

The Burning of the Steamer Star Rucca

Unknown Author - The Livonia Gazette

December 12, 1902



The Steamboat McPherson circa 1900

The steamer Star Rucca, better known as the McPherson, caught fire last Saturday night and was burned to the water level. The boat was fired up Saturday afternoon and run out in the lake, and was then headed for the shore with a full head of steam, for the purpose of forcing it as high as possible on the shore, to protect it from the waves and ice so that the hull could be overhauled during the winter. Only the stern remained in the water.

The crew left the boat soon after dark, and between 8 and 9 o'clock it was discovered to be on fire, and before anything could be done the fire was beyond control. The burning boat lit up the lake, and people

from miles around were soon on the scene.

The boat was built by Daniel McPherson of Avon, a brother of the late United States Senator McPherson of New Jersey, about twenty years ago, at a cost of over \$7,000. It was built to accommodate the excursion business on Conesus lake and had carried excursions from 500 to 1000 people. The owners, Sacket & Northrop, expended about \$2,000 in repairs on the boat last summer.

It is supposed the fire started in some way from the boiler. We understand the owners carried an insurance of \$2,000.

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Editor's note: A booklet from 1883 describes that Col. James A. McPherson built the steamboat, not Daniel. The booklet is located at the Livingston County Museum.

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