A Capsize in the Neuse river.
April 28, 1862.

At this time I was on the steamer Vidette serving as Commissary. Shortly after dinner a party of us left the vessel, then lying in the Neuse river near New Berne N.C., for a visit to the battle ground some 6 or 7 miles down the river. In the boat were—

1st mate Vars.
2nd asst. Eng. Jack Peer
3rd " " Levi Crafer [?]


Page was an enlisted man from the 8th Conn. Vols., while I was from the 23rd Mass. We spent the afternoon on the battle ground noting the havoc made by shells &c. and at a late hour took boat for our vessel. As we started up toward the city

we saw far down the river two steamers coming up, towing barges.

Thinking to get a tow we waited for them. They proved to be the "Alice Price" and the "Highland Light." Lashed to the side of the latter was the barge "Shrapwell" upon which were some [?] men from our own steamer. They had participated in the capture of Ft. Macon and were now returning to New Berne. We let the "Price" pass us, and then rowing across the bows of the "Highland Light," dropped back beside the Shrapwell. Our men threw us a rope which we caught and were drawn up to the side of the barge taking in considerable water in the operation. Some one called out "Drop her astern" and it was done.

As we fell back into the water that was boiling up under the stern of the barge our boat went over like a flash and all hands went into the water but Captain Newbury who – like a monkey – went up the rope on to the barge. The line was immediately cast off and our boat – a life boat with air tanks at both ends – remained in our midst and was a help to us in our extremity. A large boat with two men was sent back from the steamer, which kept on our way after seeing that we were all right. But we were not all out of the water. By much effort the non-swimmers of the party were helped to a hold upon the sides of the half-submerged life-boat into which Chief-mate Vars climbed and commenced to bail out with his hat. We finally climbed into the big boat and taking our own

boat in tow towed up the river reaching the Vidette about dark greeted by cries of "How did you like your ducking?" Our exercise probably saved us some heavy colds, and we were grateful it was no worse.

Shortly before this adventure I received from home a fine field glass, which I carried with me that afternoon in the breast-pocket of my blue flannel shirt, wearing no coat. When we left the shore I took the steering oar, and laid the glass on the tack [?] by my side. As we approached the barge I gave up the steering-oar to the mate and I suppose then put the glass in my pocket, although I did not remember it. As I went over backwards into the water I thought—

"There goes my glass to the bottom."

When I was safe in the boat again I found the glass in my pocket all right i.e. not lost. It never was as good as it was before. It is in my possession still and a valued relic of those days.
H. E. Valentine.