personal property, so that recovery does not lie in that direction. In the event that the responsibility for the collision is placed upon the Florida, this loss for personality will have the same standing as any other claim for the destruction of property in the disaster.

At the White Star offices yesterday, when an inquiry was made as to the chances of the passengers in recovering, in part at least, the value of their lost property, the statement was made by an official that the losses will have to be borne by the passengers themselves, and that the line is not responsible save in the event that the Admiralty courts decide that the Republic was responsible, even in part, for the collision. In that case there might be a different result.

What amount of the passage money will be returned to those who do not care to resume the cruise has not yet been determined. It was said yesterday that this might be 40 per cent of the passage money. The steerage passengers are understood to be anxious to resume the voyage, and they will go out on the next liner owned by the International Mercantile Marine that sails from New York.

## DELAY OF WRECKING TUGS.

### Fog and Other Drawbacks Prevented Their Arriving on Time.

The question having arisen as to why assistance did not reach the White Star liner Republic in time to keep her from sinking, investigation yesterday brought out the fact that only an unfortunate combination of circumstances, in which the dense fog of Saturday and Sunday played a prominent part, prevented her from being brought safely into port.

Everything seemed to be against the work of rescue, and the Relief, the powerful deep-sea salvage boat of the Merritt & Chapman Wrecking Company, which was the first to start to the aid of the Republic, did not arrive off the Nantucket Shoals until nearly ten hours after the ship had gone down. John Lee, Vice President of the White Star Line, said last night at his home in Brooklyn that he is firmly convinced that had the Relief got to the Republic in time things would have been different. The Merritt & Chapman boat is fitted with powerful pumps and is regarded as one of the best-equipped salvage boats afloat. She was to have been assisted in the rescue of the Republic by three or four other wrecking boats, but none of them could reach the sinking steamer.

## Thought Republic Would Not Sink.

All of the various boats that passed the Republic during the twenty-four hours after the accident reported that she was riding in good shape, and none of them expressed any fear that she would go down. Capt. Ranson of the Baltic sent a wireless message to the officials of the line as he came up the bay Sunday night, saying that the chief engineer of the Republic had reported to him that the leaks through the engine room bulkheads of the injured boat were such as could be remedied by a couple of strong pumps, and that only the one big break into the engine room at the point where the prow of the Florida struck the side would need outside treatment of the plates. Curiously, this message was not received until after the boat had sunk, and the men on the Baltic were much surprised to learn when they reached the pier on Monday morning that the Republic had gone down. The Standard Oil steamer City of Everett sent a wireless message ashore as she entered the bay at midnight Sunday, that she had passed the Republic earlier in the day, and that she was in good condition and in no immediate danger. This was hours after the ship had sunk.