

Do not

Evidence in the matter of the Burning  
of the "Ruth" taken before the  
Board of Survey.

Examination of

Page 2  
" 13  
" 18  
" 21  
" 26

[redacted]  
Major H. F. Bruntion, Pay master  
Henry J. Goddard, paymaster's Clerk  
Major Joseph Tilden, pay master  
" G. Greenwell "  
" W. W. White "

SP

Room of Court of Inquiry  
Saint Louis Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> 1863.

General:

The President of the Court of Inquiry instituted by Genl Orders No. 408 desires me to inclose ~~to you~~ copy of the record of the evidence taken before the Board of Survey instituted by your orders in regard to the loss of Govt. funds by the destruction of the Sherman Hatch by fire and furnished the Court of Inquiry from your Head Quarters, is at the disposal of the said Court of Inquiry.

The Copy of this record is desired with a view of appending it to the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry.

Very respectfully  
Yours obt. servt

J. S. Calhoun

May. member of recorder

May. Genl. S. Calhoun  
Comdg. Dist. New Jersey  
Dept. of War. Saint Louis Mo.

*Endorsements.*

St Louis, Mo. Oct. 5. 1863

Bellander Major G. L.

Member of Records.

Court of Inquiry

Enquiries of copy of record of evidence  
in regard to loss of Govt. funds by  
destruction of Name "Bull" furnished  
Court of Inquiry from the U. S. At.  
is at disposal of said Court.

Copy of record is desired to append it's  
to proceedings of Court of Inquiry.

Ad. Adm. Dept. of the War  
St Louis Oct 5 1863.

Respectfully returned to Colored Bellander,  
With the information that the investigation  
of the Court of Inquiry of which Major Genl.  
Sam'l Hunter is President is considered by  
the Major General Commanding as absorbing  
all former proceedings connected with the  
loss of the Mr. Ruth therefore the Record  
alluded to will be left at the disposal  
of the Court. By order of Maj. Genl. Schopfield

Asst. Asst. Genl.

loss of the Mr. Ruth - therefore the record  
alluded to within is entirely at the disposal  
of the Court. By order of Maj. Genl. Schofield

Ass't Adj't Genl.

St. Louis August 14<sup>th</sup> 1863.

Record of a Board of Survey ordered by the  
following order.

"Head Quarters Department of the Missouri  
Saint Louis Mo. August 13<sup>rd</sup> 1863.

Special Order }

Ch. 2 P. 9

x

x

5. A Board of Survey to consist of  
"the following named officers is hereby appointed  
"to meet at the office of Major [redacted] Pay Master  
"U. S. A. in the City of St. Louis on Thursday,  
"August 13<sup>rd</sup> 1863 or as soon thereafter as practicable  
"to examine into and report upon the cir-  
"cumstances connected with the loss on board  
"the steamer "Ruth" of Money and Paymasters  
"prospects for which Major G. J. Brown, M. R.  
"Jameson and other Paymasters are responsible.

Detail for the Board.

"Major Wm. C. Jones Paymaster U. S. A.

"Major G. H. Barnes Asst. Adjt. Mr. S. Mc.

"Capt. James H. Wright P. M. Cavalry.

By command of Major General Schofield  
J. H. Campbell

Assistant Adj'tant General

In pursuance to the above orders the following

named Officers viz

Major Wm C. Jones Paymaster U.S.A.

Major J. H. Barnes Paymaster U.S.A.

Capt. James F. Dwight 4<sup>th</sup> Mo. Cavalry

were at the Office of Major Hebeiger Paymaster U.S.A.  
in the City of St. Louis, and thereupon duly  
consolidated and formed themselves into the Board  
as ordered for the purposes set forth -

Major A. L. Branton Paymaster U.S.A.

being called and duly sworn by the Senior Member  
of the Board - deposes as follows: I am a Paymaster  
of the District of the Mississippi, of which Major  
Hebeiger is the chief. On the 3d day of August  
I received orders to go to Memphis & Pickering  
in command of a Detachment of Paymasters con-  
sisting of myself, and 4 other Paymasters of our  
Department and the Clerk, with funds for the  
purpose of finishing payment of General Grant's  
Army, to close up the payment to the 30<sup>th</sup> of June.

On accountance with such orders  
we left here on the 3d of August in the late after-  
noon on the steamer ~~South~~. I drew from Major  
Hebeiger here the sum of \$1,600.00 dollars in  
Treasury Notes, giving my official receipt therefor.

I received the money from the Capt. U.S.A. Head-  
-quarters in St. Louis. It was contained in four  
locked boxes with locks loose, the shapes being  
round the ends, only one box was opened the

others were ironed as they were received. The boxes  
were in the same condition as when received  
from Washington. I submit herewith my official  
report which I made to Major Hebeiger after

I received one money from me over. v. v. v.  
were in St. Louis. It was contained in four  
locked boxes with book from, the straps being  
around the ends, only one book was opened the

others were ironed as they were received. The boxes  
were in the same condition as when received  
from Washington. I submit here my official  
report which I made to Major Feltiger after  
the loss of the Ruth. The facts as stated are  
true.

Pay Office U. S. A.  
Saint Louis Mo.

August 1<sup>st</sup> 1863.

Major

I have the honor to report that in compli-  
ance with your order of the 3d inst. I proceeded  
on board the steamer "Ruth" about 4. P. M. of  
that day, taking with me two million five hun-  
dred thousands dollars, of Government funds, for  
which you hold my official receipt, the money  
had never been in circulation and was all in the  
original packages as issued from the Treasury.  
It was packed in the same boxes that contained  
it when shipped from Washington. The boxes  
were made of pine boards about one inch thick  
and the ends strapped with iron. Four of  
them held the sum total I have named above.  
I had them placed (as it is our usual custom)  
in the fore part of the cabin a short distance  
from the office of the boat. The position is the  
most desirable in consequence of its being light  
during the day and also the place near which  
a bright light is kept burning during the night.

