

The story of the *Titanic* will be familiar. But myths persist...

TITANIC ~ *fact & fable*

.....

Blue Riband – Was *Titanic* attempting the fastest transatlantic crossing? Or attempting merely to beat her sister ship *Olympic*'s time? As with so much in the *Titanic* saga, facts are confused. Protagonists say one thing and do another, and contradict previous statements.



She was sailing too fast towards ice because that was normal practice at the time (although **Captain Moore** of the *Mount Temple* thought it 'most unwise' [US Inq.]. Despite numerous warnings of large bergs ahead, there was no plan to reduce speed or change course. **Sir Rufus Isaacs**, the Attorney-General at the British Inquiry, said to **J. Bruce Ismay** [◀], White Star Line's's Chairman and Managing Director: 'Assuming that you can see far enough to get out of the way at whatever speed you are going, you can go at whatever speed you like. That is what it comes to.' Too little thought had been given to the problems of manoeuvre and turning that the enormous *Olympic* class of Harland & Wolff built ships presented. *Titanic*'s sea trials had been rudimentary, a mere 6 hours.

But White Star's *Titanic* was assuredly not (fatally) attempting the fastest Atlantic crossing on her maiden voyage. She was designed for comfort (with large cargo capacity), not speed, her two reciprocating engines and centreline turbine were at least 2 knots slower than Cunard's *Lusitania* and *Mauretania*'s all-turbine design, which could reach a maximum of 26 knots. **Capt. Smith's** chosen (southern) route across the Atlantic was a slightly longer option (to avoid icebergs). Prolonged sailing at her maximum speed (24 knots / 28 mph / 45 kph, never reached on her maiden voyage) would have risked potential engine damage. On the fatal night, not all her boilers were lit. But there is evidence that **Ismay** was encouraging an attempt to beat her sister ship *Olympic*'s transatlantic record. Although this would be good PR, it would inconvenience passengers, because if she arrived earlier than advertised, on Tuesday evening rather than Wednesday, her passengers' schedules - hotel/travel bookings etc. - would have had to be rearranged, an irritant that **Mrs. Ryerson** discussed with her husband when she understood this to be the case [see below].

In a *New York Times* report (June 22, 1911) on *Olympic*'s maiden voyage (June 14-21, 1911) **Captain Edward John Smith** (1850-1912), commanding, was asked: 'Will she ever dock on Tuesday?' 'No,' he replied, 'and there will be no attempt to bring her in on Tuesday. She was built for a Wednesday ship, and her run this first voyage has demonstrated that she will fulfil the expectations of the builders.' **Smith's** remark notwithstanding, *he did exactly that* on *Olympic*'s second transatlantic westbound

Question. Did you look at the telegram and see what it said?

- *I don't remember what it said. It had the word 'Deutschland' [sic] and something was said about speed...[he said] 'We are not going very fast, 20 or 21 knots, but we are going to start up some extra boilers this evening...'*

Q. Anything said about getting in, or not being able to stop?

- *Yes, I said 'What is the rest of the telegram?' He said 'It is the Deutschland [sic] wanting a tow, not under control' ...he said they weren't going to do anything about it...that 'we are going to get in and surprise everybody' - I don't know whether he used the word 'record' but that was left on my mind, that we had no time to delay aiding other steamers.*

Q. Did he say anything about expecting to get in any particular time in New York?

- *...my impression was it would be very late Tuesday night, or early Wednesday morning, because I discussed it with my husband after I went downstairs and the question was what we would do if we got in so very late... the strong impression left on my mind I can remember perfectly, but not the words.*

Q. You can remember the substance can you not?

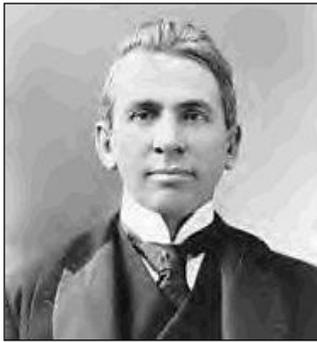
- *Yes.*

This conversation was confirmed by [Miss Grace Bowen](#), governess to [Mrs. Ryerson's](#) son [John](#), who stated (US Inquiry) that she was lying on a steamer chair in the 'latter part' of Sunday afternoon when [Ismay](#) sat next to [Mrs. Ryerson](#). He knew her from previous crossings and knew also that she was grieving for her son, recently killed in a car crash. [Mrs. Ryerson](#) was evidently displeased by his presence. Nevertheless [Ismay](#) proceeded to talk to her and her friend [Mrs. Thayer](#) 'for some minutes; he had a white slip of paper in his hand, which he appeared to show to them.' [Miss Bowen](#) then confirmed [Mrs. Ryerson's](#) version of [Ismay's](#) words, which were recounted to [Miss Bowen](#) 'only a short time' later when they went below.

Her testimony was interrupted by [Mr. Charles Burlingham](#), representing White Star Line – 'I move to strike all this out, on the grounds previously stated ['irrelevant, immaterial and incompetent'], and as double hearsay.' It was true that it was twice removed from the original source, but it was not struck. It corroborated [Mrs. Ryerson's](#) version, and both respectable ladies had no motive in lying.

Some passengers made exorbitant claims against White Star for lost baggage and valuables, and their stories of [Ismay's](#) incitement to beat [Olympic's](#) record should be treated with caution, as suggestions of reckless or negligent navigation would materially benefit them. But [Mrs. Ryerson](#) made no such claim. Although an honest witness, she did not confirm the use of the word 'record', nor that Tuesday was definitely the proposed arrival day; and 'early Wednesday morning' would of course fit in with [Ismay's](#) statement to [Bell](#) in Queenstown – 'We will arrive there at 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning.'

First class passenger [Mrs Elizabeth Lines](#) claimed she overheard in the reception room [Ismay](#) tell [Smith](#) something like: 'Today was better than yesterday, we will beat the [Olympic](#) and get into New York on Tuesday night'. In the hearings, [Ismay](#) denied the conversation took place. He *may* have been lying, as the implication of his words was damning, it appeared that he was improperly exhorting [Smith](#) to increase speed, with – in hindsight – fatal results. But perhaps it was just a statement of the obvious, [Titanic](#) was going slightly faster than [Olympic](#), because of the calm weather and her propellers being adjusted according to data from [Olympic](#). It is possible that [Mrs. Lines](#) did not hear the words 'at this rate' before 'we will beat the [Olympic](#)', or some similar equivocation.



In maritime law, **Smith** as captain was ultimately responsible for the safety of the ship and its passengers, whatever **Ismay's** urgings. If it could be proved that **Ismay** knew **Smith's** actions to be reckless and/or negligent, and that he did nothing, then damages against White Star would have been unlimited, but **Ismay** would not himself have been prosecuted because the captain alone is master of his ship. **Ismay's** actions were argued at length in both Inquiries and the US civil court. He was never proved to have influenced **Captain Smith's** navigation (damages against White Star were settled out of court, the highest being \$5000 for a Renault car – only a tiny fraction of the \$16 million claimed was paid). **Senator William Alden Smith** [▲], who instigated the US Inquiry and was a lawyer, pursued **Ismay** relentlessly but **Ismay** always stuck to his line:

Senator SMITH: Did you have occasion to consult with the captain about the movement of the ship?

Mr. ISMAY: Never.

Senator SMITH: Did he consult you about it?

Mr. ISMAY: Never. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that. I should like to say this: I do not know that it was quite a matter of consulting him about it, of his consulting me about it, but what we had arranged to do was that we would not attempt to arrive in New York at the lightship before 5 o'clock on Wednesday morning.

Senator SMITH: That was the understanding?

Mr. ISMAY: Yes. But that was arranged before we left Queenstown.

Senator SMITH: Was it supposed that you could reach New York at that time without putting the ship to its full running capacity?

Mr. ISMAY: Oh, yes, sir. There was nothing to be gained by arriving at New York any earlier than that.

In the end **Senator Smith** decided that: '...the presence of Mr. Ismay and Mr. Andrews [chief designer] stimulated the ship to greater speed than it would have made under ordinary conditions, although I cannot fairly ascribe to either of them any instructions to this effect.'

Captain Smith – he was lionised at the time because he had 'gone down with the ship', something a gentleman, and Captain, was supposed to do. But he failed his passengers and crew. He did not slow his ship when ice was reported directly in his path (though it was common practice at the time for liners to proceed as normal). He allowed lifeboats to leave the sinking ship partially filled, through inadequate supervision – some would argue that he succumbed to some form of catatonia at the enormity of the disaster. Boat 1, the first launched, had a capacity of 40 but contained just 12 people (7 of whom were crew

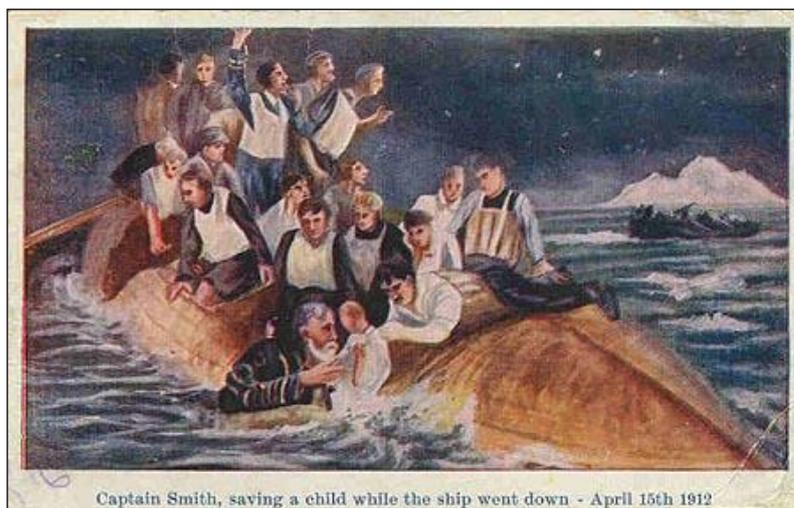


members!). He also failed to enforce lifeboat and muster drill that Sunday morning. There were only 83 *sailors* on the *Titanic* (out of 891 crew!), who were all new to the ship. Drill was essential. As **Fifth Officer Lowe** conceded at the American enquiry, that when it mattered ‘the men were not at their boat-drill stations’. Nor did **Smith** [▲ far right, **Murdoch** far left] advise lifeboat handlers that they were designed to be loaded on deck by their davits, not lowered to decks below and slowly filled in a cumbersome process. And **Smith** did not order the correct procedure for the firing of distress rockets. **Smith** claimed that he could not ‘conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern ship building has gone beyond that.’ Hubris. The ‘practically unsinkable’ *Titanic* (*Shipbuilder* magazine, 1911) sunk. **Smith’s** description of his life at sea as ‘uneventful’ ignores previous scrapes and near misses.

Charles Lightoller, one of his officers, related: ‘I had been with him many years, off and on, in the mail boats, *Majestic*, mainly, and it was an education to see him con his own ship up through the intricate channels entering New York at full speed. One particularly bad corner, known as the South-West Spit, used to make us fairly flush with pride as he swung her round, judging his distances to a nicety; she heeling over to the helm with only a matter of feet to spare between each end of the ship and the banks.’ [‘*entering New York at full speed...with only a matter of feet to spare...*’ !!]

