

STORIES RELATING THE LOSS OF  
THE COASTAL STEAMER "George S. Wright"  
WITH JOHN SUTTON AS CHIEF ENGINEER

In January, 1873, the coastal steamer "George S. Wright" disappeared off the shore of British Columbia while on a voyage from Sitka, Alaska to its home port in Portland, Oregon. Aboard the ill-fated ship was its chief engineer, John Sutton.

Father of nine, Sutton was the leader of the West Coast branch of the Delaware Sutton family. His own father had been Dr. James Nuttall Sutton and his mother was Julia Ann Stuart.

These stories relate various accounts of the fate of John Sutton and his plunky, little steamer. Even after countless searches were conducted over the course of five years, nothing very conclusive was ever discovered about the reasons for the loss of well-known ship. Her demise remains today one of the greatest mysteries along the northern coast.

Aboard one of the search vessels was a Fort Rupert translator named George Hunt. Though Hunt asked numerous Indians for information they might possess on the loss of the ship or the fate of any possible survivors, he was unable to learn anything of value.

Some 113 years later, John Sutton's great-great granddaughter, Janna Irene Smith Brown, chartered a boat out of Port Hardy, near Ft. Rupert, to research the site where wreckage of the ship was known to have washed ashore. The skipper of her chartered boat, the Swiftsure, was a man named Gene Cadwallader. Much to her great surprise, Gene was the great-great grandson of George Hunt. The account of her own frightening voyage in search of the Wright is at the end of this volume.

Janna Irene Smith Brown - 1989





INDEX OF ARTICLES  
RELATING TO THE "GEORGE S. WRIGHT"

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION TO COLLECTION	1
SECTION I	
Portland; Saturday, March 1, 1873 "Bulletin" News of Geo. S. Wright	I-2
VICTORIA COLONIST; March 1, 1937 "Mystery Surrounded Fate of Thirty-One Aboard G.S. Wright" by George Bonavia	I-3
VANCOUVER DAILY PROVINCE; Nov. 30, 1946 "Mystery Shrouds Ships Fate" - B.A. McKelvie	I-6
THE VICTORIA DAILY COLONIST; Apr. 9, 1961 "Loss of The Geo. S. Wright Still A Mystery" by Cecil Clark	I-10
<u>Marine History of the Pacific Northwest</u> "Mysterious Fate of the 'Geo. S. Wright'" by Lewis and Dryden	I-18
<u>Shipwrecks of British Columbia; 1973</u> by Fred Rogers	I-21
<u>By Juan de Fuca's Straits</u> by James McCurdy	I-25
SECTION II	
DAILY OREGONIAN Articles	
Feb. 8, 1873 Local Brevities...	II-1
Mar. 3, 1873 The Missing Steamer	II-1
Mar. 4, 1873 Officers and Crew	II-2
Mar. 8, 1873 In Search...HMS Petrel	II-2
Mar. 21, 1873 Telfair Arrived	II-3
Mar. 27, 1873 Mr. John Sutton	II-3
Mar. 28, 1873 Return of the Lincoln ...	II-3
Mar. 29, 1873 The Fate of Passengers and Crew	II-5
Apr. 1, 1873 Bonds Filed	II-6
Apr. 2, 1873 Washed Ashore	II-7

TITLEPAGE

## SECTION III

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
DAILY BRITISH COLONIST Articles	
Feb. 28, 1873 Terrible Marine Disaster	III-1
Feb. 28, 1873 Quick Work	III-3
Mar. 1, 1873 The Marine Disaster	III-3
Mar. 7, 1873 More About the George S. Wright	III-3
Mar. 10, 1873 Return of the HMS Petrel	III-5
Mar. 10, 1873 Northfleet and the Wright	III-6
Mar. 16, 1873 Loss of the Geo. S. Wright	III-7
Mar. 16, 1873 Weekly British Colonist	III-7
Mar. 16, 1873 Was She Overloaded?	III-7
Mar. 27, 1873 The Loss of the G. S. Wright	III-8
Mar. 28, 1873 Arrival of the Otter	III-8
Mar. 28, 1873 ...Dead Boy with Life Preserver	III 9
Mar. 28, 1873 A Shameful Letter	III-9
Mar. 28, 1873 The Geo. S. Wright Disaster	III-10
Mar. 29, 1873 That American Flag at Alert Bay	III-11
Apr. 16, 1873 Another Body Found	III-12
Apr. 27, 1873 Letter from the NW Coast	III-12
Jne. 24, 1873 More Relics	III-13
Jly. 17, 1873 The George S. Wright	III-13
Jly. 27, 1873 The G.S. Wright ... Mystery ...	III-14
Aug. 5, 1873 The G.S. Wright - Mrs. Sutton	III-15
Aug. 6, 1873 Search for the Geo. S. Wright	III-16
Aug. 24, 1873 The Cruise of the Lincoln	III-16
Aug. 24, 1873 The Search for the G. S. Wright	III-17
Apr. 28, 1874 The George S. Wright	III-17
Aug. 22, 1874 Reported Discovery of Relics ...	III-17
Jan. 28, 1875 Indian Reports of Murder of ...	III-18
Jan. 29, 1875 The Lost Steamer	III-18
Jul. 22, 1875 Remains	III-19
Jul. 28, 1875 The Finding of ... Remains	III-19
Feb. 17, 1877 "The George S. Wright" Mystery	III-20
Feb. 18, 1877 The G. S. Wright Mystery	III-21
Jun. 3, 1877 The Mist Cleared Away ... Truth ...	III-21
Apr. 6, 1877 The G. S. Wright Mystery	III-22
Apr. 6, 1877 Probable Massacre of Her People	III-23
Apr. 7, 1877 The Return of the HMS Rocket	III-24
Apr. 8, 1877 Log of HMS Rocket	III-25
Apr. 25, 1877 Murder of Crew...Addtl Evidence	III-28

## SECTION IV

PAPERS OF THE U.S. REVENUE CUTTER "LINCOLN"	
Cover Letter to Treasury Secretary	IV-1
Instructions to Capt. Davis of "Lincoln"	IV-2
Report of Capt. Davis regarding findings	IV-4
"Lincoln" Journal, March, 1873	IV-7
"Lincoln" Journal, August, 1873	IV-8



TITLE

PAGE

SECTION V

Journal: Janna Brown's 1986 Cape Caution Trip

V-1

SECTION VI

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES RE: "George S. Wright"









pdfelement



JOHN SUTTON, Chief Engineer of the "George S. Wright"



*The Sutton House*

*The Sutton House 1793*

*St. Georges, Delaware*

JOHN SUTTON'S BIRTHPLACE

Linden Place, St. Georges, Delaware

pdfelement



A LETTER FROM JOHN SUTTON IN JULY, 1871  
TO HIS FAMILY IN PORTLAND

Retyped in 1986 by Janna Irene Smith Brown  
Original letter in possession of Nancy Mays Rademaker

The letter is written on blue-lined embossed stationary, folded in half to make four writing pages. All four pages are filled with neatly written, easy-to-read text, generally free of curls and embellishments. *Presumably, the steamer was in San Francisco at the time.*

=====

Steamer Geo. S. Wright  
July 25th 1871

My dear Fooples

I acknowledge the receipt of two letters from you by last nights steamer (or rather one and a half as I suppose half of the last one must be credited to mama) and was very much pleased to see that all my darlings were well - I also had the pleasure of seeing Herbert's picture, received last night by Mr. Gaston -- the little good for nothing looks somewhat thin and peaked. God love him, I guess he has been pretty sick - In my last letter I stated that I thought we would get away from here about the 26th (tomorrow) but unfortunately the Tides have failed us and now I do not much prospect [?] of getting away before next Monday or Tuesday, if we do then.

You wish me to keep a strict account of all the dinner parties I attend here. Now let me whisper to you in strict confidence that I have not been out at all nor do I think I will as I have no clothes with me that are decent enough to go a visiting with - I have had several invites but have been ashamed to give my reasons for not going - Bowman, Haywood, Gaston etc etc have pressed me very hard to go. but I had to refuse and I am afraid they do not look upon it in a very friendly light - I met Mr. Francis last evening just returned from San Francisco - he offered me all sorts of appologies [Sutton's spelling] for not calling at the house on his way through Portland and says he commissioned his brother (the Major) to go and appologise [Sutton's spelling] to you all for him - Mr Gaston has purchased half of the Skating Rink here and I think will make a good deal of money out of it so far it has been very extensively patronised and the numbers in attendance constantly increase.

Mr Ames, the original proprietor, an acquaintance of mine, says that he will clear at the verry [Sutton's spelling] least 300 dollare a month. I do not know exactly what he paid for his interest but I think about nine hundred - I went to see Mr Work [?] about that velvet this morning and read my instructions to him - he says they have nothing of the kind in their store but will make inquiries around and if it is to<sup>be</sup> had in town he will get it for me - Bowman was telling me last evening that they had just received a letter from Sally Adams. She is teaching school in Sacrimento [Sutton's spelling] - the report in the papers about

her marriage was false. She intends paying them a visit shortly -  
with huge amounts of love and kisses to all I sign myself your  
affectionate old dad

John Sutton





A LETTER FROM JOHN SUTTON IN 1870  
TO HIS DAUGHTER, MARGARET

Retyped in 1986 by Janna Irene Smith Brown  
Original letter in possession of Nancy Mays Rademaker

The letter is written on blue-lined embossed stationary, folded in half to make four writing pages. All four pages are filled with neatly written, easy-to-read text, generally free of curls and embellishments. Until the bottom of the last page, spacing remains even and on the blue lines. Toward the end, he wrote smaller and closer together to conserve space.

=====

San Francisco  
May 8th 1870

My dear Maggie

I sat down this evening to acknowledge the receipt of your welcome letter enclosed with Mother's and the rest, but I am sorry to say that the one you wrote me while you was up the Sound has not yet come to hand. I can't imagine what has become of it. I have been to the Post Office, Express Office and Mr Beach every opportunity but have not been able to find it. How did you send? by mail or express - I intended to have written to you by the return of the active [?] but unfortunately I was so buisy [Sutton's spelling] just then that I could not get time to write although you said there would be fuss if I did not do so, however that threat did not frighten me much for I thought to myself she is a long ways off and can not raise a muss with me now and I will write the first convenient opportunity and offer her my excuses and it will all blow over before we meet - I was pleased to see that you had such a pleasant time over the Sound and enjoyed yourself so much - why didn't you stick it out longer? but perhaps you eat up about all the good things your friends there had on hand so thought it time to go home -- I was somewhat disappointed to see by your letter that you could not succeed in engaging the delicate attentions of dainty feet, that is a valuable acquisition lost to the family, you might possibly succeed yet by a little skillful manoevering [Sutton's spelling] - some little conquettish airs or something of that kind that young ladies are so generally proficient in - so you have again had a good time with the officers of the Mohican - did the doctor declare his intentions or show symptoms of being badly smitten? - the officers of that ship are spoken off [Sutton's spelling] very highly here as exhibiting more of the real traits of a gentleman than generally falls to the lot of navy men -



I heard the other day that a man in San Francisco received a letter from his brother (on the Anderson) last steamer stating that Finch intended sending the Hunt and Olympia both down here this summer - did you hear anything of it? if it is so I would like to come up and bring one of them down and it would be such a nice chance to bring you all down with me. I supposed the Hunt would run in a line with the New World between here and Valejo - and the Olympia I presume would run to Los Angeles that would be a splendid route for her and she would make cords of money for the buisness [Sutton's spelling] is immense both in Passengers and freight and she would be just the Boat for the trade as she is fast and economical and has good accomodations - tell mama to inquire into the matter - I thought of writing to Finch about the thing but I was uncertain of the truth of the report and I am afraid if I delay it it will be to [Sutton's spelling] late to make application to him - old King would probably have the preference [Sutton's spelling] but he has gone up the country to run a quartz mill by the year consequently he is out of the way - I have been troubled a good deal lately with the Rheumatism in the left shoulder so much so that I can't scratch my head with the left hand which makes it unpleasant - it is somewhat better the last few days - bye the bye speaking of scratching reminds to ask who scratches mama's back now since I left - or does she have to do without scratching -- best love and lots of kisses to all

Your affectionate father  
John Sutton

pdfelement



JOHN SUTTON  
Married: MARGARET NUTTALL

Married: JAMES NUTTALL SUTTON B: 16 JULY 1796 D: 10 Nov 1860

JULIA ANN STUART  
Born: 1790  
Wed: 1820  
Died: 28 MAR 1828

Elizabeth Jane Janvier  
Born:  
Wed: 16 JULY 1829  
Died: 8 Nov 1832

Abigail Bunker Barber  
Born: 14 OCT 1814  
Wed: 25 SEP 1834  
Died: 20 MAR 1849

Susan Gosler  
Born: 23 SEP 1822  
Wed: 16 DEC 1851  
4 children

JOHN SUTTON  
Born: 30 APR 1823  
Wed: MINNA BEATRICE DOLAN

Elizabeth Jane Sutton  
Born: 8 DEC 1831 Died: 27 MAY 1834

#3 Mary H. Sutton  
Born:  
Wed: Clarence Pool

#7 Albert Newton Sutton  
Born:  
Wed: Susanna Laws

JENNIE KING SUTTON  
Born: 7 NOV 1862 D: 17 DEC 1935  
Wed: ALFRED DEMEAU WHEELER  
11 JUNE 1890

Zadoc Pool, II  
Born:  
Wed: Rosalie Dougherty

Frederick T. Sutton  
Born:  
Wed: Mathilda Duttie

ALFRED SUTTON WHEELER  
Born: 21 MAR 1891 D: 15 FEB 1955  
Wed: IRENE MARGARET ANTHONY  
12 JAN 1918

1. Zadoc (Bill) Pool  
2. Roger Pool

James Nuttall Sutton \*  
Born:  
Wed: Shelby Rice

MARGARET JANE WHEELER  
Born: 5 Nov 1918  
Wed: ERNEST DEAN SMITH

1. Jeffrey Sutton  
2. Kenneth Sutton  
3. Cynthia Sutton

DEAN SUTTON SMITH (twins)  
JANNA IRENE SMITH  
Born: 6 Nov 1947

+ 6 others

\* Current residents of Sutton family home  
in St. Georges, Delaware. 1986

WILLIAM STUART  
Born: Died:

Marriage 1: Jane Barr  
1775 B: 1759 D: 23 Dec 1775

Marriage 2: Deborah Miller  
B: D:

Jane Barr Stuart  
B: 1757 D: Feb 1815  
M: 28 Feb 1792

William Newton - D: 26 Dec 1824  
1. Ondre John Thos. Newton, USN  
B: 26 May 1793 D: 28 Jly 1857

2. Mary Ricketts Newton

3. Col. Wm. Stuart Newton, USA

4. Capt. Henry C. Newton, USN

5. Lt. Edwin Barr Newton, USN

6. Jane Eliza Newton

7. Hon. Thos. M. Newton

8. Monroe Newton

9. Sinah Ann Newton  
M: George Peter Wise

Wilhelmina Stuart  
B: D:  
M:

W. J. Hurlock  
1. Julia Hurlock  
B: D:  
M: Albert O. Newton

2. Mary Frances Hurlock  
B: D:  
M: Wm. D. Clark

1. Emma Clark

2. Julia Clark

Mary Stuart  
B: D:  
M:

Benjamin Ricketts  
1. Stuart Ricketts  
B: D:  
M:

Julia Ann Stuart  
B: D: 28 Mar 1828  
M: 8 Oct 1818

Dr. James Nuttall Sutton  
B: 30 June 1796 D: 16 Nov 1860  
1. William Sutton  
B: 12 Aug or Apr 1821  
D: Oct 1821

2. John Sutton  
B: 30 Apr 1823 D: 27 Jan 1873  
M: 10 Sep 1847

Anna Beatrice Dolan  
B: 29 Jne 1829 D: 15 Apr 1905

1. Julia Anna Sutton  
B: 6 Jun 1850 D: 29 Jly 1922  
M: 25 Feb 1875  
Gustavus Blinn Wright

2. Margaret Augusta Sutton  
B: 17 Nov 1852 D: 20 Oct 1933  
M: 16 Jun 1875  
George Jennings Ainsworth

3. Mave Hellena Sutton  
B: 21 Apr 1955 D: 5 Jun 1913  
M: 20 Nov 1877  
Otis Sprague

4. James Nuttall Sutton  
B: 14 Nov 1856 D: 15 Nov 1911  
M: 17 Nov 1879  
Rosa Agnes Brandt

5. Charles Dolan Sutton  
B: 17 Aug 1859 D: 7 Sep 1859



6. John Sutton, Jr.  
B: 2 or 18 Jne 1860  
D: 1860

7. William Stuart Sutton  
B: 18 or 22 Mar 1861  
D: 1861

8. Jane "Jennie" King Sutton  
B: 8 Nov 1862 D: 17 Dec 1935  
M: 11 Jne 1890  
Alfred Demeau Wheeler

9. John Grant Sutton  
B: 14 Oct 1864 D: 12 Jly 1950  
M: 14 Sep 1899  
Mary Emma Robbins

10. Albert Sutton  
B: 6 Jne 1867 D: 17 Nov 1923  
M1: 29 Aug 1894 Ethel Meeks  
M2: 25 Sep 1909 Marie Hewitt

11. Ada Victoria Sutton  
B: 6 Jne 1867 D: 2 May 1950  
M: 12 Nov 1890  
Archer Edward Bull

12. Herbert Gaston Sutton  
B: 14 Sep 1870 D: 17 Feb 1936  
M: 9 Nov 1915  
Mary Collins

13. Julius B. Sutton  
B: 23 Mar 1828 D: 11 Sep 1828

SECTION I

MISCELLANEOUS ACCOUNTS FROM MARITIME HISTORY





# Oregonian

Nov. 17, 1875  
Pg. 3.

to ex-  
open-  
rains  
ividly

Looking at the river, one would naturally inquire where all the driftwood came from during high water, and where it went to.

The residence of Chief Lappetus narrowly escaped destruction by fire Monday afternoon. Prompt and efficient aid prevented a conflagration.

The street was run so heavy through the snow yesterday and last night that Superintendent Budd found it necessary to hitch two horse-drawn cars.

Miss Zoe Clayton, the actress who was here a few weeks ago, sailed from Victoria for San Francisco on the *Salsador*, on the 10th inst. She was in very poor health.

As the steamer *Oregonian* did not sail from San Francisco for Portland until 3 o'clock Sunday morning, she need not be expected to arrive here before this evening.

The wires about the city connected with the fire alarm telegraph, were not in good working order yesterday. Chief Engineer Hallock was around making such repairs as were needed.

One hundred and seventy head of beef cattle were brought down from the Balles, Monday evening, on the *Emma*; *Steward*. Most of these cattle are intended to supply the meat markets of Portland. A few of them were shipped to the Sound.

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The superintendent of the county has received, to-day, from the State superintendent, blanks for teachers' reports, which will be forwarded to the district clerks or the teachers now engaged in the county.

Such portions of a paper entitled "Suggestions to Teachers" (distributed to the several schools, April, 1875,) as may conflict with the provisions of the forms now issued are hereby recalled, and teachers are requested, in future, to keep their records and make their reports to this office as required by the State.

To avoid any misunderstanding or confusion in the report next due, teachers are authorized to make out the same upon the basis of my suggestions of April, 1875; but all subsequent reports will follow the new form as prescribed.

T. L. ELIOT,  
Co. Superintendent.

NOVEMBER 16, 1875.

