

George Hills

Extract from a newspaper (source unknown) at the time of his death in 1916 provided by descendant Andrew Hirth:

He described how soon after the crash he scrambled into the rigging of the mainmast, and raised himself into the ratlines. "I had not been there more than a few minutes," he told an interviewer, "when a gigantic billow crashed over the vessel, and swept me and the mast into the boiling sea. Fortunately the mizzen stay was made fast to it, and thus I did not get far from the vessel. At about this time the ship broke in three, leaving the aftpart perched on one rock and the forepart on another, while the engines and boilers sank to the bed of the sea. The topsides bridged the gap, while the billows rolled beneath. Meanwhile I was fighting for dear life in the tumbling sea. Shortly after the engines fell through the bottom of the ship the mast to which I was sticking was swept between an opening in the rocks. A great sea caught the heel of it as it was going through, and instantly the upper portion, to which I was attached, was flung into the air. It was for all the world like being attached to lash end of a whip, and being flicked through space. Thus I was tumbled once or twice, and then the mast drifted alongside the wreck. There I was observed clinging to the spar, and brave young Soren Holm (one of the foremast hands) came to my assistance, helping me with difficulty to regain the steamer. Soon after I was on board again it was pointed out that my thumb was where my little finger ought to be, and I found that it had been broken. How or when the injury was sustained, I did not know, nor did I care, for I had been battered about so much in other ways that I was quite numbed and almost insensible to pain. By this time all those who had not perished were huddled together on the after end of the wreck. The seas caught the fore part, and slewed it right around, but as the after part was well ballasted with copper, it kept pretty steady."