‘Overconfidence seems to have dulled the faculties usually so alert’, said **Senator Smith** of **Captain E.J. Smith**.

On ‘The Night to Remember’ **Smith’s** judgement failed him – he ordered the first lifeboats launched on the port side to row to the ship in the distance, drop off the passengers and come back to *Titanic* for more! A 52 year-old Canadian, **Major Arthur Peuchen** was particularly scornful of **Smith** ‘leisurely partaking of a hearty dinner with a party of friends. They were in the big restaurant and were apparently having an enjoyable and social dinner...The captain was at dinner with **Bruce Ismay** and a number of millionaires for more than three hours that night. Instead of being on the bridge, where he belonged, knowing that we were going into the [ice]fields.’ [Interview, *Toronto World*, April 20, 1912]



Captain Smith, saving a child while the ship went down - April 15th 1912

His defenders argue that **Smith** returned early from dinner (as guest of the **Wideners**), conferred with his officers about possible dangers and instructed them to call him ‘if it’s in the slightest degree doubtful’, then retired to the chart room to plot the ice (presumably) in relation to his course,

all perfectly professional. When the berg was struck he had the ship sounded, gave the Marconi men a position, had them send a distress call and ordered the boats

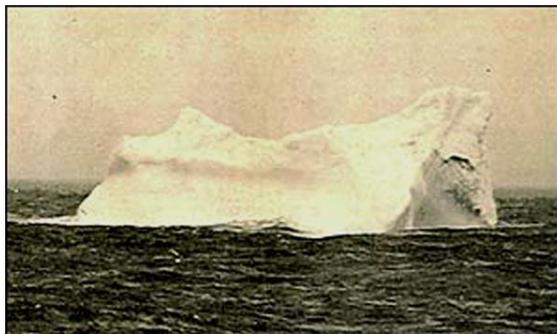
prepared. But then he seems to have been crippled by indecision. [Lightoller](#) had to approach him for the order to load and lower the boats. There is absolutely no evidence that [Smith](#) shot himself at the end. Several witnesses thought they saw him in the water [[▲ fanciful 1912 postcard](#)]. [2nd WO Bride](#), who was in the right spot, said the captain dived off the bridge just before *Titanic* sank, having given the order to abandon ship. His body was not identified, if it was recovered. He was 62, from the Potteries, noted for his mildly flamboyant and charming manner. [Smith](#) was the highest paid mariner of the age, earning £1,250 per year which included, ironically, a no-collision bonus. Some passengers deliberately sailed on ships captained by [Smith](#). [Major Peuchen](#), who had made ‘some 40 crossings’, did not. ‘The *Titanic* was a good boat, luxuriously fitted up, and I have never seen anything to compare with her. When I got on at Southampton I was pleased with her. But when I heard that our captain was [Captain Smith](#), my heart rose in my mouth. *Surely, we are not going to have that man*, I said. An hour after sailing we got into a needless tangle with several other boats. We had a scratch crew on the *Titanic*, who knew nothing about the business.’

It is often said that *Titanic*'s maiden voyage was to be [Smith's](#) final one before retirement. It adds to the romance. But there is no evidence to suggest it, rather the reverse – White Star issued two separate denials *before* the disaster.

Bunker fire – a coalbunker fire burnt for perhaps 3 days after *Titanic* left Belfast. But it did not weaken the hull, as has been suggested, and did not cause or contribute to the tragedy. Another canard is that *Titanic* was short of coal on the voyage, because of the coal strike. She was not. [Ismay](#) told [Senator Perkins](#) at the US Inquiry: ‘She had about 6000 tons of coal leaving Southampton . . . sufficient coal to enable her to reach New York, with about two days’ spare consumption.’ When considering the evidence for and against an attempt on *Olympic*'s transatlantic record, conservation of coal is not a factor

Binoculars and the iceberg – the binoculars which were available to the lookouts on the journey from Belfast to Southampton were, inexplicably, locked away in a cupboard on the New York leg of *Titanic*'s maiden voyage. But they would not *necessarily* have helped lookouts [Fleet](#) and [Lee](#) see the iceberg sooner (despite [Fleet's](#) self-serving testimony to the US enquiry), in the conditions that night. They restrict lateral vision. At the British Inquiry, [Captain Edwin Cannons](#), a Master Mariner who had spent 25 years in the North Atlantic, questioned the value of binoculars - ‘I do not think they are any advantage at all. In the North Atlantic trade they would not be of much use because they are so easily blurred.’ Significantly, in [Cannons'](#) experience a large iceberg should have been visible a mile away (‘at least two miles’ according to his earlier testimony, amended after reflecting on the effect of the ‘flat calm’), in the starry night and flat calm of that April night, even a dark, capsized berg should have been spotted in time. And despite [Boxhall's](#) suggestion that the berg was ‘just a small black mass’ (compromised somewhat by his concession that ‘I was not very sure of seeing it’ because he had arrived on the bridge *after* the collision.) most eye-witnesses saw a *greyish white* mass. Pertinently [Fleet](#) sketched a huge *white* mountain of ice for the US Inquiry, when it was in his interest to draw a small dark object (although he was primarily trying to show the berg's position relative to *Titanic* when she struck). Sketches by eyewitnesses (passenger [George Rheims](#), seaman [Joseph Scarrott](#)) and

sketches and photographs by passengers on *Carpathia* and *Birma* of icebergs compellingly similar in shape and size, show a large white iceberg.



From [Fleet's](#) evidence, and other eye-witnesses, it was about 75 ft. high (and 200 ft. long), shaped according to [Scarrott](#), like an inverse Rock of Gibraltar. A photograph [◀] was discovered in 2000, taken by a Bohemian, [Stephan Rehorek](#), at the scene of the sinking on the German steamer *Bremen*, on its way from Bremerhaven to New York. Damage is

visible and the shape is exactly as described by [Scarrott](#). It has a vertical side, off which ice ricocheted on to *Titanic's* foredeck after being shattered beneath the water line on collision.

[Cannons'](#) testimony to the Mersey Inquiry supported [Captain Smith's](#) navigational theory which was current practice – maintaining speed through ice - but questioned its application on this occasion:

Question no. 23832. (The Commissioner.) **Do you believe there are icebergs that you cannot see?**

- *No, My Lord.*

23733. **When you do sight an iceberg do you reduce your speed or do you keep your speed?**

- *I keep my speed....Both day and night.*

23737. **Then you have time, I suppose, from what you said, to get clear of the iceberg going at the speed at which your vessel then is?**

- *I have never had any difficulty to clear when I have met ice ahead.*

23743. **And supposing that your look-out is properly kept and that the night is clear is there any difficulty in your sighting an iceberg at sufficient distance to enable you to steer clear of it?**

- *None whatever.*

23797. (The Commissioner.) **Now, assume you had under your command a vessel of 22 knots, would you slacken speed then?**

- *Not in clear weather.*



[Mersey](#) [◀] wrote in his Report [pub. 12 July, 1912] that [Smith's](#) 'alteration of the course at 5.50 p.m. was so insignificant that it cannot be attributed to any intention to avoid ice.' Yet [Smith](#) nevertheless maintained, as was customary in clear weather, his 'excessive speed'. However, said [Mersey](#), whereas 'in the face of the practice and past experience, negligence cannot be said to have any part...It is...to be hoped that that the last has been heard of this practice...What was a mistake in the case of the *Titanic* would without doubt be negligence in any similar case in the future.' 'The event has proved the practice to be bad.'

Mersey recorded five ice warnings received by *Titanic* on April 24, two which **Smith** acknowledged, one which he saw (from *SS Baltic* at 1.42 p.m.) but was passed to **Ismay** who pocketed it (it was only posted in the chart room after 7.15 p.m.) and two that never went beyond the Marconi room, the most important, and last, being from the steamer *Mesaba* (9.40 p.m.) – ‘Saw much heavy pack ice and great number large icebergs’. They were ‘in the immediate vicinity of the *Titanic*’ stated **Mersey** ‘and if [the message] had reached the bridge would perhaps have affected the navigation of the vessel.’ Not speed, because of ‘bad’ practice, but course. The message warned *Titanic* that she was heading for a huge rectangular ice field, a navigational warning that took precedence over passenger traffic. *Mesaba*’s wireless operator pressed for confirmation that *Titanic*’s captain had been alerted but *Titanic*’s WO, **Phillips**, kept up his chatter to Cape Race.

On the question of whether a dark berg could be seen at night, **Cannons** argued that vigilance would avert collision:

3829. It has been your good fortune that you did not strike [black bergs] or they strike you?

- *Yes, but they would not be on my track.*

23830. I do not quite follow. Do you mean that you would not expect to see one in your track?

- *Oh yes, I should be on the alert for it.*

But **Cannons** conceded that another factor entered the equation affecting the range of practical vision:

23834. ...Just assume this: A perfectly clear night, a perfectly flat sea, and no wind, and therefore nothing in the nature of surf round the edge of the iceberg. Would those circumstances, in your opinion, make the sighting of an iceberg difficult?

- *Yes, it would increase the difficulty of seeing it.*

23838. How far do you suppose you would see an iceberg in those circumstances?

- *I should say a mile.*

23839. A vessel going 22 knots an hour, sighting an iceberg a mile away, can, I suppose, clear it?

- *Yes.*

23845. ...Would a bad look-out account for [the collision]?

- *Yes.*

23846. Can you account for it in any other way - a bad look-out and going at the rate of 22 knots an hour?

- *They should have seen the berg in time to have cleared it.*

Major Peuchen, who claimed to be a proficient yachtsman, concurred: ‘if the look-out had been on the job in the crow’s nest, he should have seen the berg. It was a monster and the night was beautifully clear, and the stars were shining brightly.’ [Interview, *Toronto World*, April 20, 1912] Even though the absence of ripples hindered observation -

23849. (The Attorney-General.) ...on a specially calm night and a specially clear night [would it be] more difficult to detect an iceberg?

Cannons - *Oh, yes...it would be more difficult in the calm...the sea causes an extra warning, breaking against the berg.*

The Commissioner ([Mersey](#)) pointed out that: ‘*Specially clear* does not add to the difficulty; specially calm does’ to which the Attorney-General replied: ‘Yes, but you have to take into account also that it is specially clear’, because ironically the ‘excellent’ visibility contributed to the disaster. *Titanic*’s officers were confident that icebergs would be seen in time to avert collision so her speed was not considered excessive. No added lookouts were deemed necessary, none were posted on the stem head, as they would have been in a haze - ‘A man goes there immediately’ in such conditions said [Cannons](#).