"Lieut. Kruer of Co. "I" 9<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Vol. with thirty  
 "men of his command, reported to me just as the  
 "boxes containing the money were placed on board,  
 "to assist in taking charge of them, a guard was  
 "stationed around them, and all possible precautions  
 "taken for the safety of the money was used -  
 "The following paymasters with their clerks re-  
 "ported on board to proceed with me to Memphis  
 "as directed by you. viz., Major's L.C. Humphrey  
 "C. W. Brigden M. M. White, H. H. Jameson, Josiah  
 "Tidwell, H. B. Henderson and J. D. Greenwald,  
 "The boat left hind about 6<sup>th</sup> o'clock P.M.  
 "At 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. and reached Cairo about 9. P.M. of  
 "the 4<sup>th</sup>. On reaching the west I stationed a  
 "guard at the landing plank with instructions  
 "to prevent as far as possible any suspicious  
 "looking ~~person~~ from coming on board; and  
 "directed those on duty with the money to be as  
 "vigilant and watchful.  
 "We remained at Cairo until  
 "11 P.M. to enable the custom house officers to  
 "transact the necessary business, and then  
 "started again for Memphis. I was with the  
 "guard at the money boxes when the boat left  
 "the wharf and all was then safe. Most of the  
 "passengers retired immediately on leaving Cairo,  
 "and the boat was soon quiet. My clerk Mr.  
 "H. J. Goldward proposed to me to do the same  
 and I walked back to our stateroom with him.

"He went to bed, and I passed on through the ladies  
 "cabins to a small apartment in the stern to get

" passengers were uncommonly numerous  
and the boat was very quiet. My brother Mr.  
H. L. Goddard proposed to me to do the same  
and I walked back to our stateroom with him.

" He went to bed, and I passed on through the ladies' cabin to a small apartment in the stern to get a glass of water - a stair way leads from this apartment to rooms under deck which are used as nursery, laundry, etc. In passing the head of this stairway I noticed a bright light from a lamp and saw cots and bedding of various kinds piled up. These rooms were occupied by four negro women who were the only females on board.

My impression is that they had gone to sleep with lights burning in these rooms - After obtaining a glass of water I passed through the whole length of the cabin to where the money was placed to see that the guard was all right and every thing secure for the night. Finding things there as I wished I went out on the hurricane deck where the Captain of the boat was sitting to have a short conversation with him. I remained there some time, and on looking at my watch found it was just about midnight so I rose to retire, as I did so a watchman pushed up and informed the Captain that the boat was on fire. He left me in great haste and proceeded to the cabin where I discovered that the stern of the boat was enveloped in flames and the fire was very fierce. I stopped at my state room, wakened Mr. Goddard and told him to get every one up and prepare for the worst.

"I then returned to the guard with the money and  
" requested the officer to have his men fall in and  
" prepare to act as circumstances might require.  
" This he promptly accomplished and I stepped on  
" the guard to see where we were going. I found the  
" boat sounding to, under full headway and cap-  
" =idly approaching a bluff shore with banks about  
" fifteen feet above the water.  
" The fire was then gaining rapidly and it  
" was evident would cover every part of the  
" boat in a few moments. I instructed the  
" guard to be prepared to commence moving the  
" money the moment I gave them directions to do  
" so and again stepped on the guard to ascertain  
" where a landing was effected. I had just got =  
" ten out when the boat ran full "broad on" to  
" the bank and struck with prodigious force.  
" A stag[ing] ~~was~~ run out and in an instant  
" most of the crew and a number of the passen-  
" -gers who were crowded on the bow jumped off,  
" the mate had a chain cable ready and an  
" effort was made to fasten the boat to the shore,  
" but the fire had gained so rapidly that the  
" engineer was only able to stop one engine,  
" and the other keeping in motion rapidly reced[ed]  
" the boat struck and it receded from the shore  
" At this instant the flames and smoke  
" rushed forward enveloping the front part of  
" the boat, a general rush was made, and all

" was violently thrown from my position on the  
" board at the cabin deck, or to the bridge deck.

" the boat around" and it receded from "the shore.  
At this instant the flames and smoke  
pushed forward, enveloping the front part of  
the boat, a general rush was made, and

" was violently thrown from my position on the  
guard of the cabin deck, on to the boiler deck.  
Fortunately my fall was broken, by first  
striking the staging and some one passing  
underneath. I was still too much shocked to  
rise up rapidly, but managed to reach the long  
staging to the bank which dropped from the  
boat just as I reached it. In this way I reached  
the bank and was saved. From my position  
on the ~~front~~ of the cabin deck, I was in sight  
of the money and saw it was all there when  
I was thrown off and the boat leaving shore.  
The flames enveloped it instantly and it was  
unquestionably consumed. The majority  
of the guard escaped when the boat sank  
immediately at the ~~loss~~ but the five who were  
lost made I alluded to but the five who were  
pay tribute to the gallant behavior of Lieut. How,  
and the brave soldiers with him. They did their  
duty nobly, and remained to protect the money  
at the imminent risk and loss of their lives.  
The Lieut. and number of the men only so  
cared by swimming and drifting ashore.  
The five who were lost were either burned  
or jumped off the boat when too far to reach  
the land. The burning steamer soon explod-  
ed her steam pipe and the wheel stopped. The  
heavy chain cable was dragging and this retarded  
her progress so that she slowly drifted down  
the current, and finally was bogged either by

" her cable, or striking against a snag in fifteen  
 " feet of water. As the last person jumped off  
 " she was completely enveloped in flames, and  
 " having immense quantities of bacon coal and wood  
 " on board, the heat was sufficiently intense to  
 " fuse iron. From our position on the bank we  
 " could see the burning wreck until it was  
 " burned to the water's edge, and ample testimony  
 " can be furnished of the utter impossibility of any  
 " ship having been taken off the steamer.  
 " On ~~ascertaining~~  
 " pained to discover that Major Greenwaldt and  
 " Jameson, and Mr. Martin, Clerk to Major Gibbons,  
 " were missing. Every effort and search was made,  
 " no bodies could be found a steamer passed up  
 " about 3<sup>r</sup> A.M. and took us to Laro. On search-  
 " ing there I immediately telegraphed you and  
 " there obtained a government steamer to proceed  
 " to the wreck, several of our party returned with  
 " her to the place where the "Truth" had struck  
 " the shore ~~and carefully~~  
 " then followed to where the wreck was lagged,  
 " It had floated about two miles, and now lies about  
 " three miles below Wofford on the Missouri  
 " side, and within about a half a mile of the  
 " shore. The water was thought to be over fifty  
 " feet deep and nothing could be seen but

