

Frederick H. Burlingame

(- 30 Aug 1897)

Burlingame. On Monday, August 30, 1897 at 8 p.m., drowned at Sandy Point, Md., Frederick H. Burlingame, the son of F.H. and Katie May Burlingame, aged 8 years. Funeral from his late residence, No. 23 C street northeast on Friday at 3 p.m. Funeral private.

The Evening Star, August 31, 1897

Reported Drowning

Fred Burlingame, a Young Boy, Lost on the Potomac

A message was received by The Star this morning from Indian Head, stating that Fred. Burlingame, the eight-year-old son of Mr. Fred. H. Burlingame, an employee of the bureau of engraving and printing of this city, was drowned off Sandy Point last night by the capsizing of a boat.

Mr. Fred. Burlingame took his son with him on a cruise down the river in a small yacht a week ago last Saturday. Mrs. Burlingame left at that time on a trip to Providence. She returned, however, about a week ago. When a Star reporter broke the sad news to her this morning at her residence, 24 C street northeast, she was totally unaware of the accident and the loss of her boy seemed to affect her deeply.

Mrs. Burlingame, it seems, had been loath to let the boy go on the trip, and stated this morning that she has had a premonition all along that something was going to happen. She said she had always been afraid that something would happen to the boat, and a report received from a naval officer several days ago, to the effect that the boat was leaking and that her husband and son were forced to put up for repairs, did not tend in any way to soothe her troubled mind.

The boy was a handsome little fellow, a little over eight years of age, and a prime favorite at school, at home and with his playmates. He had a bright, cheerful disposition, and was always generous and kind-hearted.

The message received contained no news of Mr. Burlingame, but it is supposed that he survived the accident.

The Evening Star, September 2, 1897

Boys Body Recovered

Police Boat Vigilant Returns With Remains of Little Fred Burlingame

Discovered Floating in the Open Channel Near Clifton Beach --

Violence of the Storm

The police boat Vigilant returned to the city last evening at 7 o'clock with the body of Fred Burlingame, the eight-year-old son of Mr. F.H. Burlingame, custodian of presses of the bureau of engraving and printing. As exclusively announced in The Star last Tuesday, the little fellow was drowned off his father's boat, the William Washington, in a squall last Monday night.

Through the kindness of Commissioner Ross the police boat was ordered to the scene of the wreck off Sandy Point and directed to search for the body. The tops of the masts of the sunken boat were plainly visible, and the police boat crew directed its energies to dragging about the wreck. The water was quite deep and the men experienced considerable trouble in their work. Shortly before 2 o'clock a schooner spoke the Vigilant, and reported that the schooner Walter P. Snow. Captain Roberts, had discovered the body floating in the main channel this side of Clifton Beach and was lying close by

watching it until the arrival of the police boat. Harbor Master Sutton called in his men and all steam was crowded on for Clifton Beach.

The Father's Discovery

The agonized father of the boy was in the pilot house and was among the first to discover the body. A boat was lowered, and the remains carefully and tenderly placed in the bottom. After a word of thanks to Captain Roberts, the Vigilant was put about, and hurriedly returned to the city.

The storm which sunk the William Washington was a severe one. During Monday afternoon signs of the approaching squall were visible and toward sunset all vessels in sight sought shelter. Off Sandy Point there is but little good harbor, and the river is very wide, giving the wind a chance to blow its hardest. Out in the middle of the stream, fully a mile and a half from shore, the William Washington came to anchor. Everything was made snug for the night. The sails were furled, the anchor dropped and preparations made for weathering the storm. It did not break in all its fury until 9 o'clock, and then it came, heralded by the most magnificent electrical display ever seen.

The heavens were transformed into a brilliant, electrical dazzle, and for nearly an hour the lightning was so intense and frequent that one could have read a newspaper without trouble. When the lightning ceased the wind rose and blew great guns for half an hour.

From Bed to Billows

The little boy had been put to bed on board the William Washington, and the three men were watching the storm. Mr. Burlingame attempted to go on deck, but the wind was so severe he could not stand, and was forced into the cabin. Suddenly, without warning, the boat was blown over on her side. The men piled out of the cabin, the little boy with them. They were all thrown into the water by the force of the wind, and Mr. Burlingame swam to where his son was struggling. Reaching him he placed the little fellow on the high side of the capsized boat, and then swam off to the yawl boat, in the hopes of cutting her loose from the davits. After considerable trouble, he succeeded, and righting her, rowed off to where the men were sitting on the high side of the boat. When he reached them, the child was nowhere to be seen. The men said they had not noticed him. It was then too dark to see a yard in advance, and the rain was coming down in torrents, and the broken-hearted father was obliged to pull away into the night. They rowed nearly all night, and were finally picked up by a schooner. They stayed aboard of her until morning, and embarked for Indian Head, from where the harbor master was telephoned.

Vigilant Ordered to Scene

It was out of the harbor master's jurisdiction, and he could not respond without orders from the Commissioners. A reporter of The Star was nearby, and volunteered to telephone Commissioner Ross. The response came back that the police boat had been ordered to the scene. The Vigilant arrived Tuesday night and tied up at Chickamucksent. At daybreak, the crew, now augmented by Mr. Burlingame and several of his friends, set to work, with the result stated above.

The house of Mr. John Mills, near the scene of the drowning, was struck by lightning Monday night, and his eight-year-old daughter killed outright. Everyone in the house was stunned.