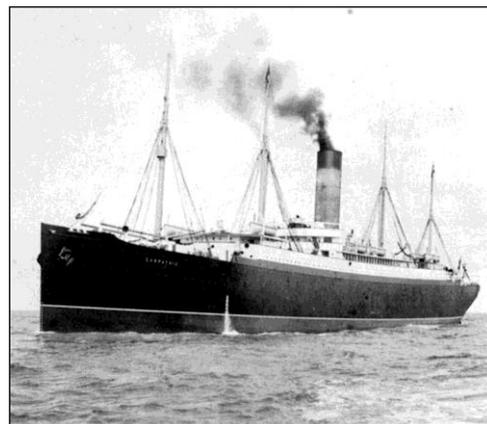
[Frederick Passow](#), Captain of the American Inman Line *St. Paul*, testified (UK Inq.) that he never altered his speed because he could always depend upon seeing the ice in sufficient time ‘as long as the weather [was] perfectly clear’. He was asked:

21881. **Has the disaster to the *Titanic* caused you in any way to modify your view?**
- *I do not think so...I have never seen an iceberg of that size that you could not see on a perfectly clear night, and far enough off safely to clear it. I have seen a piece, quite a small piece, that you could see some distance off.*

21882. (The Commissioner) **If you are right, and if this was...a perfectly clear night, how do you account for the collision?**

- *I cannot account for it at all. They say it looked like a black iceberg, but I have never seen a black iceberg. I never saw anything but a white one, and that you can see on the darkest night. You can see field ice, too, on the darkest night in time enough for you to get out of the way of it.*

At 7.15 [Murdoch](#) ordered lamp trimmer [Samuel Hemming](#) to secure the fore scuttle hatch to prevent glow from interfering with the crow’s nest and bridge watch. That was the only precaution, the only concession to the conditions that night of ice in a ‘flat calm’. [Lee](#)’s claim that a haze did in fact obscure vision was denied by [Fleet](#), and the Commissioner ([Lord Mersey](#)) of the British Inquiry stated – ‘*My impression is this, [Lee] was trying to make an excuse for not seeing the iceberg, and he thought he could make it out by creating a thick haze.*’ [Fleet](#)’s defensive petulance in the stand (‘Is there any more likes to have a go at me?’) *may* have masked his own guilty knowledge that they had not been concentrating (possibly distracted, as might [Murdoch](#), by a white light seen low on the sea on the port bow just before the collision). It was near freezing and the lookouts, in an open crow’s nest, had a 22 knot wind in their face, making it feel much colder. *Carpathia*’s [▶] [Captain Arthur Rostron](#) testified (British Inquiry) that although most icebergs were visible, in the conditions that night, from between one and two miles, he was the first to sight one iceberg a mere quarter of a mile away. It was ‘between 25 and 30 feet high’.



Titanic’s was probably about 75 feet high. Even given [Rostron](#)’s late sighting of a berg, *Titanic*’s should still have been seen sooner – it was well over twice the size. [Collins](#), with experience of bergs in the North Atlantic, explained why *Titanic* hit the iceberg even after her turn -

23840. **Now can you explain to me why the *Titanic* did not clear this iceberg? Have you formed any theory?**

- *It is possible for the iceberg to extend under the water a considerable distance from the portion seen above.*

J. Bruce Ismay – the 39-year-old Chairman and Managing Director of the White Star Line was a passenger. He was also President of International Mercantile Marine Co. [IMM], **J. P. Morgan's** giant US combine that owned White Star. He was accused (above all by the Anglophobe **W. R. Hearst's** US newspapers who called him 'J. Brute Ismay') of escaping the sinking ship while women and children were left to drown. In fact, **Ismay** helped load and lower several lifeboats and only jumped into a half-filled boat, with an officer's approval, when no other passengers were visible. He was also accused of ordering **Capt. Smith**, *Titanic's* commander, to 'make a record crossing', thus indirectly causing the collision. There is no evidence at all that **Smith** deferred to **Ismay** on matters of navigation. The only charge that sticks is that he pocketed a Marconi ice warning that should have been posted on the bridge. **Smith** later asked for its return. The British press was fairer to **Ismay** although *Nautical Magazine's* snide comment – 'It is not given to everyone to be a hero' may not have impressed him. **Ismay's** fault was that he survived.



The White Star Line - following the disaster the company did not go into immediate terminal decline as is often supposed. In 1913 White Star announced a record year, due to profits from the immigrant trade. In 1927 the line was returned to British interests, but by 1934 was in financial difficulties because of the world depression. The British government agreed to advance both White Star and Cunard £9.5 million if they merged, which they did, White Star however becoming the junior partner with 38% of the shares. In 1947 Cunard bought them out and by 1950 the name, White Star Line, no longer existed.

SS Californian - 6223 tons, bound from London to Boston, this Leyland Line steamship (also owned by IMM) had, at 7:30 p.m. on April 14, reported three large icebergs fifteen miles north of *Titanic's* course, which *Bride* intercepted and delivered to the bridge. Later that evening at 10.21 (ship's time), south of the Grand Banks, the *Californian* encountered a large ice field stretching some 30 miles NW-SE. **Captain Stanley Lord** [▶] decided to stop for the night (at 42° 5' N, 50° 7' W by his reckoning). Around 11:00 p.m. the light of a ship's masthead was seen approaching from the east. **Lord** asked **Evans** (wireless operator) which ships were nearby. **Evans** said only *Titanic*.



Lord thought the ship was not her but asked **Evans** to tell *Titanic* anyway that they were stopped by ice. *Titanic* was sending and receiving greetings (and stock market news etc.) via Cape Race and *Californian's* signal was loud and intrusive. **Phillips**, at the key, told **Evans** - 'Keep out! Shut up, shut up! I am busy, I am working Cape Race.' Such apparent rudeness was not taken as such by **Evans**, who understood that his signal was 'jamming' the weaker one from Cape Race. **Evans** turned in at 11:30

p.m. Fifteen minutes later *Titanic* hit an iceberg. 35 minutes later the first CQD was sent.

There is considerable controversy concerning the identity, course and position of this 'mystery ship'. But the evidence is clear. *Californian's* **Third Officer Groves** stated at the British Inquiry: 'About 11.10, ship's time, I made out a steamer coming up a little bit abaft our starboard beam...' *Californian* was pointed NE at the time, so her starboard beam faced SE. A ship 'a little bit abaft our starboard beam' would therefore have been roughly SSE of *Californian* when **Groves** first saw her. **Lord** himself testified (Br. Inq.) that 'It was approaching me from the eastward...on the starboard side [and] I saw a green [starboard] light.' *Californian's* **Second Officer Stone**, who came on duty at midnight (when *Titanic* was stopped), confirmed that *Californian* was pointing ENE and the other ship was 'on our starboard beam' – SSE. All this tallies with *Titanic's* known course and position, and no other ship.

Groves (on duty from 8 p.m. on April 14th until about 12:15 a.m. on the morning of April 15th) said that the nearby vessel was showing 'a lot of light. There was absolutely no doubt her being a passenger steamer, at least in my mind.' **Second Officer Stone** and **Apprentice Gibson** (both on duty at midnight, or shortly after) on the other hand, saw a poorly-lit 'tramp steamer', stopped SSE of *Californian* pointing slightly north of the latter's position. The reason for the discrepancy in what they perceived is easily explained - a ship looks completely different from the side, and from bow on. Even a great liner viewed at night head on will look dark, her deck forward of the bridge kept deliberately unlit for easier visibility by the watch.



Captain Lord [◀] also thought that it was a small steamer, but he had not seen her broadside. **Lord** testified that he was on deck watching the steamer until 11:30 p.m. and in an affidavit added: 'At 11:30 p.m. I noticed that the other steamer was stopped about five miles off, also that the Third Officer was morsing him...At 11:45 p.m. I went to the bridge...' **Lord** claimed (Br. Inq.) that he was 'up and down off the bridge till 12 o'clock'. However, **Groves'** stated that **Captain Lord** visited the bridge only once between 10:35 p.m. and midnight. At 11:30 p.m. **Groves** descended to the lower bridge, where he expected to find the captain, to tell him of the proximity of a large passenger ship whose deck lights were clearly visible. **Lord** was in the chart room. He never saw the 'mystery ship' side on, and his memory was unreliable. He claimed later not to recall **Groves** telling him about the big, brightly-lit ship. But

then he did not remember the rockets either [see below], until overwhelmed by the evidence. **Lord** admitted to the British Inquiry, 'I have heard so many stories about the *Titanic* since that I really do not know what I heard that night.'

Groves told the Mersey Inquiry that the vessel he saw could not have been a 'small passenger steamer' because it 'would not show the light I saw from this steamer' and that in his opinion it could 'most decidedly' have been the *Titanic*.

Around 12:45 a.m. on April 15, **Stone** saw a white rocket explode in the direction of the steamer, followed by others. He called **Captain Lord** at 1:15 a.m. on the voice

tube. Lord said he was told of only one rocket and asked if it had been a company signal. Stone said he didn't know. Lord told Stone to tell him if anything about the ship changed, and to keep signaling with the Morse lamp.

The Merchant Shipping Act (1894) states (Article 27, later 31) that rockets may be used at night by a ship in distress 'throwing stars of any colour or description, fired one at a time, at short intervals.' *Titanic* probably fired 8 rockets, but perhaps as many as 12 (she had 36), and they were not fired at the correct intervals. Thus, to the watch officer on Leyland Line's *Californian* the sight of 8 rockets (the number he saw) fired over a period of an hour might not *automatically* signal alarm. Nevertheless they alerted *Californian's* Captain Lord three times over the night although Lord was apparently unaware of Apprentice Gibson entering the chart room where the captain slept at 2.05 a.m. (Stone should of course have gone himself, even if it meant leaving the bridge). He told him that 8 rockets had now been fired, the ship was disappearing SW and that she had not responded to the Morse lamp. Gibson claimed the captain asked whether the rockets were white (i.e. whether they were company signals, although it indicated ignorance of distress procedure). A further call on the voice pipe, according to Stone, at 2.40 a.m. (*Titanic* time about 2.25, a few minutes after she foundered) informed Lord that the ship had disappeared. Lord asked again about the colour of the rockets.

Even without hindsight, Lord should certainly have ordered the radio operator back to his set. 'That silly man, who wouldn't use his wireless!' *Carpathia's* Captain Rostron was supposed to have said of Lord. *Californian's* sole wireless operator (Evans), unassisted, had just finished a 16-hour day and needed rest. No maritime disaster of this magnitude had occurred in living memory. But rockets of whatever colour being fired after midnight near an ice flow should at least have prompted a concerned officer to insist the Captain come to the bridge. Second Officer Stone, peering through glasses at what he now thought was a large passenger ship, remarked to Gibson at about 1.30 a.m. (around 1.15 on *Titanic*), 'she looks queer out of water, her lights look queer...a ship is not going to fire rockets at sea for nothing.' Quite. Gibson told the Mersey Inquiry 'everything was not all right with her' that it was 'a case of some kind of distress.' But they stood and watched. 'There was a 'certain slackness' that night aboard his ship, Lord later conceded to his lawyer. Second Officer Stone was undoubtedly 'slack' in his dithering, Morsing away to no avail while a radio operator slept. Third Officer Charles Groves described Stone as 'a stolid, unimaginative type who possessed little self-confidence.' He was nervous of the humourless Lord. Lord, in turn, seemed reluctant to act unless forced by Stone's insistence, which was lacking.