" the tops of some of the charred piles. We then

" returned to Laro and called on Genl. Buford

" three miles below Norfolk on the Missouri  
" side, and within about a half a mile of the  
" shore. The water was thought to be over five  
" feet deep and nothing could be seen but

" the tops of some of the charred piles. We then  
" returned to Cairo and called on Genl. Buford  
" commanding there. Was also fortunate as to  
" meet General Crook commanding at Columbus,  
" and Capt. Pennock of the Navy. On consultation  
" with these gentlemen it was decided that it  
" would be best to send a Gun-boat to the  
" wreck and have it watched until an effort  
" can be made to ascertain the contents of the  
" hold if any exist. Captain Pennock very  
" kindly offered to have the gun boat "Tyler" at  
" our disposal and she immediately left for the  
" vicinity of the wreck. The officer commanding  
" her was also instructed to have two small  
" manned and starting at the point the boat  
" first struck, to proceed closely along each  
" shore for twenty miles below, carefully search-  
" ing for any property that may have been  
" washed ashore. Major Niblack remained with  
" the gun boat to watch the result, since our  
" return here I am gratified to learn that  
" Major Greenwaldt was left at Cairo and  
" there fore was not on the "Truth" when she was  
" burned. He probably proceeded on a steamer  
" to Memphis which left soon after our de-  
" parture. I fear however that the clerks man-  
" ed as best will never be heard from. This  
" loss of life is very sad. Those of our corps  
" who were saved have lost all their personal  
" effects, and our loss in official papers is

very disastrous -

This report is more lengthy than I intended it should be, but the responsibility I feel under in having so large an amount of public funds lost whilst under my charge is so great, that I could not refrain from giving a full report of my whole course in taking care of it. If any precaution has been omitted, it has been an error of judgment, as I have conscientiously endeavored to do every thing in my power to fulfil my public trust.

Waiting your further instructions and suggestions to the action you may think advisable in this matter

I am Sir

Very respectfully  
Your obdt. Servt.

Nathan J. Brunton  
P. M. U. S. A.

Major Geo. L. Schuyler  
Chief Paymaster  
District of the Mississippi.

SP

The four boxes containing the money were piled one on the other right at the head

The four boxes containing the money were piled one on the other right at the head of the saloon aft. of the clerks office and perhaps six or eight feet from the office. There were also two boxes of Blanks, four in all, which were smaller than the money boxes, and which were by the side of the money, stacked in front one on the other. There were also the safes of the Paymaster's which stood near two or three of them close by the money boxes, and the other just across the passage.

I was with the boxes when they left the Paymaster's office in S. I. Lewis', and went down to the boat with them and tow them put aboard in the joint I have described and they were not moved from that place at all afterwards.

I last saw them there when I left the boat at the bluff below Davis, and the guard, was there with them. I am sure these boxes could not float and judging from the weight it necessary to move them I conclude they weighed about (300) Three hundred pounds each. The boat was drift ing out from the shore at the time I was thrown overboard, and at that time the boxes were unmoved and the guard was still with them - there was no effort made to move the money. One of the boxes of Blanks was marked and the guard had commenced to drag it out,

There was no chance to get the boxes of money ashore, there was no time to do it. The rush of the flames was so mad, it was impossible to get the money boxes ashore. The boat remained at the bank only an instant. I had not turned over any of the money to the pay masters it was intended to do that at Memphis. The money was taken only for the use of those pay masters who went with me, but a corps of pay masters were waiting below for some of this money, and the ~~final~~ distribution was to be effected at Memphis. I did not count the money remaining in the ~~box~~ opened, the lid being only partially removed. I know that there was money left in the box, but cannot state the amount. The place made vacant by the \$ 240. 00 <sup>100</sup> taken out, was filled with blank day account packed tightly so as to keep the money in place. The box was then immediately nailed and bound as before opened. I was present in the Treasury saw the ~~box~~ opened the money (\$ 240. 00 <sup>100</sup>) taken out, the blanks put in, and the box closed.

Signed Nathan J. Brinton

Henry L. Goddard being duly sworn deposes...  
as follows:

I am Clerk for Major Brinton Pay  
Master H. S. C. and was with him on the  
Steamer "Rush".

I think it was on the evening of the  
3d of August we left St. Louis. I was with  
Major Brinton all the time up to the burning  
of the Steamer. I was with him when he drew  
the money for which Major Hebiger gave  
him the check. [REDACTED] He drew two millions  
less hundred thousand dollars, that was  
the amount of the check and receipt. He  
drew Treasury notes in the original packe-  
-yes, the money was not counted, only one  
of the boxes (of which there was four) was  
opened, that was box number "Three" Head-  
-ing numbers, this box was opened for the  
purpose of taking out two hundred and  
forty thousand dollars, so as to reduce the  
amount taken below to two million six  
hundred thousand dollars. I saw the box  
opened in the office of the Treasurer. The  
money taken out was counted, that which  
was left in the box was not counted, I saw  
the box closed up again, I am certain that  
no more was taken out than the two hun-  
-dred and forty thousand dollars. Of the money  
taken out forty thousand dollars was in  
ten dollar bills and the remainder in fives.

