

HIPPOPOTAMUS OVERBOARD – Danbury Times –  
Thursday, July 2, 1863

It seems that in the transit of the circus now performing here from Buffalo to the city, it became necessary to send the elephants and the hippopotamus on a propeller, and they were accordingly shipped on board the S. D. Caldwell. On Monday afternoon as the steamer was nearing this port, a scene of great excitement occurred, which nearly resulted in the escape of the huge behemoth or hippopotamus belonging to G. C. Quick, Esq. and at the present forming one of the attractions of G. F. Bailey's quadruple circus.

The huge beast was shipped from Buffalo on board the steamer, and as it was impossible to get his immense cage on board, that was sent by land, while his Behemothship accompanied by Ali, the Egyptian, his captor and keeper, proceeded by water to Detroit. During the voyage it was noticed that the animal continually looked longingly toward the water, as though he would have given one of his eye teeth for a plunge into the depths of the lake and ramble about its unexplored bottom. No one supposed, however, that he would yield to his amphibious tastes, and so no extra watch was set upon him.

As the steamer neared the city, and when about three miles below the fort, a crash and then a splash were heard from the side of the boat toward the American shore. Everybody rushed to the spot. The place where the hippopotamus had been confined was empty. The beast no longer able to resist the

temptation, had burst his bonds and plunged into the river, resolved on an aquatic excursion.

The owner, who was on board, looked the picture of despair. Forty thousand dollars, to say nothing of a large amount of prospective profits, has suddenly vamoosed. As for Ali, the Egyptian keeper, he was nearly frantic. In a few moments, however, the monstrous head of the huge beast appeared above the surface of the water. A general shout arose, and Ali was with great difficulty prevented from jumping overboard in pursuit of his companion and beloved pet, while a boat was lowered into to which he jumped and rowed toward the beast, who swam about in an ecstasy of delight.

As the Egyptian commenced calling him by familiar names, at the sound of his voice the monster stopped, looked around, and seemed to wait for the boat to near him, but just as it appeared within reaching distance the Hippopotamus gave a plunge and once more disappeared leaving a whirlpool of seething water to mark the spot where he had gone down. Nothing was seen of him now for a long time, and they were about giving him up for lost, when he suddenly made his appearance about one hundred yards off but nearer the shore than at first. Ali again rowed toward him, calling him as before, but again the beast dodged him, and dived to the bottom of the river. Ali now made a large circuit with his boat, in hopes of taking him by surprise, as he came up to breathe; but, as if aware of his intentions, the Hippopotamus rose at a long distance off and looked at his master cunningly and with an expression which seemed, to say, "No you don't."

For a third time Ali started in pursuit, with a result similar to that which had attended his other attempts to recapture his pet. When he went down the third time, Ali paused completely nonplussed, and seemingly overcome with grief and despair. In a second, however, he seized the oars and rowed toward the steamer. "Tey de tog," he shouted as he came alongside, "gib me te tog!" A large black mastiff, which has been trained to sleep in the cage of the hippopotamus, and for who he has for a long time evinced much affection, had been keeping up a continued howling from the time his companion had escaped, was now loosened and instantly plunged into the river and swam after Ali as he moved off. In about a minute the hippopotamus again stuck his huge head out of the water, and on seeing him, the dog gave a wild bark, and swam in his direction very rapidly, Ali accompanying him in the boat. At last the dog reached the monster, and with a series of barks commenced swimming round the animal, and finally struck out for the shore, the hippopotamus following.

The interest excited by this scene was intense, which continued to increase until the dog and hippopotamus reached the American shore in safety. Ali was not long after, and the animal was no sooner on terra firma than the Egyptian, armed with a small rawhide, which he had taken with him, jumped on the beach and going to the animal spoke a few words in the Egyptian tongue, gave him a few smart cuts over his ponderous rump with the rawhide and drove him without further difficulty to a place of safety, where he was at once secured and the proper means adopted to have him brought to this city, where he now is, in fine condition after his frolic beneath the waves.

