

Burning of the Steamboat "City of Newark".

The steamboat *City of Newark*, plying between this city and Newark, took fire June 10th, on her morning trip to this city, at about a quarter to 9 o'clock, when off Staten Island, just before entering the bay. The fire took place in the fire room from the boilers, and the boat was actually on fire, while the captain was giving a lady passenger assurances that in case of fire there would be no danger, the boat being well supplied with all the appliances for extinguishment. The sequel proved that no attempt was made to use them if they were on board, as the boat burned to a shell, and three passengers were drowned by their eager haste to leave the burning wreck, by a lady passenger jumping on the gunwale of a boat already full. Fortunately the fire was discovered by the *Achilles*, the *Commodore*, and the *Thomas Hunt*, all of whom promptly came to her assistance, and with their small boats took off all the passengers, the steamboats themselves not daring to approach near enough to take them, lest they should take fire. The *Achilles* came up to the bow, the flames driving aft toward the stern. But for the prompt and efficient aid afforded by these three steamboats, few of the sixty passengers would have been saved from the flames or a watery grave, and as it was, quite a number scorched by the falling cinders and the intensity of heat. The wreck was towed upon Jersey flats by the *Commodore*. How long will the Insurance Companies of this city take Ferry or Steamboat risks on such boats as have their boilers encased with wooden bulkheads — wooden boxes to hold fire? The *City of Newark* had an iron tank aboard to hold fresh water for the boilers. What a glaring inconsistency — iron tanks to hold water, and wooden tanks to hold fire!

The U.S. Nautical Magazine and Naval Journal Vol. IV (1855), p 259.

1. What were some negative aspects of early steam ships?

2. How can an event like this help improve the steam ships?