

Winter Dangers of the Great South Bay.

That the body of Albert Latham is not lying in the bottom of the bay alongside his new 14 foot ice "scooter" is due to his presence of mind and a sail sprit.

Mr. Latham, one of the crew of the Blue Point Life Saving Station, had a desperate struggle for life alone on the thin running ice of the bay last Sunday afternoon, and his escape from drowning is little less than miraculous.

Latham had been ailing for some time and was waiting for the return of Nathan Payne, one of the crew, to return to the station so he could go to the main land for medical treatment. Payne went back Sunday morning by way of Smith's Point, and Latham made ready to go home. While waiting for Payne, Latham, Baker and Moger tried the ice in their scooters to see if it was

safe. They went across the bay to Blue Point and back. In the afternoon about 5 o'clock, Latham started for home alone. A strong southwest wind was blowing and the tide was flood. This started the ice to running. The wind blew fresher out in the bay and Latham found he was fast getting into trouble as he had on a big sail. He was about half way across when he attempted to shorten his sail. Just then the ice ran together right along side and some of it toppled over on to the deck sending his scooter to the bottom while he was thrown out upon the ice. As he went over he grabbed the boat hook and clung to the sprit which he cut loose. With one of these in each hand he carefully moved over the ice drawing his legs along. He moved slowly toward the main land, but when the ice would bear, stood up, hoping the life saving crew would see him. They did, and Newton Moger and Morris Baker started bravely to his rescue.

In the meantime the minutes seemed hours to Latham. His legs would go down through the thin ice and he was chilled through. His gloves were worn to his bare fingers from drawing himself along on the thin ice. Without the long sprit to distribute his weight he would have gone through the ice at once. He finally got as far as he could go, the ice growing thinner near the shore.

But help was close at hand. John Danes, Jos. Stillman, and Percy Cochran started from Blue Point on a light scow with runners and were making fair progress towards Latham and would soon have reached him. Just then, Moger and Baker came tearing across the bay in their "scooter." The wind was so strong they could not stop. Moger was in the lead and his boat was making nearly 30 miles an hour. Latham saw he couldn't stop as both men would have been in the same predicament he was in had they tried it. As Moger steered his boat close to Latham, the latter hooked his arms around the shrouds and was carried along. Moger hauled him inside and together they got ashore.

Latham was weak from excitement, exposure and his illness and was at once brought to Patchogue to the home of his father-in-law Henry W. Paine, where there was great rejoicing over his escape from death.

Moger and Baker were unable to return on the bay and went around by Smith's Point.