What Stone and Gibson saw, on a clear but moonless night, was not a small tramp steamer only 5 miles off but the superstructure of a much larger liner 8-10 miles away, its hull only partially visible over the horizon. The rockets were not being fired from a larger ship, some way beyond but *exactly* behind the mystery ship from *Californian's* position (an amazing coincidence on the wide Atlantic). They were being fired from *Titanic*, there was no 'mystery ship'. The change in the appearance of her lights was not *Titanic*, or any other ship, sailing away but brought about by *Titanic* slowly sinking by the head, and turning. *Californian's* head was swinging, which added to the confusion, a fact Stone and Gibson ignored. Stone testified: 'I knew that rockets shown at short intervals, one at a time, meant distress

signals...[but] a steamer that is in distress does not steam away...' So Stone remained blind to the evidence (also because the Captain seemed unperturbed). The ship's lights were disappearing because she was sinking. Notwithstanding their misgivings at 1.30 a.m. (about an hour before *Titanic* sank) that she looked 'queer' and 'a ship is not going to fire rockets at sea for nothing', Stone and Gibson concluded by her lights, or lack of them, that around 2.00 a.m. (*Californian's* time) the ship was steaming away SW (Lord was informed at 2.05 a.m.). At 2.40 she had gone. Stone thought that he could see the steamer's stern light, which would have been an indicator of the ship moving south and away, but Gibson said he never saw it.

Debate continues as to how far the *Californian* was from *Titanic*. At between 8-10 miles distant the curvature of the earth, balanced against the height of her bridge and *Titanic's* boat deck, meant that although rockets were visible once in the air, the Morse lamp *Californian* used to signal *Titanic* (and vice versa) was invisible. The theory that rockets were being fired from a mystery ship exactly between *Californian* and *Titanic* would be a coincidence stretching credulity – *Titanic* fired rockets, eight rockets were seen on the *Californian*, no ship nearby claimed to have fired rockets, and there was certainly no other passenger ship close. The sighting of ships' lights by both ships tallies with what we know of the respective positions of both the *Californian* and *Titanic*. Moreover, Groves, told the British Inquiry 'there was absolutely no doubt about her being a passenger steamer' because of her size and 'the brilliance of the lights'; her deck lights appeared to go out around the time *Titanic* struck the berg (when *Titanic's* turn would have obscured her lights) and she seemed to disappear altogether at the same time as she sank.

Q. (Br. Inq.) You have told us the deck lights had gone out? –

(GROVES) *Yes; when I say that the deck lights had gone out I mean they had disappeared from my view.*

Q. They disappeared from your view, and apparently some of them again came into view?

- *Yes.*

Q. ...Supposing the steamer whose lights you saw turned two points to port at 11:40, would that account to you for her lights ceasing to be visible to you?

- *I quite think it would.*



Ernest Gill, a fireman working in the *Californian's* engine room, came on deck at 11.56 [about 11.40 *Titanic* time, the moment of collision] that night. He told the Mersey Inquiry: 'It was very clear and I could see for a long distance...I looked over the rail on the starboard side and saw the lights of a very large steamer about 10 miles away. I could see her broadside lights...They could not have helped but see her from the bridge and lookout. It was now 12 o'clock and I went to my cabin.... I turned in but could not sleep [and] went on deck again. [After] about 10 minutes I saw a white rocket about 10 miles away on the starboard side...In seven or eight minutes I saw distinctly a second rocket in the same place, and I said to myself, *That must be a vessel in distress*. It was not

my business to notify the bridge or the lookouts; but they could not have helped but see them. I turned in immediately after, supposing that the ship would pay attention to the rockets.’ Next day the night’s drama was being discussed and he heard **Second Engineer Evans** exclaim ‘Why in the devil didn’t they wake the wireless man up?’ **Gill** added – ‘I am quite sure that the *Californian* was less than 20 miles from the *Titanic*, which the officers report to have been our position. I could not have seen her if she had been more than 10 miles distant and I saw her very plainly.’ **Gill** stated: ‘It could not have been anything but a passenger boat, she was too large.’

Lord kept quiet about sighting rockets. It was a press interview with **Gill** that alerted **Senator Smith**. *Californian’s* ‘scrap log’, from which entries in the official log were written up, was destroyed - common practice but in the circumstances an exception should have been made. This has led to suspicions that **Lord** may have ‘doctored’ (**Lord Mersey’s** phrase) his log and falsified *Californian’s* position to place her further away from *Titanic*. In the official log there is no report of rockets, a startling omission. **Lord** did not help his cause by trying to discredit crewmembers who talked of rockets [see press extracts below].

"On Watch" FOR NEARLY A CENTURY

Though there were only four ships when Cunard inaugurated regular transatlantic steamship service in 1840, the fleet grew to twice that number within the same decade... and before 1850 sailings were made weekly. So then, as now, there were ships of this Line standing out on the high seas at all times. In endless alternation, the officers of Cunard White Star have kept their "watch" ... for nearly a century. Through this rotation, ceaseless as the ocean tides, it was inevitable that Cunard White Star should have raised even higher the tradition of Britain on the seas... that it should have perfected every detail of service, while strengthening to a stern code that seamanship which was its heritage.

Senior First Officer I. C. Boothall and Junior Third Officer E. A. Divers, on the bridge of the Aquitania, a senior and junior officer always keep the bridge "watch" together.

Book early in this Coronation Year!
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Express from New York to Cherbourg and Southampton
Oceanic Mar. 18; Sat. Apr. 7; 21; May 5, 19
Albatross Mar. 17; Apr. 16; May 4, 20; June 11
Aquitania Mar. 31; Apr. 20; May 15; June 2, 18

To Plymouth and London (via Halifax)
 Mar. 22; weekly to Apr. 6 in the *Albatross, Aquitania, Albatross, Albatross*

To Glasgow via Greenock, Belfast and Liverpool (via Halifax)
Aquitania, Mar. 22; *Albatross*, Mar. 19

**AQUITANIA
BERENGARIA
QUEEN MARY
GEORGIC
BRITANNIC
CARINTHIA
FRANCINIA
SAMARIA
SCYTHIA
LACONIA
LANCASTRIA**

‘The dog that didn’t bark in the night’ is perhaps the key to where *Californian* lay, and thus whether **Lord** could have saved some (but not all - even if she had been 10 miles away and alert) of *Titanic’s* passengers. The ‘mystery ship’, so convenient for **Lord’s** argument that it was she they saw not 10 miles away, was invisible next day. ‘She’ was travelling from the east into an impenetrable ice barrier, would have stopped or slowed, or skirted south and then headed west and thus would have been seen by any of the ships racing from the west that came to *Titanic’s* aid; yet no ship saw her. *Mount Royal* supposedly spotted a schooner, but at a point that on this windless night no ‘mystery ship’ could have reached, if she had been visible to the *Californian* while stopped. Sen. Smith was correct in his harsh judgement:

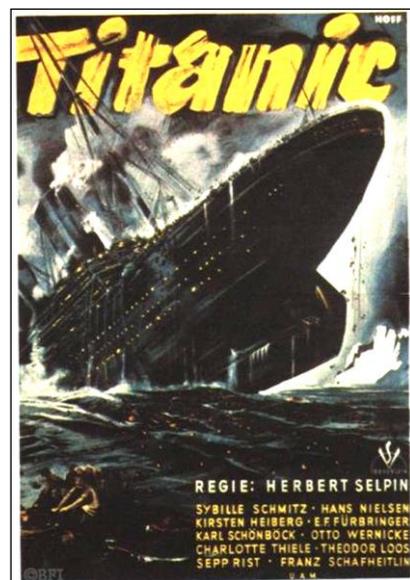
‘It is not a pleasant duty to comment on the shortcomings of others, but the plain truth should be told.... I am well aware from the testimony of the captain of the *Californian* that he deluded himself with the idea that there was a ship between the *Titanic* and the *Californian*, but there was no ship seen there at daybreak and no intervening rockets were seen by anyone on the *Titanic*.... A ship would not have

been held there if it had been eastbound, and she could not have gone west without passing the *Californian* on the north or the *Titanic* on the south. That ice floe held but two ships - the *Titanic* and the *Californian*.' [Smith, May 28, 1912]

And so was Mersey:

'There are contradictions and inconsistencies in the story as told by the different witnesses. But the truth of the matter is plain. The *Titanic* collided with the berg at 11:40. The vessel seen by the *Californian* stopped at this time. The rockets sent up from the *Titanic* were distress signals. The *Californian* saw distress signals. The number sent up by the *Titanic* was about eight. The *Californian* saw eight. The time over which the rockets were sent up from the *Titanic* was from about 12:45 to 1:45 o'clock. It was about this time that the *Californian* saw the rockets. At 2:40 Mr. Stone called to the Master that the ship from which he had seen the rockets had disappeared. At 2:20 am the *Titanic* had foundered. It was suggested that the rockets seen by the *Californian* were from some other ship, not the *Titanic*. But no other ship to fit this theory has ever been heard of.'

Gibson saw the flash of a rocket's detonator on *Titanic's* boat deck, which thus had to be above *Californian's* visible horizon, meaning that the maximum distance the ships could have been apart was about 16 miles, assuming *Titanic* was on an even keel, but as she was down by the head she was much nearer. **Boxhall's** [▲ in 1937 Cunard advert. ► US 1979 TV film poster, German 1943 propaganda film] flares, fired in Lifeboat No. 2 to beckon rescuers, were first spotted by the *Carpathia* at around 3.15 a.m. from 10 miles distant, which **Rostron** later confirmed to a survivor, **Mrs Mahala Douglas**; but they were not seen by the *Californian* who thus must have been more than 6 miles away (rockets rose 600-800 ft., flares were sea-level), the lifeboats having drifted 1.2 nautical miles per hour SW from the doomed ship, in the Labrador Current. At 3.20 a.m. **Stone** and **Gibson** on the *Californian* noticed rockets being fired low down on the southern horizon (**Stone** did not have the wit to report this to **Lord**), which was the *Carpathia's* response, putting that distance at under 12 miles. Put simply, the trigonometry - and time, speed and course - put *Californian* about 8-10 miles from *Titanic* when she struck the berg. And if we add to that this exchange concerning the 'mystery ship' -



Fourth Officer **BOXHALL**: I judged her to be between 5 and 6 miles away when I Morsed to her, and then she turned around - she was turning very, very slowly... [Br Inq, Q15409]

Eventually I saw the red [port] light, I had seen the green [starboard light]... I saw the green before I saw the red. [US Inq. 933]

Captain LORD, *Californian*: This man was coming along... on our starboard side. After midnight we slowly blew around and showed him our red [port] light. [US Inq. 732]

- it tallies, *Californian* was turning slowly to starboard, showing *Titanic* first her green starboard light and then her red port one. 'I could see her broadside lights' said Gill. This would have consistent with *Titanic* having stopped shortly after the collision, facing west, and her head turning slowly to starboard, northwards. Dr Ballard found her bow section still facing north, 4000 metres below the waves.