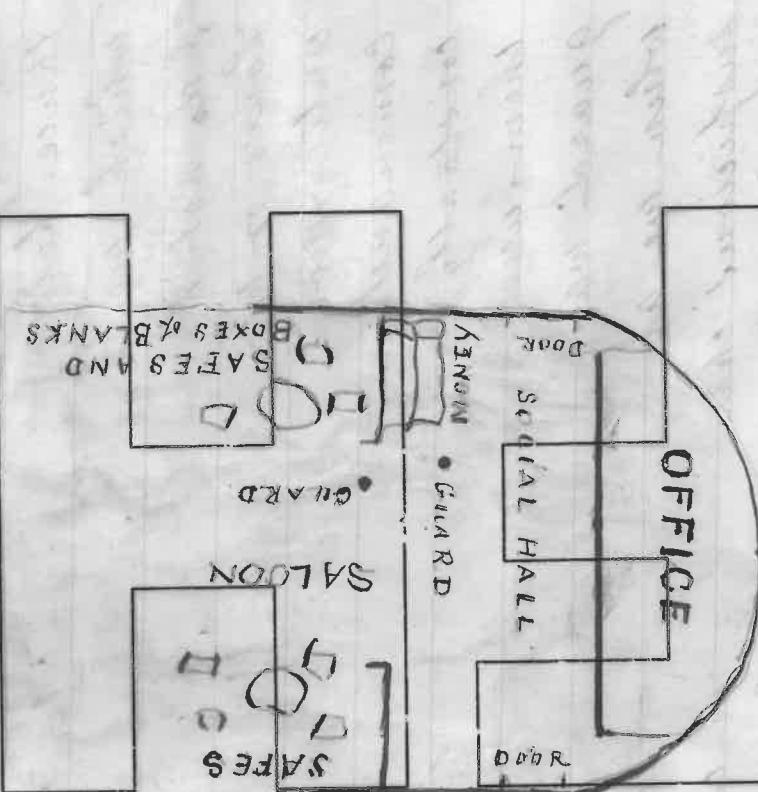
The box that was opened contained five, and  
Send only.

I did not know what was contained  
in the other boxes, except by the list that  
was furnished from Washington and which  
stated them as ones, twos, fives, tens and  
Twenty, that list was lost in Major  
Brenton's safe. There was no postal cer-  
tency in that box. Never having seen  
the money it would be impossible for  
me to give the denominations or series.  
The received the four boxes in pay-  
ment of the check given by Major Ferguson  
This money was delivered to us by Mr  
Wmde Cashier of the Treasury, Major  
Brenton and myself were the only persons  
present when the money was delivered  
to us. G. W. S. told me that the boxes  
were received, and they remained in the  
~~Treasury until~~ Mon day they appeared in  
the same condition and had remained  
in the S. H. S. Treasury until that time,

As far as I know as Mon day after =  
noon at 4 o'clock those boxes were taken  
from the S. H. S. Treasury to the "Ramer" Ruck  
or a Government wagon - Major Brenton  
and myself going back the wagon to the  
boat on carrying the boxes were removed  
to the steamer by the Guard. Major Brenton

going with the guard with the first box, and I remained with the rest until they were all removed. The boxes were piled together by two at the head of the saloon near the Clerk's office against the larboard side, against the bulkhead of the state room.

"(This diagram shows correctly the position of the Boxes, safe &c.)"



The boxes of money were piled in two tiers two boxes high. After the money boxes were piled I went directly on board of the boat, the guards were immediately stationed by the money in two posts. We left port about 6 o'clock on the morning of the third, I saw the boxes before we left Port and am certain that they had not been opened. - The box that was opened in the Sub Treasury was re-joined as it was before the money was taken out.

The boat arrived at Cairo about 9 o'clock P.M. on the fourth. On the trip down I very often visited the banks, as was my custom when Major Benton has charge of funds. I am satisfied the boxes had not been removed or tampered with from the time they were put aboard until after the fire had broken out and the boat had fallen off the bank where it was found impossible to secure her. The boat was tied up the night we left from some distance below St. Louis, at some bar below which we reached some time about 11 o'clock. I do not know the exact distance from St. Louis or the place - We remained tied up until morning. The order was given to the commander of the guards to have two men constantly on duty at the boats not to leave them under any pretence. And an extra guard was thrown out at the gang plank when we arrived at Cairo to prevent any suspicious characters from coming aboard. The boat lay at Cairo about two hours. I do not know that any extra guard was thrown out when we tied up the preceding night. I do not know on which side of the shore we tied up whether on the Missouri or Illinois on the night of the disaster - I "turned in" directly after we left Cairo and was asleep when the fire broke out,

was awakened about ten or fifteen minutes  
of 12 o'clock by Major Brenton who went  
to the front of the boat to give the guard  
orders, while dressing the boat struck  
and the fire drove me from my room. I  
found no person in the social hall, and  
the boxes of money safes and other property  
undisturbed. On the stairs I found one of  
the guard with a box of blanks. I did  
not go down at once on account of the crowd.  
Upon arriving at the boiler deck I saw  
nothing of the guard or the box of bla-  
nks. The boat having succeeded to near  
the centre of the river, I partially undressed,  
and swam ashore. The fire when  
I left the boat was bursting from the  
windows of the clerks office, and I am  
confident no one could have been in the  
saloon after I left it. Before I reached  
shore the fire had reached the back-  
staff <sup>Twenty</sup> minutes from the breaking  
out of the fire, the upper works fell  
into the hold, which must have carried  
the boxes of money safes <sup>to</sup> with them.

I was in the second state room  
lack of the money boxes and the fire  
drove me from my state room.

From what I know of the building of the  
boat I should suppose that the  
boxes in falling through the upper deck

would land forward of, and to the lar-  
board of the boilers.

No change was apparent in the po-  
sition of our property, except the removal  
of one box of blanks which had  
been dragged out by the guard to the  
bottom of the stairs. I am quite positive  
that the box that was dragged out was  
not one of the money boxes, as I saw  
them all in the saloon as I passed through  
and also a noticeable difference in the  
shape size and appearance of the boxes.

