

An Enquiry held under the
Law of 24th July 1874 into the circum-
stances attending the loss of the
barge "E. P. Haendel" of Bremen, before

Assessors { Robert Esq. Consul of Bremen
Arthur Bailey Esq. Police Magistrate
and Receiver of Wrecks
John Langdon, Esq.
Captain J. H. M. L. Seeman, German
Master Mariner
Captain John Scott, of Barge "Aimée"
British Master Mariner

Monday 29th November 1874.

The Assessors were first duly
sworn.

Captain Gerhard Schöck was
called, and was not sworn. He stated as
follows:-

I have been master of the "E. P.
Haendel" since July 1873. I have held a
certificate as shipmaster since July 1871.
I think my certificate was burnt with
the ship. I sailed on my last voyage
from Bremerhaven for Honolulu direct
on the 28th of August last. The ship was
laden with about 400 tons of coal and a
general cargo including 27 cases of gun powder
a quantity of spirits and tar. There was
no through ventilation provided but
surface

surface ventilation by means of three spacious wooden ventilators about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet square, one in each hatch, the fore and after hatches being always open, also one passing through the after peak into the lower hold and another from the topgallant forecastle passing into the same. The last two were always open. Nothing of consequence occurred on the voyage, but there were several severe gales during which the vessel laboured and rolled excessively but sustained in my opinion no damage. On the morning of the 12th November I noticed a close smell like gas. I first sent the second mate below to see if he could discover anything. He reported the smell much stronger in the between decks, I then went below myself without a light and crept along to the main hatch ventilator. I did not find the coal heated but noticed a very strong smell. On this I immediately ordered the main hatch to be opened, the ship being

being under the lee of Staten Island,
and had a quantity of coal thrown
up on deck to make room to work.

The deeper we worked the warmer
the coals became, and I then told
the carpenter to drive an iron bar
about 9 feet down through the coals,
and let it remain about a quarter
of an hour. On withdrawing it it
was considerably warm about 4 or 5
feet from the surface but not at
either end. During this time the
coals were smoking, and the smoke
became denser. After some time I

had the bar driven in again deeper
than before, 12 feet, and in withdraw-
ing it after half an hour I found
it so hot I could not handle it. I
concluded there was fire in the ship
which had taken considerable hold.
We were still passing coal up until
the men fainted and had to be
hauled on deck with ropes. I was also
below and found it impossible to
work. We then closed all hatches, all
ventilators and openings, previously
having

ing passed the powder on deck
and I decided to run for Port Stanley.
On the 13th November running with a
fair wind the smoke drove us out of
the cabin. On the 14th November at
8.30 a.m. all three hatches blew up at
the same time, a dense smoke coming
through. I immediately had all the
powder thrown over board, and got
the boats provisioned. I then ordered
the hatches to be closed again, which
was done as well as possible. In the
afternoon I perceived smoke coming
through the seams of the deck, the
pitch having melted. I plugged the
scupper holes and flooded the deck
with water. At 11 p.m. a strong breeze
arose from E.S.E. with heavy squalls
about 6.30 a.m. on the 15th I saw the
lighthouse, about this time the three
hatches blew up again, also the boot
hatch. I again had them secured.
About 7.30 a.m. we passed the
lighthouse and received a pilot
on board at the William Islands.
The ship

The ship was brought to an anchor
in 6 fathoms in Port William. Several
boats came alongside and I sent my
passengers with their effects up to
Stanley. I was informed that there
was a fire engine in Stanley, and
I sent one of the boats for it at once,
and asked for surveyors to be sent
under the authority of the German
Consulate. Before the arrival of the
town engine I engaged a small
force pump to assist. The surveyors
then came on board and recom-
mended the ship to be scuttled
which was immediately done with
five two and a half inch holes below
the water line on the Starboard
side. On the arrival of the engine
it commenced at once to throw water
through the fore hatch and was
shifted from one hatch to another
from 9 a.m. until about 6 p.m. At
4 p.m. there was 12 feet of water in
the hold, at 6 p.m. 15 feet and about
6.30. 16 feet. At 6 p.m. the ship
was in

was in flames forward. The schooner
with the engine could no longer lie
alongside, and as I was warned by
a Magistrate that if the ship was
allowed to sink in the channel
I should be responsible for the
removal of the wreck. I slipped
the chain and ran on the beach,
close at hand. The ship was then
completely in flames and was
abandoned by all hands. She
burnt during the night down to
the water's edge.