About 11:40 p.m. the approaching ship stopped and her deck lights disappeared from Groves' view. Groves deduced that she had turned, changed her heading (which *Titanic* had indeed done, following her starboard movement after hitting the iceberg). But he could still see the ship's masthead light and her red port sidelight was now visible. Apprentice Gibson was certain that the nearby ship (SSE of *Californian*) must have been pointing north of NNW in order to show her red port sidelight to *Californian*. Gibson could see the glare of the ship's deck lights extending to the right of the bright masthead light, confirming that the nearby ship was pointed slightly north of the *Californian*'s position. Boxhall, at the US Inquiry, explained what he saw from *Titanic*:

'I thought she was about 5 miles, and I arrived at it in this way. The masthead lights of a steamer are required by the Board of Trade regulations to show for 5 miles, and the signals are required to show for 2 miles...I saw the side lights. Whatever ship she was had beautiful lights. I think we could see her lights more than the regulation distance, but I do not think we could see them 14 miles.'

It should be noted that on such a very clear and dark, moonless night lights would appear brighter than usual, leading even experienced seamen to underestimate distances. As both Inquiries deduced, there was no reason why *Titanic* and *Californian* did not have a clear view of each other during the early hours of April 15, 1912.

'Lordites', as they are known in the *Titanic* 'industry', consider Captain Lord a scapegoat. Unfortunately, he did them, and himself, no service by his evasions and lies. His officers, perhaps under pressure or duress, supported Lord's falsehoods. Extracts from contemporary press reports are incriminating:

April 19, 1912, Boston Traveller - Lord states: *'My wireless operator, C.F. Evans, received the SOS message at 5:30 Monday morning when we were 30 miles north of the scene of the frightful disaster.'* He claims his latitude and longitude when he first received the SOS message from the *Virginian* were *'state secrets'*. ['30 miles' is of course nonsense by any reckoning. No captain can treat his position as some sort of 'state secret'.]

April 19, 1912, Boston Evening Transcript - *'Ordinarily when a steamer reaches port and has anything to report, figures giving exact positions reckoned in latitude and longitude have always been obtainable from the ship's officers.... An agent of the line boarded the steamer immediately after she docked and was closeted with Captain Lord in his cabin for a few minutes before the reporters saw him.'*

April 23, 1912, *New York Herald* - Rumours were circulating that the *Californian* 'was within sight of the Titanic and failed to respond to her calls for assistance.' **Captain Lord** dismissed them with a statement that 'Sailors will tell anything when they are ashore...with the engines stopped, the wireless was of course not working, so we heard nothing of the Titanic's plight until the next morning.' [Slandering his sailors was a last resort; the wireless was 'not working' because the operator was asleep, the ship may have been 'stopped' but he still had power for his wireless; he had told his Chief Engineer – 'Keep main steam handy, in case we start bumping the ice' .]

April 24, 1912, *Boston Post* - **Captain Lord** 'stoutly denied that his was the ship which was said by Titanic survivors to have passed within five miles of the sinking steamer and ignored distress signals.' **Captain Lord** also said his vessel 'had sighted no rockets or other signals of distress.' [He had been informed that 8 rockets in all had been sighted.]

April 25, 1912, *Boston Globe* - An unnamed sailor [**Ernest Gill**] on the *Californian* claims that the signals of distress sent up by the *Titanic* were seen by the *Californian* and ignored; and that 'the *Californian* was within 10 miles of the *Titanic* when the accident occurred...**Captain Lord** simply ignored the story yesterday...' He claims that when he was in the icefield 'Titanic was 18 miles due south of us and seven miles west, which would make her 20 miles away.' **First Officer Stewart** said that the first message received about the *Titanic* was a confused one from the *Frankfurt*. 'None of the crew yesterday would say they had seen any signals of distress or any lights on the night of Sunday, April 14. One of them said he did not believe that anyone else did.' ['20 miles away' compromises his estimate of 6 days before, but conveniently puts the ship out of visible range.]

April 25, 1912, *Boston Herald* – 'Captain Lord's story of the *Californian*'s position and the other occurrences on that night was corroborated by **First Officer Stewart**, **Second Officer Stone**, and the quartermaster on duty at the time. **Stone** emphatically denied that he had notified **Capt. Lord** of any rockets, as he had seen none, nor had any been reported to him.' [**Stone** had in fact signed a secret affidavit a week earlier admitting seeing rockets. Perhaps **Lord**, ignorant of the affidavit's existence, thought **Stone**'s corroboration was necessary, and applied pressure.]

April 25, 1912, *Boston Journal* – **Lord** says that 'Mr. Stewart, the first officer, was on the bridge during the times that the signals were supposed to have been seen and he can tell you himself that nothing of the kind was seen by him, or[by] any of the men who were on watch with him...Everything had been quiet during the night and no signals of distress or anything else had been seen, and about 5 o'clock in the morning, which is my regular time for getting up, I told Mr. Stewart to wake up 'Wireless' and have him get in touch with some ship and get an idea of what kind of an ice field we had gotten into.' [There are several inaccuracies here. **Stone** was on the bridge at the critical time, not **Stewart** who relieved him at 4 a.m. **Stewart** called the captain at 4.30 a.m. and told him that **Stone** had seen rockets in the middle watch. **Lord** replied 'Yes, I know, he has been telling me.' He woke up the WO not for an ice report but because of the uncertainty over the unidentified ship. In the Washington Inquiry **Lord** presumably saw that the jig was up: 'The officer on watch saw some signals...' he admitted.]

In Lord's defence, when he learnt of the disaster shortly after 5.00 a.m. on April 15, he acted swiftly and bravely (possibly sensing he might be criticized for his previous inaction). Assuming that *Titanic's* transmitted position was correct he sailed due west through the icefield until reaching open sea, then sped south to the supposed position, where he saw no wreckage. But he spotted *Carpathia* the other side of the field. He traveled east back through the ice, arriving at 7.45 a.m. by *Carpathia*, who had picked up survivors and was about to make for New York. Lord searched in vain for bodies, then made for Boston. Unlike Lord, *Mount Temple's* Captain Moore had stayed west of the ice.

At both Inquiries it naturally suited Lord to place his ship further away from *Titanic* to show that he could not see her, could not be blamed for inaction, and that he was too far away to have taken her passengers off even if he had been alerted to the sinking. ['The *Californian*, of the Leyland Line, west-bound, was in latitude 42° 05' north, longitude 50° 07' west, and was distant in a northerly direction 19.5 miles according to the Captain's figures' – US Inquiry Report.] Unfortunately for Lord, despite his version of the timetable on April 15, his journey to where *Titanic* actually foundered was too quick to put him 20 miles from where we now know *Titanic* lay stopped and sinking the night before.

Lord came on the bridge at 5.0 a.m. (*Californian* time) and shortly after had the wireless operator woken, who quickly learnt of the disaster from *Frankfurt*, *Virginian* and *Mount Temple*. At the Senate Inquiry Captain Lord testified that at 6 a.m. - actually 5.46 according to *Mount Temple's* WO, who was monitoring (allowing for *MT* being 15 minutes behind) - he received *Titanic's* CQD position from *Virginian* and that his next communication with her was an hour and a half later. But according to *Virginian's* log only *thirty-nine minutes* later *Virginian* sent her second message to *Californian* (6:25 a.m. *Californian* time). The exchange is significant:

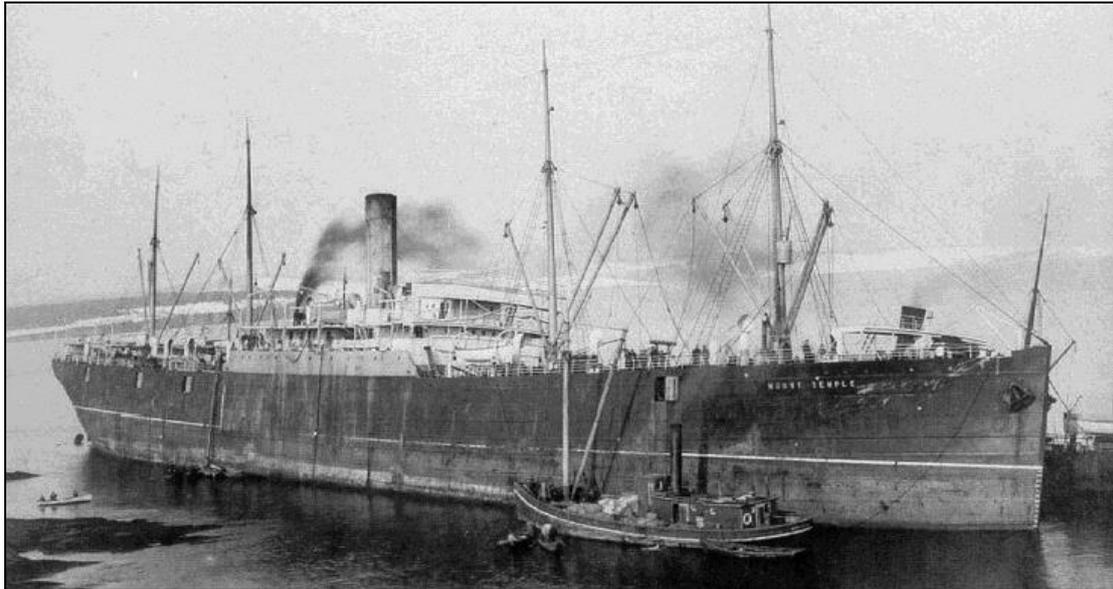
Virginian: 'Kindly let me know condition of affairs when you get to *Titanic*.'

Californian: 'Can now see *Carpathia* taking passengers on board from small boats. *Titanic* foundered about 2 a.m. [sic]'

So *Californian* could already see *Carpathia* recovering *Titanic's* lifeboats at 6:25 a.m., over an hour before Lord's estimate. Put simply, setting out at 6.00 a.m. from east of the 3-mile wide icefield, sailing SW (thus adding an extra mile), emerging about 30 minutes later and seeing *Carpathia* across the ice (and being seen by *Mount Temple*) would be impossible if *Californian* had started 20 miles north of *Titanic's* known position. This is confirmed by the following timetable -

5 a.m.: [all times *Californian* time] Lord appeared on *Californian's* bridge and shortly afterwards has his wireless operator woken.

5.26: according to *NY Times* interview with *Mount Temple's* [▼ aground in Nova Scotia, 1908] Captain Moore, who quoted 5.11 a.m. (5.26 adjusted to *Californian* time), Evans learns of the disaster from *Mount Temple*, and also *Titanic's* CDQ position.



5.46: **Evans** also receives *Titanic's* CQD position from *Virginian*.

6.0: *Californian* steams S-W through the icefield, towards *Titanic's* CQD position (strange that **Lord** did not fathom that the true direction was obviously where the rockets had been seen). *Californian* is spotted as she traverses the field by **Captain James Moore** of the *Mount Temple*, who is stopped on the western side of the icefield, about '6 miles' due west of *Carpathia*, who **Moore** can see on her rescue mission.

