

The New-Yorker by H. Greeley & Co, Office No. 30 Ann-Street, Vol. IX, No. 14, New-York, Saturday Evening, June 20, 1840, Whole No. 222 – Three Dollars Per Annum, page 222:

Steamboat Outrage. – As the steamboats Dewitt [sic] Clinton and Napoleon were about leaving this city last Saturday afternoon for Albany, they came in collision under the following circumstances: The Napoleon was passing up the river opposite the slip, as the De Witt Clinton came out and struck the former boat just forward of the wheel without any serious injury. Had there been a full head of steam the Napoleon must have sunk, as she careened over so far as to bring her decks under water. It is questionable whether the collision was accidental or designed. The captain of the De Witt was waiting for a messenger, and when he saw him come on board, he waved his hand to the pilot without being aware of the near approach of the Napoleon. – Finding the boats coming in contact, the bell was rung and the wheels of the De Witt instantly backed, but not in season to prevent the collision. *During this time, the captain of the Napoleon fired three pistol shots at the pilot of the De Witt Clinton*, as he declared his boat was run down intentionally. Fortunately neither the pilot nor the other officers of the boat, who were both in and around the wheel house, were wounded. The most remarkable circumstance connected with the affair remains to be stated. The captain of the Napoleon was arrested in Albany and carried before a magistrate named Kane, charged with firing at the officers of the De Witt Clinton with intent to kill them. The prisoner *did not deny* the firing or the imputed intention, but claimed he had acted in self-defence! and on this ridiculous plea he was discharged from custody.