Examined by Mr. Bailey. There were
about 32 men working the engine
from the shore. The crew could not
render any assistance, because they
were exhausted, there were 15 of them.
As far as I know the men were not
drunk. I do not know if they
rendered any assistance at pumping.
My eyes were full of smoke and
I was nearly suffocated. To my
knowledge no assistance was
refused

refused by any of my officers.

By Captain Scott - My crew have been orderly during the voyage, have behaved very well, and I have been satisfied with them.

On each boat I had several bottles of spirits placed before coming into harbour which I forgot to remove. I do not know if the coats were English or German

(signed) Gerh. Schrock

Recalled in reply to Mr. Bailey

I am aware now that the fire engine belonged to the Government. I received assistance as soon as possible. I think there was a sufficient number of men sent down to work the engine.

I encouraged my crew to keep on to the last. I did not tell them to leave off work at any time

(signed) G. S.

Ludwig Deetjen, Chiefmate
of the S. S. Haendel not sworn. I hold
a master's certificate since Feb 4th 1873.
I joined the ship in Bremerhaven.
This voyage I was present when the
cargo was taken on board. I cannot
say what the coals were, but I was
informed they were from Westphalia.
The Gunpowder was the last cargo
taken on board. No circumstances
of note took place on the voyage
until we arrived off Staten Island
on the 12th November. On that day
we all noticed a strong smell of gas.
The second mate went into the hold,
it was my watch on deck and I
attended to the ship when the
captain went down after the second
mate. As soon as the captain
came on deck he ordered the main
hatch to be taken off, and we pulled
up some coal through the ventilator
in buckets. The coal was cold on
the top, an iron bar was passed
down the ventilator and driven
some 12 to 14 feet into the coals. After
a quarter

a quarter of an hour the bar was pulled
up, and was found to be warm in the
middle. We were throwing out coals all
the time, the bar was put down again,
and on being pulled out after about
half an hour was found to be still warmer
so that it could not be held in the hand.
After that the smoke became stronger, so
that we had to draw the men up with
a rope, fainting. Finding that we
could do no more in the hold on account
of the nature of the cargo the between
decks being blocked up with iron pipes
and bars, it was decided to close all
the hatches and all ventilations, and
bear away for Port Stanley. The gunpowder
was placed in the scullage, ready for
heaving overboard. The decks were
kept constantly wet, in some places
smoke was coming through, these
places we plugged up with oakum.
The second morning after we put back
the hatches blew off. They were put
on and secured as quickly as possible.
The gunpowder was thrown overboard,
and the boats were provisioned ready
for use, provisions and water, nautical
instruments, a few bottles of wine, no
spirits. The weather on Sunday the
16th was

14th was stormy and on the morning of
the 15th we saw the land: all the hatches
blew up again, they were secured again.
We got a pilot near the William Islands
and the ship was shortly after brought
to an anchor. There was smoke then
coming from her all over. As soon as
boats came alongside the Captain
hired a pump, and shortly afterwards
engaged a large engine from the shore
which came down in a schooner. The
nose was passed down the forehold, and
the engine worked without stopping
as long as it was safe to remain along-
side. Holes were bored in the ship's
side at the same time, until about
16 feet of water was in the ship. At
six o'clock the chain was slipped and
the ship sailed on the beach, about
a quarter of a mile off. At about
7 o'clock the ship was burning all
over, and it was not possible to stay
on board any longer. The next
morning I went to the ship, and
she was burnt down to the water.
During the voyage it has always
been

any possible to get into the hold,
but no one to my knowledge has
been down at any time with
a light. The ship's coals have
been kept on deck, away from
the cargo. When the schooner
came with the engine seven or
eight of the ship's crew assisted
at pumping, they relieved one
another, and worked by my
orders. There were five men in
the boats to take charge of
them. I did not see any
of the ship's crew drunk.