The steamer now due has on board an invoice of new and splendid jewelry for B. L. Stone. Mr. Stone has made special arrangements for the introduction in Oregon of the very latest styles in jewelry, every month.

In order to make sure of having a well-fitting suit for the social season you must recollect that Fabel & Roberts are prepared to attend all in want of the desired article. They can fill your order to a nicety.

If drugs cannot cure you go and consult Dr. Wood, at American Exchange.

Pacific Transportation Company's steamer *Active*, which sailed from San Francisco on her last voyage June 4, 1870. About 2:40 in the afternoon of the following day the vessel got among the reefs of Shelton Cove, Humboldt county, during the prevalence of a dense fog. All the passengers, most of the baggage and considerable of the cargo saved, but the vessel herself became a total wreck, incurring a loss to her owners of about \$50,000. The *Active* was built in New York in 1849, and had been brought to this coast soon afterward, and was for a long time employed by the government in the coast survey service.

### GEO. S. WRIGHT,

This staunch little steamer was lost on the night of January 27, 1873,—as near as it is possible to determine—on the northern coast. The place where the *Geo. S. Wright* is supposed to have taken her last plunge is a point along the wild and rugged coast about 40 miles northwest of the extreme northern end of Vancouver Island, and nearly 250 miles from Victoria. On the evening of January 27, 1873, the *Wright* sailed from Portland, bound for Sitka and intermediate ports. She reached her destination, and was on the return trip when, it is supposed, she ran on a hidden rock near Cape Caution and sunk. As near as can be ascertained, about twenty passengers were on board at the time of the fatal disaster, not one of which survives to tell the dreadful story. A few fragments of the wreck have been discovered, and two bodies which are supposed to belong to those who went down. One of these bodies was identified as that of Major John Walker, U. S. paymaster, who was known to be among the passengers, and the other that of a small boy. The whole fate of the *Wright* is shrouded in mystery, and little of satisfactory character will ever be known as to where, when and how she went down. The *Geo. S. Wright* was a propeller, top-sailed, schooner rigged. She was built at Port Ludlow in 1863. Her length was 118 feet, hold 10 feet, beam 23 feet. Registered capacity, 215 tons; carrying capacity, 400. Originally the *Wright* was built as a tug, and after plying for some months between Portland and Victoria, she was taken to San Francisco and sold to Capt. Blakely, of the Russian and Siberian Telegraph Company. Subsequently the steamer was resold to Jacob Katum, Esq., of this city, who, after running her for several years on the northern coast, disposed of her to Ben Holladay, who was the owner at the time the vessel was lost. The boiler, hull and machinery were inspected a few months prior to the time the *Wright* was lost, and all were pronounced to be in excellent condition. The boiler was 18 1/2 feet long, 8 1/2 in diameter, constructed of boiler iron 5-16th of an inch thick. The boiler was a low pressure, capable of a working force of 25 pounds to the square inch. The propeller was over 7 feet in diameter with 3 flukes, driven by an engine of 30 inch bore and 2 1/2 feet stroke. At the time the *Wright* was lost she was well provided with all the necessary life-saving appointments, having in addition to a number of life-preservers two large life-boats.

### THE PRINCE ALFRED.

The next on the list, the *Prince Alfred*, was lost during a fog on Duxbury reef. The *Prince Alfred* was built at Dumbarton, on the Clyde, in 1854, and registered 861 tons. She

NABTES' Crockery and G First street, between Mor will give more goods for th other establishment in the Fancy Goods for the Hull are very attractive and ready sale. Be sure to thing in his line.

### PIANOS AND ORG REPAIR

Persons in business have clis to abandon teaching al regular trips through all p Ington Territory. Patrons work, as he comes highly Music Store, where he has Also, by the celebrated Pi ders from all parts of the Grey's Music Store, and w tion.

### REMO

GEO. H. CHANCE.  
CHANCE & Dent Office—FIRST (Odd Fellow) PLEASURE

I have a number of Ball any moment to let at re made to order. JC

AFFLICTIONS OF THE LIV: Sick HEADACHE, &c., and Dr. D. Jaynes' Benative change the vitiated secret Liver, and restore those of dilign. Sold every where.

Meeting is E If ladies who do not use will compare teeth with th in an instant, more rows can be composed into a ne

POND'S EXTRACT. CELESTIAL FAMILY MEDICINE TO USE appeared before th so generally useful, so simi as POND'S EXTRACT. A gl lague of life and disease cure, will convince us, if i in human testimony, that and most useful medicine valuable remedy ever m thirty years has been in e people and profession; an been a thousand times worthily, yet in every inst been triumphantly vind whom, for a long use and indispensable, have fully proved, and the medical orally slow to admit a new anything but their own pr of instances adapted it, e but cheerfully recommend the more we use it and like it.

IMPORTANT.—Indo: Legion. Dr. Wm. HALL L'UNION cures Coughs, Cold diseases of the Throat and TOOTHACHE AND DYNE

Do not think that c cured. Try WRIGHT'S Ba and you will have a pe which thousands have to in any of the forms of cou or of coughs and colds.

Vertical text on the left margin, including names like 'A. F. M.', 'F. K. Ritchy', 'Beed', 'Good sir de-terp-ly be eting', and 'J. K.'.







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"BULLETIN"

EXTRA!

NEWS FROM THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT

The Ship a Total Loss  
Nothing Heard From Crew or Passengers

---

[source publication?]  
Portland, Saturday, March 1, 1873

News was received here this morning from Seattle, brought by the steamer North Pacific to Port Townsend, of the loss of the steamer Geo. S. Wright. No particulars were given in the dispatch.

A LATER DISPATCH

This afternoon Mr. Weidler received from the agents at Victoria, Messrs. Brodrick & Co, the following:

"Steamer Geo. S. Wright reported by Indians lost on return trip, near Cape Caution, Queen Charlotte Sound. No traces of passengers. The steamer's sign board, half of mast, hatch and part of deck found ashore. Wreck apparently out of the usual course, and near the shore."

THIRD DISPATCH

A third-dispatch, confirming the above, was received which further states that the report is generally credited in Victoria.

SITUATION OF THE WRECK

The locality of the wreck as indicated by the chart is just opposite the extreme north west end of Vancouver Island, across the entrance of Queen Charlotte Sound, and by water about three hundred miles to the north of Victoria.

STILL A HOPE

"There is still a hope from the Ocean," and as there is nothing in these dispatches to indicate the positive loss of either passengers or crew, there is yet hope that they may have been saved.

---

MYSTERY SURROUNDED FATE OF THIRTY-ONE  
ABOARD G.S. WRIGHT

United States Mail Steamship Vanished on  
January 25, 1873, on way to Nanaimo and  
Was Later Found in Fragments off Cape Caution

by George Bonavia  
Victoria Colonist; 3/1/1937

Fate of passengers and crew aboard the United States mail steamer George S. Wright early in 1873 was never definitely cleared up. Whether they were murdered in cold blood by warlike Indians on the British Columbia coast or drowned at sea when their vessel struck a reef and broke up has been a matter of much speculation.

Fragments of the ship were found ashore and three bodies were picked up, but not a survivor remained to tell a tragic tale of the disaster of sixty-four years ago. Nearly four years after the event a resident of Toronto, who found some wreckage and signs of human habitation near by, led many to believe the white men had been ruthlessly slaughtered.

The "Daily Colonist" published the following item about the George S. Wright on February 13, 1873, when she failed to arrive in Nanaimo:

"The Otter brings no tidings of the George S. Wright beyond that she passed the mouth of the Skeena River on her way north five weeks ago. She should have arrived back at Nanaimo from Sitka twenty-seven days ago, and her non-appearance creates much anxiety."

TRACE OF WRECK - F. Campbell of Victoria received the following letter from Wesley W. Huson, of Alert Bay, on February 27:

"I have just received news of the wreck of the George S. Wright somewhere near Cape Caution in Queen Charlotte Sound. All hands probably lost. I have bought a board bearing the steamer's name. It was picked up by Indians camped near the spot. Half of one of her masts, several pieces of her deck and a hatch cover were observed. A box and a plank drifted ashore.

"Indians could find no trace of bodies, but half of a white shirt was seen, so I have no doubt all are past and gone," Huson concluded his letter.



Two canoe loads of Bella Bella Indians arrived at Victoria on the same day in tow of Ss. Sir James Douglas. They stated about February 15 they were encamped at the mouth of Belle Isle Inlet, south of Cape Caution, close to the village of fierce Kuerguftah Indians. There they discovered the poop deck, part of a mast and piece of a steamer's pilot house, a pair of blankets, a dead deer, several sticks of cordwood, and a board bearing the name of the ship.

Not far from the beach they saw two masts rising out of the sea. They remained five days in the vicinity, hunting and fishing, but saw no signs of white men nor bodies. They took the board to Mr. Huson, who found it bore the name George S. Wright.

OFFICERS OF THE SHIP - Captain Ainsley, whose sister resided in Victoria, was master of the ill-fated steamship. Frank Weidler was purser, and JOHN SUTTON [JSB's caps], chief engineer. He was also a former resident of the Island. The Wright carried a crew of twenty-one men and ten passengers, including Major Walker, a United States army paymaster, accompanied by his wife, on the way to Sitka to pay off troupes.

Early in 1873 the Wright sailed from Portland for Alaska and way points. Upon arrival at Nanaimo, Chief Engineer SUTTON [JSB's caps] wanted to have the vessel beached to repair a discharge pipe, but Captain Ainsley gave orders to proceed north, believing her to be in a seaworthy condition.

Information reached Victoria that the Wright touched at Fort Tongass on January 13 and ran to Kluvok to load a large cargo of salmon, fish oil and furs. She left Kluvok for Nanaimo on January 25 and was not seen again until Indians discovered her remains. It was believed she ran upon Devil's Ridge, near Cape Caution, during a snowstorm. Although H.M.S. Petrel and the steamships Lincoln and Gussie Telfair searched the coast, they found only the body of a man believed to have been a passenger and the remains of an eight-year-old boy in a lifebelt. Another body was picked up a month after the steamer was believed to have been wrecked.

INTERESTING DIARY - Extracts from the diary of Charles Horetsky, published at Toronto in April, 1877, strengthened the belief the George S. Wright's passengers and crew had been murdered. Horetsky made a canoe voyage from Bella Bella to Comox in December, 1874. They follow:

Thursday, December 29, 1874, reached Indian Cove, about one-mile south of Cape Caution. Immediately south of the cove there is another semi-circular bay upon the hard white sands of which were debris and portions of cargo of the George S.



Wright, lost early in 1873. Many portions of the vessel were found imbedded in the sand.

Charlie, a Bella Bella Indian, says it is the opinion of all Indians that some white people were saved from the wreck, but immediately after were murdered by Kimsquit Indians. Another member of my canoe pointed out a spot upon which he and some others found a hurriedly constructed hut with traces of bottles, corks and bones. It is known at the time the Wright was wrecked a party of Kimsquit Indians, then on the way to Victoria, was camped at Indian Cove.

Charlie said he and a party of Bella Bella were on their way to Victoria. Seeing a fire on shore, they landed and were surprised to find some Kimsquits who had been there for ten days. In answer to an inquiry, they laughingly stated they were fishing for white men. I should be strongly inclined to suspect Indian John and a few others in the Kimsquit village up Dean Creek.... [note: remainder of article illegible in photocopy at hand.]





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## MYSTERY SHROUDS SHIP'S FATE

George S. Wright And All Hands Disappear  
Indians Detained for Months in Victoria

by B.A. McKelvie  
The Vancouver Daily Province; 11/30/1946

It was in the winter of 1873 that the steam ship George S. Wright, Captain Thos. J. Ainsley, disappeared on a voyage down the Coast from Alaska. Now, nearly three-quarters of century later the manner of her loss is still as much a mystery as it was at the time.

Search was maintained for several years; wild stories were circulated as to the fate of the 12 passengers and 21 officers and crew. These included a report that a number of survivors of the foundering of the vessel in Milbank Sound (between the southern tip of the Queen Charlottes and the northern end of Vancouver Island), had landed near Cape Caution and had been murdered by Indians. This rumor led to extraordinary action on the part of the authorities.

VESSEL FAILS TO APPEAR - H.M.S. Rocket, carrying police, went to Kimsquit, many miles distant from Cape Caution, where a demand was made for alleged witnesses of the massacre, and these not being forthcoming, the village was bombarded.

The steamer, an American vessel, left Kluvok, Alaska, on January 25, southbound. Her next port of call was to be Nanaimo, where she was to take on coal. She failed to appear. Weeks passed, but no word was received of the fate of the steamer, or where she went down.

Then, from what can be learned from old newspaper reports, rumors began to spread. It was in April, 1877, that the British Colonist reported "Major Walker's cash box was found at Bella Bella, and a piece of the mast of George S. Wright at Kimsquit."

Commenting editorially, Walker was a U.S. Army paymaster, who was a passenger, the paper, April 7, 1877, assembled the facts as reported to that date.



"Three canoes filled with Kimsquit Indians reached Victoria and reported they had discovered portions of the wreck of a steamer on the beach at Cape Caution, a promontory on the northeast coast of the Island, nearly opposite the northern end of Vancouver Island. They brought with them packages of furs and skins that had formed part of the cargo, and the name-board of the steamer."

GUNBOAT LEAVES -

[Note: next two lines of copy illegible.]

...wearing life-preservers, were also reported as having been found in the vicinity.

It was in the spring of 1877 that Alfred Dudower, the master of the sloop Ringleader, arrived at Victoria to report that he had been told by Charley Hampsett, Bella Bella chief, that another Indian "told him he was one of the survivors of the George S. Wright, and that the others had been murdered by the Indians."

Other reports reached Victoria about that time, as set out in a letter from Charles Tod, superintendant of police to the attorney-general, were to the effect that the mass murders were committed by "four canoe loads of Kimsquit Indians and one or more canoe loads of Bella Coola Indians."

Amid such startling stories the government decided to take action. The naval authorities at Esquimalt were asked to provide a

gunboat, and H.M.S. Rocket, Captain C. P. Harris, placed at the disposal of Lieut-Governor Richards, to take investigating officers up the coast.

The gunboat left Esquimalt on March 14, with Police Sergt. Chas. P. Bloomfield and Alfred Dudower aboard.

The gunboat went to Fort Rupert where George Hunt was taken aboard as interpreter and three Indians, believed to have knowledge of the affair, were also embarked. The ship went to Cape Caution where a search of the vicinity revealed nothing.

The Rocket then steamed to Kimsquit where it was found that the head chief was absent, but that the other chiefs, "still remaining, promised to come off the next morning, it being too late for them."

H.M.S. Rocket  
HUNT



The following morning, March 29, when no Indians came off to the steamer, Sergt. Bloomfield, Dudower and the interpreter went ashore. The Indians denied that there were any chiefs present, but it was later discovered that there were four chiefs in the village. In the afternoon seven chiefs came on aboard.

They were told they must surrender the Indians who were present at the tragedy involving the passengers and crew of the George S. Wright. The Indians denied that there were any witnesses then in the village and later are said to have admitted that three men and a woman who had knowledge of the affair were there. An effort was made to arrest them. One youth threatened to shoot Dudower, and his father coming to the assistance of his son also threatened. He evaded capture and fled to the woods with his gun, calling on the camp to offer resistance.

"Sergt. Bloomfield and party returned on board with the two prisoners," the official record of the affair sets out. "The six other chiefs (the seventh had accompanied the shore party) had been detained on board and were informed of what had taken place on shore, and then all were told the old man and the woman, already spoken of, were to be delivered up on board the ship at 9 o'clock the next morning; failing which the village would be burnt. Two chiefs were detained on board for the night as hostages."

WHERE WERE CULPRITS? - Precisely at 9 a.m. the next day, the Indians not appearing, the gunboat was moved into position off the village and the gig and galley bearing special police and marines, all under the command of Willian Bailey, landed.

"On arriving," the record states, "the village was found nearly deserted, two chiefs with a few others only remaining, one of whom was arrested and the other ran off; the Indians wanted were not found. Those present were informed that the village would be fired into and burnt if the offenders were not given up; the boat then returned to the ship; fired blank from great guns; then two 20-pound shells, one on each side of the village."

Further parleying now took place with the Indians who promised to surrender the wanted individuals. Messengers were sent to bring them in, but they did not appear...

"Mr. Bailey and Sergt. Bloomfield examined the village to see that there were no inhabitants - men, women, or children - left and the



boats having returned, blank charges were then fired and afterward shell, round the skirts of the village, then into the village itself, and after a few rounds the first gig was sent in as before to fire the house of the old man who had threatened life; this was accomplished and the boat returned and the ship proceeded to Bella Coola."

According to a report made to Dr. Israel by the natives, six houses had been burned with all their contents of food, personal goods and nets and other gear, and three canoes had been destroyed. It was also told him, Dr. Powell said, that a number of the Indians died from exposure after the affair.

The Indians who had been detained were locked up in jail in Victoria, but after months of imprisonment were liberated because there was no charge against them that could be proceeded with by the authorities.

Four years later, in 1881, Dr. Powell, who was trying to obtain recompense for the Kimsquit Indians for the loss of their homes, told the Ottawa government:

"There is, after all, no reason to believe that the crew of the ill-fated steamer "Wright" had been foully dealt with, and, in this view their (the Kimsquit Indians) case is certainly a hard one and deserving, in my opinion, of practical and humane consideration."

And so it is that even to this day the fate of the steamer George S. Wright is still one of the greatest mysteries of the Pacific Coast.

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Eighty-Eight Years After ... Despite Indian Inventiveness

LOSS OF THE GEO. S. WRIGHT STILL A MYSTERY

by Cecil Clark  
The Daily Colonist; Victoria, B.C.  
April 9, 1961  
Page 9

Eight-eight years ago this month, the main topic of conversation along Victoria's waterfront was a ship, its crew and its passengers.

The George S. Wright had disappeared!

In the next four years only a few fragmentary clues came to light, and to this day the fate of the little vessel and the 31 people aboard her is shrouded in mystery.

The George S. Wright was built at Port Ludlow, Washington, in 1863 by John T. Wright and named for his brother. Propeller driven, she was 116 feet long, 25-foot beam and 400 ton registry; in fact about the size of the Gulf Islands ferry, Cy Peck.

At one point in her career, she was employed in the Bering Straits by the Russian-American Telegraph Co. which folded in 1868 when the laying of the Atlantic cable killed the idea of a telegraph service from the U.S. through Siberia and Russia to Europe.

In 1870, now owned by the Oregon Steamship Company [Note: Company president was Capt. John C. Ainsworth.], she carried passengers and mail from Portland to Alaska, one of her regular ports of call being Victoria. For a couple of years she was a familiar sight to Victorians, docking every few weeks at the foot of Yates Street, her little deck gun booming over the town to recall her passengers and crew before sailing. Aids to coastal navigation were few and far between in those early days, and apart from seasonal rough weather one particular hazard always faced the coastal skipper - the original brown-skinned inhabitants.

For example, take the schooner Growler which left Victoria in March 1868 with a \$35,000 cargo for the American Fur Company at



Sitka and was wrecked on a storm-swept cape on the Queen Charlottes. Neither the skipper, who bore the ominous name of Horace Coffin, nor his eight crewmen were ever seen again.

Nearby Indians being reported in possession of a sextant, a ship's clock and a few other valuables spurred Capt. Stevens in the schooner Nanaimo Packet to an effort at salvage. Stevens didn't get far with the operation, for the tribesmen ganged up on him, robbing him of \$600. He was lucky to get out alive.

