

SAILORS DROWNED

EIGHT MEN LOST IN WRECK EAST OF HERE.

Worst Fatality on the Beach Since the Loss of the *Louis V. Place*.—Two Men Saved.

Last Saturday off Westhampton Beach the cruel breakers of Long Island's southern coast pounded into kindling wood the four-masted schooner *Augustus Hunt*, bound from Norfolk to Boston with coal, and dragged down to death eight of her crew of ten men.

John Coerts, second mate, and Carl Sumners, a sailor, were saved by the courageous work of the life savers from the Quogue and Westhampton stations.

The vessel struck at midnight Friday night on the outer bar. A fierce southerly gale was blowing and the breakers were very high, and although they tried hard the life savers could not launch a boat. Lines were shot out in the direction of the sound of the vessel's fog horn, but none of them reached. Piteous cries came from the sailors clinging to the wrecked vessel, but nothing could be done to help them. When morning came the fog was still so thick the wreck could not be seen. About nine o'clock there was a break in the fog, and the outlines of the schooner were revealed to the people on shore for a few moments. The life boat was launched again, but she was upset before she had gone twenty feet, and men and boat came rolling in on the breakers.

Time and time again the line gun was tried, but without success. At 11 o'clock the beach was strewn for nearly a mile with small and large pieces of wreckage, and not a sound had been heard from the vessel for over an hour. Suddenly two men were made out riding on an upright piece of wreckage. The life savers jumped to the line guns and fired several lines out to them. Most of them went wide, but finally one came within reach of the men who were then about two hundred feet from shore.

It was impossible to haul the men in as the breakers were filled with wreckage which would have ground them to pieces. At last one of the men dropped off, but grasped the line as he came to the surface. Brave William Halsey, of the Quogue crew, with a life preserver under his arm, sprang into the breakers, and half swimming and half crawling, finally reached the exhausted sailor. After a hard fight for life they were both picked up by the life savers who formed a line by holding hands, as far out as they could. The other sailor was afterward hauled in by the life line. The two sailors and a number of life savers were nearly exhausted.

Capt. Blair of the wrecked vessel was in Boston, and came on Sunday to take charge of matters and look after the sailors.

Three bodies have now been recovered. Captain Robert Blair, agent of the company, sold the wreckage this morning. The major portion was sold to Silas Tuttle, the aged Quaker, for \$16. The scene of the wreck is still visited daily by a large number of sight seers, all of whom carry away a piece of the wreckage for a souvenir.

As is customary, on behalf of the Government, Lieut. De Otte, Inspector in the U. S. Life-saving Stations, is making an inquiry at Quogue and Point Life-saving Stations, into the wreck of the *Augustus Hunt*, and the drowning of eight of her crew.