(signed) Lud Deetjen

Heinrich Rörig - 2^d Mate of
the "G. F. Daendel", Sworn.

I have had a certificate as
Mate from the 27th March 1898 and
have been in the ship about a
year and a quarter. I was not on
board when the ship was loaded.
No accident occurred in the voyage
until we got near Staten Island,
when in the morning of the 12th Nov.
there was a smell of gas. By the
Captain's orders I was sent down
into the hold, and found the
smell stronger so that I was nearly
suffocated. The coals were cool on
the top, but on moving some I
found they were warm about a
foot down. I called the Captain
down, and upon his coming up,
as soon as we got under the lee
of Staten Island in about half
an hour's time, the main hatch
was taken off so that we could
get down. We took some coals
on deck, and then put an iron
bar through the coals about 9 feet
and left

and left it in about 10 minutes, on
withdrawing it it was warm in the
middle. About half an hour afterwards
the bar was pushed down again, 10 or
12 feet deep and left about half an hour,
and on pulling it up it was so hot we
could not touch it. There was a good
deal of smoke, and some of the men
were nearly insensible. After the bar was
withdrawn the hatches were secured,
and at 4 p.m. the ship was kept away
for Port Stanley. Nothing of importance
occurred on Saturday the 13th, but on
the 14th at 8 a.m. all three hatches blew
up. The powder was then placed on the
quarter deck, and the hatches were
secured again. The boats were got ready
and the powder was then thrown over
board. In the boats were placed
some provisions and wine, but no spirits.
On the 15th in the morning early the
fore and after masts blew up, we were
then in sight of land. He got in that
morning in charge of a pilot, and
anchored in Port William. One sail
was

were clewed up, and we attempted to make them fast, but the men were ordered from aloft. The passengers were sent away, and a pump and large engine brought to pump water into the ship, and holes were bored in the side under water. In the afternoon there were 10 or 12 feet of water in the hold, and then we tried to swing her round by means of a spring on the chain so as to allow the smoke to blow clear, but it was not successful. The engine was kept going, until she was in flames and smoke all over, we then slipped the anchor, hoisted the jib and mizen staysail and let her run on the beach, where she was on fire all over. Five or six of the ship's men lent a hand to pump, as long as they were able. I saw none of the ship's men drunk. In my opinion everything was done that it was possible to do to save the ship.

(Signed) Heinrich Röhritz

Tuesday 30th Nov 1880

George V Brandt - sworn.

I was carpenter on board the
"F. Haendel", from Bremen bound for
Honolulu. No accident occurred on the
voyage before the discovery of the fire.
On Friday the 12th between 12 and 4 in
my watch on deck I told the mate
there was a curious smell. He said he
smelt it too, and I opened a door in the
after part of the cabin where the
passengers and steward slept. The
smell was stronger there. The second
mate went into the hold, and then the
Captain called me down and I went
through the main hatch ventilator.
The Captain told me to remain at
the mouth of the ventilator to give
him a sign where I was while he
went down the ventilator. I then
by the Captain's orders went down
the forehatch with the second mate
and crawled underneath the between
deck beams as far as the 2nd beam
from the main hatch. I felt suffocated
and told the second mate I must go on
deck. The main hatch house was taken
off and the hatch opened to find if there
was any