OF A MORE MILITANT attitude was Capt. J. D. Warren [Note: photo of Warren appears in the article.] who, a couple of months later, found himself becalmed in the sloop Thornton off the north end of Vancouver Island. As he drifted idly, Indians in a couple of canoes came out to invite him to an anchorage in a nearby bay. They had furs to trade, they said, but Warren became suspicious when they were slow to take his line and somehow they seemed to be marking time. Sure enough, another couple of canoes appeared, and Warren, looking over the bow, spotted muskets under their blankets. He got a rifle from his cabin just to show he was prepared.

Said an Indian, looking up at him, "What are you going to do with that?"

"First man to touch a gun dies!" was Warren's dictum, as he was joined by Big Bill, the mate and a seaman called Steve. Big Bill had a revolver and Steve, another rifle.

Whipping aside the blankets the Indians grabbed their guns and for the next five minutes it was every man for himself.

At the white's first shots, two Indians keeled over, and in the next burst of fire, four more. Ducking, dodging and reloading, Warren noticed that Steve had been hit, for he was crawling tortuously along the deck to a foc'sle hatch. Their Indian pilot, however, took a hand with the whites, and rifle in hand killed a couple of braves attempting to clamber over the bulwarks. Warren had an advantage with his repeating rifle, and when the canoes sheered off they held 14 dead and six wounded, one of whom died the next day.

There was no court case or enquiry over this little melee; it was just one of the hazards of navigation.

NEXT YEAR came the case of the British bark John Bright, which drove ashore near Hesquiat in a storm. There were no survivors,



and the victims were all burned by Hesquiats. Later, when they were exhumed, they were all discovered to be headless!

"They came ashore that way," said one Hesquiat chief naively. But investigation proved who was responsible. Upshot was some hangings in front of the Hesquiat village.

In this sort of background, the George S. Wright left Portland for Alaska early in January, '73, and after coaling at Nanaimo arrived at Sitka where she discharged her cargo and started the return voyage.

Captain at the time was handsome young Tom Ainsley - shortly to be married - with him Dan Noonan, first officer; second officer Bill Price, chief engineer JOHN SUTTON - father of nine children - and second engineer James Minor. Rest of the crew consisted of five seamen, a couple of firemen, two Indian coal passers, a steward, two cooks and a waiter, plus an Indian pantryman and an Indian messboy.

Passengers were a Major Walker of the U.S. army and his wife, the major having gone up to pay the garrison at Sitka. There were Lieut. Rogers and servant; Charles Waldron, a canneryman; Charles Kincaid; a U.S. quartermaster's clerk called Sinsheimer; and an unknown cooper.

Southward bound, the ship called at Tongass in southern Alaska to pick up a man called Hogan and his little eight year-old halfbreed son, as well as a couple of miners from the Omenica, John Williams - with \$15,000 in gold dust - and a French-Canadian.

Finally before leaving Alaskan waters the Wright made one more call to Kluvok, where they took on 800 barrels of salmon and a hundred barrels of oil from Waldron's plant. With this load under the hatches, she left for Nanaimo on Jan. 25, 1873.

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A MONTH LATER word trickled down to Nanaimo that someone had spotted wreckage on the beach, near Cape Caution, the mainland cape off the north end of Vancouver Island. Confirmation came with the steamer Sir James Douglas which arrived towing two canoes loaded with Bella Bella Indians. They said they'd been camped on a beach on the north side of Slingsby Channel about the middle of February. High up on the hard-packed sand they'd seen the remains of the poop deck of a ship, a pair of blankets, some deer skins, part of a mast, a dead deer and a quantity of cordwood. They had also found part of a plank tied to a box as if someone had tried to make a raft. The beach, they said, was close to the Indian



village of Kerguftah, inhabited by a pretty fierce outfit. The Bella Bellas said they'd camped in this spot about five days, saw no bodies, and the local tribesmen were conspicuous by their absence. One of the visitors wandering over the rocks found a woman's veil, and a board with the name of the George S. Wright on it. The board had been given to one Wes Huson at Alert Bay.

Conclusion was the George S. Wright had become a total wreck, and any survivors who reached shore were either killed by Indians or frozen to death. In the latter event, it was peculiar no bodies were seen.

There was gossip in Nanaimo about the vessel's seaworthiness, some remembering how on her northward trip, the chief engineer [JOHN SUTTON] wanted her beached to repair a discharge pipe, and others heard him comment about his assistant being incompetent. It was remembered the George Wright seemed poorly provided with canvas, important in that day of repeated engine failures. Conclusion was the vessel had been the victim of some furious gale, or maybe a boiler explosion - which wasn't uncommon.

THE U.S. CONSUL at Victoria asked for an immediate search, and the sloop HMS Petrel, along with the coaster Gussie Telfair [Note: the Gussie Telfair was also owned by the Oregon Steamship Navigation Company, owners of the George S. Wright.], scoured the Cape Caution shoreline, after first calling at Alert Bay and picking up the name board [The Gussie Telfair returned the name board to Portland later.]. By day and by night the Petrel followed the shoreline, firing guns and rockets. No wreckage was seen, stray Indians seemed noncommittal and finally HMS Rocket took up the search. Her commander, Capt. Spalding, figured the Wright must have struck Devil's Ridge, near Cape Caution, probably in a blinding snowstorm.

Two months later, on March 27, the coastal steamer Otter, plying between Victoria and Port Easington, returned with a copper-tipped boy's boot and a life-preserver. Capt. Lewis said he got them from some Indians who said a little boy had been found floating in the life-preserver away up on Findlayson Canal, over 100 miles north of Cape Caution. The body, badly mangled by dog fish, was that of a "stikum" boy (halfbreed), and the Indians buried the remains, probably the son of Charles Waldron [Note: More probably the son of Hogan.]

Again the lifebelt was some sort of clue. If there was time to put on a lifebelt, what happened to the ship's boats?



On April 10 came a report from Alert Bay that Indians had buried the remains of a white man drowned near Cape Caution, and a fortnight later William H. Woodcock came down from Skeena in the sloop Yellow Lane, skippered by Bill Madden. Besset by incessant gale-force winds the trip had taken them 35 days, and once near Slingsby Channel, they had put in to a cove for shelter. There they found wreckage, including a ship's bowsprit, part of a wheelhouse and some deck planking. It was all above high water mark and the bowsprit, they said, appeared to have been shattered as if it had hit something head on.

Madden suggested that the vessel struck Hannah Rocks during a southwest gale.

NO BODIES were seen but on the heels of this report, 150 miles northward, on Aristazable Island, was found the remains of a white man in a life-preserver, lashed with a long woolen muffler to two chairs. Indians reported they buried him where he landed.

Here again a man had time to lash himself to an improvised raft. Where were the boats?

A couple more months went by and, around the end of June, Capt. Collins brought his sloop Duncan in to Victoria and produced a cigar holder, a meerschaum pipe and part of an account book which he'd bought from an Indian 175 miles north of Cape Caution. Last entry in the book was July, 1872 and in it were the names of R. Backus, Mary Sullivan and T. Bittencourt. The name Esmeralda Bay was a frequent entry, and details of fares, "beds, eggs, beef steak, trunks." It was surmised the book belonged to a steward.

Came middle July, by which time William Irwin was writing in a San Francisco paper suggesting that some of the survivors must still be alive somewhere along the coast, and he too brought up the question of the ship's boats. If spars and wreckage got ashore, why not boats?

RUMOR NOW confounded rumor as from odd points along the coast Indians were found in possession of, first, a lantern, then a newspaper, and finally some pilot bread. These things must have been taken ashore by someone. They didn't float. Finally a drum of oil came to light.

In August, CHIEF ENGINEER SUTTON's wife asked that the Port Townsend based revenue cutter Lincoln be used in the search, but opinion was the Lincoln wasn't fit for the wild waters of Queen



Charlotte Sound. This didn't satisfy the mother of nine, who promptly wired President U. S. Grant. [Note: Grant and JOHN SUTTON classmates together at West Point.] It got action, for in August the Lincoln returned from a 20-day search of Queen Charlotte and Millbanke Sound. The skipper's opinion was that the George S. Wright struck the Sea Otter Group and sank without trace.

Came then other things to occupy the minds of those in the Pacific northwest and it wasn't until two years later (in February, 1875) that the famous shipwreck came back in the limelight. This time it was a rumor from an Indian source up coast that people must have landed from the George Wright because some Indians had seen a hut built at Indian Cove - a hut that wasn't built by Indians, but a white man's structure. There were empty bottles around it, some with corks, and hanging in a nearby tree were a couple of lifebelts.

The story seems to take us back to the two canoe loads of Bella Bellas, the men who had first reported some wreckage but no local tribesmen around. Now the story had changed; they had seen some Indians around the scene, people who had departed soon after the Bella Bellas arrived. The visiting Bella Bellas figured the whites who had built the hut had gone off with the departing Indians. They said they had been back again, but the hut had been washed away by the next big spring tide and the spars were all buried in the sand.

On July 22, 1875, two and half years after the wreck, came an astonishing reminder of the tragedy. The remains of Major Walker were found tied to a life-preserver on a lonely beach on an island not far from Sitka. A U.S. revenue cutter was promptly on the scene to view a skull, some ribs, vertebrae and thigh bones, in what remained of a U.S. army uniform and an army overcoat. Again the grisly relics pointed to the fact that the ship must have struck in daylight for Walker to be fully dressed.

NINETEEN MORE months passed, then in mid-February, 1877, five years after the wreck, Capt. Alf Dudower of the sloop Ringleader reported at Victoria that a Bella Bella chief, Charley Hamsett, *Humahs* had come aboard his vessel one night to tell him that an Owekano brave, thought to be around Nanaimo, was the sole survivor of the George S. Wright.

According to his story he'd been a coal passer on the vessel and crossing Queen Charlotte Sound, bucking mountainous seas, suddenly a huge wave broke over the ship, putting out the fires. After



that the boiler blew up and the vessel sank. It was all too sudden for boats to be lowered but one survived.

In it the Owekano and 14 whites reached shore, on one of two small, round islands in Queen Charlotte Sound. That night their fires attracted the Owekanos who landed and cut the throats of all the whites, then dumped their weighted bodies in the sea. The informant said the skipper went down with the ship, but the mate and carpenter got ashore.

There was immediate inquiry in Nanaimo for this last eyewitness of the fate of the George S. Wright, and quickly Provincial Chief Constable Stewart found him. His name was Coma, and he was working in a mine.

As no bodies had been found with throats cut, the whole story seemed a bit wild and someone wondered how Coma had escaped the beach slaughter. He was of the same band, he said, and they threatened to kill his father if he spoke about it.

HMS ROCKET was sent off again to check, with Police Sergeant Bloomfield and Alf Dudower aboard. At Fort Rupert, they picked up George Hunt to act as interpreter. When they anchored at Kimsquit, the local chief was asked to point out the men who were in on the massacre. At first he denied any knowledge, then said those concerned were all down at Victoria.

Came finally the abrupt ultimatum that the whole village would be burned down if he didn't produce the culprits within the hour. It was a tense few moments as a file of armed marines eyed the villagers, then finally the chief handed over his son and three other minor chiefs. Although there was little evidence to connect them with the crime, they were taken to Victoria where a new development faced the Crown.

It was a variation in Coma's story. After the boiler exploded, he said, and the vessel began to sink, Capt. Ainsley and four of his officers were in aboat and yelled to Coma to join them. The rest of the people were either in bed or trying to get into another boat. The captain's party, seven nearly-naked men, reached the shore near Cape Caution. Indians there gave them blankets and a day or two later Owekanos appeared in two canoes. Ainsley offered them \$500 to take his party to Fort Rupert, but the Owekanos produced firearms, killed the whites, and then sank the bodies in the sea.

Coma confronted by the four Kimsquit prisoners, identified two of them as the killers, but a hitch in the arrangements was provided by the police. They discovered Coma had never been a coal-passer on the George S. Wright!

Having heard the story of the missing vessel, he'd thought up a neat stratagem to get back at some of his enemies.

Somewhere, back of all these Indian tales, however, lies the true story of the shipwreck and massacre, a story that goes down in the annals as one of the riddles of the north Pacific.

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## MARINE HISTORY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

by Lewis & Dryden  
Chapter Ten  
Pages 204 - 205

## "Mysterious Fate of the 'George S. Wright'"

EARLY in 1873 the steamer George S. Wright disappeared while on a trip from Alaska to Portland, and, though strenuous efforts have been made to learn the exact fate which overtook the steamer, her crew and passengers, the mystery has never been fathomed, and, like many similar calamities of lesser importance, all that can be said is that she sailed away and no message ever came to quiet the heartaches of those whose friends and relatives perished with her.

The George S. Wright occupies a permanent place in the Northwestern marine annals through having been a Puget Sound production and having spent her entire existence in the waters of the North Pacific. She was launched at Port Ludlow, September 1, 1863, for John T. Wright who named her in honor of his brother. She was one hundred and sixteen feet seven inches long, twenty-five feet beam, ten feet six inches hold, and, in command of Capt. S. F. Lewis, was put on the Portland and Victoria route, where she ran for a short time, until secured by the Russian-American Telegraph Company, who sent her to Siberia, where she was operated in their interest for nearly two years. On the failure of that project in 1868 she was sold to Jacob Kamm, who ran her until October, 1869, and then disposed of her to the North Pacific Transportation Company. In this service she carried mail on the Alaska route, and was commanded at different times by Waitt, Rogers, Hayes, and Thomas J. Ainsley.

She sailed from Portland on her last trip early in January [1873], coaled at Nanaimo, and proceeded to Alaska. Arriving at Sitka, she discharged her cargo and started on the return trip, having as passengers Major Walker and wife, Lieutenant Rogers and servant, Charles Waldron, Charles Kincaid, Mr. Sinsheimer, quartermaster's clerk at Sitka, and an unknown cooper. At Tongass, John Williams of Victoria, S. Millotitch and a man named Hogan and his son were taken aboard. After leaving Sitka the steamer went to Kluvok, where Waldron had a fishing station. Here she loaded eight hundred barrels of salmon, one hundred barrels of oil, a few bundles of skins and furs sailing for Nanaimo, January 25th.



Her crew consisted of Thomas J. Ainsley, captain; B. F. Weidler, purser; JOHN SUTTON, chief engineer; James Minor, second engineer; Daniel Noonan, first officer; William Price, second officer; P. Clawson, Owen McGough, firemen; Edward Johnson, Archibald Dunn, James Irwin, Gus Proffe, J. Jenson, seamen; Chris Adams, steward; Pedro Salvo, Jewell Michels, cooks; C. Hevendehi, waiter; Moses Baptist, pantryman; Indian Jim, messboy; Indian Jack and Jim, coal passers.

As time passed on and no tidings were received, those having friends in peril appealed to the Government to send a steamer to search for the absent vessel. The knowledge of treatment which shipwrecked crews had received in the past made it probable that, if the steamer had been wrecked, the survivors might suffer indignities, or even death, at the hands of the murderous savages on the North coast.

The United States Government, with the exasperating slowness which on more than one similar occasion has cost human life, failed to furnish the assistance desired until weeks after the steamer had been reported missing, although British officials at Victoria dispatched Her Majesty's ship Petrel in search long before an American vessel was ready for service. The owners of the Wright sent the steamer Gussie Telfair to the rescue, but so much time had elapsed that but few traces could be found of either the vessel or those on board. Some pieces of wreckage came ashore near Cape Caution, indicating that the steamer had been lost in that vicinity. The supposition has always been that she struck an unmarked rock near that point about January 27th, and that, if any of the passengers or crew reached shore, they were butchered by the natives.

Several months after the disaster a portion of a human body clothed in a soldier's uniform was found on the beach, and the remains of an eight-year-old boy, with a life preserver attached, supposed to be that of young Hogan, were also found. Both were fully clothed, indicating that the accident must have happened either in the daytime or in the evening before the hour for retiring.

Another theory advanced in explanation of the mystery is that the boiler exploded, destroying the vessel and killing all on board. The finding of the boy's body would appear to refute this supposition, as in the case of an explosion there would have been no time to secure a life preserver.

About five years after the disappearance of the Wright, an Indian called Billy Coma was arrested in Victoria, and while in jail made



a confession in which he stated that he had been a coal-passer on the Wright when she was lost, and that all of the crew, with the exception of himself and another Indian, had been killed by the natives. The story was investigated, and while it was ascertained that Coma had never been a coal-passer on the steamer and was very much a stranger to the truth, yet he had been living with a tribe near the scene at the time of the wreck, and his familiarity with many of the details was such as to warrant the belief that he might have imparted information which would have thrown light on the mystery.

Numbers of stories of a similar nature occasionally found their way to the public ear, but, despite the wearisome search of the friends of the lost, no tidings bearing the stamp of authenticity have ever been received.

FOOTNOTE -----

John T. Wright, Jr. was born in New York in 1826, and gained his knowledge of the steamship business on his father's vessels sailing out of the metropolis. He came to the Pacific Coast in 1849, served for a long time as engineer on the Sea Bird, Doliah and other vessels owned by the elder Wright, and eventually acquired an interest in the business. The steamer which bears his name was intended for service on Puget Sound, the framework having been constructed by Capt. John H. Soranton, who had the mail contract between Olympia and Victoria. Wright bought the structure as it lay and lengthened it for an ocean steamship, fitting her out with the engines of the old Sea Bird. After selling this steamer, Wright went East in 1866 and bought the Gussie Telfair and the well-known steamship William Tabor, which he sent around to the Coast, and when he returned in 1868 ran the latter as an opposition steamer on the various routes out of San Francisco. On the Sound he was interested with his brothers in the steamers Eliza Anderson, Olympia, George S. Wright, Maria, and other early-day steamers. Of later years Mr. Wright has not been connected with the business, and is now living in Oakland, Cal.

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## SHIPWRECKS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

by Fred Rogers, 1973  
J.J. Douglas, Ltd.  
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Part Five  
Pages 167 - 170

### Northern Coast of British Columbia S. S. GEORGE S. WRIGHT - 1873

The mysterious and unsolved disappearance of the propeller-driven wood steamer GEORGE S. WRIGHT provides mute testimony of the hazards to shipping along British Columbia's 500-mile coastline.

The search for this small cargo-passenger vessel was one of most baffling and frustrating of the thousands that have taken place in these waters. It extended over many years at tremendous cost. And the tragic drama underlying the search involved all the adventure-story elements of emotion and mystery - a young captain's romance; danger and agonizing fear; shattered hopes and despair; the ingenious fabrication of an incredible lie; and the finality of death itself.

I am indebted to Mr. Cecil Clark, a retired police officer and historical writer, for many details of this vessel's last hours. His account appeared in the April 9, 1961 issue of the Victoria Colonist's weekend magazine The Islander.

The GEORGE S. WRIGHT was built at Port Ludlow, Puget Sound, in 1863, by John T. Wright, who named her for his brother. Her first years were spent on the Puget Sound-Vancouver Island-Portland run; then, in 1870, she was sold to the Oregon Steamship Company, who expanded her service by carrying freight, mail, and passengers to Alaska.

The GEORGE S. WRIGHT's foredoomed voyage was made in January, 1873, during which she stopped at Victoria and then at Nanaimo to take on coal before heading out on the long run north to Sitka. In command was young Capt. Thomas Ainsley, who was eager to prove his seamanship and complete the return trip to Oregon in time for his wedding day.

