

Thoreau's July 25, 1850, letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson**Hoar's notes**

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Fire Island Beach Thursday morn. July 25 '50 Dear Friend,	H Thoreau says
I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes, within one mile of the wreck. He is the one who rendered the most assistance. W ^m H Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller—nor Greeley, Nor Spring. Spring & Sumner were here yesterday but left soon. Mr Oakes & wife tell me (all the survivors came or were brought directly to their house) that the ship struck at 10 minutes after 4 AM. and all hands, being mostly in their night clothes made haste to the forecastle—the water coming in at once. There they remained the, passengers <i>in</i> the forecastle, the crew <i>above</i> it doing what they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof & washed over those within. The first man got ashore at 9. Many from 9 to noon— At flood tide about 3½ o'clock when the ship broke up entirely—they came out of the forecastle & Margaret sat with her back to the foremast with her hands over her knees—her husband & child already drowned—a great wave came & washed her off. The Steward? had just before taken her child & started for shore; both were drowned.	I am at the house where all the survivors came or were brought—they tell me the ship struck at 10 min. past 4 AM. & all hands, being mostly in their night clothes made haste to the forecastle the water coming in at once. There they remained, the passengers <u>in</u> the forecastle, the crew above it, doing what they could. Every wave lifted the forecastle roof & washed over those within The first man got ashore at 9, many from 9 till noon. At flood tide about three ½ P. M. when the ship broke up entirely, they came out of the forecastle & Margaret sat with her back to the forecastle with her hands on her knees—her husband & child already drowned—a great wave came & washed her aft— The steward had just before taken her child & started for shore—both were drow[n]ed.
The broken desk in a bag—containing no very valuable papers—a large black leather trunk—with an upper and under apartment—the upper holding books & papers—A carpet bag probably Ossolis and one of his? shoes—are all the Ossolis' effects known to have been found.	
Four bodies remain to be found—the two Ossolis—Horace Sumner—& a Sailor—	
I have visited the child's grave— Its body will probably be taken away today.	I have visited th[e] child's grave—The body will probably be taken [aw]ay to day.

<p>The wreck is to be sold at auction—excepting the hull—today</p>	
<p>The mortar would not go off. Mrs Hasty the Captains Wife, told Mrs Oakes that she & Margaret divided their money—& tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons that Margaret took 60 or 70 doll Mrs Hasty who can tell all about Margaret up to 11 oclock on Friday is said to be going to Portland ME. today— She & Mrs Fuller must & probably will come together. The cook, the last to leave, & the Steward? will know the rest. I shall try to see them. In the meanwhile I shall do what I can to recover property & obtain particulars here abouts. W^m H. Channing—did I write it? has come with me. Arthur Fuller has this moment reached this house. He reached the beach last night—we got here yesterday noon. A good part of the vessel still holds together where she struck, & something may come ashore with her fragments. The last body was found on Tuesday 3 miles west. Mrs Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk—and she says they appeared to be of various kinds. "Would they cover that table"?, a small round one— "They would spread out"— Some were tied up. There were 20 or 30 books in the same half of the trunk. another, smaller trunk empty, came ashore. but there is no mark on it— She speaks of Paiolina as if she might have been a "sort of nurse to the child"— I expect to go to Patchogue whence the pilferers must have chiefly come—& advertise &c &c.</p>	<p>Mrs Hasty the Capts wife told Mr Oakes that she & Margaret divided their money—& tied up the halves in handkerchiefs around their persons that Margaret took 60 or 70 doll.s Mrs Hasty can tell all abo[u]t M up too 11 oclock on Friday is said to be [go]ing to Portland Me., the cook, the last to leave, & the steward will know the rest. I shall try to see them. Mean while I shall do what I can here to learn particulars & recover property W^m H. Chan ning came with me. Arthur Fuller has this moment reached the house. He reached the beach last night A good part of the vessel still holds together & something may come ashore with her fragments. Mrs Oakes dried the papers which were in the trunk & says they appeared to be of various kinds "Would they cover that small round table? "They would spread Mrs Hasty out—some w[e]re tied up." "She ^ speaks of a Celesta as if she might have been some sort of nurse to the child— I expect to go to Patchogue whence the pilferers must have chiefly come, & advertise &c. Half a dozen men are ranging the beach for 5 or 6 miles saving the cargo & looking for the bodies so that large articles [which] may come ashore hereafter [are] likely to be saved</p>
	<p>Dated Fire Island.</p>