was any fire or not. We took some coals
out and they were hot, no one could stay
down as two fainted away altogether
and had to be hauled up with a ropes
end. We had driven a bar down about
10 feet into the coal and it was very
hot in the middle when it came out.
The mate drove the bar down a second
time and let it stand for 10 minutes,
and it was hot when it was drawn
out. I did not see the hatches closed,
but the order was given shortly after
to keep away and the hatches were
then closed. On Sunday morning the
hatches blew off, they were put on
again and closed up as much as we
could. I forgot to mention that on
Friday the powder was taken out of
the main hold and put in the
steerage. When the hatches blew up on
Sunday we took the powder on deck.
The boats were placed in the davits
and made ready. Fire came out of
the ventilator in the fore-castle
and the main hatch began to burn,
the powder

The powder was then thrown overboard. Smoke was coming very heavy out of the fore hatch which blew up several times, but was always replaced and secured. On Sunday and the night after the Captain told me to keep the decks constantly wet and the supper holes closed up. The decks were getting hotter all the time. On Monday morning about 5.30 the after and fore hatches blew up, and the main hatch jumped. Three baskets jumped out of the after hatch higher than the rigging stay. On Sunday afternoon we saw the land, and on Monday morning we took a pilot and anchored in Port William. On board was put over on Sunday, and as soon as we anchored both the other boats were lowered down. A cutter came alongside with a gun which the Captain engaged, and shortly afterwards a large engine board a schooner. The engine began to work at once down the fore hatch and from

and five of our men went on board
the schooner to pump, their names
were Andrew Barber, John Siemers,
H. Eberlein, Victor Pettersen, Carl
Nillson, some of the remainder
were on deck, and some were sitting
in the boats. The engine worked
until the afternoon without stopping
except to change men. The passengers
were sent ashore almost immediately.
I know nothing about the passengers
luggage, the men's chests were
mostly put on board the pilot
boat. Holes were bored in the ship's
side to let water in. They were
bored by two carpenters from the
shore. I did not assist, I was ex-
hausted. Flames burst out in
the afternoon and the ship was
run on the beach; I unshackled
the chain. I do not know what
water was in the ship at the time,
during the afternoon I sounded
and found 12 feet. After the ship
got on

on shore, she burst out in
flames, and we left her next
morning her masts had fallen
overboard, and she was burnt
close to the waters edge. I cannot
say if anything was saved that
morning. I saw no bottles or brandy.
When the ship was run ashore the
work was done by the ship's crew,
under the Directions of the pilot.
I have never known a naked
light taken into the hold
during the voyage.

(signed) G. Brandt

A question here arose as to the
conduct of the ship's men and the
assistance rendered by them at
the fire engine, and the discussion
becoming heated the Court
adjourned.

Friday 5th Dec: 1880.

The Court resumed, when the President read the following memorandum: -

Before resuming the enquiry I have a question to place before the Court, and in putting it I am acting without any previous consultation with any of the Assessors: - some feeling has arisen with regard to the conduct of the crew while the ship was burning, and particularly as to the amount of assistance rendered by them in working the fire engine. I wish to ask the assessors whether in their opinion this question is a material one as regards the loss of the ship and cargo, whether the loss could have been avoided or lessened if the crew had worked steadily at the engine the whole time it was alongside. If a material one the question must be thoroughly sifted, if not it is unnecessary to go into it. I must add that by § 23 of the law under which we are sitting all doubts as to the validity of a question are to be

to be decided by the Court.

The Court decided that the evidence went to prove that the ship was so far gone at the time she anchored that any assistance rendered by the crew subsequent to that time would not have had any material effect in saving her or the cargo, and it was unanimously decided to leave the question of their conduct out of the enquiry.

The foregoing witnesses spoke English and were examined in that language. A witness appearing who did not speak English, Joseph Tellman, a German, was sworn in as interpreter.