The journey north was relatively uneventful. After discharging her cargo at Sitka, she left for the return trip with about 25 passengers, including a Major Walker, his wife, and a Lieut. Rogers and his servant. She then called at Tongass to pick up a



man and his eight-year-old son, as well as two miners, one of whom was John Williams of Victoria. Rumor had it that Williams carried \$15,000 worth of gold aboard. Another stop was made at a fishing settlement to take on 800 barrels of salted salmon, 100 barrels of oil, and some skins and furs.

The GEORGE S. WRIGHT left the fishing village on January 25, Captain Ainsley anticipating an uneventful return trip to his home port and to the arms of his bride. But he never made it. When his ship became overdue, word was passed along to other skippers to keep watch for her. But there was no sign of the missing steamer. About a month later a rumor reached Nanaimo that wreckage had been washed ashore at Cape Caution and in the surrounding areas. This was soon confirmed when the Canadian steamer SIR JAMES DOUGLAS arrived at Nanaimo carrying Indians from Bella Bella and two canoes in tow. The natives related how they had been camping on the beach on the north side of Slingsby Channel in February when they found blankets, boxes, skins, sections of a mast, and some planks roped together as a raft. Two cinching clues were a woman's veil and a painted board bearing the missing vessel's name.

In this area there lived a tribe of natives who were said to be dangerous. The Bella Bella Indians then casually mentioned that they had given the ship's nameplate to a white man who lived at Alert Bay. This vital information naturally stirred anxiety for the safety of any survivors who may have met up with the supposedly unfriendly tribe, so the United States Consul at Victoria asked for an organized search. H.M.S. Petrel and the steamer Gussie Telfair sailed immediately for Cape Caution. Their first stop was Alert Bay to lay claim to the identifying board and to verify the Indian's story. The two ships then searched the Queen Charlotte Sound area for many days, but very little of value was found. Other Indians were questioned for clues but proved uncommunicative.

After the ships returned without success, public pressure resulted in resumption of the search by another vessel. Although Captain Spalding, in command of the H.M.S. ROCKET, scoured miles of shoreline, he too found no answer to the mystery. It was his theory that the ship had struck Devil's Rocks in the Queen Charlotte Sound during a blinding snowstorm and gone down in deep water.

Late in March, Capt. H. G. Lewis of the steamer OTTER revived interest in the GEORGE S. WRIGHT when Indians gave him a copper-tipped boy's boot and a lifejacket. The natives told him they had found the boy's body clad in a lifejacket in Finlayson Channel, about 100 miles north of Cape Caution. Although the body had been



ravaged by sea life, the natives were able to identify it as that of a part-Indian - probably the son of a miner named Logan [or Hogan?] who was a passenger on the ill-fated ship. The presence of the lifejacket indicated that, whatever disaster had befallen the GEORGE S. WRIGHT, at least some of the victims had had time to don lifesaving gear.

Two more questions now remained unanswered: What happened to the lifeboats? And were they able to be launched before the ship went down?

On April 10, hopes for a breakthrough brightened when news came from Alert Bay that Indians had found the remains of a white man near Cape Caution and buried them there. A week later the sloop YELLOW LANE reported that she had taken shelter in a bay near Slingsley Channel where her crew located, high on the beach, parts of smashed bowsprit and sections of a wheelhouse and ship's decking. The jagged appearance of the bowsprit suggested that the GEORGE S. WRIGHT may have struck Hannah Rocks.

X During the summer, numerous fresh reports of shipwreck evidence came to light. Indians had found the body of a white man in a lifejacket lashed to wooden wreckage ashore on Aristazabal Island. It was also noted that in certain areas the natives were in possession of a ship's articles which could not have floated ashore. When questioned on how they got hold of them, the Indians claimed they found the articles in a wreck which had later drifted away. This news resulted in the U.S. cutter LINCOLN being sent north in August to search the area, but after 20 fruitless days at sea, she returned. Her skipper theorized that the GEORGE S. WRIGHT had met her doom on the rocks of the Sea Otter Group.

The quest for a solution to the mystery of the GEORGE S. WRIGHT was put to rest for several years. Then, in January, 1875, it was revived again when newspaper reports told of Indians finding a strange hut at Indian Cove, north of Cape Caution. According to the press, the hut was not the type of shelter usually built by Indians. Empty bottles had been found in the shelter and two lifejackets were hanging in a tree, but natives claimed to have no knowledge of anyone having lived there.

In July, 1875, still another find was reported by Indians - the remains of a man's body in a lifejacket near Sitka. A U.S. Revenue cutter investigated and found a uniform, along with parts of a skeleton, tied in the lifejacket. The uniform was identified as that worn by passenger Major Walker. This also indicated that the tragedy must have occurred while the ship's company were not in bed.



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The hottest clue, however, came two years later. In February, 1877, Capt. Alfred Dudower of the sloop RINGLEADER reported at Victoria that a Bella Bella tribal chief, Charlie Hamsett, had come to his ship during the night to tell of an Owekano Indian, then living at Nanaimo, having been the only survivor of the shipwreck. The chief said that the Indian claimed he had worked as a coal-passer on the GEORGE S. WRIGHT, and his account of the disaster was that a huge wave had swamped the ship while she was crossing Queen Charlotte Sound. When the waves killed the fires, the ship blew up before anyone could take to the lifeboats. By clinging to floating wreckage, 14 crewmen and passengers managed to reach a small island where they made a fire. When local Indians saw the fire, they attacked the camp and massacred everyone but himself because he was of Indian blood.

This incredible story sparked a search for the storyteller named Billy C--- [COMA?]. He was found working in a coal mine and taken in for questioning. Billy said he couldn't tell who had murdered the men because if he did they would kill his father. Nonetheless, such an important clue as this could not be ignored, so H.M.S. ROCKET was sent north with an Indian interpreter and Billy, who was under armed escort, to apprehend the suspects. The chief and tribal members were questioned, but the chief was reluctant to disclose any information. However, he soon changed his mind when warned that unless he identified the guilty his village would be destroyed.

The chief then produced four men, and, in Billy's presence, two of them were picked out and arrested as suspects. Then came the bombshell! Further investigation proved that Billy was an unmitigated liar. He confessed that he had never been a coal-passer on the GEORGE S. WRIGHT; moreover, he had fabricated the entire story, after piecing together details of the wreck, with the idea of getting revenge on old enemies in his neighboring tribe.

Thus ended in dismal failure the long and frustrating search for the remains of another ill-starred vessel. In light of this amazing final turn in events, who can say that there were no survivors? It is not difficult to imagine that most, if not all, of the GEORGE S. WRIGHT's passengers and crew met death at the hands of the Indians. Yet this would be mere speculation - indeed, even injustice to the name of the area's early inhabitants. For the answer to the mystery remains forever sealed in the graveyard of the Charlottes.

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BY JUAN DE FUCA'S STRAITS  
by James G. McCurdy

Metropolitan Press, Publisher  
Portland, Oregon  
Pages 239 - 240

One of the finest vessel's ever built in Jefferson County was the trim little steamship, George S. Wright. She was constructed in the shipyards of Port Ludlow in 1863 for Captain John T. Wright, who named her for his brother. The vessel was later taken over by the North Pacific Transportation Company, and operated between Portland and Alaska ports.

In 1873, while en route from Sitka to Nanaimo, she disappeared completely from human sight, leaving her exact fate an unsolved mystery. Some pieces of wreckage came ashore at Cape Caution. It is believed that the steamer struck a sunken rock in that vicinity, and went down with a loss of all hands. The bodies of a man dressed in a uniform and a small boy in a lifepreserver were cast upon the beach near where the wreckage was found. An Indian arrested in Victoria claimed that the vessel ran upon a rock and that all who reached land were killed by the natives, but this story was discredited and no tidings bearing the stamp of authenticity were ever received.

Samuel L. Simpson, one of the earlier poets of the Pacific Coast, wrote some stirring verses entitled: "The Wreck of the Wright" from which I quote several stanzas:

The sun has set, and all alone  
The steamer battles with the sea;  
Her plume of smoke is backward blown,  
Beneath her prow, with bodeful moan,  
The conquering wave bends sullenly.  
And chill and drear, a shadow creeps  
Along the wild and misty deeps  
That roll to windward and a-lee.

The sticken billows leap away  
With trampling thunders in the gale,  
And staggering blindly in the fray,  
The strong ship starts each bolt and stray;  
Her cordage shrieks and with a wail  
She plunges downward in the gloom  
Of roaring gorges, hoarse and doom,  
And none alive may tell the tale.



They sailed one day, and came - no more!  
All else is wrapped in mystery;  
The surges keel upon the shore,  
And tell their sorrows o'er and o'er;  
And still above the Northern sea,  
A pensive spirit, pale and slow,  
The gray gull, wheeling to and fro,  
Keeps watch and ward eternally.

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SECTION II

DAILY OREGONIAN ARTICLES





"jsb-oreg"

"DAILY OREGONIAN" ARTICLES  
RELATING INFORMATION ON THE LOSS OF  
THE STEAMSHIP "GEORGE S. WRIGHT"

Retyped from microfiche in the  
Oregon Historical Society Library

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FEBRUARY 8, 1873  
Page 2; Col 2

LOCAL BREVITIES - No report of the Geo. S. Wright now seven days  
over due from Sitka.

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MARCH 3, 1873  
Page 2; Col 2

THE MISSING STEAMER - "Gone down at sea, with all on board." Such are the short, sharp words that reach us to-day, after a month of anxious waiting. At any time they are fraught with painful meaning. We shuddered as we read of the fate of the burning "Missouri" that went down in mid-ocean, three hundred leagues from land. The heart grew sick in pondering the awful fate that befel those helpless emigrants that sad night, when, lying at anchor off the British coast in seeming safety, the "Northfleet" went down before the awful shock of collision with the "Murillo". And there have been scores of holocausts on all the oceans traversed by the wide sailing fleets of commerce. But never since the day when the "Brother Jonathan" struck the fatal reefs off Crescent City, or that other day in which a score of souls dropped, exhausted, one by one, from the rigging of the "Industry" as she slowly sank at the entrance of the Columbia, has any tale of marine disaster, however sad, afflicted the community as did the intelligence of the loss of the "George S. Wright". Sixty days ago she left this port for Sitka. She should have returned thirty days since, at the longest. Painful rumors have been current for weeks past, and these sad tidings but confirm them.

Our morning dispatches state that portions of the masts, cordage, and pilot house have been discovered by wandering tribes at the northern end of Vancouver Island. A board bearing the name "Geo. S. Wright" has also been found. The telegraph adds with painful

"Daily Oregonian" Articles  
Page 1



certainty, "all hands on board have perished." And yet we cannot regard this as decisive. The "Wright" may have foundered at sea.

She probably has. But this does not preclude the hope, nay, more, the probability that passengers and crew may have reached land in the small boats with which the steamer was provided. The coast thereabouts is rough and inhospitable, but once reached the means of subsistence could be easily found. The supposition that the disaster is attributable to some disarrangement in the vessel's machinery lends additional strength to the theory that timely provision for the saving of precious lives might have been made.

There are many hearts sore-stricken who will watch patiently and longingly for some authentic narrative of what now appears to be a terrible calamity. For ourselves, we are not disposed to credit with full faith the rumors that bear within themselves some evidence of exaggeration. In common with the whole community, we await further particulars with grave anxiety.

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 MARCH 4, 1873  
 Page 3, Col 1

OFFICERS AND CREW - The following are the names of the officers and crew of the steamer "George S. Wright", reported to be lost while on the way from Sitka to this port: Thomas J. Ainsley, captain; B.F. Weidler, Purser; JOHN SUTTON, CHIEF ENGINEER; James Minor, Second Engineer; Daniel Noonan; First Mate; William Price, Second Mate; P. Clawson, fireman; Owen McGough, fireman; Edward Johnson, seaman; Arch Dunn, seaman; James Irwin, seaman; Gus Proffe, seaman; J. Jensen, seaman; Chris Adami, steward; Pedro Salvo, cook; C. Hevendehl, waiter; Moses Baptist, pantryman; Indian James, mess boy; Indian Jim, coal passer; Indian Jack, coal passer.

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 MARCH 8, 1873  
 Page 3, Col 2

IN SEARCH - We clip the following from the Victoria Standard of a late date: "'H. M. S. Petrel' left Esquimalt harbor at 8 o'clock, yesterday morning, bound for Cape Caution and the steamer 'George S. Wright', as also to render aid and protection to any survivors whom she may be fortunate enough to discover. The U.S. revenue cutter 'Lincoln' followed in her wake at daylight, after having had her boilers and machinery slightly repaired for the trip."

"Daily Oregonian" Articles  
 Page 2



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MARCH 21, 1873  
Page 3, Col 1

TELFAIR ARRIVED - The steamer "Gussie Telfair" arrived yesterday morning from an extensive cruise on the northern coast, whither she went some weeks ago in quest of the lost steamer "Geo. S. Wright". She brings no additional intelligence other than that which has already been published. A few pieces of the wreck, gathered along the coast, were brought to this port by the "Telfair". The only vestiges discovered were the board on which was painted "Geo. S. Wright", several pieces of molding, a copper nozzle and other fragments. The "Gussie Telfair" touched at Sitka before her return, and carefully inspected the coast all the way down, but nothing was discovered of the fate or whereabouts of the missing steamer, but the few fragments mentioned. At Sitka it was learned that the "Wright" had arrived there in safety, and had sailed again for Portland; and the people at that port were as ignorant of what had befallen the steamer as were those here. Finding all efforts of no avail, the "Gussie Telfair" was at length compelled to abandon the search.

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MARCH 27, 1873  
Page 3, Col 2

MR. JOHN SUTTON, who perished on the "Geo. S. Wright" held a life insurance policy for \$5,000. In addition he held property, real and personal, to the amount of \$4,500.

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MARCH 28, 1873  
Page 3, Col 2

RETURN OF THE LINCOLN - ARRIVAL OF THE REVENUE CUTTER LINCOLN - THE OPINION OF COMMANDER STANLEY.

From the Port Townsend Argus we obtain the following concerning the steamer "Geo. S. Wright":

"Daily Oregonian" Articles  
Page 3



The U.S. Revenue steamer "Lincoln", Captain Bailey, arrived from the north, whither she had been searching for survivors of the steamer "Geo. S. Wright", on Sunday afternoon.

Captain Bailey reports being at Cape Caution on the 9th, but was unable to land on account of bad weather. Spoke H. B. M. ship "Petrel" (which had been there and in Smith's Inlet two days) off the Cape. The "Petrel" had spoke and examined all the Indians in the vicinity, and ascertained beyond a doubt that no person landed thereabout from the wreck of the "Wright". The shore of Cape Caution was approached as near as the heavy seas would permit, but no sign of the wreck was seen. It had probably been broken up by the wind and breakers which dash against the exposed rocky coast with pitiless force. After becoming satisfied he could render no assistance, and the weather being exceedingly stormy, the "Lincoln's" head turned southward.

The following statement and opinion were furnished by Capt. Bailey and by Commander Stanley, of H. B. M. ship "Petrel":

AT NANAIMO, March 15th, 1873.

Sir: Having visited the coast in the vicinity of Cape Caution and the neighboring Indian villages in Smith's Sound with the view of ascertaining whether any persons had landed from the wreck of the "Geo. S. Wright", and if so what treatment they had received, I beg to inform you that, judging by what I have heard and saw of the only Indian tribe at all near the place, I am of the opinion that no human being escaped from the ill fated vessel, and that no bodies were washed ashore upon that part of the coast.

Being informed by the Indians that the portion of the wreck found had been washed ashore in Blunden Bay, just north of Cape Caution, I stood as close in to that place as the state of the weather would admit, but failed, after careful scrutiny, to distinguish anything. Hoping that the weather would clear up so as to admit of our landing at this place and examine the beach, I remained two days in Takush Harbor, but, the weather coming on bad again, was forced to give up all idea of obtaining my purpose.

The only Indians near Cape Caution are a small tribe of forty or fifty, and they appear to me not the kind of people to commit murder, - being a quiet, inoffensive and wretchedly poor tribe. Captain Spaulding, the Magistrate who accompanied me, closely interrogated these people, from which it transpired that only one



of their number had visited the scene of the wreck, and that the only articles which he brought away and which he showed us, were some pieces of painted boards, some strips of painted canvas, and a piece of a life belt - the brass portion.

The village is fully ten miles from Blunden Bay, and the Indians said that the weather had been so bad for a long time that, with the exception of this man, no one had ventured outside in a canoe, and that there is no means of getting to the place by land.

My opinion is that the "George S. Wright" foundered on one of the numerous rocks that fringe the coast, and that, as the cold has been very severe, and gales constantly blowing, no one reached the shore alive.

I have the honor to be, sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
C. SLAUNE STANLEY, Commander

MARCH 29, 1873  
Page 3, Col 3

THE FATE OF THE WRIGHT'S PASSENGERS AND CREW - A HORRIBLE STORY. The Puget Sound "Courier" published correspondence in regard to the probable fate of the passengers and crew of the steamer 'Geo. S. Wright', which that journal says was handed for publication by a gentleman of the highest respectability, who vouches for the writer. The story seems almost too revolting for credence, but the "Courier" states its readiness to give the names of the writer and the person who handed the letters to that journal. We copy the correspondence:

ALERT BAY, B. C., MARCH 10, 1873

EDITOR COURIER: Ere this you have, of course, heard the fate of the 'Wright', but a sadder and more horrible tale remains yet to be told. Two white men and a white woman came ashore on a raft, and the men were murdered and eaten by a tribe of Indians known as the Ioutanaghs. One body was devoured there, and the other body given to the Mamalalakulas. One savage was seen devouring the head and neck of one of the victims. The bodies were presented to those two tribes by the Ow-wi-ke-~~to~~s, who still hold the white woman for feast. Some say she is dead, while others declare that she is still alive and used for vile purposes, and is to be

"Daily Oregonian" Articles  
Page 5



sacrificed on a certain day. The fate of the two men is unquestioned, as the feast is no secret. All those tribes are practical cannibals, and have been worse for the past six years than heretofore, as they had free license to do as they pleased while 'Alabama' claims were pending, and might be wanted for cut throats. What British subjects. SUWANEE

EDITOR COURIER: Through the medium of your paper I would make the public aware of the state of matters on the coast of British Columbia, and the uncertainty of life and property in transit through those waters to U.S. territory. Ere this your readers are aware of the loss of the 'Geo. S. Wright' and the murder of American citizens by the savages near Cape Caution, and worse still, devoured by those cannibals, who were potted while the 'Alabama' claims were in question. During that time six murders of white men and three piracies have taken place, and although complaints have immediately and reportedly been made to the proper authorities, no notice was taken of them. The Indians are told openly that to murder "Bostons" is no crime, only to do it up to the handle. This country is cursed with two elements that caused all the trouble in Oregon - The Hudson Bay Company and the same priests who were driven from Spokane, and their missions razed to the ground by U.S. troops, as being accessory to Indian wars and adverse to the settlement of the country by Americans. The Indians of this coast are allowed to do as they please. They are known murderers, pirates and cannibals, yet, when pointed out to the authorities, they are not punished. The cruise of the 'H. M. Petrel' is a farce, as time will show. The news of the disaster did not come from a Hudson Bay Co.'s Fort, although there is one near the place. And why did the authorities take a half-breed trader as interpreter from there, instead of the white man who first sent the news? SUWANEE

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APRIL 1, 1873 Page 3, Col 2

BONDS FILED. - Mr. Wm. Wadhams, who was appointed last week administrator of the estate of JOHN SUTTON, deceased, filed his bond on Saturday last. The Court appointed as appraisers of the estate Messrs. J. L. Atkinson, J. M. Ritchey, and H. Boyd.

