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THE GALE OF NOVEMBER 1898

Excerpts from a Radio Speech related by Douglas H. Shepherd, Keeper of Wood End Lighthouse, Provincetown, Mass., about the year 1928

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We have had many storms along the coast and at sea, leaving in its wake loss of life and destruction of property afloat, but the gale and blizzard of November 27, 1898 will always remain in the minds of us who recall it. Fine snow began to fall and sudden gusts of wind began to pile it up on the streets. People were making a hurried exit from their daily labors in order to reach their homes. Stores closed early. Later in the evening street cars and trains were badly hampered in reaching their destination and as the evening wore on, about everything on wheels came to a standstill. Every hotel and rooming house was packed with people unable to reach their homes. Down on Atlantic Avenue, the old sea-dogs along the waterfront shook their heads and no doubt such a remark might have been frequently heard: "It's goin' to be a bad 'un, boys."

Tied up to her dock was the steamer Portland. All hands were busy hustling freight aboard under the lee of

the large store and warehouses and the increasing storm was not noticed to any extent. Passengers, many who were returning home from visiting friends and relatives over the Thanksgiving holiday, began to arrive with their friends in groups, some on foot, while others were lucky to obtain a cab. Up in the Pilot House the Captain probably noticed that the glass was very low, perhaps pacing back and forth wondering if it all amounted to much, and except for an occasional order to one of his officers, all was silent up there. But while they realized that the trip would not be very pleasant by any means, still there was no cause for any alarm at sailing

time. True, the wind had been on the increase all afternoon, and now that it came time to cast off it was mulling along about 25 miles an hour with thick snow. But this breeze is enough to kick up a nasty sea outside for a steamer of the side-wheeler type, as was the Portland.

At five minutes before sailing time-- which is believed to be 5 P.M.-- the all-ashore whistle shrieked out its warning to those visiting on board. Goodbyes were shouted and handkerchiefs waved and with a sharp toot, the steamer's gangplank was hauled