(Signed)

Henry J. Goddard

St Louis Mo. Augt. 15<sup>th</sup> 1863.  
The Board adjourned until 9 o'clock A.M. August

15<sup>th</sup>

The Board met pursuant to adjournment - Present  
all the members of the Board.

Major Joseph Wilson

Pay master H. J. G. being duly sworn depo-  
=ses as follows.

I am a Pay master of the District of the Mississippi  
I submit the following report I made to Major Teller  
in regard to the circumstances connected with the  
loss of the money. It is true.

Pay Department  
St Louis Mo. Aug 14<sup>th</sup> 1863.

"Major

"In accordance with your order of Augt. 1<sup>st</sup> 1863 I make the following report.

" As per Order, myself and several other Pay-Masters, Major Brinton in charge left this place for Memphis, Tenn. Major Brinton having in charge

" several wooden boxes containing United States

" currency, said to contain Two Million and six

" hundred thousand dollars, with a guard of a

" Lieutenant and ~~thirty~~ soldiers of the 9<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin

" Regt. We left Monday eve. August 3<sup>d</sup> 1863. on

" the Steam boat "Truth".

" Between the hours of eleven and twelve o'clock on Tuesday night ten miles below Cairo,

" Illinois, the Steam boat "Truth" was destroyed by fire,

" and the money must have all been burned, for

" the following reasons. The boxes containing the

" money were piled up in the cabin, on the right

" opposite the clerks office, and under a strong

" guard of soldiers. In not to exceed ten minutes

" the fire swept through the boat destroying the

" soldiers from their posts, and destroying every

" thing before it. It was impossible for Major

" Brinton to have it removed to the shore. There

" were some forty cords of dry wood, a large amount

" of coal, and a quantity of Bacon, on the lower deck

" and immediately under the boxes of money, so

" that as the Cabin was burned down the boxes

" of money must have fallen directly into this com-  
" bined combustible material, and was there exposed  
" to its fire from three to five hours, before the wreck  
" sunk. The wreck now lies some four miles  
" below the scene of disaster, sunk in from fifteen  
" to twenty-five feet of water.

By direction of Major Brinton, I have re-  
" mained at, and near the wreck for the past  
" week, and it has been guarded by soldiers, and  
" more remains as near as I can judge in the  
" same condition as when first sunk.

" And in my opinion Major Brinton did all it  
" was possible for him to do to save the money,  
" and that the money was utterly and entirely  
" consumed by the fire.

Josiah Tidwell  
(supposed) Paymaster G. L. H.

To Major George L. Tidwell  
chief Paymaster Department of the Mississippi  
Faint Adams Mo.

I left the boat, after the strong wind from the  
shore at the time of the fire, and swam ashore.  
The next morning I went down to the wreck in  
Company Major Brinton and others, arriving there  
about 9 o'clock in the morning. We found the  
wreck lying about six or eight miles above  
Columbus in fifteen or twenty feet of water, near  
the Missouri shore, most of her wheel house was

above water. She was lying about one third of  
the way across the river. When we reached the

wreck lying about six or eight miles above  
Columbus in fifteen or twenty feet of water, near  
the Missouri shore, part of her wheel house was

above water. She was lying about one third of  
the way across the river. When we reached the  
wreck we found the watchman of the boat, and  
a guard sent by General Ishboth on the shore. I  
do not know how long they had been there.

We returned to Cairo, and that night the  
gun boat "Tyler" went down to the wreck, and  
remained until the next day. There was a per-

"manent guard ordered to remain on the shore  
near the wreck by General Ishboth.

There was little or nothing of the wreck above  
the surface of the water.  
There no boats except the watchman's boat,  
near the wreck when we went down. The  
guards stationed by General Ishboth had orders  
not to allow any small boats to go near the  
wreck.

(Signed) Josiah Gildem  
Caymester U. S. C. S.

Major J. S. Greenwalt

Caymester U. S. C. S. Being duly sworn depon-  
ted as follows  
I submit the following report I made to Major  
Ranger.

Asstt Louis Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> 1863.

" Major,

" Your communication of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. deserving  
a statement of what I know of the position and  
condition of the money on board steam boat "Ruth"

"at the time she was burned, and also my opinion  
"with reasons of its partial or total destruction, is  
"received.

"In reply I will state, that the boxes said to  
"contain the money to pay the troops, were placed  
"in the cabin, in the front part of the boat, near the  
"officer, under the guard of a detachment of soldiers.

"When the "Ruth" arrived at Cairo, August 4<sup>th</sup>

"about 10. O'clock P.M. I was informed she would  
"remain until the arrival of the cars, say 3 o'clock

"the following morning. Doctor Bevill and I  
"went ashore to get some writing matter, we visited  
"the Saint Charles Hotel, and Mr. Theodore Adams

"conversed about an hour with him, returned to  
"the boat and found the "Ruth" had left for

"Memphis.

"The "City of Alton" lay at the wharf, engaged  
"upon her for Memphis. I could not get  
"a slate room or berth and took a seat upon

"deck. At about 12 o'clock I discovered a bright  
"light in a westerly direction. At about 3 o'clock

"and forty minutes the "City of Alton" left Cairo

"for Memphis, when about fourteen miles below

"Cairo and about five o'clock A. M. on the morn-

"ing of the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. we passed the burning hulk  
"of a large boat, looking like a large ark, filled  
"with burning coals, which I believe to be the remains of the  
"steamboat "Ruth," and I believe that any thing  
"left upon the boat, was either burned to ashes, or

"melted away to a cinder. During the day and previous  
"to the burning of the "Ruth" she took on a large

" with burning coals, which to be the remains of one  
" Steamboat "Ruth"; and I believe that any thing  
" left upon the boat, was either burned to ashes, or

" melted away to a cinder. During the day and previous  
" to the burning of the "Ruth" she took on a large  
" stock of wood, perhaps between fifty and eighty  
" cords, had a good supply of coal, and a large  
" quantity of bacon, making an intense heat suffi-  
" cient to burn any thing, and should the money  
" have been on board, and doubtless it was, under  
" the eyes of the guard must be totally destroyed -

" The burning boat appeared to be anchored  
" as I distinctly saw a chain hanging over the bow,  
" and to be aground on a sand bar. A few miles  
" below the burning wreck, we came upon a  
" large number of turned and dead cattle floating  
" upon the water, also charred pieces of timber.  
" Supposed to have been from the lost boat.