Andrew Barber, A.B. sworn:

On my watch between 12 and 1 in the morning the alarm about the smell of gas was given the Captain and second mate went down the after hatch, and the order was afterwards given to open the main hatch. The powder was removed and brought on the after deck, all the hatches and openings were closed and the ship was put

was put back for Port Stanley. On Sunday morning the fore and after hatches blew up and were put on again and made as tight as possible, and on Monday morning the after hatch blew up a second time. When we arrived off this port the pilot boarded us, and on anchoring we were ordered to furl the sails, the topgallant sails and royals were furled when the main hatch began to smoke and we were ordered on deck. We went up again and furled all the sails and then a schooner came with a fire engine. As soon as the hose was passed on board the ship the engine was worked and was kept on pumping till 4 or 5 in the afternoon when the smoke became more dense and flames came out of the main hatch. I did not notice when the schooner left, I was assisting to slip the ship's chain, and she was sailed on the beach.

John. The ship was then left after
lowering the jib and mizen stay
sail. As we left her the flames
were coming high out of the main
hatch. I saw no more of her as
I came ashore in the ship's boat
in tow of the schooner.

(signed) A. Barber

Recalled, asked by Captain as
to the powder: On Sunday morn-
ing about half past eight the
powder was thrown overboard.

By Mr Bailey:— The utmost
endeavours were in my opinion
made by the Captain and Officers
to save the ship.

(signed) A. Barber

The whole of the crew were then
called in with the exception of
Budelmann who was sick and
the evidence of the last witness
was read over to them, all being
sworn: They were then asked if
the evidence was true, and whether
any of them had anything to add.

The Sailmaker

The Sailmaker Mr. Cooper stated that after the fire was discovered the decks were kept wet continually. On Sunday morning the boats were got ready and provisioned and strict orders were given by the Captain not to go near the boats except in case of extreme necessity. On Sunday night all hands were kept on deck, every man at his post, the decks were kept wetted and every favourable chance of wind was watched in order to reach the port. On Monday morning a heavy snow squall prevented us from seeing the lighthouse, and the ship's head was put off again. We laid off for about an hour. As soon as it cleared up at all we put about and made for the port. I was sent up to the town in charge of the luggage in the pilot boat and on my return I found

I found the engine and pump at work
and the fire coming through the
forecastle deck. After the ship was
on shore I was obliged to pass outside
her to get to the boat as she was
completely on fire amidships. The
Captain, Chief Officer and I were the
last to leave the ship. I consider
the statement of Andrew Barber
to be correct.

(signed) R. Gefken

The remainder of the crew
having heard the foregoing statement
declare that they are to the best of
their knowledge correct, and that
they have nothing to add to them.

(signed) Heinrich Meijer

(signed) Hermann Eberlein

(signed) Johann Siemert

(signed) M. Kullrich

(signed) Johann J. Wensen

(signed) A. W. Pettersen

(signed) Nielson

(signed) H. Lange

(signed) A. Droumel

(signed) C. Habelitz

(signed) Peter Fassing

The Court met again on 1st December, when the following judgment was delivered:

After hearing the evidence in the case of the S. F. Haendel the Court of opinion:

1. That the S. F. Haendel was destroyed by fire, which originated through the spontaneous ignition of the coals laden on board.

2. That there was a great body of fire in the ship before she was brought into port, so great in fact, that saving her was an impossibility.

3. That from the time the fire was discovered until the ship's arrival in Port William every reasonable precaution was taken to keep the flames under.

4. That in putting back promptly upon the discovery of the fire Captain Schrock took the only course that was open to him under the circumstances, having in view the lives of the crew and passengers.

Taking the above into consideration the

the Court unanimously decided that
no blame can be attached to Cap-
Schroek or his officers as regards
the loss of the vessel, and he and
they are acquitted of all blame
accordingly.

(signed) Fred M. Cobb

Empt. German Consul

(signed) Arthur Bailey & P.

Receiver of Wicks

(signed) John Langdon

(signed) H. C. Deane

Shipmaster

(signed) John Scott

Master barque 'Cainsmore'