

Copy of letter from J. D. Price to John Anderson

Ormond, Fla. December 6, 1896

A wrecked schooner with six men aboard was reported being stranded on the outer bar in front of Chapman's house yesterday morning, and assistance was called for. I told two of our painters who I understood were good seamen to take rope and go over. I followed and most of the force working at the hotel went. About fifty people gathered on the beach. I overtook Waterhouse and Lowe going down the beach.

It was decided that as the schooner's people were in no immediate danger, it would be better to wait for low tide (about eleven o'clock) Shaw's and Capt. Wardwell's boats were brought down on wagon's and several coils of rope. There was a tremendous sea coming in. At nearly low tide ^{Jim} Carnell and De Courcy (one of the painters) started out with a coil of rope in Shaw's boat, leaving one end of the line on the beach. The schooner's crew tied a line to a box and as the boat started they threw the box over and paid out their line. The little boat went safely through the first line of breakers and they did nobly; but the current making a very strong run south, carried them about five feet below the float when out that far and they had to back in again. They made two more ineffectual attempts, the

boat filling as they tried to get through the inner line of breakers. Then Waterhouse asked Tom Fagen to go out with a line in Wardwell's life boat, an iron yawl with water tight compartments in each end. Tom asked him if he was a good swimmer to which Waterhouse replied, "I can swim like a fish." They got another coil of rope and started, passed through the first breakers easily, shipping very little water; their object as Tom told me afterwards being to reach

the schooner and pass them the other end of their line. As they reached the outer bar a giant wave struck them and filled the boat. Other immense waves followed closely after the first and Waterhouse stood up and said, "Tom, we can't make it" then sat down again. Tom told him that they would have to leave the boat and swim ashore, telling him to jump clear of the boat northward, and to follow him. They both jumped and Tom struck out for shore. The boat just then turned bottom side upward and instead of following Tom, Waterhouse climbed up and sat astraddle the boat. The men on the beach then began to haul her in but in the next comber she turned right side up and Waterhouse got into her and sat there while the men again began to haul her in. In another instant she was bottom up again, catching Waterhouse under her, but he came out in a moment and seemed dazed. He appeared to be swimming with the current for one of the oars. The men on the beach ran down with the other boat and attempted to put out after him. I then saw Waterhouse go down and knew that he was drowning. I threw off my coat and vest and shoes and ran out into the surf as far as I could make my way and other men were beside me, but no man could swim against those seas nor across that current, and in a few seconds all was over with poor Waterhouse. He must have drowned about a thousand feet from shore. It was a terrible thing. None of us could realize that it was all over with him. Tom came ashore completely exhausted. He had a hard fight to keep up, the breakers beating him down continually. Everyone was more alarmed about Tom than Waterhouse and he had a hard pull before him and we thought we should succeed in bringing Waterhouse in with the boat. Some think

that he was struck on the head by the boat as it turned and covered him and others that he lost his head and became exhausted, or cramped.

The little boat, Shaw's, went out once more with Shaw and De Courcy. The Captain of the schooner, when he saw Waterhouse go, said to his men, "They have sacrificed one man in their efforts to save us; now I'll risk my life in an attempt to get ashore." and as the little boat started out from the beach, he tied a line around his waist and dropped into the water and struck bravely out.

Now, these men met the disaster last Tuesday and they had had no sleep since, the deck being continually washed by the heavy seas and all they had had to eat was raw pickled beef. They had, however an abundance of fresh water. The Captain had a hard fight to come with that line around him and when he was almost exhausted the boat reached him. He clung to the bow and they brought him in. Their line was tied to the one on shore, a life preserver hitched on, and the schooner's crew pulled in until the life preserver reached the ship. Then one of the crew would put on the life preserver, tie the rope around him under his arms, drop into the water and the men on shore would haul away and the men on the schooner pay off until the man reached shore. The last man put on the preserver, tied himself to the end of the rope and came in as well as the others had done.

As they arrived they were met with a cup of hot coffee and a drink of whiskey, a blanket wrapped around him and a carriage took him rapidly to the Coquina.

The vessel was the Nathan Cobb, of Rockland, Me. She was load-

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ed with cross ties from Brunswick, Ga. and was bound for New York. She capsized last Tuesday afternoon. They cut away her masts and she righted but was waterlogged. The mate and cook were washed overboard and were drowned.

I am beginning to fear that poor Waterhouse's body will not come ashore. We have had the beach patrolled constantly but as yet nothing has been seen or heard of him. Have wired and written particulars to his brother in California. If a first class life saving station with all their improved facilities had done the work that our village men did yesterday with only frail unsuitable boats and rowlocks that didn't fit, and what other means they could hastily get together, they would have deserved unstinted praise and I am proud of our brave men of Ormond and of poor Waterhouse too. I have men on the lookout on the beach constantly.

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Ferd Waterhouse was bookkeeper at the Ormond hotel, and came from *Cape Elizabeth* Me.
Ned De Courcy, an old sailer was at work painting, and afterwards looked after the boats at the hotel for a number of years
Tom Fagen, a brother of Wm. Fagen came also from Maine and now lives at Daytona.

Good Words for a Brave Deed.

Treasury Department office Gen'l Supt. Life Saving Service, Washington, D. C. Jan., 4, 1897.
Capt. Edward DeCourcey,
Ormond, Florida,
Dear Sir;—

Capt. Shaw in his report of the circumstances attending the wreck of the Nathan F. Cobb, recently lost near Ormond, while to use his own words, "giving all praise and honor to those who so nobly helped on that occasion," calls the especial attention of this office to your participation in the operations which resulted in the rescue of the shipwrecked crew and expresses the opinion that you are entitled to high commendation. In that opinion, I cordially concur.

With no official obligation resting upon you, and actuated solely by impulses of humanity, you placed your life in jeopardy, with full knowledge as evidenced by your preparations, of the peril you were about to incur. When asked by Capt Shaw whether you would go out with him in the boat you were already wet and chilled from contact with the sea in your previous attempt to reach the vessel, but you unhesitatingly answered yes. In the boat and during all the difficult and dangerous movements which finally resulted in success, you have showed yourself a brave and skillful man, and I have, therefore, great pleasure in bearing official testimony to your heroism as established by the evidence before me,

Respectfully Yours,

S. I. KIMBALL, Gen. Supt.

In the above generous and frank acknowledgement of brave service on the part of Captain DeCourcey by Supt. Kimball, the latter shows not only that he is a warm hearted official but that he has the best good of the noblest existing governmental institution close at heart. Long may he remain at the head.

Amende Honorable.

There is but one thing in connection with our report of the Cobb wreck we regret, and that is, that our old friend J. D. Price set his foot down on our giving him the credit he deserved not only for the open handed aid he gave in furnishing blankets etc. for the wrecked sailors, with every other accommodation in his power, but his own personal effort to go to their aid in the breakers. The omitting of this in our account at his request although it was, has lain on our conscience ever since even

when to have mentioned all who deserved it would have more than filled our little paper. At the risk of offending him we must square up with ourself by saying that no one showed more generous hearted humanity and desire to assist in the rescue and care of the parties afterward than Mr Price.

JANUARY 15, 1897.