" I continued on the city of Alton, and could  
" learn nothing of the name of the lost boat,  
" until the night of the 2d we arrived in Mem-  
" phis, when the pilot of the "Ruth" advised and  
" informed me, the burning wreck I saw was  
" the "Ruth" and that the fire was first discovered  
" in the mornin, joining the carpenter's shop.  
" On the evening of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst, I left Memphis  
" for Cairo where I arrived on the morning of the  
" 5<sup>th</sup> inst. The same evening I left Cairo for Colum-  
" bus, on board the Crawford, with a view to  
" recover the body of Theodore J. Fisher, my  
" nephew and clerk, whom I now believed to be lost,  
" he having taken passage with me on Board the  
" "Ruth" on the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. On the

" morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. I visited the wreck, and  
" found it sunken, filled with water, resting on a  
" sand bar, with a portion of the bow and stern  
" visible, the "Buck" lying along side, all in charge  
" of Major Garrison, who was making every effort,  
" to recover the bodies of those lost, and the dead-  
" =use belonging to Government.

" On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. Major Tilden  
" and I, with four men and boat, proceeded down  
" the river to Columbus, with a view to recover  
" the bodies of our [redacted] crew, and to have description  
" of those bodies picked up below that point the day  
" previous, when about leaving Columbus for the  
" week, we received your telegram ordering  
" us to do, which we promptly obeyed  
" arriving here on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst.

[redacted]  
very respectfully  
of your Obd. Servt.

(signed) J. J. Greenwall.

[redacted] Adm' P. M. U. S. A.

" Major Geo. D. Schreiber

Chief Paymaster of U. S. A.

of the Division of the Mississippi)

I was of the party of Paymasters on the "Buck," and  
was left by accident at Columbus.

I proceeded the same night down the river  
on the "City of Alton." We passed the "Buck"  
about 5 o'clock in the morning, she was lying

I proceeded the same night down the river on the "City of Alton". We passed the "Butch" about 5 o'clock in the morning, she was lying.

with her nose up stream apparently held by the chain cable which I could see above her bow, and I thought she was on a sand bar. She was burnt down to the hull, and seemed to me like a large ark filled with burning coals. I know that there was a large stock of wood, a good supply of coal, and a large quantity of bacon on board the "Butch", which in burning make an intense heat, sufficient to destroy ~~any~~ <sup>nothing</sup> on board.

Some miles below the wreck we came upon a large number of dead cattle, floating upon the water, doubtless a part of the cargo of the "Butch".

I saw the boxes brought on the boat at St. Louis stowed in ~~the~~ saloon, and the guard placed over them. But I cannot say from my own knowledge, what the boxes contained.

I know that the first night from St. Louis we were tied up from about 9 o'clock until day light next morning, on account of a bad fog in the river about 26 miles below Saint Louis.

I was up for two or three hours that night after we tied up. And I do not know that any body came on board or went off the boat.

There were no boats lying near us.

(Signed) J. D. Greenwald

Attest. P. M. G. L. S. C. S.

26.

Major Wm Wallace White.

Pay master Q. M. S. being duly sworn,  
deposes as follows.

I first submit my report I made to Major  
Fehiger, in regard to the circumstances connec -  
ted with the loss of the money.

"Lamont Louis, August 10<sup>th</sup> 1863.

Major G. L. Fehiger  
Pay master, Q. M. C. P.

Sir,

I am in receipt of your communication of  
the 1<sup>st</sup> inst, in which you request me to render  
a statement of what I know of the position and  
condition of the money on board the steamer "Ruth"  
at the time she was burned, and also my opinion  
with respect of its partial or total destruction,  
and any other information which may be  
valuable in relieving Major Brinton from  
responsibility on its account.

I went on board the "Ruth" between

4 & 5 o'clock P. M. 3d inst.

About the same time I saw Govt. wagon  
driven down to the boat accompanied by a  
guard of soldiers and Major Brinton. Certain  
boxes were removed from wagon and taken  
up into the forward cabin of the "Ruth" and  
the guard referred to was marched on board  
at the same time, and placed in charge of

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buses were removed from <sup>one</sup> wagon and taken  
up into the forward cabin of the "Truth" and  
the guard referred to was marched on board  
at the same time, and placed in charge of

said boxes. I was not informed by Major Brewster  
of the contents of said boxes; and having no  
supervision or control over them, I made no  
inquiry.

At the same time it seemed to be under-  
stood by the other pay masters on board that  
said boxes contained Govt. money, in charge  
of Major Brewster; and I also heard it stated  
in use in the Pay Department. I had no  
knowledge whatever beyond this - no official  
knowledge or information of the contents of  
said boxes.

Taking it for granted that said boxes  
contained the money you inquire about, I am  
over the first branch of your inquiry by  
stating that said boxes were piled in the open  
space between the open space and between  
the boat office and forward state room on the  
starboard side, close against the side of the  
state room. The safes and voucher boxes be-  
longing to the several Paymasters, on board,  
were placed near by, on either side of the  
cabin, in front of state rooms, and in full  
view of the guard. It seems proper to state  
that some five or more of the forward state  
rooms, on either side of the boat, were then  
unfinished and unoccupied.

They appeared to be a recent addition,  
simply enclosed, without doors or interior

ittings. It was against the front side of the foremost of these unfinished state rooms, on the larboard side, that said boxes were placed and guarded. The upper guards of the boat opposite the location specified, appeared to be about 8 feet in width; and a perpendicular line let fall from the outer edge of said guards to the lower deck, would apparently leave a space of at least 12 feet between said line, and the outer edge of the lower guards of the boat. Its said [ ] boxes were piled several feet inside the cabin from the upper guards, it cannot be much out of the way to estimate the distance between the location of said boxes and the outer edge of the lower guards on the larboard side, at 23 feet, or more; the distance on the starboard side being increased by nearly the width of the cabin. This estimate of relative location is important in connection with an opinion of the ultimate fate of said boxes and their contents.

