

in, lines cast off, the coastwise steamer Portland with about 270 souls on board headed out into the harbor and was soon lost from view in the thick smother of swirling snow. From this point, mystery shrouds the loss of the steamer and all on board. In those days there was no wireless, no radio, and no call of distress could possibly have been heard by passing craft on such a night.

(Mr. Isaac M. Small, Marine Reporting Agent at Highland Light, for the Boston Chamber of Commerce for over 69 years, and author of "Shipwrecks on Cape Cod", interrupts Mr. Shepherd for just a moment to relate further details of the tragedy as he remembers it: "At 4 o'clock the next afternoon, Sunday, the Life Savers at Race Point Station heard two distinct blasts of a steamer's whistle; at 10 o'clock that night, the patrolmen from stations south of Race Point came upon great masses of broken beams, deck-houses, furniture, boxes and barrels of freight and several dead bodies. It is believed by men on the coast familiar with storms and tides, that the whistle heard at 4 o'clock was the last despairing cry sent up by the doomed ship. The location of this terrible disaster has never been satisfactorily determined, but there is no question in the minds of sea coast men but that this ship went down somewhere between 8 and 12 miles north of Highland Light". (This would be 5 miles N. E. of the now discontinued High Head Life Saving Station which was between Highland and Peaked Hill.) Mr. Shepherd continues:

Cape Cod - with its 50 miles of land extending out into the Atlantic, fared very badly and felt the full force of the storm, and on the outside beach from Monomoy Point to Long Point, Provincetown, a shore line distance of about 60 miles

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which is patrolled by the crews of 13 Coast Guard Stations, it is said that the boys who were on duty at that time found wreckage of every description such as ten gallon milk cans, crates of merchandise, boxes, canned goods, deck chairs, life preservers, spars, rigging with partly torn sails, wearing apparel, lumber, a boy's bicycle - and bodies.

This stool came off the Portland, and was given to Mother by her Uncle Joe Mayo



No work could be relayed from station to station due to the fact that the whole telephone system was laid flat in the early part of the evening, and the only reports of disaster were by the beach patrols returning to their stations. And what a night on the beach - a lantern was absolutely useless, and these boys staggered and stumbled along, going sideways and backwards to ease themselves against the stinging sleet, falling over objects which by sense of touch they realized their assistance was not required and kept on, always with the thought that perhaps the living in distress might be saved. But not a soul of those 270 aboard the steamer Portland was ever seen again.

(Isaac Small intervenes: "Out of the entire company of passengers and crew which went down with the ship, only 60 bodies were recovered, some found fully dressed with life preservers around them, others were entirely nude.")