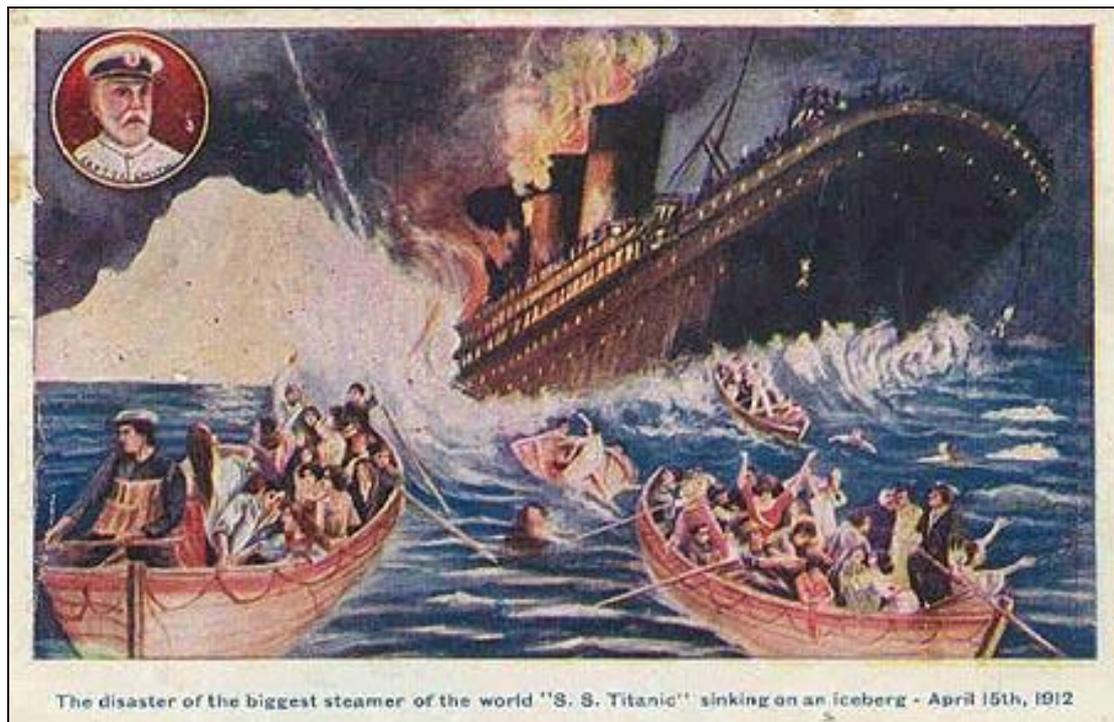
6:25: *Californian's* wireless operator notifies *Virginian* that she can see *Carpathia* and *Titanic's* lifeboats.

6:30: having cleared the icefield, *Californian* turns and steams south at full speed.

6:50: **Third Officer Groves** returns to *Californian's* bridge and sees *Carpathia* at the rescue site due west, on the eastern side of the icefield (the same side *Californian* had started from 50 minutes before) 'about five miles' distant, and also *Mount Temple* 'perhaps a mile and a half away', 'ahead, a little on our starboard side'.

8.30: *Californian* [► deck of the Dundee-built SS *Californian*] is alongside *Carpathia* at the disaster site after steaming 6-7 miles more miles due south on the western side of the iceflow (to seek an easier passage towards *Carpathia*) and then NE back through the ice. The timing means that if *Californian* had started from **Lord's** stated position (latitude 42° 05' north, longitude 50° 07' west) on 14 April, she would have steamed at an average 20 knots! Her maximum speed was 13 knots.





Lifeboats [▲ 1912 postcard] - the British Board of Trade allowed vessels to sail with insufficient lifeboats, because lifesaving regulations were based on ships up to 10,000 gross registered tons (*Titanic* was 46,329). They had not kept up with marine developments. *Titanic's* lifeboat capacity was 1178. It has been argued these 20 lifeboats, in a 'flat calm', should have been loaded to capacity in time. They consisted of 14 Standard Lifeboats (capacity 65 each), 4 Collapsible Lifeboats (capacity 47) and 2 Emergency Cutters (capacity 40). The capacities were considered by several officers to be excessive and dangerous. **Boxhall** had 18 in Boat 2, which was the first, most southerly boat rescued at 4.10 a.m., the last (12, with **Lightoller** in command, having transferred from Collapsible B) being picked up at 8.10 a.m. **Boxhall** thought he could only have managed two or three more, despite its official capacity of 40 (an allowance of a meagre 8 cubic feet per person. Even so, they were loaded to a total of only 65.31% of their potential capacity, not an impressive figure, and **Lightoller**, star of screen (*A Night to Remember*, 1958) and book (his own), loaded 5 boats to a wretched 47.23% of capacity with too few crew to man them (in contrast **Murdoch** managed to load 8 boats to 66.86%). The myth persists that if there had been 48 boats – as originally proposed by one of the builders' designers –



all would have been saved. It would have made no difference, because the crew was unable to load 20 boats adequately in the 2 hours available (the last collapsible boat was being loaded at the end).

Most half-full lifeboats did not return and pick up survivors, fearing being swamped. **Third Officer Pitman** ordered his rowers to pull back towards the ship but his passengers,

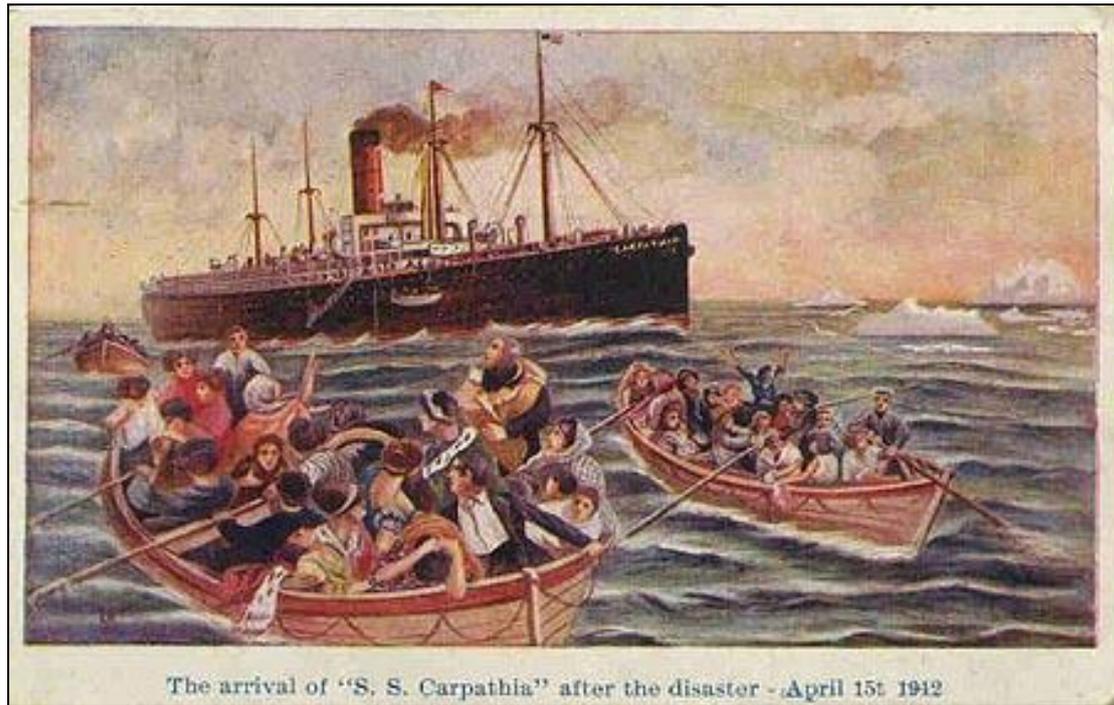
especially the women, implored him not to, so they stayed put, listening to ‘a continual moan for about an hour’. **Fifth Officer Lowe** did go back, but only after waiting an hour and a half ‘for the people to thin out’. Three were found who survived. Boat No. 4 also went back, but some terrified ladies protested and threw themselves on the oars. **Mrs. J. J. Astor** calmed them. Boat 6, with ‘**Unsinkable Molly**’ **Brown** aboard, did not return to pick up survivors at the insistence of **Mrs. Brown**, as myth would have it, because of the petulant intransigence of **Quartermaster Hichens**, a Cornish curmudgeon [▲ in Boat 6]. The ebullient ‘**Molly**’ **Brown** [▶ with **Rostron**, NY, 1912], who knew ‘everyone worth knowing from Moscow to the Bosphorus’ was a *nouveau-riche* American whose estranged husband’s money came from gold-mining in Colorado. She was returning home from a trip to Egypt with the **Astors** to attend a gravely sick grandson. **Hichens**, in charge, claimed it would be pointless to return because ‘there’s only a lot of stiffs there’, a comment which upset the women. **Hichens** became a *Titanic* legend for the wrong reasons. He constantly berated the rowers with foul-mouthed abuse and moaned with perverse gloating that the boat was doomed to drift for days. Fed up with his gloomy predictions **Mrs. Brown** took command, got the women to row, and threatened to throw **Hichens** overboard when he ranted that he was in charge. Eventually **Hichens** succumbed to muttering obscenities under his blanket. When *Carpathia* was spotted he delighted in telling everyone that she was only coming to pick up dead bodies, and they were still doomed. His testimony to the US Inquiry about his command of Lifeboat 6 was a fiction, belied by the reports of the passengers and crew he had threatened. A thoroughly bad hat, in 1933 **Hichens** (b. 1882), by now a committed drunk, was jailed for attempted murder after a boozy night. He died in 1940 aboard a tramp steamer, a far cry from steering *Titanic*, albeit to her doom.



The poor loading of boats was not wholly due to officers’ incompetence. Passengers would not believe the boat was sinking, partly because of its reputation and because the list was so gradual and minimal at first. Why exchange the warmth and security of the liner for an open lifeboat on the freezing ocean? Families would not be separated, women would not leave their husbands – all large families in steerage perished. Some women watched the precarious lowering of boats with trepidation, and stepped back when invited to enter the next one. ‘The ladies had been invited to go to two or three previous boats and they refused to go absolutely,’ said **Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon** of his boat station. Steward **John Hart** was instructed at 12.30 a.m. to pass the women from third class up to the boat deck, but found few willing to go.

Once in the lifeboats there were other problems –

‘No one seemed to know what direction to take’, said **Mrs. Emily Ryerson** (Affidavit to US Inq., May 9, 1912). ‘We had no lights or compass. There were several babies in the boat, but there was no milk or water. (I believe these were all stowed away somewhere, but no one knew where, and as the bottom of the boat was full of water and the boat full of people it was very difficult to find anything’).



Boats [▲ 1912 postcard] lacked both equipment and provisions, and competent leadership. **Lowe** said in his testimony to the US Inquiry – ‘a sailor is not necessarily a boatman’ and some crew’s unfamiliarity with an oar frustrated passengers, several of whom took over the rowing.