According to my idea, then, the location of said boxes was over and within the hull lines, and in falling, therefore, they would lodge in the hold, or upon the deck over the hold, and by no possibility upon the boat guns. - Such was the position of said boxes on the first alarm of fire.

At that time (very near midnight) I was

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guards. - Such was the position of said boxes  
on the first alarm of fire.

At that time (very near mid-night) I was

near the location of said boxes, conversing  
with Major Mendenhall; and I cannot re-  
call now that there were any other persons  
then present in the cabin except 2 or 3 of the  
guard on duty. While thus conversing, the  
first alarm of fire was given by a colored  
woman, who ran forward from the ladies  
cabin. I proceeded to wake up my clerk  
and as many others as possible. In a few  
seconds the alarm was general over the boat.  
I then returned to the forward part of the  
cabin, where I met Major Binton.

He suggested that we (Paymasters)  
should make that place our stand until  
the result of the alarm was developed. I  
conversed in that idea and acted according-  
ly. Very soon the boat struck the shore  
with a terrible crash. But discovering,  
some what to my surprise, that she still  
held together, I concluded at once that  
there was no further risk of life, and that  
some property might possibly be saved,  
and that concession was based on the very  
natural supposition that the boat would  
be held fast to the shore. I then carried  
my trunk from my state room, and placed  
it beside the other property belonging to  
Pay masters. At that time the guard was  
still on duty. I returned to my state room  
again - when I discovered the floor of it

burning, and immediately the flames burst through the cabin floor, in every direction as far forward as the front of the wheelhouse. I saw at once that the fire was extending forward more rapidly under than above the floor; and it was then, too, fully realized that there was not only no hope of saving property, but that a speedy exit from the cabin was necessary to save life.

As I passed forward I saw the soldiers moving out, and down the stair way to the lower deck. (For it this and soon after the alarm, one of the soldiers moved one of hand boxes, by whose orders I can not state, ~~but~~ <sup>but</sup> ~~now~~ <sup>now</sup> with the box out side of the cabin and near the top of the other way, but he was suddenly overthrown by the rush, and the box fell on top of him. Subsequently the box remained near where it fell.)

As I passed out of the cabin, behind the soldiers, I turned to look at the flames. They had then possessed more than half way of the cabin, and were smoldering forward at a rapid rate. None may have been other persons in the cabin at that moment, but if so, they must have been in slate rooms, for as my eye swept

the open space of the cabin floor, from

©  
ward at a fearful rate. There may have been other persons in the cabin at that moment, but if so, they must have been in state rooms; for as my eye swept

the open space of the cabin floor, from the office forward to the flames aft, not a human being was visible.

On reaching the lower deck, I took

my stand just aft of the gang plank, not doubting for a moment but there was ample time for all to pass out, still supposing the boat fast to the shore.

But a few seconds only had elapsed when the gang-plank slipped from the boat into the water. Instantly realized

for the first time, that the boat was not fast to the shore, but was then swinging out into the stream. I immediately stepped forward to the edge of the gunwale

and sprang into the water - Major, James son, Brigdon, Wilson and Mr. God-

-dard must have jumped about the same time, from forward of the gang plank - we all reached the shore, and were, I presume, the last saved from the burning boat. I have thus detailed my personal knowledge and observation while on board, and can say confidently that the boxes in question were not disturbed (except as I have stated) up to the time I jumped overboard. —

While in the water the struggle for life was too serious to permit any attention to

32.

" the boat, except that I noticed the explosion '  
 " of her steam pipes. Thought to have started  
 " perhaps, that prior to jumping, I glanced off, on  
 " the outside (starboard), to note the progress of the  
 " flames, and so saw that they were spreading  
 " over the wheel house, in the cabin. However,  
 " at that time, they must have spread quite as  
 " far forward as the locality of said boxes.  
 " On reaching the shore I sat down exhausted,  
 " and steadily watched the burning boat until  
 " she drifted out of sight - unless, perhaps, for  
 " seconds, when the scene was too horrible to  
 " gaze upon.  
 " While thus watching, I saw nothing  
 " thrown over-board - nothing leave the boat,  
 " except the form of one man, who jumped  
 " from her ~~burned~~ bow, nearly in mid air,  
 " the fire seemed to spread with intense fury,  
 " and by the time she had fairly sprung  
 " cross-wise of the river all her upper works  
 " fell to the main deck - the flames then  
 " seemed to be ~~universal~~ enveloping every part  
 " except the extreme bow, I should judge that  
 " she remained in sight a full half hour  
 " after I reached the shore, and during that  
 " time, and when she disappeared from sight  
 " around a point of land below, the whole  
 " interior of her hull appeared to be one fur-  
 " nace of fire.

" time, and when she disappeared from sight  
" around a point of land below, the whole  
" interior of her hull appeared, to be one fur=  
" nace of fire.

I know, from personal observation, that there  
was from 40 to 50 cords of dry wood on the  
lower deck of the boat, and I know from  
hear say dimly, that there was a large quant  
=ity of bituminous coal stowed there, and  
it was understood on board messmates, that  
her hold was filled with boxes of bacon.—

From the above facts, I do not hesitate in  
coming to the following conclusions.

