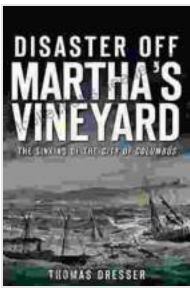


# The Sinking of the City of Columbus: A Tragic Maritime Disaster

On the evening of January 17, 1847, the steamship City of Columbus embarked on a journey from Boston to New York City. Onboard were 120 passengers and crew, including many prominent citizens and business leaders. However, tragedy struck just hours into the voyage when the ship struck a reef off the coast of Rhode Island and began to sink.



## Disaster Off Martha's Vineyard: The Sinking of the City of Columbus by J. Marsha Michler

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1614 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 163 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



## The Collision

The City of Columbus was a side-wheel steamship, one of the most advanced vessels of its time. It was equipped with two powerful engines and could reach speeds of up to 12 knots. However, on this fateful night, the ship was sailing through thick fog and heavy seas. The crew was unable to see the reef until it was too late.

The ship struck the reef with a tremendous impact. The bow was crushed, and water began to pour into the hull. The passengers and crew were thrown into chaos, as they realized that their ship was sinking.

## **The Rescue**

As the City of Columbus sank, a nearby ship, the steamer Rescue, came to the aid of the survivors. The Rescue was able to launch its lifeboats and rescue many of the passengers and crew. However, many others were not so fortunate.

The City of Columbus sank in just minutes, taking with it over 100 lives. The disaster was a national tragedy, and it led to a public outcry for improved safety measures on steamships.

## **The Investigation**

In the aftermath of the disaster, an investigation was launched to determine the cause of the sinking. The investigation found that the crew of the City of Columbus had been negligent in not keeping a proper lookout. The ship's captain was also blamed for sailing too fast in the fog.

The investigation also revealed that the City of Columbus was not equipped with enough lifeboats. This was a common problem on steamships at the time, as there was no regulation requiring them to carry a certain number of lifeboats.

## **The Legacy**

The sinking of the City of Columbus was a major maritime disaster that had a lasting impact on the shipping industry. The disaster led to new safety

regulations for steamships, including requirements for a certain number of lifeboats and better lookout procedures.

The disaster also raised awareness of the need for improved maritime safety. In the years that followed, the United States government established the United States Life-Saving Service, which was responsible for providing lifesaving assistance to ships in distress.

The sinking of the City of Columbus is a reminder of the dangers of maritime travel. It is also a testament to the importance of safety regulations and the need for constant vigilance when operating a ship.

### **Additional Information**

- The City of Columbus was built in 1846 at the shipyard of William H. Webb in New York City.
- The ship was 220 feet long and 30 feet wide.
- It was powered by two steam engines that generated 800 horsepower.
- The ship could carry up to 400 passengers.
- The sinking of the City of Columbus was the deadliest maritime disaster in the United States until the sinking of the Titanic in 1912.

### **Images**





## Sources

- The New York Times, "The Loss of the Steamer City of Columbus," January 19, 1847.
- The Boston Daily Advertiser, "The Steamer City of Columbus," January 19, 1847.
- The National Archives, "Report of the Investigation into the Sinking of the City of Columbus," January 22, 1847.

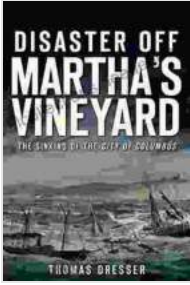
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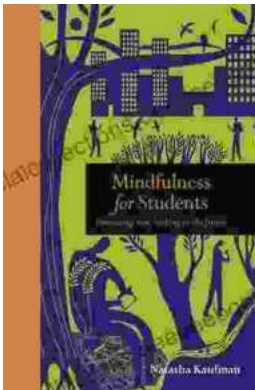
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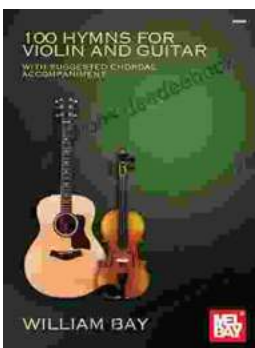


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