First Class passenger **Major Peuchen** was permitted to join Boat 6 because he claimed to be a yachtsman, and **Quartermaster Hichens**, in charge, had shouted to **Second Officer Lightoller**, who was lowering, that the boat lacked crew. **Peuchen** was not impressed with what he found:

‘Then we began to row without compass, without light, but with a little food and water. Our sailor in charge [**Hichens**] had also got at some brandy and was incapable. So we had no provisions. No. 13 was said [to have had] no food or water on board. After we had rowed three-quarters of an hour towards a certain light, which this fool of ours thought was a vessel, he wanted to know if we thought it was a buoy. Then he called it a fishing smack, but it proved to be the Northern Lights. He was the most stupid man I ever saw. He kept calling out this and that and making incoherent remarks.’ [Interview, *Toronto World*, April 20, 1912]

But as always with such testimony some scepticism is necessary as too often it is self-serving. It is odd that **Peuchen**, a military officer, deferred to **Hichens** if he was both drunk and useless. **Peuchen** is the hero of his story but makes no mention of ‘**Molly Brown**’, who provided real leadership. There were whispers that **Peuchen** had complained of tiredness and downed his oar until **Mrs Brown** berated him. **Peuchen** discredited **Smith** when he was interviewed but was more moderate at the U.S. Senate Inquiry. Yet he was consistent in his criticism of the lack of seamanship. ‘They seemed to be short of sailors around the lifeboats, [they were] a ‘scratch crew’, brought from different vessels...they were not accustomed to working together.’ In his home city of Toronto he was labelled a coward, it was muttered that he had said he was a yachtsman to get off the ship. He seemed suspiciously defensive, as though secretly sheepish. The *Titanic* disaster both made and broke reputations.

Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff-Gordon [▼ on *Carpathia*, second/third from R] – they were vilified for, allegedly, bribing the crew in Boat 1 not to return to pick up survivors. In fact, they were offering compensation for loss of earnings and possessions, although they did indeed resist vehemently a suggestion to go back.

Lady D-G owned and ran a successful couture company ‘The Maison Lucille’ with branches in London, Paris and New York - her clientele included **Margot Asquith** and the **Duchess of York** (the future **Queen Mary**). A divorcée, she married **Sir Cosmo**, a minor aristocrat, after he had joined her company as a business partner. He gave her a title, financial acumen and respectability; she gave him



money. The British Inquiry elicited a series of responses from **Sir Cosmo** that were, to put it mildly, unhelpful to his case, and the intervention of the Commissioner (**Mersey**) merely stressed his difficulty:

12530. **Did you hear the cries?**

Sir COSMO DUFF-GORDON - *Yes, I heard the explosion first, and I heard, I will not say the cries, but a wail - one confused sound.*

12531. **We do not want unnecessarily to prolong the discussion of it, but they were the cries of people who were drowning?**

- *Yes.*

12533. **Did it occur to you that with the room in your boat, if you could get to these people you could save some?**

- *...we were rather in an abnormal condition...but of course it quite well occurred to one that people in the water could be saved by a boat, yes.*

12534. **And that there was room in your boat; that they could have got into your boat and been saved?**

- *Yes, it is possible.*

12558. **...no thought entered into your mind at that time that you ought to go back and try to save some of these people?**

- *No, I suppose not.*

12563. **But the cries continued for some time?**

- *Yes, I believe they did.*

12564. **As the men proceeded to row away did the cries sound fainter?**

- *Oh, you could not hear the sound at all when the men were rowing.*

12565. **Does that mean that in your boat they were not rowing when you heard the cries?**

- *The moment the Titanic sank, of course everything stopped. There was a dead silence.*

12566. **And then you of course did hear the cries?**

- *Yes, then we did.*

12568. **We have heard from two Witnesses that a suggestion was made that your boat should go back to try to save some of the people?**

- *Yes.*

12581. **We have heard what they have said, but so far as you are concerned, as I understand your statement, nothing was done at all?**

- *No.*

12667. **Would it not have been more in harmony with the traditions of seamanship that ...you should have suggested to the sailors to have gone and tried if they could rescue**

any one?

- ...the possibility of being able to help anybody never occurred to me at all.

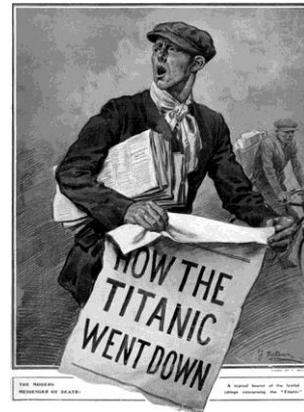
12668. [Do] I accurately state your position...that you considered when you were safe yourselves that all the others might perish?

- No, that is not quite the way to put it.

The COMMISSIONER: Do you think a question of that kind is fair to this Witness? The witness's position is bad enough.

And so it went on, until his cocky self-assurance was gone, and his reputation.

Hard a-starboard – First Officer Murdoch, upon Sixth Officer Moody's alert of 'Iceberg right ahead!' (or possibly seconds before then, having spotted the iceberg himself) went to the engine telegraphs setting them to 'Stop engines', then to 'Full astern together' and ordered Quartermaster Hichens to put the helm 'Hard a-starboard'. He intended to 'port round' it. Arcane naval lore (from sailing ship days) meant that an order 'Hard a-Starboard' commanded a turn (and the wheel) to port because it referred to a tiller being moved to starboard and thus the rudder and the ship to port. To 'port round' meant swinging the stern away from the berg by turning to starboard once the bow had passed the obstacle. In the event, as Boxhall reported hearing Murdoch tell Captain Smith, 'she was too close'.



The Mersey Report stated that:

...it appears that the *Titanic* had turned about two points to port before the collision occurred. From various experiments subsequently made with the *s.s. Olympic*, a sister ship to the *Titanic*, it was found that travelling at the same rate as *Titanic*, about 37 seconds would be required for the ship to change her course to this extent after the helm had been put hard a-starboard. In this time the ship would travel about 466 yards, and allowing for the few seconds that would be necessary for the order to be given, it may be assumed that 500 yards was about the distance at which the iceberg was sighted either from the bridge or crow's nest.

Lightoller told the British Inquiry of a conversation with the lookouts that implied Murdoch had ordered the turn to port just before the lookout's warning:

(Mr. Scanlan). Well, they [the lookouts] ultimately discovered the ice you know, and the men on the bridge did not? - (LIGHTOLLER) *You say the men on the bridge did not. I may say I discussed that immediately on the Carpathia with the look-out men - not necessarily discussed it, but asked them questions whilst their minds were perfectly fresh, and the look-out man told me that practically at the same moment he struck the bell he noticed that the ship's head commenced to swing showing that the helm had been altered probably a few moments before the bell, because the ship's head could not have commenced to swing at practically the same time he struck the bell unless the ice had been seen at the same moment or a few moments before he saw it.*

According to Hichens, who was best placed to recall his manoeuvres (if an occasionally unreliable witness), Murdoch, after the turn to port then ordered him to 'port his helm' (turn to starboard) to swing the stern - with its vulnerable propellers and rudder - away from the iceberg. This explains *Titanic's* turn to NW (pointing

towards *Californian*, where Dr. Ballard found her still pointing on the seabed in 1985) after the collision. [Smith](#) or [Murdoch](#) put the ship's telegraphs to 'Half Ahead', then to 'Stop', to avoid reversing into the iceberg, and to halt the ship.

If *Titanic* had rammed the iceberg head on she would have survived (albeit losing crew in the first two compartments) since she was designed to float with four compartments flooded. In 1879 the 5147 ton *Arizona* (Guion Line) rammed an iceberg head on while travelling at 15 knots and survived, although 25 feet of the bow were compressed, almost to the collision bulkhead. But [Murdoch's](#) instinct was understandable – to avoid the iceberg. It would be a strange mariner who would steer straight for an obstacle. [Marine lawyers would have enjoyed such a debacle – 'Are you telling this court that you steered straight at the iceberg?'] He was not to know that she could not survive a glancing blow. Her watertight bulkheads did not completely seal the ship's compartments (they extended only to E Deck, 3m above the waterline). As one filled it overflowed to the next, and so on, dragging the head down. Another design flaw was the *Titanic's* triple screw engine configuration, with reciprocating steam engines (reversible) driving its wing propellers, and a steam turbine (not reversible) driving its centre propeller. [Murdoch's](#) order to reverse engines hindered the ship's turning ability because the centre turbine, just forward of the rudder, stopped revolving so the rudder was ineffective. Had [Murdoch](#) simply turned the ship while maintaining its forward speed, in accordance with the latest (1910) seamanship manual, the ship might have missed the iceberg. When the iceberg was struck it popped rivets and buckled plates. The inferior quality of steel and rivets was, however, the best then available.

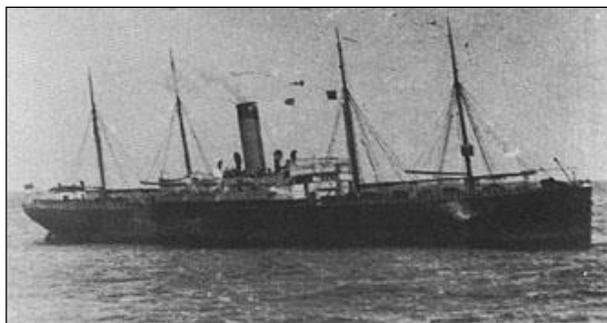
The engineers of the Titanic were the pick of the service. They were second to none and chosen [for] their excellent record. There can be no doubt that it was entirely due to the heroic devotion of these engineer officers that the ship remained afloat as long as she did. Letter from [F.J. Blake](#) RNR (White Star Line Engineering Superintendent in Southampton), *The Engineer*, 26 April 1912.

All engineers stayed at their tasks until the very end, maintaining electrical lighting and pumping. None survived. But they saved a good many who would have perished. At the Mersey Inquiry [Murdoch](#) was said to have rung the engine room telegraphs to 'Full astern' for both engines soon after the iceberg was reported – perhaps 10 seconds after, given the time taken for [Fleet](#) to alert [Moody](#), [Moody](#) to alert [Murdoch](#), and [Murdoch](#) to move and issue the order...and by all accounts it took between 30 and 40 seconds (37 seconds said Mersey) from that time until impact. So the engines were unlikely to be going full astern before the impact; the iceberg was too close, there was not time for the engines to affect the outcome. During her sea trials, sailing at 20.5 knots, it took *Titanic* three minutes and fifteen seconds and about 850 yards (777 metres) to stop, *from engines being reversed*. Engineers would have been at the controls, anticipating telegraph orders, which they would not have been on April 14, which is why the engines were still going ahead when *Titanic* collided, as it took perhaps 20 seconds for an engineer to reach the controls and then another 10 seconds for the engines to react. The ship hit the iceberg because it could neither turn nor stop in time. The iceberg was not seen soon enough.

SOS - *Titanic's* wireless was the most powerful on the seas. The main transmitter was a rotary spark design, powered by a 5 kW motor generator. The equipment used a 4

wire antenna suspended between the ship's 2 masts, 250 feet above the sea. There was a battery-powered emergency transmitter and a back-up motor generator. The Marconi radio's guaranteed working range was 250 miles, but it could reach 400 miles during daylight and up to 2000 at night.