Fish - that said boxes were not  
moved or meddled with (except as stated)  
until the upper works fell to the lower deck,  
unless they were disturbed or moved while it  
was in the water, that being the only time,  
or period of time, that I was in a condition  
not to observe. Second, the fire originating  
in, and being at first confined to, the upper  
works and more especially to the open space  
of her cabin. I feel confident that said  
boxed and contents must have been pretty  
thoroughly consumed before falling to the  
main deck; and at the time the upper works  
fell, I am confident that the main or lower  
deck was still standing, as it could only  
have caught gradually from the dropping  
of the fire from above, and besides there was  
not the slightest appearance, that it gave way  
in the crash -

whatever fell, then unconsumed from

" above, was subjected to the additional heat  
 " of the burning of dry wood, coals, and other  
 " combustible materials on the main deck  
 " and in the hold. I mean of course what  
 " ever fell within and upon the dimensions  
 " of the hull; and the statement already  
 " made of the relative locality of said boxes,  
 " in reference to this very point permits me to  
 " add that if said boxes or their contents, fell uncon-  
 " sumed, they fell within the length and beam of the  
 " hull, and were subject to the intense burning which  
 " immediately followed.

Third - if said boxes contained Treasury notes, put  
 up in original packages similar to those hereto-  
 fore distributed to ~~passengers~~<sup>just believe there is a variety</sup>, from ~~them~~ of one gift.  
 After consuming the wooden box, the fire would  
 encounter heavy wrapping paper, enveloping each  
 package and sealed with sealing wax, burning  
 through that, it would come to the small sub-  
 packages, bound together with twine; on burning  
 the twine, those sub-packages would separate and  
 fall apart; at last such is my experience in  
 cutting the wine. Therefore I do not indulge the  
 shadow of a doubt that whatever of said boxes  
 or contents, fell to the lower deck unconsumed  
 were subsequently consumed in the furnace of  
 fire which thereupon appeared. It is utterly im-  
 possible for language to convey an adequate idea  
 of the intensity of that fire, nothing but actual

" were subsequently consumed in the furnace of  
" fire which therupon appeared. It is utterly im-  
" possible for language to convey an adequate idea  
" of the intensity of that fire, nothing but actual

sight could impress the reality -

From the first alarm until I reached shore, I do not recollect of seeing Major Brinton but once, and then, at the time and under the circumstan- ced stated. When or how he escaped, I cannot state from personal knowledge.

My own observation, which was confined

to the cabin from the first alarm until I left it as stated, does not, and did not suggest any thing that Major Brinton could have done, as officer in charge, to change or modify the disas- trous result. Whatever anticipations may have been indulged in at first, it was too soon demon- strated to all left on board, that the crisis was disengaged of every thought or question, except the simple one of life or death -

I have thus given you my own experience and observations, and my conclusions therefrom relative to your inquiry - I will now proceed to other details, not without interest and perhaps of importance in reaching the summing up of a terrible calamity.

To the burning steamer was floating out of sight, my clerk, Mr. J. S. Green, and Mr. Morris, clerk to Major Brinson, followed down the shore until they encountered a canoe, in which they put out to the steamer, detached the yawl which was towing astern, and rowed around to ascertain, whether a human being was then on board or in the water.

" They discovered no one, neither did they hear any  
" cries for help.

" At that time as Mr. Green informed me, the  
" vessel was completely in flames except the extreme  
" point of the bow; and before they could get away  
" that part also was on fire; thus by the statements  
" of these young men, who were the last witnesses  
" among those in any way attached to the boat, the  
" fire progressed with the results that were evident  
" as she drifted from the sight of those who remained  
" where she first struck the shore. —

" About two hours after [ ] Green & Morris return-  
" ed, the steamer " Shingee" came up and took us  
" on board.

" On the passage to Laysan, the Capt. of the " Iao"  
" " [ ] Green informed me that the wreck was burning  
" fiercely when he passed it - the heat being intense  
" and prohibiting all approach. He stated more  
" over, that it appeared to be anchored - that he did-

" distinctly see the cable stretching from the hull.  
" This statement excited me to make inquiry as to the

" location of the anchor, prior to the fire; and I was  
" informed that it rested on the forward guards,  
" and must have dropped into the water as the  
" guards turned or fell.

" It was attached to a chain cable, it must have  
" held the wreck at anchor until the fastenings  
" of the cable in-board gave way or were destroyed.

" I have not learned whether the wreck sank at  
that point.

"guards turned or fell.

" If it was attached to a chain cable, it must have

" held the wreck at anchor until the fastenings

" of the cable in-board gave way or were destroyed.

" I have not learned whether the wreck sank at

that point.

" The Gov't property on the "Buck" in my possession  
" and subject to my control, was one iron safe and  
" one wooden box, both of which were placed  
" near the boxes in question, and these remained  
" when I left the cabin to escape - The safe contain-  
" ed all my retained vouchers, receipts, abstract-book,  
" check book, and every memorandum or paper -  
" connected with my past disbursements.

" The wooden box contained all the stationary  
" drawn on my trip ~~to~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~expedition~~ (not incl.) together  
" with a small quantity then on hand equal in  
" value to \$ 30 -

" My individual property lost consisted  
" of my entire wardrobe (except the clothing I had  
" on) together with trunks, blankets, revolver, etc.,  
" all being valued at \$ 300. now

Very respect'ly th: M: G: Lovst.

(signed) Wm Wallace White  
Capt'l Pay Master, U.S.A.

I am attached to the Pay District of the Mississippi.  
My impression is that the box I saw the soldier  
have outside the cabin was one of the four  
money boxes, it was about 5 feet in length, and  
about 15 or 16 inches in width and depth, square  
across the end, the same to all appearance as the  
boxes said to contain the money. The box fell  
on to the floor near the head of the stair way -

I think that from a medical line from the spot where the box lay on the deck, would strike inside the hull of the boat - I think when the upper works gave way this box, I think must have fallen on the deck over the hold, or into the hold. But one soldier had hold of the box, he seemed to have raised it on end with great difficulty, I am quite positive this box was not removed from the boat.

After the return of Mr. Green and Mr. Morris some of the boat's crew took the yawl and started down the river, they met the "Pungies" and returned on her.

I cannot state whether they went as far down as the wreck, but presume they did.

(Signed) Wm Wallace White.

The Board adjourned until Monday Aug. 14 at 9 o'clock A. M.

A true copy  
from the record.

James H. Wright  
Capt. 4<sup>th</sup> Inf. Co. F.  
Recorder.