

Mr. Marjoram's Account

Mr. Marjoram also reported on his experience on board the *Royal Tar*. His account was first printed by Charles Ellms in The Tragedy of the Seas ...

Mr. William Marjoram, a very religious man, spoke about his adventure on the *Royal Tar*. At 2 p.m., the engineer reported that there was no water in the boiler. Captain Reed ordered the anchor to be dropped. However, when the fire was discovered, Captain Reed told the boy who reported it to keep quiet. Fifteen people got into one boat, Captain Reed and four men got into the other boat, and both boats rowed towards the shore. Men, women, and children were running in all directions. When the sails were raised, they caught fire. Mr. Marjoram started preaching to the passengers, telling them to stay calm and to trust in God. He also reminded them that they were sinful creatures and hoped that they would be given.

By the time Captain Reed came back, several people had caught on fire and jumped into the sea. Some were holding on to the stern. The fire filled the middle of the steam boat, so people in the bow (front) couldn't talk to people in the stern (rear). When the cutter (the revenue cutter) came close, people got ready to jump on board, but the cutter started to turn around! Captain Reed got on the cutter, came back to the *Royal Tar*, and took some of the passengers off the stern. The cutter and the cutter's boat were afraid to come too close to the *Royal Tar* because it had gunpower on board. Mr. Marjoram was taken off the steamer three hours after it caught on fire. As soon as he was on the cutter, he helped people out of the smaller boat that was carrying survivors from the *Royal Tar*.

Mr. Marjoram was thankful to all the people on the islands who helped to find clothing for the survivors, who took care of their injuries, and who helped them get to Portland. He blamed the accident on crew members who were neglectful and lacked courage.

Smith, Barbara Darrah. Terror at Sea. Cape Elizabeth, ME: The Provincial Press, 1995.

[Edited and rewritten for fourth grader by Ann Dodd-Collins