"Daily Oregonian" Articles  
Page 6



NO  
1873  
APRIL 2, 1983

Page 3, Col 1

WASUAK ASHOKE.

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 X WASHED ASHORE. → The following is taken from the "Standard",  
 Victoria, under the date of the 27th ult.: "The steamer 'Eita  
 X White' arrived here last night at 7:30 from Nanaimo, bringing word  
 X that the steamer 'Otter' was lying there when she lost. The  
 X 'Otter' picked up on the coast, between Nanaimo and Skeena, the  
 X body of a child, supposed to have met its untimely death at the  
 X wreck of the steamer 'Geo. S. Wright'. The fact that the body of  
 X the child found - a boy apparently about six years old - having a  
 X life preserver attached to it, proves the supposition that the  
 X steamer 'G. S. Wright' blew up, to be erroneous, and confirms the  
 X idea that she went to pieces upon the sunken rocks, and that  
 X desperate efforts were made to save the lives of those on board,  
 X their death struggles being superhuman. The body found was much  
 X disfigured from being dashed against rocks or mutilated by the  
 X inhabitants of the deep. The above information seems to have been  
 X received directly, and is entitled to some credit. However, the  
 X only intimation contained in any of the accounts as to the  
 X passengers, that a child was on board, was a small son of a Mr.  
 X Hogan. The age of the child was not stated, and this fact,  
 X together with the direct manner in which the report came, imparts  
 X a plausible coloring in the whole story.

SECTION III

DAILY BRITISH COLONIST ARTICLES





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"DAILY BRITISH COLONIST" ARTICLES  
FROM VICTORIA, B.C.  
RELATING INFORMATION ON THE LOSS OF  
THE STEAMSHIP "GEORGE S. WRIGHT"

Retyped from photocopies provided  
by the British Columbia Provincial Archives  
Victoria, B. C.

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FEBRUARY 28, 1873  
Page 3, Col 1

TERRIBLE MARINE DISASTER! PROBABLE LOSS OF THE PROPELLER GEO. S. WRIGHT WITH ALL ON BOARD! The steamer 'Emma', Capt. Lucky, arrived from Nanaimo yesterday morning, bringing intelligence that Indians had discovered a quantity of wreckage on the beach near Cape Caution which was supposed to have come from the missing propeller 'George S. Wright'. Later in the day the Government steamer 'Sir James Douglas' came in from Nanaimo, towing two canoes filled with Bella Bella Indians. These Indians state that about 12 days ago - with three other canoes of their tribe - they encamped on the beach of the Mainland at the mouth of Bella Isle Inlet (a little south of Cape Caution) and close to the village of the Kuerguftah Indians - a fierce tribe of savages. Here they discovered the poop deck, part of the mast and the pilothouse of a vessel, a pair of blankets, some deerskins, a dead deer, a quantity of cordwood, and a board with the name of some vessel painted upon it. They also found a plank tied to a box as if some unfortunate person on board a sinking vessel had tried to make a raft and by this means reach the shore. Not far from the beach in deep water they saw two masts sticking out, which they supposed to belong to the wreck. The Indians remained five days on the spot, but saw no signs of bodies or any of the people from the wreck. Strange to say, also, the Indians from the villages who are usually very curious about such matters, did not come near the spot, nor were any of them seen! One day an Indian clambered over the rocks some distance and found a woman's chignon lying some distance from the beach. Upon leaving the scene of the wreck they brought with them the board with the name on it which was at once recognized by Mr. Wes Huson at Alert Bay as that of the missing steamer 'George S. Wright', as it bore the name of that vessel.

There is no room for doubt then, that this brave little steamer has been lost, perhaps with all on board, or if any of her people



reached the shore that they were killed by the Indians or froze to death from exposure before they could reach the village. The "George S. Wright" was commanded by Capt. Ainsley, brother of Mrs. Coust of this city, an experienced pilot. Frank Weidler, of Portland, was purser, and MR. JOHN SUTTON, formerly of this city, but late of Portland, was chief engineer. Among those known to be on board were Major Walker, Paymaster U. S. Army (who had been to Sitka to pay the troops,) and wife, with three other passengers. Officers, crew and passengers are supposed to have numbered 18 or 20 souls.

The cause of the disaster may never be known. It is said that the steamer was poorly provided with canvas, and that in case of her machinery breaking down she would have much difficulty in sailing. When at Nanaimo the CHIEF ENGINEER wanted to have the ship beached to repair a discharge pipe, but for some reason this was not done. It is said, too, that he complained of his assistant (a new man) as being incompetent. Other hands are said to have stated that the vessel was in very bad condition. Fierce gales prevailed on this coast during the month of January and it is thought that the disaster occurred on the downward trip, either by an explosion of the boiler (as in the case of the "Emily Harris") or by the breaking down of the machinery. It would seem from the position of the wreck, that an attempt was made to reach the shore, and the Indians say that they could stand on the beach and toss a stone to the wreck.

The "George S. Wright" sailed from Portland early in the New Year. She reached Nanaimo; was seen to pass Skeenamouth; touched at Fort Tongass; probably made this run to Sitka in safety and, on the downward passage met with the disaster. The steamer Gussie Telfair is up the coast now, but as the wreck lies out of the usual track of steamers bound to or from Sitka, it is probable she will not see it.

MR. SUTTON, the chief engineer, was a highly respected gentleman and leaves a wife and nine children to deplore their bereavement.

The following letter was received by Mr. F. Campbell from Alert Bay yesterday:

Alert Bay, Feb. 18th, 1873

MR. F. CAMPBELL. Dear Sir - I have just received the news of the wreck of the steamer "Geo. S. Wright" somewhere near Cape Caution in Queen Charlotte Sound. All hands are probably lost. I have brought the board confirming the steamer's name (plate?) was picked up on the beach by one of a party of Indians that camped near the spot. Half of one of her masts and several pieces of her deck, also one hatch cover, were observed by the bearer of this letter, who says he also saw one box and some plank that had been lashed



together as if some person had endeavored to drift ashore by that means. The Indians could find no trace of bodies, but half of a white shirt was seen, so I have no doubt all are past and gone.  
Wadlay W. Huson

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FEBRUARY 28, 1873  
Page 3; Col 3

QUICK WORK - The steamer Gussie Telfair, Capt. Hayes, arrived at Nanaimo on the evening of the 21st, took in 180 tons of coal during the night and left early next morning for the north in search of the missing steamer "George S. Wright".

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MARCH 1, 1873  
Page 3; Col 1

THE MARINE DISASTER. The American Consul, backed by several citizens, yesterday memorialized the Lieut. Governor to send a gunboat to Cape Caution to learn further particulars of the loss of the propeller George S. Wright and to ascertain whether any of her people reached the shore alive only to die from the hands of the savage tribes that occupy that neighborhood. We believe that the Petrel will be sent up today. The wreck lies out of the track of vessels bound north and it is feared that the Gussie Telfair may pass the spot without discovering the wreck. This is one of the most appalling disasters that has occurred on our coast.

THE LOSS OF THE G. S. WRIGHT - In addition to the names published yesterday, we have to give the name of Jewell Michaels, cook on board, whose father is a resident of Esquimalt Town, and S. Millotitch, formerly proprietor of the Adelphi Saloon in this city.

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MARCH 7, 1873  
Page 3; Col 1

#### MORE ABOUT THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT

We give below some further particulars copied from the "Portland Bulletin" of Monday last.

How many passengers were on the steamer on her way down of course is not yet known. It is very certain, however, that Major Walker and wife were on board. We do not think it probable that Geo. A. Edes, Collector of Customs for the District of Alaska, was on board, since his successor has not yet gone to Sitka to relieve him, and he could not quit his trust without leave from the

department. The following is a complete list of the steamer's officers and crew:

Thomas Ainsley, Captain  
 B. F. Weidler, Purser  
 JOHN SUTTON, Chief Engineer  
 James Minor, Second Engineer  
 Daniel Noonan, First Mate  
 Wm. Price, Second Mate  
 P. Clawson, Fireman  
 Owlén McGough, Fireman  
 Edward Johnson, Seaman  
 Arch Dunn, Seaman  
 James Irwin, Seaman  
 Gus Proffe, Seaman  
 J. Jenson, Seaman  
 Chris Adami, Steward  
 Pedro Selvo, Cook  
 C. Hevendehi, Waiter  
 Moses Baptist, Pantryman  
 Indian James, Mess Boy  
 Indian Jim, Coal Passer  
 Indian Jack, Coal Passer

Major Walker had gone to Sitka to pay off the troops stationed there, and was to return on the Wright.

Capt. Ainsley, it is stated, was shortly to have been married to a young lady of this city. The first and second officers were both unmarried. CHIEF ENGINEER SUTTON leaves a large family in this city, so, too, does Assistant Engineer Minor. B. F. Weidler, the Purser, was a brother of George W. Weidler, steamship agent here.

The Wright was regarded as an unusually staunch and seaworthy vessel. She was a propeller of nearly 400 tons, and but eight or nine years old. Her value was about \$340,000, upon which there was no insurance. She was the property of the Oregon Steamship Company.



MARCH 10, 1873  
Page 3; Col 1

THE WRECK OF THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT!

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THIRTY-ONE LIVES LOST!  
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Return of HMS Peterel, USS Lincoln and  
Propeller Gussie Telfair to Nanaimo.

By the steamer Sir James Douglas, yesterday, came Mr. Nichols, of the Oregon Steam Navigation Co., and Mr. Joseph Spratt, who went to Sitka in the propeller Gussie Telfair last month. They report that the Peterel, Lincoln and Gussie Telfair are lying at Nanaimo, having just returned from a perilous trip to the North in search of relics of the lost propeller George S. Wright. We regret to say that we have little to add to the information already received through Indian sources. When the Telfair arrived at Fort Tongass, on her way up, she learned that the George S. Wright touched there on the upward trip, about the 13th of January, and took on some freight, the mails, Mr. John Williams of Ominera (formerly of the firm of Evans & Williams, Victoria), and a Frenchman, also from Ominera. Mr. Williams had \$15,000 in gold dust in his possession. After arriving at Sitka, she embarked Messrs. Charles Kincaid, Charles Waldron, a miner from Stickeen River, and Lt. Rogers, U.S.A., and servant, who, added to those already on board, increased the number to 31. She then ran across to a place called Kluvok, where Waldron had a fishing station, and took on 800 barrels of salmon, 100 barrels of oil and some skins and furs. She sailed thence on the 25th of January for Nanaimo direct. And that is the last that any person now living is supposed to have seen of the ill-fated steamer or her passengers, officers and crew. The Gussie Telfair visited Kluvok and other points and then came down the coast, calling in at different places for information. At Bella Bella a trader named Lowden showed a barrel of oil which some Indians had picked up 200 miles above Cape Caution and sold to him. It was bought by the purser of the Gussie Telfair and is now aboard that steamer. Subsequently some Indians were found with the iron band from the foot of the G. S. Wright's mainmast which, they said, they had torn from the mast as it lay on the beach. This was also bought. The Indians were directed to search the vicinity of Cape Caution (which is unapproachable now owing to the surf) for bodies or papers. Indians reported that on the beach near Cape Caution were signs of some persons having tried to build a house after the fashion of white men, but none of the Indians would acknowledge to having seen the wreck or the people.

HMS Peterel called at Alert Bay and secured the signboard of the lost steamer, which bears the name - "George S. Wright" - in gilt



letters. She then passed on up the Coast, firing guns and rockets frequently, but met with no response from the shore. At one of the villages near Cape Caution the Indians were questioned by Capt. Spalding, but professed entire ignorance of the wreck or any of the missing people. The Peterel, we understand, went around Queen Charlotte Island, but saw nothing of the wreck. The general belief is that the lost propeller ran on the Devil's Ridge, a dangerous cluster of rocks near Cape Caution, in a snow storm and that she went to pieces almost immediately.

The Lincoln did not cross Queen Charlotte Sound.

John Williams leaves a wife and two children in this city. Mr. Kincaid was a California pioneer and was engaged as a merchant in Sitka. Mr. Waldron was a well-known trader. Mr. Millotitch was not on board. MR. SUTTON, Chief Engineer, had his life insured for \$5,000.

While prossenting [as written] her noble errand the Peterel struck a rock and lost her forefoot and has gone on the beach at Nanaimo for repairs.

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MARCH 10, 1873

Page 3; Col 3

NORTHFLEET AND THE WRIGHT  
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EDITOR COLONIST - Great admiration has been expressed on the conduct of the captain and officers of the Northfleet, which lately floundered in shoal water in the English Channel; and perhaps no finer example of courage and devotion has been recorded. With certain safety for all who could climb a rope, with all hope of saving the vessel past, those noble hearted sailors chose rather to go down at their posts than desert the women and children whom they could not save.

Probably about the same time that the Northfleet went down with her three hundred passengers, the George S. Wright was lost in Queen Charlotte Sound. Of the one disaster we have full accounts from survivors. Of the loss of the G. S. Wright it is not likely that we shall ever hear the particulars, but all who knew her commander will feel satisfied that everything a calm, brave sailor would do in such a case would be done by him. And that had the fate of the Wright been the same as that of the Northfleet, what Captain Knowlen did Captain Ainsley would have done. -D.



MARCH 16, 1873  
Page 3; Col 1

LOSS OF THE GEO. S. WRIGHT  
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By the arrival of the H.M.S. Peterel and the steamship Gussie Telfair from the North, we are placed in possession of additional information regarding this most melancholy disaster. The belief of the Telfair's officers is that the steamer struck on Sea Otter Group, low sunken rocks about six miles outside of Queen Charlotte Sound. Lieut. Rogers, reported to be on board the Wright, was not there. The following is a correct list of the persons who took passage from Sitka to Portland:

Major Walker, U.S.A. and wife; Lieut. Henry C. Dodge, Battery C. Second U.S. Artillery, and formerly quartermaster at Sitka; John Williams of Victoria; Mr. Sincheimer, a soldier, and formerly Quartermaster's Clerk at Sitka; Charles Waldron; Charles Kincaid; a man supposed to be named Hogan, from Stickeen, and son; and a cooper who used to work at Kluvok, name unknown.

The Gussie Telfair, carrying the lost steamer's signboard and other relics of the disaster, sailed for Portland yesterday morning.

MARCH 16, 1873  
Page 3; Col 3

WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST

Copies of this journal, containing a full account of the G. S. Wright disaster and other important information, may be had at T. S. Hibben & Co's and at the Publication Office.

MARCH 16, 1873  
Page 3; Col 3

WAS SHE OVERLOADED?

EDITOR COLONIST - You state that the George S. Wright (whose loss with so many valuable lives all deeply deplore) took on board 800 barrels of salmon and 100 barrels of oil at Kluvok. How much freight she received at other points we are not told; but, no doubt; she received half as much more, which would increase her



cargo to about 300 tons. May she not have been too deeply laden for an emergency likely to arise in the winter season on this coast - had her decks swept by a heavy sea, filled and gone down? I am yours truly, OLD SALT. March 17, 1873.

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MARCH 27, 1873

THE LOSS OF THE G. S. WRIGHT

Body of Child with a Life Preserver  
upon it picked up by the Stmr Otter

The steamer Etta White came down from Nanaimo last evening. She reports that the bark Dominga from San Francisco for coal, and the steamer Otter from the North, in port there. Capt. Lewis of the Otter, reported that near where the steamer George S. Wright is thought to have been lost the body of a little child was picked up. It had a life preserver about its little body, which bore evidence of having been in the water some time. The poor little thing must have been a passenger on the lost steamer. The Otter will be down to-day.

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MARCH 28, 1873

ARRIVAL OF THE OTTER

The H. B. Co's steamer Otter arrived down from the North yesterday morning. She left Victoria on the 11th inst., called at Nanaimo and coaled; arrived at Comox at 8 a.m. on the 12th, and Alert Bay at midnight on the same date, on the 13th touching at Fort Rupert and Bella Bella; left early on the 13th for Woodcock's where she arrived early on the morning of the 15th. Called at Port Essington on the 16th and Metlakatlah on the 17th, where she lay overnight - a gale of wind blowing - left early next morning, 18th, for Fort Simpson; left Fort Simpson on the 19th, called in at Woodcock's, took passengers on board and left for Bella Bella and Bella Coola, arriving at the later place at 8 a.m. on the 22nd. On the way down called at Fort Rupert, Alert Bay, Comox, and Departure Bay. At Woodcock's heard of a child's body having been picked up in Hykin Narrows, Finlayson's Canal, about 110 miles from Cape Caution, having on a life belt and minus the head, one leg and one arm, probably eaten off by dog fish, supposed to have been on board the George S. Wright. The child is supposed to have been about eight years old. The body was buried by the Indians near that place. The belt and shoe found on it are on board the Otter, having been procured on the way down.



Messrs. Callan, Sterling and 10 others started from Fort Simpson on the arrival of the Otter there for Naas. There was five feet of snow at Essington and the river, it is supposed, will not be open for navigation till about the 25th of next month. So great a fall of snow has not been known in the interior for years. The Otter brought as passengers Messrs. A. McKenzie, Johnson, William McNeil and wife, A. G. Horne, F. Laughton, Marwick, Smith, Chaflin and Thompson. The Etta White arrived at Departure Bay on Tuesday evening from Port Townsend, having the bark Dominga in tow to load coal.

For the above particulars we are indebted to R. E. Green, Esq., Purser of the Otter.

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MARCH 28, 1873

 THE LOSS OF THE G.S. WRIGHT

The Dead Boy with a Life Preserver about Him

Yesterday the steamer Otter brought down a leather copper-tipped shoe and a life preserver (the latter of the pattern with which the George S. Wright was supplied). These relics were got from the Indians by Capt. Lewis. The Indians say that the boy was stikum or half-breed and aged about eight years. The body had been frightfully mangled by dogfish. Even the little shoe bears marks of the voracity of these fish. The Indians raised the melancholy remains, placed them in a packing-box and buried them, keeping the shoe and preserver to send to Victoria. The body is supposed to be that of a little halfbreed son (aged eight years) of Mr. Charles Waldron of Kluvok, who was also lost with the steamer. The finding of the body, with life preserver attached, shows that the people on board had some intimation of their approaching fate. It is now established beyond doubt that the lost steamer was coming down by the outside passage, because Capt. Ainsley had arranged with Capt. Lawton to blow the steam whistle in passing Bella Bella, which arrangement was never carried out.



MARCH 28, 1873

A SHAMEFUL LETTER

Some prurient-minded wretch, signing himself "Suwanee," has written a letter to the "Olympia Courier" (which that paper has had the bad taste to publish) in which he says that two men and a woman reached the shore from the George S. Wright and were seized by the natives, the men eaten, and the woman kept for vile purposes, to eventually be eaten on one of the great feast-days of the tribe. The brute further charges that this conduct of the natives is due to the teachings and advice of the British authorities here, who have taught them to abhor Boston men. We really think that the almority [??] with which the Canadian Government sent a British war-ship to cruise in the vicinity of the wreck, and the zeal with which the officers of that ship prosecuted their search, should have protected our people from the publication of charges which only a vile mind could conceive, and to which only minds equally debased could give credence. We are not surprised that the article was written (there are men bad enough to write anything); but we are surprised that it should have found a place in the columns of a respectable American journal.

MARCH 28, 1873

Alert Bay; March 23, 1873.

THE GEO. S. WRIGHT DISASTER

X Editor British Colonist - The Awikeno Indians were the first to the wreck of the Geo. S. Wright, about the day it happened. They were on their way down to the Famanghtas to a feast. They got valuable furs by the bale. One Indian is said to have picked up 100 sea otter skins. The Indians are mum about anyone getting ashore at the place where the skins were. If so, it will take a long time to learn their fate. It was a great oversight to take those Indians from Fort Rupert and let them ashore at Smith's Inlet. The Indians are laughing at how they fooled the man-of-war again. It is a pity the Awikenos were not visited. It is too late now. The Gussie Telfair made a mistake in not calling at the different places where the G. S. Wright was in the habit of stopping; for instance at Alert Bay, where she could have got the first news. This is a matter, with many others in the district, which will demand the immediate attention of the Indian Department; but they must look sharp that they are not fooled also. JAMES F. MCGRATH.

"Daily British Colonist" Articles

Page III-10



MARCH 29, 1873  
Page 3, col 2

THAT AMERICAN FLAG AT ALERT BAY

Editor British Colonist - As there are unpleasant feelings in regard to the American Flag at Alert Bay, please allow me to explain: I arrived at Alert Bay on board H.M.S. Petrel, (by kind permission of Capt. Stanley and for courtesy of that gentleman and officers I am under many obligations). It was my intention to return on the steamer Otter, but I embraced the opportunity to come on the Petrel so as to relieve Mr. Houson, who was in charge of my place, and thinking he would be taken as pilot and interpreter, (being well versed in the habits of the Indians of Cape Caution District, and a reliable medium in clearing up the mystery of the ill-fated G. S. Wright). As he was intimately acquainted for a number of years with the Captain and officers, I concluded he would be the right man in the right place. I myself left Victoria with a portion of my business unfinished out of regard for the officers of the G. S. Wright, who had been extremely kind to me in bringing my mail to and from Nanaimo to this out-of-the-way place. When we arrived at Alert Bay, Capt. Stanley called my attention to the American Flag being up and reprimanded me. I thereupon called his attention to its being up at half mast, and to the name board of the G. S. Wright being nailed to the flag staff under the flag; and surmised that probably there might be some of the bodies of the lost people of the wreck in the house. When I got on I ascertained from Mr. Houson that he had had it up night and day, expecting the steamer Gussie Telfair to come along and notice it, as the flag was American, and a large one, and could be seen from the channel; the flag was left up as before, night and day, until the Gussie Telfair did call on her down trip and got what information was to be gleaned of the wreck.

On another occasion, Capt. Lewis of the H.B. Co's steamer Otter called me to account for the same flag being up, and said if he was the Indians he would pull it down. In this case it was up, expecting the G.S. Wright, and was the signal for her to ease up and shear into the Bay to take the mail. If Her Majesty were by I should use the only means at hand to signal for good and humane purposes. Let Capt. Lewis, or any other man, furnish me a set of signals and pockets [?] and I shall use them and thank them; but as I am poor I have to use the means at hand. Sorry for the mishap of the flag, as it was the cause for Mr. Hewson [Houson?] not being wanted by the Petrel. Respectfully yours,  
JAMES F. MCGRATH, Alert Bay; March 19, 1873



APRIL 16, 1873  
Page 3, Col 2

THE WRECK OF THE G. S. WRIGHT!  
ANOTHER BODY FOUND!

A letter from Alert Bay states that two canoes filled with Tsimpsonian Indians had arrived there. They report that another body has been found near Cape Caution, in Indian Cove, by China, the Nu-witte Chief. The body was that of a man, and was buried by the Indians, who have also picked up several packages of skins. It is possible that the hull of the lost steamer may yet be found.

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APRIL 27, 1873  
Page 3, Col 1

LETTER FROM THE NW COAST - MORE ABOUT THE LOST STEAMER

Mr. Wm. H. Woodcock arrived last evening from Skeenamouth in the sloop Yellow Lane, Capt. Wm. Madden. They were 35 days on the trip and experienced terrible gales from the S.E. and S.W. The sloop put in at Indian Cove, where a part of the wreckage of the G.S. Wright came ashore. The party on board found the foremast, bowsprit, part of the wheel, and some of the cabin plank. It was lying on the beach at extreme high water mark. The mast was entire and had no scratches on it. The bowsprit was shivered as if it had struck a rock. It is believed the steamer struck on Hannah Rocks during a S.W. gale. No bodies were picked up at Cape Caution, but about 150 miles north of the Cape, at Aristasable Island - part of the body of a man lashed to two chairs with a woolen comforter and having on a life preserver was picked up by the Indians and buried. Some of the cabin furniture and planking came ashore at the same place. None of the small boats have been heard of. They must have gone down at the davits. Mr. Woodcock told the Indians at the different villages on the coast to preserve the wreckage and bury any bodies that might come ashore and he would see they were paid. The Indians from Cape Caution up are very friendly.

Skeena River was not open when the Yellow Lane sailed.

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JUNE 24, 1873

Page 3, Col 1

*MORE RELICS*

*X*  
MORE RELICS - The sloop Duncan, Capt. Collins, came down yesterday from the N.W. Coast. Capt. Collins has shown us a cigarholder, a merschaum pipe and part of an account-book, which he bought from Indians who reside about 175 miles north of Cape Caution. The book was evidently used to keep accounts. The last entry is July, 1872. The names of R. Backus, Mary Sullivan, T. Bittencourt and others occur. Esmeralda Bay is often met with and there are frequent entries such as "5 fares at \$2, \$10; beds, eggs, beefsteaks, trunks", showing that the owner must have been steward of the lost G.S. Wright, or conductor on a railway train.

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JULY 17, 1873

Page 3, Col 1

THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT

By the arrival of the Otter, we have a fresh crop of rumors about the unfortunate people who are supposed to have perished in the George S. Wright. One report states that two mutilated bodies have been found; another report increases the number to six. The stories are very vague - as vague as those sent down last Spring, which charged Indians with eating the bodies of some of the wrecked people and holding a lady and two white men in captivity. Ever since the visits of the warships Lincoln and Peterel to the scener of the wreck we have believed that all on board the steamer went down with her and the frequent revival of the shocking and baseless rumors concerning their fate only adds to the unhappiness of the friends of the lost ones.



JULY 27, 1873  
Page 3, Col 3

THE G. S. WRIGHT AND THE MYSTERY  
WHICH ENVELOPES HER FATE

San Francisco; July 21st, 1873

Editor British Colonist - In the San Francisco papers of July 18th it is stated that the steamer Otter had arrived at Victoria from the North bringing vague rumors of the finding of two (and another account says six) mutilated bodies supposed to be those of persons who were on board the steamer G. S. Wright, and that the press of your city is agitating the subject of sending another vessel to make a thorough search and investigation on the northern coast where the Wright was lost. I for one (having had a brother on the Wright) do sincerely hope that another search may be made. How do we know but that one, two, five, or ten of these unfortunate people may have succeeded in reaching the shore alive, either on pieces of the wreck or in the boats? We can hardly hope that any of them are still alive, but can we say positively, from the facts hitherto ascertained that not one exists? May not five, or three, or two or one of them be dragging out a miserable existence of hopeless slavery in the hands of brutal savages? suffering bodily pain and mental agony, praying that each day may bring delivery or death. What became of the boats of that steamer? If they had no time to free them from the davits before the steamer sunk, why is it that no vestige of the boats has been found?

The non-finding of either boats or pieces of boats is the greatest mystery of all connected with the loss of the steamer. The following questions present themselves to one's mind: Did some of the people succeed in reaching the shore in the boats at some point not yet known, and fall into the hands of Indians who murdered them. Or, did they reach the shore at some desolate, uninhabited locality and there perish miserably from cold and hunger, encouraging until their last hour a faint hope that they might be discovered? The bones of some of them who thus died may now be bleaching on some lonely spot, a record of past agony and suffering.

We have been told that the possibility is some reached the shore alive. But, we are not positive of that, and, judging from the general results of shipwrecks, it is not probable that all and every one without exception was drowned before reaching shore.



During the time that has elapsed since the catastrophe the body of a boy six or seven years old and having a life preserver fastened to it has been found adrift in the neighborhood of the wreck. The body of a man, also lashed to a chair and having a life preserver on, came ashore on Aristizable Island, 150 miles from Cape Caution, having been carried north by the winds and currents.

These facts show that the steamer did not sink instantly, but that there was time (perhaps 15 minutes, perhaps half an hour, perhaps three hours or more) to make an effort to save their lives. Again, there have been obtained from the Indians a lantern, a candle, a piece of a newspaper and some ship's bread. How could these things reach the shore unless some one carried them? They were not articles which float. I do hope that some steps may be taken to unravel these mysteries, if all are dead to ascertain with certainty the place, time and manner of their death - if but one still lives, to rescue him.

Notwithstanding the apparent hopelessness of finding any one of them alive, how do we know but that some one may yet be discovered and rescued, the sole survivor of the company of the ill-fated G. S. Wright?

I remain yours, most respectfully,  
William Irwin

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AUGUST 5, 1873

THE G. S. WRIGHT - MRS SUTTON, of Portland, whose husband perished on the steamship G. S. Wright, and who petitioned the United States Government to send out a gunboat to ascertain the fate of the passengers and crew, has been informed by the U. S. authorities that the steamer Lincoln is in an unfit state to be send [sic] on the mission. The "Oregonian" says that MRS. SUTTON has not yet despaired of eliciting the attention of Government to the matter, and of yet securing assistance. Letters have recently been addressed to President Grant and Hon. George H. Williams by prominent and influential citizens of the State. These letters appeal in the strongest terms for a reconsideration of the matter and ask for immediate action. Should such appeals prove unavailing, it is quite probable that a vessel will be fitted out by private parties and the long-delayed search made. We understand that such a movement is on foot. There appears to be no doubt but that it is the duty of the Government to send at once a vessel. It is a question in which the general safety and interest of the traveling public are concerned.

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AUGUST 6, 1873

SEARCH FOR THE GEO. S. WRIGHT

THE U.S.R. Cutter Lincoln arrived in the harbor last evening from Port Townsend. She is going north to search for further and more definite tidings as to the fate of the lost steamship G.S. Wright and her people. Every cove, inlet and bay will be entered and all the Indian villages examined for traces of the wreck and those who were on board her. We hope that the search will be thorough and complete, and although the length of time (seven months) which has elapsed, precludes all hope of finding any survivors, the search will, nevertheless, tend to remove the uncertainty which now enshrouds their fate.

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AUGUST 24, 1873

Page 3, Col 1

THE CRUISE OF THE LINCOLN

Port Townsend; August 23

The U.S. Revenue Cutter Lincoln returned today from the search for survivors of the lost steamer G. S. Wright, after an absence of about 20 days, during which time she has cruised about Queen Charlotte and Millbank Sounds. No pains have been spared by Capt. Davis and his officers and men, who are satisfied that the horrible stories told are inventions of unprincipled white men. The ship was lost on Sea Otter Group, nine miles off Cape Caution. No clue of her boats could be had. The Bella Coola Indians picked up pieces of the wreck and some skins; but they deny having seen any of the people. A copper plate, evidently belonging to the gangway, was obtained from the Indians.

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AUGUST 24, 1873  
Page 3, Col 1

THE SEARCH FOR THE G. S. WRIGHT

The report of Capt. Davis, of the USS Lincoln, which, we publish today, will, we trust, put an end to the heartless stories with respect to the fate of the persons which have been so often printed here. No additional information was obtained from the Lincoln to that published months ago. Not a soul escaped from the ill-fated steamer to tell the story of her loss; all perished with her.

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APRIL 28, 1874  
COL 1

THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT

A spiritual medium at San Francisco claims to have conversed with the spirit of the captain of the lost steamer George S. Wright. The spirit says the steamer was blown up, and not lost by running on a reef.

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AUGUST 22, 1874  
Col 2

REPORTED DISCOVERY OF RELICS OF THE "WRIGHT"

Wrangle; August 6th - Indians brought in news today that extensive portions of the wreck of the Geo. S. Wright have been brought into Fort Simpson and Metlahkatlah by Indians from an island in Queen Charlotte Sound. Also, that there are partly constructed cabins on the island, which are supposed to have been put up by the survivors who managed to get ashore from the wreck, thus giving evidence that some of the Wright's people did reach the shore, but evidently perished from exposure.

Box.

(We can glean nothing in confirmation of this report from passengers of the Otter and doubt its correctness. Ed. Col.)



JANUARY 28, 1875

Page 2, Col 3

THE LOST STEAMER  
INDIAN REPORTS OF THE MURDER OF HER PEOPLE

Certain facts have leaked out from reliable Indian information that lead us to believe that some of the people of the lost steamer "George S. Wright" reached the shore at a little bay south of Indian Cove and built a hut there. Shortly after the wreck four canoes filled with Campscotts and Tsataquot Indians, from Deane Canal, on their way to Victoria, in passing Cape Caution, saw the wreck and went ashore. They remained there at least a week. Some Bella Bella Indians in the meantime, were on a visit to some friends at an inlet leading up from Slingsby Channel. They saw the canoes and Indians on shore. On the return of these Bella Bellas North, they thought they would go ashore also. They saw a hut, and inferred that the builders thereof (who were evidently white men) had taken passage with the Campscott Indians to Fort Rupert. They saw bottles and corks lying about the hut and other evidences of the recent presence of whites. They saw, also, three life bouys hung on the trees at Cape Caution, and the wheelhouse of the steamer, which had been made to serve as a raft, by having several planks nailed to it, lying on the beach. As the white men were never afterwards heard of the Bella Bellas believe that they were murdered by the Campscotts and Tsataquots. The hut was washed away by the next high spring tides, but many relics of the lost vessel are still to be met with strewn along the beach near Cape Caution. Up to a short time ago, two spars were to be seen on the sandy beach of a little cove, but they are now completely buried by the action of the tides upon the sands.

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JANUARY 29, 1875

Page 4, Col 1

THE LOST STEAMER

(Kensquot)

There are several Campscott Indians in town. If the Government were to arrest three or four of their number some information of th "G.S. Wright" and her people might be obtained. The Bella Bella Chiefs now in town stoutly maintain that several of the unfortunates reached the shore alive and built the hut, and that after the visit of the Campscotts to the hut that the whites disappeared.



JULY 22, 1875  
Page ?, Col 1

#### REMAINS

The remains of Major Walker, U.S.A., were taken down by the "California" yesterday. They consist of part of the skull, ribs, vertebrae and thighbones. They were found tied to a life preserver of the lost steamer "G. S. Wright", and were still enveloped in the Major's military coat, by means of which they were identified. The bones, life preserver, and coat were found on the beach of a lonely island not far from Sitka by Indians and were by them handed over to the U. S. revenue cutter. From the finding of these and the remains of other persons who were on board the lost steamer fully dressed and with life preservers upon them, there is every reason to believe that the steamer was wrecked in broad day light or early in the evening, and that the unfortunate people had time to provide for their safety; but why the boats were not utilized must ever remain a mystery.

JULY 28, 1875  
Page 2, Col 1

#### THE FINDING OF MAJOR WALKER'S REMAINS

A correspondent of the Port Townsend Argus, writing from Sitka, furnishes the following interesting information respecting the recovery of the remains of the late Major Walker, who was lost in the steamer "George S. Wright".

"The Indian who had found the remains of the skeleton mentioned in my last letter was secured and brought on board. He brought with him two bunches of keys on steel rings, in one of which was a safe key of peculiar construction; also an amethyst cuff button, set in gold, the stone of which was a dark one, oblong in shape, and ground flat off top and diamond shaped along the edges. The Indians stated that, besides those things, he found the remains [of] some money, among which was a \$20 piece, several half dollars and a number of five and ten cent pieces, which were in the possession of his brother, who could not be found or it would have been secured. The man stated that the remains were found by him and his brother while hunting seals in Bazon Bay, and willingly agreed to point out the spot; so steaming around Cape Kygane, which is the most southerly point of the Prince of Wales Island, as well as the territory of Alaska, we entered the bay.

A small boat was lowered and an officer accompanied by the Indian proceeded to the head of the bay, where, on a lone rocky isle, the



bones of the unfortunate had at length found a resting place, washed there by the sad sea waves, and at length buried by a friendly Indian, who from the account given, must have had a touch of humanity in him, for the grave was in a small grove in a bed of sand and gravel, and over it was piled a rude monument of rocks. The man stated that besides the coat and portions of the pants found buried with the remains there was also a cork life preserver attached, which, doubtless, must have assisted in holding it together for this long time. The overcoat was of dark blue cloth, and the cheveron on the sleeves left no doubt that it belonged to an army officer. The remnants of the pants showed the material to have been of dark gray cloth. The remains were taken on board the cutter, conveyed to Fort Wrangel, and forwarded to Gen. O. O. Howard of Portland, and from all the circumstances and articles found there remains not the slightest doubt but that they are those of Paymaster Walker, who was known to have been on the unfortunate "George S. Wright", and is another link in the sad story of that lost steamer from which there is no living evidence to tell her sad fate."

FEBRUARY 17, 1877

Page 2, Col 4

"THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT" MYSTERY.

The Free Press (Nanaimo), issues an extra containing what purports to be particulars attending the wreck of the steamer "George S. Wright" in Queen Charlotte Sound three years ago. The news is third or fourth hand; and is scarcely entitled to credence. The Free Press received its information from Capt. Dudower of the sloop "Ringleader", who reports that at Bella Bella the Indian Chief Charley Hamsett, came on board the sloop, and told him that a Wakena Indian who worked as a coal passer on the steamship "Geo. S. Wright" at the time of her wreck and who with 15 white men reached the shore alive, related to him the following particulars of the disaster:

The steamship "Geo. S. Wright" while crossing Queen Charlotte Sound encountered the most terrific gale, with the sea running mountains high. The vessel endeavored to keep her course, but a huge wave broke over her, putting out the fires. Immediately afterwards the boiler exploded and in a short time the steamer sank. In the meantime the boats were lowered, but with one exception, the boats were instantly swamped. The fortunate, or rather unfortunate, boat contained fifteen white persons and the Wakena Indian, and reached one of the two small round islands in Queen Charlotte Sound safely. At night those saved lit a fire and

"Daily British Colonist" Articles

Page III-20



went to sleep. The fire attracted a party of Wakena Indians who, in conjunction with their [illegible word] who had been saved, cut the throats of the white men while they were asleep, mutilating their bodies in frightful manner, and afterwards threw their bodies into the water. The disaster occurred close to where portions of the wreck were washed ashore. The saved Indians says that Capt. Ainsley went down with the steamer, and that he worked hard to get the boats lowered and in throwing life preservers to those persons struggling in the seething waters. The only persons that the Indian knew who reached the shore in safety were the first mate and the carpenter. As the Indian was working on the steamship and would therefore know all the crew, we presume that the thirteen others in the boat were passengers.

The sloop "Ringleader" is now on the way to Victoria to inform the Government of this matter and endeavor to get a gunboat to go up there and arrest the murderers.

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FEBRUARY 18, 1877  
Page 2, Col 2

THE G. S. WRIGHT MYSTERY

The captain of the sloop "Ringleader" had an interview with the Premier yesterday afternoon. The captain expresses the utmost confidence in the story told by the Indian chief of the murder of 15 white survivors of the wreck of the steamship "Geo. S. Wright". The island on which the massacre is said to have been perpetrated lies in Queen Charlott Sound and in British territory. The men were asleep when they were attacked and killed. The bodies were not thrown into the sea, but buried on the island. The chief offers to conduct a Government party to the spot. It is understood that application has been made for the gunvessel "Rocket" to go north and investigate.

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JUNE 3, 1877  
Page 2, Col 1

THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT MYSTERY  
The Mist Cleared Away - The Whole Truth At Last

The steamer "Cariboo-Fly" yesterday brought from Nanaimo an Indian miner named Coma. This man was a coal-passer on board the steamship "George S. Wright" at the time she was lost. Since the disaster he had constantly evaded the police and until quite recently it was not known that there existed a single survivor of



the wreck. About a fortnight ago he ventured into Nanaimo, where he was arrested by constable Stewart on Friday and arrived here yesterday. Coma confessed to the Superintendent of Police, after being duly cautioned, that at night the boilers of the steamship exploded and she began to sink at once. Captain Ainsely, with four U.S. officers and a passenger, got into a boat and called to Coma, who was on deck, to get in too. The rest of the people were in bed, or tried to escape by means of another boat. The Captain's party, seven in all, pulled ashore near Cape Caution. The party were nearly naked and the Indians gave them blankets to keep them warm. A day or two afterwards three canoe loads of Indians came to the spot and Captain Ainsley offered the leader \$300 to convey the shipwrecked men to Fort Rupert. Four of the Indians were armed with muskets, with which they killed all the whites, tied stones to the bodies and sank them in deep water. They robbed the bodies of all valuables, including the captain's gold watch and chain. They spared Coma, but told him that if he ever dared to narrate the circumstances they would kill his father. Coma thinks that all the people on board who were in bed at the time of the explosion were drowned, as the boat went down rapidly. The prisoner was confronted by the four prisoners who were brought down by the "Rocket" and have since lain in gaol here, and identified two as belonging to the party of murderers.

APRIL 6, 1877

Page 7, Col 1

THE G. S. WRIGHT MYSTERY

It would seem that the most sorrowful chapter connected with the loss of the steamship "Geo. S. Wright" remains to be written. It has been popularly supposed that when the ship was wrecked in January, 1875 [sic - 1873!], all hands went down with her. The finding of the bodies of two or three persons who were known to have been on board the lost steamer has served to strengthen the belief that either the boiler exploded, or that she struck on a reef near Cape Caution and all hands perished. The latest theory - founded on Indian reports - is that a number of the shipwrecked persons reached the shore and that they were afterwards treacherously murdered by a party of Kimsquit Indians who were on their way to Victoria. In 1875, Mr. Horetzky, O.E., who passed a season at Deane Canal and vicinity in the interest of the railway survey, expressed the opinion, obtained from Indian sources, that at least six of the "Wright's" people were killed by the Kimsquits after getting ashore. Little weight was attached to that opinion at the time, but recent developments indicate that it was well founded. There are on board the "H.M.S. Rocket" four Indians who are supposed to be cognizant of the circumstances attending the massacre, and who will probably be put on their trial. The public await the return of the "Rocket" with full particulars with impatience.

"Daily British Colonist" Articles



APRIL 6, 1877  
Page 2, Col 4

THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT MYSTERY  
Probable Massacre of Her People.

The steamer "Cariboo Fly" brings intelligence of the arrival of "H.M.S. Rocket" at Departure Bay from the North in search of information as to the fate of the passengers and crew of the steamship "George S. Wright", which was wrecked in January, 1874 [sic - 1873!] near Cape Caution, and over which a mystery has hung ever since the disaster. The Free Press learns from Sergeant Bloomfield, of the Victoria Police, that four Indians - 2 Kimsquit and 2 Wakenas - were arrested at Kimsquit on suspicion of being implicated in the massacre of the passengers of the "George S. Wright" and brought down on the war vessel.

At the Kimsquit village at the head of Dean's Canal, the officers were fired at by the Indians. The next morning the "Rocket" shelled and burnt the village to the ground. Sergeant Bloomfield says that from the inquiries made and the facts revealed he feels confident that some of the crew and passengers reached the shore alive and were afterwards murdered in cold blood, as it is apparent that nearly all the Indians know more or less of the affair, but are afraid to speak.

The Indian, reported as being saved from the wreck, is said to be one who served a long term in the Victoria jail.

The "Rocket" remained at Departure Bay yesterday, but will be probably be [sic] down today, when particulars will be obtained.

Additional

The intelligence gleaned [sic] by the "Rocket's" party is very conflicting; but the officers learned enough to convince them that several of the shipwrecked persons got ashore and were murdered by the natives. The story is to the purport that a number of white men came ashore in a boat, and that they had with them a box in which were many papers and a large sum of money in gold and silver. They bargained with a party of Kimsquit Indians (who were bound to Victoria) to take them to Fort Rupert for seven dollars each. The white men were without arms and when night came and all were asleep the Indians murdered them, and threw the bodies into the sea after stripping them of everything of value. The money in the box was divided by the savages, who then came on to Victoria and spent the coin. An Indian woman says that she picked up the head of a white man on the beach at Cape Caution a few months after the wreck, and was told to put it down again and say nothing about having found it. The officers found no property belonging to the "Wright" except portions of the wreck which probably drifted ashore.



With respect to the destruction of the village we learn that Sargeant Bloomfield landed with three others from the "Rocket" and demanded four men who are suspected of complicity in the murders. The Indians came out armed and refused to give up the men. The party then seized two of the suspected savages and made for the boat. They were fired on, but got back to the ship safely. Capt. Harris then gave the tribe six hours in which to surrender the men. After the lapse of six hours, he extended the time three hours longer. He then fired blank cartridge and the Indians ran away. The village was then shelled and afterwards burned and the two men secured. No one was killed.

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APRIL 7, 1877  
Page 2; Col 4

#### THE RETURN OF HMS ROCKET

X The gunvessel Rocket, Captain Harris, returned from the last voyage of inquiry into the G.S. Wright mystery last evening, bringing four Kimsquit prisoners, who were safely lodged in goal. Two of the prisoners were charged with scuttling a trading schooner and murdering two white men some time ago. The other two are charged with complicity in killing some of the Wright's people who are supposed to have reached the shore from the wreck. It is said that the cash box of Major Walker, U. S. Paymaster, who was lost on the Wright, is in possession of the Bella Bella Indians. At Kimsquit a piece of one of the Wright's masts was discovered. Sergt. Bloomfield remains behind in Nanaimo to assist Sheriff Harris in discharge of his duties.

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APRIL 8, 1877  
Page 2; Col 4

LOG OF HMS ROCKET ON HER RECENT CRUISE  
IN SEARCH OF THE MURDERERS OF SHIPWRECKED PEOPLE.

Wednesday, 10th of March, 6 a.m. - Embarked Sergt. Bloomfield and Alfred Dudower at Esquimalt and proceeded outside; 7 o'clock a thick fog, anchored off Victoria; 10:30 weighed and proceeded; 8:15 p.m. off Nanaimo, but too foggy to go in; anchored.

15th March, 6 a.m. - Weighed and communicated with the shore at Nanaimo and Departure Bay; 10:30 proceeded; sunset, anchored off Oyster Bay.

16th March, 6 a.m. - Underweigh, fair wind; sunset anchored off Fort Rupert, embarked Mr. George Hunt as interpreter and three Sumkholatu [sp?] Indian witnesses.

17th March, 5:45 a.m. - At McLaughlin Bay (Bella Bella); found Humpsett was further north.

18th March, Sunday - Sergt. Bloomfield and Alfred Dudower proceeded in gig for Humpsett; 5 p.m. Humpsett was brought on board when he requested that a Kitamat woman should be procured as a witness.

19th March, 5:30 - Weighed and proceeded south to pick up a woman near Kikeis [sp?]; at noon embarked the woman and turned round; towards evening wind freshened from southeast; forced to anchor in Morris Bay.

20th March - Daylight, under weigh for Fort Rupert; p.m. wind freshened ahead; made Safety Cove at sunset.

21st March - Detained by stress of weather; 9 a.m., slight improvement; weighed; fresh breeze outside; p.m. freshened; obliged to put into Takush Harbor; sent for chief but got no information from them.

22nd March, 6 a.m. - Weighed for Fort Rupert, strong head wind; p.m. made Fort Rupert by Sundwell [sp?] Passage and Goletas Channel about 3:20; landed Sumkholatu Indians and continued.

23rd March - Detained off Fort Rupert through stress of weather.

24th March, 6 a.m. - Proceeded for Alert Bay; 8 o'clock stopped off Kliksera [sp?] communicated with Mr. Coon; noon alongside pier at Alert Bay taking in firewood; Coroa, the Indian wanted as witness, not to be found here, although expected; determined to remain until Monday morning.



25th March, Alert Bay - Landed Humpset and Khamtsloocamau [sp??].

26th March, 6 a.m. - Held coast, underweigh to the northward; thick fog occasionally; 2 p.m. off Cape Caution, where the Captain, Sergts. Bloomfield and Humm, Messrs. Hunt, Dudower and Dyer with gig's crew landed and searched; nothing found; "California" passed north 4:30; boat returned to ship; ship proceeded to and anchored in Open Bay.

27th March - Daylight under weigh for Wakeena; 11 a.m. arrived; sent Mr. Hunt for chief; 1 p.m. Chief came; detained Chief, a son and one Wakeena; proceeded to next river for another and at 4:30 embarked him; fresh breeze ahead; anchored at 8:70 [sic?]; fine; weighed and proceeded; 10:30 to 11 o'clock thick fog going east; midnight proceeded for Kemsquot.

28th March - Steaming through Barke and Labouchere Channels for Kemsquot; towards sunset anchored behind village and sent in for Chief by Mr. Hunt, interpreter; they informed him that very few Indians were in camp, and that the principal Chiefs were away at Bella Koola, but they expected them back that night; those still remaining promised to come off the next morning, it being too late for them.

29th March - 9 a.m. no Indians coming near the ship, Sergt. Bloomfield and Messrs Hunt and Dudower walked over to the village; when the Indians first of all denied that any Chiefs were there; then said the head Chief was still absent; later it was found out there were four Chiefs in camp and these accompanied Sergt. Bloomfield on board about 11 a.m.; these men stated that they expected the head Chief any minute and were told to return on board again at 5 p.m. with him; at 5 p.m. seven Chiefs (not including the head Chief) came on board; they were then told that they had to give up the Kemsquot Indians who were at the wreck of the Wright; they first of all denied all knowledge of such wreck; then said two were dead and one in Victoria; then they admitted that three men and a woman who had been present were then in camp; Sergt. Bloomfield and Humm, accompanied by Messrs. Hunt and Dudower and one Chief, went to arrest these parties, when they arrived in the camp the Indians were found to be preparing to leave that night; two youths were arrested, but, in doing so, one threatened to shoot Alfred Dudower, and the father of this youth went to the assistance of his son and so threatened the life of Dudower; the old man then made off with his gun and called up the camp to resist by force. Sergt. Bloomfield and party returned on board with the two prisoners. The six other chiefs who had been detained on board ship were informed of what had taken place on shore, and then all were told that the old man, and the man and woman already spoken of, were to be delivered up on board the ship at 9 o'clock the next morning, failing which the village would be burnt; two chiefs were detained on board for the night as hostages



and the others were allowed to go on shore after promising to give up the Indians required.

30th March, 9 a.m. - No Indians appearing, weighed and proceeded off village; sent first gig armed with side arms, Sergt. Bloomfield and Humm, two marines, Messrs. Hunt and Dyer (special constables) accompanied by galley manned and armed, the whole under Wm. Batter [sp?], to arrest the offenders; on arriving the village was found nearly deserted, two chiefs with a few others only remaining, one of whom was arrested and the others ran off; the Indians wanted were nowhere to be found. Those present were again informed that the village would be fired into and burnt if the offenders were not given up; the boat then returned to the ship; fired blank from great guns; then two 20 lb shell, one on each side of the village. Sent 1st gig in as before, with two of the chiefs then detained who promised that they would go and bring the persons required if the village was not fired into or burnt. Two chiefs called two men and sent them after the parties wanted, but after a long time these men came back without anyone and were again informed that the village would be fired into and burnt. Mr. Bailey and Mr. Bloomfield examined the village to see that there were no inhabitants - men, women or children - left and the boats, having returned, blank charges were then fired and afterwards shell, round the skirts of the village, then into the village itself, and after a few rounds the 1st gig was sent in as before to fire the homes of the old man who had threatened life; this accomplished and the boat returned and the ship proceeded for Bella Coola; arriving there at 11 p.m. Sent for Chief; at 9 a.m. they came on board with Mr. Clayton of the H.B. Co. [Hudson's Bay Company] accompanied by three Bella Coola Indians who have seen a portion of the wreck of the Wright. No Indians from this place were detained and the ship proceeded at 4 p.m. for the southward, having previously landed, 31st March. Wakeena chief and son and three Kemsquot chiefs.

1st April, 8:30 - Stopped off Cape Caution landed Sergt. Bloomsfield, Messrs. Dudower, Hunt and Dyer, with one Wakeena and one Kemsquot Indian in Blunden Bay and Indian Cove to search; they found a portion of a mast; 10:40 boat returned; proceeded at 3:30 p.m.; stopped off Fort Rupert; landed Mr. Hunt; proceeded at 5:20 and stopped off Klikseon [sp?] communicated with Mr. Coon; 6 o'clock proceeded, 7:15 anchored in Alert Bay.

2nd April, 4 a.m. - Weighed and proceeded south.

3rd April, 3:30 a.m. - Secured to buoy in Departure Bay and coaled ship.

4th April, 6:30 a.m. - Cast off, proceeded; 7 o'clock received request from the High Sheriff of Vancouver for the ship to remain to support his authority by her presence, he fearing resistance by force. Anchored off Nanaimo.



5th April - Anchored off Nanaimo.

6th April, 8 o'clock a.m. - Left Nanaimo under steam.

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APRIL 25, 1877

Page 2; Col 2

MURDER OF THE GEORGE S. WRIGHT'S CREW.  
Additional Evidence

(Toronto Globe)

Recent allusions in the columns of "The Globe" to the supposed murder of the crew and passengers of the United States steamer Geo. S. Wright, lost on the British Columbia coast early in 1873m has induced Mr. Charles Horetzky, C.E., to send up an extract from his diary during his trip down that coast in 1874-5. Mr. Horetzky states that on his arrival at Victoria he made known what had come to his knowledge, as related below, but the truth of his information was doubted by the people to whom he imparted it.

Extracted from the diary of Charles Horetzky during a canoe voyage from Bella Bella to Comox, V. I., during the winter of 1874-5:

Tuesday, December 29, 1874 - Reached Indian Cove at 3:30 p.m. This lies about one mile to the southward from Cape Caution. To this point we have paddled the whole way from Bella Bella. Wind has been at the southeast all day; it is now (6 p.m.) blowing a gale from the south; sky clear; but we are wind bound as long as this lasts. ... From Knight's Inlet to this the coast line is quite low, slightly elevated cliffs of granite, gniss, and the same volcanic rock abounding at Bella Bella, presenting a serrated front to the full of the terrible swell which rolls in from the westward. ... This cove is a snug harbor. Immediately south from it there is another semi-circular bay, upon the hard, white sands of which were stranded the debris and portions of the cargo of the ill-fated George S. Wright, lost in the beginning of 1873.

Charlie (a Bella Bella Indian) and I walked to the Cape and back, while the others were making a camp, and many portions of the vessel were found imbedded in the sand. Charlie says it is the general opinion of all the Indians that some white people were saved from the wreck, but immediately afterwards murdered by some of my late "friends" of Kimsquit. Another of my crew pointed out the spot upon which he and some others had found a hurriedly constructed hut, in which were seen traces of white men, such as bottles, corks, broken boxes, etc. It is a fact that at the time the George S. Wright was lost, a party of Kimsquit Indians, then



on their way to Victoria, were encamped at Indian Cove. Mu informant added: "We (a party of Bella Bella) were on our way to Victoria, and seeing the fire on shore, landed, and to our surprise found the Kimsquits, who had been in this camping ground for the last 10 days. In answer to our inquiry, What are you doing here? they laughingly replied, 'Oh, we are fishing for white men.'"

I should be inclined strongly to suspect Indian John, and one or two others of the Kimsquit village up Dean Canal, where dwell some of the most debased specimens of humanity. ... C. Horetzky.

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 pdfelement



SECTION IV

PAPERS OF THE US REVENUE CUTTER "LINCOLN"





PORT TOWNSEND, W.T.  
August 26, 1883

S. Garfielde, Collector

In relation to transmittal of copies of instructions and Report  
of Capt. A. B. Davis concerning Revenue Steamer "Lincoln" in  
regard to cruise in search of survivors of  
wrecked steamer "George S. Wright"

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CUSTOM HOUSE, DISTRICT OF PUGET SOUND  
Port Townsend, W.T.  
August 26th, 1883

Hon. William A. Richardson  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Washington, D.C.

Sir:

Herewith I have the honor to enclose copy of my letter of  
instructions to Captain A. B. Davis of the Revenue Cutter  
"Lincoln", in regard to his cruise north in search of survivors  
from steamer "George S. Wright", marked "A", and also his report  
upon his return from said cruise, marked "B".

Very Respectfully,  
Your Able Servant,

S. Garfielde, Collector



RECORDED SEP 12 1873

Port Townsend W. T.

August 26. 1873.

S. Garfield,  
Collector.

In relation to transmit  
& copies of instructions  
Report of Capt. A. B. Dow  
and Rev. St. Lawrence in  
regard to cruise in search  
of survivors of wrecked at  
George S. Wright.

Vol. 9. 1873.

RM  
Zell

Collector,

Port Townsend, W. T.,

187

Relating to

No. of Enclosures

pdfelement



Custom House, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T., August 26th, 1873.

Sir:

Herewith I have the honor to enclose  
copy of my letter of instructions to Captain  
A. B. Lewis of Rev. letter "Lincoln", in  
regard to his cruise north in search of  
survivors from steamer "George S. Wright",  
marked "A", and also his report upon  
his return from said cruise, marked "B".

Very Respectfully  
Your Obedt Servt

Wm Wm A. Richardson  
Secretary of the Treasury  
Washington

Chas. Fielder  
Collector

L. C.



PORT TOWNSEND, W.T  
August 26, 1873

Copy of instructions to Capt. A. B. Davis in regard to  
a cruise north in search of survivors of  
the steamer "George S. Wright"

=====

CUSTOM HOUSE, DISTRICT OF PUGET SOUND  
Port Townsend, W.T.  
August 2, 1873

Capt. A. B. Davis  
Revenue Cutter "Lincoln"

Sir:

By letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Treasury, dated June 6 last and subsequent telegram, I am authorized to dispatch the "Lincoln" under your command to Queen Charlotte Sound and adjacent waters, "with a view to ascertaining the fate of the passengers and crew of the wrecked steamer "George S. Wright" lost in those waters some time in February last."

You will therefore proceed on said cruise on Monday next at twelve o'clock meridian, or as soon thereafter as your vessel may be ready for sea, touching at Victoria, if necessary, for information and a pilot, and at Nanaimo for coals.

It is believed that the "Wright" struck upon Pearl Rocks near Calvert Island and to the northward and westward of Cape Caution, and went to pieces soon afterwards. In view of this impression, apparently based upon facts, it seems proper to make that locality the center of your earliest operations, and diverge therefrom in your investigations as soon and in such directions as information obtained may seem to indicate.

If Indians are found along the Coast in that vicinity, it is desirable to get in communication with them for the purpose of eliciting (sic) whatever information they may possess. It is even still more important to visit any religious missions on the Coast within fifty or one hundred miles of the locality of the disaster and confer freely with their principal men; as it is well known



that the missionaries have superior facilities for obtaining information. Indeed all important events which transpire along the coast are reported at these missions as surely and as early as they are known to the tribes which inhabit the country.

It seems hardly possible that any survivors of the wreck should remain without the fact being known to either the Indians or the missionaries, unless it be found that the Coast in that region is almost destitute of population. In that event, it will be desirable, by weaving together all the shreds of information you be able to obtain, to determine the locality of the disaster and then explore the coast in that vicinity, giving your attention first to those portions of the Coast upon which wrecked persons would be likely to be cast by the currents of the locality and prevailing winds of the season.

If a clue can be obtained to the locality and cause of the disaster, this may go far towards settling the possibility of any persons having survived. It may, therefore, in the absence of more definite information, be desirable to investigate these matters closely and endeavor to reach a satisfactory conclusion thereon. It is impossible and perhaps undesirable to point out with certainty any line of action. Suggestions are all I have to offer. The country and even the waters in that vicinity are so little known that any prescribed course of procedure might prove wholly impracticable or destructive of the object in view. All must be left to your judgement guided by your observations on the spot.

The cruise is limited by instructions to one months duration. You will occupy as much of that time in the search as your own judgement and broad humanity require. It is the intention to rescue the survivors, if any exist, if not, then to place that fact beyond reasonable doubt. Your own sympathies, high sense of duty, and professional pride will stimulate you to the most vigorous effort in promoting the humane and philanthropic objects of the government in sending you upon this special service.

Very Respectfully,

(signed) S. Garfielde, Collector



*W. T. Townsend*

Collector.

W. T. Townsend M. J.

Port Townsend, W. T.

August 26, 1873

187

S. Garfield

Collector.

Relating to

Copy of instructions to  
Captain A. B. Davis,  
in regard to a cruise  
north in search of survivors  
of str. "Gen. S. Wright"

No. of Enclosures

21898<sub>2</sub>

pdfelement



"A"

Custom House, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T., Aug 2, 1873.

Copy

Captain A. B. Davis  
Revenue Cutter "Lincoln"

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Custom House, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T., ..... , 187

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Remove Watermark Now

Common House, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T.,

187 .

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Case, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T., \_\_\_\_\_, 187 .

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, 187 .

undesirable, to point out with certainty any line of action. Suggestions are all I have to offer. The country and even the waters in that vicinity are so little known that any prescribed course of procedure might prove wholly impracticable or destructive of the object in view. All must be left to your judgment, guided by your observations on the spot.

The cruise is limited by instructions to one month's duration. You will occupy as much of that time in the search as your own judgment and broad humanity require. It is the intention to rescue the survivors, if any need, if not then to place them



House, District of Puget Sound,

Port Townsend, W. T., \_\_\_\_\_, 187 .

fact beyond reasonable doubt. Your own sympathies, high sense of duty and professional pride will stimulate you to the most vigorous effort in promoting the human and philanthropic objects of the Government in sending you upon this special service.

Very Respectfully  
(Signed) S. Garfield,  
Collector



PORT TOWNSEND, W.T.  
August 26, 1873

Copy of Report of Capt. A. B. Davis, commanding officer,  
Revenue Steamer "Lincoln", of cruise in search of  
survivors of steamer "George S. Wright"

=====

REVENUE STEAMER "LINCOLN"  
Port Townsend, W.T.  
August 23, 1873

Hon. S. Garfielde,  
Collector of Customs  
Port Townsend, W.T.

Sir:

The Revenue Steamer "Lincoln", under my command, arrived at Port Townsend W.T. this day at 12:20 p.m. via Nanaimo, B.C. where I stopped to take in coal and discharge the pilot. I wrote you a few lines from Nanaimo relative to the cruise of the "Lincoln" north, but had not time to go into a detailed report.

The "Lincoln" left Port Townsend W.T. on the 5' instant in compliance with your communication of the 2' instant directing me, by authority of the Hon. Secretary of the Treasury, to proceed with her to Queen Charlotte Sound and adjacent waters, with a view to ascertaining the fate of passengers and crew of the wrecked steamer "George S. Wright" lost in those waters sometime in February last. I proceeded first to Victoria B.C. to procure a pilot for the northern waters, but was unable to get one there. I also called upon His Excellency Gov. Thrutch who kindly offered to render me any assistance I might desire.

After leaving Victoria, I went to Nanaimo for coal, and obtained the services of Mr. John Sebastian as pilot.

At Victoria and Nanaimo I heard vague rumors that some of the passengers and crew of the "George S. Wright" had reached the shore and were murdered by the Indians. I left Nanaimo at the 11' instant and anchored in Port Duncan on the evening of that date, to wait for the proper tide to steam through Seymour Narrows. From thence I proceeded to Blinkinsop and Alert Bays, hoping at



the latter place to meet with Father Ferquet (a Catholic priest) but he was absent and his whereabouts was very uncertain. From Alert Bay, I shaped my course for Fort Rupert, Beaver Harbor, and there employed Mr. George Hunt as an Indian Interpreter. Leaving Fort Rupert, I stood for Cape Caution and reaching that point dispatched Lieut. Orcutt in the second cutter to explore the beach in that vicinity. After remaining ashore about an hour he returned and informed me there [were] two masts on the beach which he judged to have belonged to the "George S. Wright", the mainmast was painted black and the foremast bright, except the part which came in her between decks that was painted white. He also saw some portions of her top work. Lieut. Orcutt frequently had seen the "G.S. Wright" and he felt assured beyond doubt that these were portions of her wreck, and from previous and subsequent description I have had of her, I fully concur with him. I anchored that evening in Safety Cove, Calvert Island, and next day went to Mc Laughlin Bay (Bella Bella). Hearing there that some of the wreck had drifted on Price Island, Milbank Sound, I got the "Lincoln" underway in the morning of the 17th and started for that island. I sent a boat on my arrival there in charge of Lieut. Rogers to search along the shore where this portion of the wreck was reported to have landed, but was unable to find any trace of it. I returned that evening to Bella Bella.

At Bella Koula, up the Bentick Arm, the Indians encamped there were reported to have been the first to visit Cape Caution after the wreck of the steamer. I therefore concluded to go to Bella Koula and have an interview with them. It was necessary to employ an Indian as an extra pilot to take the "Lincoln" there. Arriving at Bella Koula, I had an interview with an Indian named Coobootes, who was one of the Indians in the canoe that landed at Cape Caution, as mentioned above. He described the portion of the wreck seen at this point as her top work and masts. He also got the name board, with "George S. Wright" painted on it. The name board was subsequently sent to Victoria. There were also some deerskins on the beach, a portion of which he took to Victoria and sold.

Up to this date, I had communication with the following tribes - viz: Nowwhitte, the Nawantons, who live in the vicinity of Cape Caution, also the Bella Bella and Bella Koula Indians. They readily answered all my questions and freely gave all the information they possessed. They seemed very peaceable and bore that reputation among the agents of the Hudson Bay Company who live among them. I came to the conclusion that the rumors and reports of foul play being done to any of the passengers and crew of the "Wright" were instigated by a few unreliable and unprincipled white men, whose reputation in British Columbia is very bad.



I would also mention it is reported that the body of a half-breed boy is buried at Kilkish Narrows, Finlayson Channel. It was found floating in that neighborhood. This boy, with his father, went on board the "George S. Wright" at Kygane on her last trip to Sitka. Kygane was the place there the "Wright" was last seen. There were also two other bodies reported to have been found and buried at Aristazable Island, about ten miles up Laredo Channel, but I could not trace this information to any reliable source. I think I have made a thorough search in Queen Charlotte Sound and adjacent waters for relics of the ill-fated steamer.

In my opinion, unquestionably the "George S. Wright" struck on the rocks of the "Sea Otter Group" and every soul on board perished. These rocks lie about nine miles to the northward and westward of Cape Caution. They are mostly below water. A steamer striking them in a gale of wind would soon break up and unless possessing the very best class of boats, there would scarcely be a chance of any one reaching the shore. I firmly believe the "Wrights" boats were not launched from the vessel and if they were, they quickly swamped, for nowhere could I find any traces of boats nor could I obtain any information of them.

Unable to obtain any more knowledge relative to the loss of the steamer and the sad fate of those on board, I made the best of my way to this place, stopping at Nanaimo, as previously mentioned, for coal.

I am very respectfully,

(signed) Alfred B. Davis, Captain

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pdfelement

Ms. A. 9. 2. 11. 10. 11. 12. 13.

Copy of Report of Capt.  
A. B. Davis, Commanding  
Rev. Str. Lincoln; of  
Cruise in search of  
Remains of Steamer  
Gen. S. Wright.

MS. A. 9. 2. 11. 10. 11. 12. 13.



"B."

copy

Revenue Steamer "Lincoln"  
Port Townsend W.T. Aug 23 1873

Sir:

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Captain

Hon. S. Gaspier,  
Collector of Customs,  
Port Townsend,  
W. I.



JOURNAL OF THE US REVENUE CUTTER LINCOLN  
Capt. Alfred B. Davis

Month of March, 1873

Friday	March 7	Blinkinsop Bay Arrived at Alert Bay and Fort Rupert
Saturday	March 8	Fort Rupert Harbor, Vancouver Island Started for Cape Caution and had to return due to inclement weather.
Sunday	March 9	Fort Rupert Harbor, Vancouver Island
	7:00 am	Got underway and steamed out of the harbor. At 9 came through Christies Passage into Nier Channel. At 10:45 passed the Storm Islands and shifted course N.N.W. for Cape Caution, very heavy swell from the Western.
	11:45	Spoke with British Steamer <u>Peterel</u> who have been examining the coast about the Cape and Smith's Inlet and had found out from the Indians that no person had landed from the wreck of the steamer <u>George S. Wright</u> . Turned about and steamed back toward Cape James, South East, carrying all sail.
	1:00	Passed Pine Island, steaming toward Christies Passage. At 2 passed through Christies Pas- sage. At 3 took in all sail. At 3:30 entered Fort Rupert Harbor. Stopped Engines. Commanding officer went on board steamer <u>Peterel</u> and after conferring with Capt. Stanley of that vessel, deemed it of no use to proceed further in search of the Wright people. Steamed toward Alert Bay in company with the <u>Peterel</u> .
	7:40	Came to anchor in Alert Bay, in 8 fathoms. Steamed 90 miles.
Monday	March 10	Alert Bay, Cormorant Island
Wed.	March 12	Left for Blinkinsop Bay Spoke with steamer <u>Otter</u> , Lewis, Master, from Victoria, turned north.
Thurs.	March 13	Returned to Nanaimo Harbor.



JOURNAL OF US REVENUE CUTTER LINCOLN  
 Capt. Alfred B. Davis

Week Ending August 9, 1873

Tuesday	Aug. 5	Port Townsend, Washington Territory (W.T.) At 2:15 got underway by order of the (Customs) Collector Garfield for a cruise north in search of information relative to the American steamer <u>George S. Wright</u> , supposed to have been wrecked in January last near Cape Caution British Columbia.
Sunday	Aug. 10	Reached Nanaimo, B.C.
Wed.	Aug. 13	Left Blinkinsop Bay 2:15 pm Came to anchor at Fort Rupert in six fathoms. Wind NW. Moderate and clear. Barometer: 30.34 -- Signed, 1st Lt. Rogers 4 - 8 pm Wind NW, fresh and clear. Received on board Mr. Hunt (Half Breed) to interpret among the Indians.
Thurs.	Aug. 14	Fort Rupert 5:45 am Got underway and steamed to the NW 8:30 Thick fog - steaming under one bell. At 9 passed Boxes Point. At 10:30, steaming through Bates Passage. At 10:35 stopped engines off Nawetti (sp?) Village and sent an officer on shore with interpreter to converse with the natives. At 10:40 steamed ahead and spoke with English sloop <u>Yellow Lane</u> , Marden Cape. Sent an officer in search for any information he might learn in relation to the object of our cruise. At 11:45 boats returned and steamed ahead. Calm and clear. 12:30 Passed Pine Island and took sloop <u>Yellow Lane</u> in tow. Captain came on board. At 2, stopped engines off Cape Caution and sent boat ashore to examine the beach. At 3:30, the boat returned: found two masts, and a large quantity of meckice (? machine ?) stuff from the "Wright" - steamed ahead to Safety Cove. Moderate wind from W and clear.



Friday	Aug. 15	Safety Cove Steamed out of Safety Cove and up to Fitzhugh Sound. At "Bella Bella Harbor" in 12 fathoms
Sunday	Aug. 17	Bella Bella Indian Charlie came on board to pilot us to portion of the wreck site in Milbank Sound. 11:55 Stopped engines off Prices Island, Milbank Sound and sent officer on shore to examine the beach. At 12:45 officer returned having found no trace of the wreck. Steamed ahead and returned to Bella Bella.
Monday	Aug. 18	Bella Coola Fired one gun to attract attention of the natives.
Tues.	Aug. 19	Dean Channel Entered Dean Channel and Fisher Channel. Stopped off Bella Bella and landed Indian Charley - entered Fitzhugh Sound. Steamed into Safety Cove.
Wed.	Aug. 20	Safety Cove 7:20 am Off Cape Caution. At 8:30, off Storm Island. At 11:40, stopped engines off Fort Rupert and landed George Hunt, interpreter. 12:00 Got underway south.
Sat.	Aug 23	Port Townsend Arrived back at Port Townsend

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## TRIP JOURNAL TO CAPE CAUTION

OCTOBER 7, 1986

Janna Irene Smith Brown

- Purpose: To view the scene at Cape Caution where portions of steamer "George S. Wright" washed ashore in January of 1873 carrying my great-great grandfather, John Sutton, the chief engineer.
- Boat Name: Swiftsure '76 - A 24-foot cruiser with enclosed cabin  
 Captain: Gene Cadwallader
- 11:30 am Gene calls to say the fog is clearing. There are two bear hunters who also want to charter the boat. They wish to go beyond Cape Caution to the end of Rivers Inlet. Do I want to share the charter and costs and see Rivers Inlet in the bargain? If so, bring overnight gear in case fog requires a stay.
- 12:15 pm Arrive at the dock and meet Gene and the two bear hunters from Vancouver. The boat is small, but cozy and compact. The hunter's gear fills every available space in the bow and stern. The cabin seats three comfortably. One hunter stands most of the way; or rides sitting on the top step of the galley exit. Gene has supplied the boat's refrigerator with food and beverages.
- 12:40 pm Left Port Hardy wharf. High fog. Slight breeze.
- 1:25 pm Passed Scarlett Point Lighthouse, perched high on the cliffs overlooking the narrows. Lots of drift requires careful watchfulness and slower speeds.
- 1:35 pm Spot two sea otters lounging on driftwood.
- 1:45 pm Passed Pine Island Lighthouse, another set of buildings at cliff's edge. Capt. explains that original buildings were washed away by a freak and unusually large wave during a winter storm. The cliff is so high, it's impossible to imagine such a wave.
- 2:45 pm Arrived at Cape Caution, a rocky promitory. Clear weather, fog very high and thin. Some sunshine. Moderate ocean swells. Reasonably calm within the area of Blunden Bay. Entered Blunden Bay as far as



possible, avoiding rocks, motoring slowly. Took photos for fifteen minutes. Capt. said that landing might be possible on the return trip, weather still permitting. But, someone would have to stay with the boat ... we had no one to do that. The bay, comprised of two semi-circular beaches, was bisected by a jagged, high rocky outcropping. Both of the beaches appeared to be narrow, but white and clear of debris. The southern-most beach would have been impossible to land on directly due to rocks facing it in the water. However, we might have tried the northern reach without too much trouble. Beyond this northern beach, a finger of land covered with trees separated Indian Cove from Blunden Bay. It looked as though it would have been easy to walk over this point to the cove. A large rock stood like a sentinel at mouth of the cove, precluding safe entry by sea. As there are no islands to separate Blunden Bay from the ocean, it was easy to see that storm waves could sweep anything into either the bay itself, or into the cove. In fact, up high on the rocks dividing the two sections of Blunden Bay beach, remains of a rusting ship's hull could be seen. An enormous power coupled with a very high tide would have been necessary to deposit such a hulk so high above the water, it seems. This hull could not have been the "George S. Wright's" because the Wright had a wooden hull, not steel.

- 3:30 pm Entered Rivers Inlet. Weather clear and calm.
- 4:45 pm Dropped off two hunters at deserted cabins at Kilpella Bay, near end of Rivers Inlet.
- 5:30 pm Arrived at Killam logging camp in Kilpella Bay. Had dinner in the camp dining room (Roast beef). Took on fuel from Capt. Rob's boat "Rye Whiskey" which had also crossed from Port Hardy ahead of us and had delivered eleven loggers to the camp. Waited for seven return passengers from the camp to embark on "Rye Whiskey". They had been fog-bound five days and were anxious to return home without delay. Capt. decided to follow "Rye" to mouth of Rivers Inlet and not to cross over to Port Hardy at night unless fog was gone and skies were clear.



6:30 pm Left Killam for mouth of Rivers Inlet. Sunset lit high fog with hues of pink, mauve and gold.

7:35 pm Arrived at mouth of inlet. Dark. No fog visible in channel. "Rye Whiskey" chooses to continue and Capt. Cadwallader and Capt. Rob discuss journey plan over radio. The "Rye" will chart the course using its radar navigation feature. "Swiftsure" will keep her in view at all times. Need to go extremely slowly, exercising much caution as both rocks and heavy drift are impossible to see in the dark, with or without fog. Wind and waters calm. Estimated time to Cape Caution - two hours! It only took forty-five minutes earlier in the day.

Midnight Fog enshrouded. Trying to find Pine Island Lighthouse, having apparently missed Cape Caution Light in the fog. Capt. Rob admits being wary of the accuracy of the LOREN radar tracking system on board. The "Swiftsure's" depth finding gauge is malfunctioning. We don't know exactly where we are or how deep the water beneath us is. Spent two hours trying to see Pine Island light or hear her fog horn sounding. Stopped engines every twenty minutes for an hour to listen. On stopping the first time, observed a school of porpoises playing about the bow of the boats - swimming madly between the boats and, later, in the sparkling foam of our bow spray. Fog everywhere. Heard the foghorn on the second stop, faintly ahead. Went ahead and stopped again. The foghorn now seemed to be behind us. Took a new heading for Scarlett Point, hoping we were out of danger of rocks and crossing in a safe passage. Feeling very tired and sleeping at times in the bow and, unsure of the safety there, sitting up in the cabin ... feet popped up on the bench seat facing aft or changing to forward. At times, peering into the foggy gloom for the faint shine of a lighthouse. Several jarring hits on monstrous floating logs forced immediate engine stop. Luckily, no apparent damage to hull or prop. Passed a tug with tow and spent several anxious moments on radio with "Rye Whiskey" to determine direction of tug's tow barge. We didn't want to cross under her tow line.

1:30 am Finally spotted what appeared to be Scarlett Point Lighthouse. "Rye Whiskey", just ahead of us, suddenly hollars, "Back off!" as I simultaneously see an immense rocky island silhouetted before her. The red channel light by which she was guiding us disappears from view off starboard. We discover



we are passing to port when we should have been passing in the channel to starboard instead at the southern edge of Gordon Channel.

3:30 am

Fog thins as we draw near to Port Hardy. Arrive safely, tired and slightly harried.

END