Titanic was not the first ship to send an SOS signal [· · ·, — — —, · · ·]. It had been in use since 1908, because it was easier to send and understand than the older CQD code [— · — ·, — — · —, — · ·], which British wireless operators, however, still preferred (it was the Marconi company's house signal). [First WO Jack Phillips](#) (who perished) began transmitting CQD until [Second WO Harold Bride](#) joked 'Send SOS; it's the new call, and this



may be your last chance to send it.' Sending CQD instead of SOS made no difference. [Phillips](#) and [Bride](#) stayed at their posts to the end (the Captain released them saying 'you can go now, boys. You've done your job well'). They had succeeded in alerting the following ships - *Olympic*, 500 miles away who reversed course for *Titanic* at full speed; *Mount Temple*, 50 miles away; *Frankfurt*, 150, who later informed *Californian* [▲ seen from *Carpathia*, April 15] of the disaster; *Birma*, 70; *Baltic*, 140 miles; *Virginian*, 170; *Carpathia*, 58, who braved ice to race to the rescue, but not at a speed of 17.5 knots, as stated proudly by [Captain Rostron](#) which would have been beyond her, but at a more likely, but impressive, 15.5 knots (her rated speed was 14.5 knots), slowing when nearing his destination. [Rostron](#) sailed about 5 miles northeast of the line planned, which by luck was what was needed to reach the survivors. Ironically, he steered the wrong course to the 'wrong' position, but it turned out to be exactly the right one. His computing of his speed was based on time and distance, but his calculation was based on *Titanic's* wrongly reported position and not the (nearer) actual position of the boats. It was pure chance that [Harold Cottam](#), *Carpathia's* WO, was at work and heard *Titanic's* CQD at 12.25 a.m., 10 minutes after she had started transmitting distress calls ('Come at once. We have struck a berg. It's a CQD OM [it's an emergency, old man]. Position 41.46 N. 50.14 W.'). He would normally have closed down for the night but had just sent a message to *Parisian* and was waiting for a reply. That delay made [Rostron](#) a hero; if *Californian's* [Evans](#) had stayed up a little longer [Lord](#) might not have been a villain. But the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch, in its reappraisal of 1992 concluded, generously, that 'there are no villains in this story: just human beings with human characteristics.'

One minor diplomatic incident was caused by [Phillips'](#) rough handling of North German Lloyd's *Frankfurt*, the first ship to answer *Titanic's* CQD. *Frankfurt's* operator dutifully informed his captain but half an hour later came back with a query - 'What's wrong with u?' [Phillips](#) thought this half-witted, as he assumed *Frankfurt* was replying to his second message (12.17 a.m.) - 'CQD CQD SOS Titanic Position 41.44 N. 50.24 W. Require immediate assistance. Come at once. We struck an iceberg. Sinking' - which seemed pretty unambiguous. [Bride](#) told the US Inquiry that 'Mr. Phillips said he was a fool and told him to keep out.' In fact *Frankfurt* had probably only received the cryptic first message (12.15 a.m.) - 'CQD Titanic 41.44 N

50.24 W'. Phillips had replied perfectly politely to a fatuous query from *Olympic* so the inference was that a German ship (with a rival Telefunken wireless system incidentally) was deemed unworthy of courtesy. This was not lost on the German press who scoffed gleefully at British maritime inefficiency.

Steerage and class distinction - Walter Lord, in *A Night to Remember* (1955) writes of the effect, if at all, of class distinction in *Titanic's* final hours: 'In fairness to White Star Line, these distinctions grew not so much from a set policy as no policy at all. At some points the crew barred the way to the Boat Deck; at others they opened the gates



but didn't tell anyone; at a few points there were well-meaning efforts to guide the steerage up. But, generally, Third Class was left to shift for itself. And a few of the more enterprising met the challenge, but most milled helplessly about their quarters – ignored, neglected, forgotten.' Movies show high, iron, folding gates. These were Bostwick Gates.

The *Titanic* plans in the National Archives show only 2 Bostwick Gates, both on E Deck, one in 3rd Class (flooded early, trapping no-one) and the other in the crew area. Although immigration laws required locked barriers on immigrant ships to segregate (possibly diseased) steerage passengers, these were mostly doors and waist-high gates (easily surmountable - 4 separated Third and Second Classes on B Deck). Survivors' accounts refer to most doors leading from Third Class as being unlocked, and those that were locked as being low and the locks breakable. In the US Inquiry, its instigator, Senator Smith, tried several times to get steerage witnesses to claim they had been kept from the boats, as in this exchange with Daniel Buckley, an Irish immigrant who jumped into Boat 13 (where he hid under a shawl) after rushing through a smashed gate to the Boat Deck – he died in WW1):

Senator SMITH: I want to ask you whether, from what you saw that night, you feel that the steerage passengers had an equal opportunity with other passengers and the crew in getting into the lifeboats?

Mr. BUCKLEY: Yes; I think they had as good a chance as the first and second class passengers.

Senator SMITH: You think they did have?

Mr. BUCKLEY: Yes. But at the start they tried to keep them down on their own deck.

Senator SMITH: But they broke down this gate to which you have referred?

Mr. BUCKLEY: Yes, sir.

The barriers that doomed so many steerage passengers were mostly metaphorical rather than literal. Barriers of language, of expectation. Steerage passengers were used to obeying, initiative was limited. One Scandinavian (Protestant) immigrant was astonished to find a mass of mostly southern European Catholics being led in prayer by a priest (possibly Father Thomas Byles who perished), all imploring the Madonna to save them, rather than save themselves. Naturally, there were social frictions even in the lifeboats, the imminence or threat of death does not always provoke a Blitz spirit, with all united in a common cause. Steerage passenger Edward Ryan recalled:

‘I found I still had my pipe in my pocket, so I scraped around in my pocket lining for some tobacco dust and lit up. This seemed to offend one of the first class woman passengers in the boat, because she asked me not to smoke.’

Lord Mersey's report addressed the question of the low overall survival rate of third-class passengers:

‘It has been suggested...that the third-class passengers had been unfairly treated; that their access to the boat deck had been impeded; and that when at last they reached that deck the first and second-class passengers were given precedence in getting places in the boats. There appears to have been no truth in these suggestions. It is no doubt true that the proportion of third-class passengers saved falls far short of the proportion of the first and second class, but this is accounted for by the greater reluctance of the third-class passengers to leave the ship, by their unwillingness to part with their baggage, by the difficulty in getting them up from their quarters, which were at the extreme ends of the ship, and by other similar causes. The interests of the relatives of some of the third-class passengers who had perished were in the hands of Mr. Harbinson, who attended the Enquiry on their behalf. He said at the end of his address to the court:

‘I wish to say distinctly that no evidence has been given in the course of this case which would substantiate a charge that any attempt was made to keep back the third-class passengers [not quite true, but attempts were haphazard] ... I desire further to say that there is no evidence that when they did reach the boat deck there was any discrimination practiced either by the officers or by the sailors in putting them into the boats.’

I am satisfied that the explanation of the excessive proportion lost is not to be found in the suggestion that the third-class passengers were in any way unfairly treated. They were not unfairly treated.’

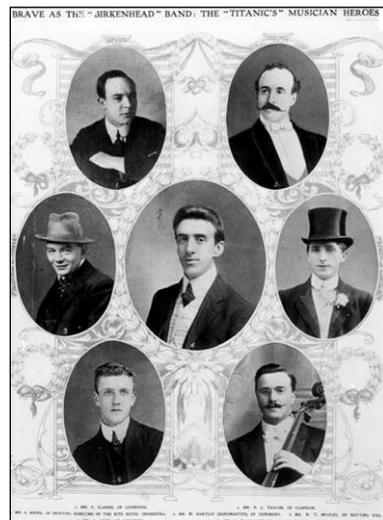
8.33% of Second Class men survived against 16.23% of Third Class men. So despite their access to boats, bourgeois gentlemen clearly acted according to tradition, ‘women and children first...’

Critics have responded to Mersey's exoneration of White Star with cynicism. ‘He would, wouldn't he...’ The Inquiry had vested interests, as did the US Inquiry, whose Chairman, a railroad man, wanted to emphasise maritime sloppiness, especially British tolerance of bad practice. The British Inquiry was a Board of Trade Commission, the very body that was culpably lax in its regulations concerning lifeboats etc. While the report blamed excessive speed, and Lord, conveniently it exonerated *Titanic's* builders, operators and officers. Most gratifyingly for White Star, Mersey did not find White Star guilty of negligence, which curtailed numerous pending cases for loss of property or life, on both sides of the Atlantic. White Star's officers were particularly careful in their testimony not to embarrass their employers, or themselves. Boxhall was asked by Lord Mersey: ‘Can you explain why, having received warnings of icebergs both to the north and south of her, the *Titanic* was allowed to continue her way in such regions?’ Boxhall did not reply.

Murdoch and Lowe – First Officer William Murdoch did not shoot himself, as the 1997 film depicts. Reliable witnesses saw him washed overboard by a huge wave while attempting to free the last collapsible boat. And no officer shot a passenger – Lowe fired a warning shot to deter some panicky ‘Italians’ (‘wild beasts’ he called them) from rushing a boat. All excitable men were described as ‘Italians’ by Lowe

and other witnesses, which led to protests from the Italian Ambassador in Washington. **Lowe** agreed, under pressure, to ‘cancel the word Italian and substitute the words immigrants belonging to Latin races’. He held the standard prejudices about foreigners. A 26-year-old Hong Kong man, **Fang Lang**, a fireman on Donaldson Line's *Anetta*, was eventually fished from the sea by **Lowe's** Boat 14, somewhat grudgingly, according to a **Mrs. Charlotte Collyer**, who left *Titanic* in **Lowe's** boat and who, in a ghosted magazine article, quoted **Lowe's** reaction on seeing **Mr. Lang** floating on his back - ‘What's the use? He's dead, likely, and if he isn't there's others better worth saving than a Jap.’ This has become part of *Titanic* lore. But the boat's crew swore that all passengers had been transferred into other boats before **Lowe** rowed back to rescue survivors, so **Mrs Collyer** could not have had heard such a remark. **Lowe** did however cause considerable offence to genteel passengers by roughly handling and haranguing them during the transfer. It is likely that **Mrs. Collyer** was only too pleased to embellish something heard second hand to **Lowe's** detriment.

Titanic's band - *Titanic's* eight-member band [employed by C.W. & F.N.Black of Liverpool], led by **Wallace Hartley** [▼ centre], assembled (for the first time – they were normally a separate trio and quintet) in the First Class Lounge after midnight to distract passengers with ragtime tunes (several witnesses heard *Alexander's Ragtime Band*). They then moved to the Boat Deck by the Grand Staircase, and latterly moved aft. Here they played patriotic tunes like *The Star Spangled Banner* and *Land of Hope and Glory*, and sentimental favourites like *Home, Sweet Home*. And then hymns - *Abide With Me*; *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*; *When We Meet Beyond and Lead, Kindly Light*...None survived, so what they played at the end remains unproven. But, evidentially, they played the hymn *Nearer, My God, to Thee* and then moved elsewhere and played a popular waltz of the time *Songe d'Automne* by **Archibald Joyce**, which some passengers had heard the quintet play during the voyage, and not the musically complex hymn *Autumn*, which would have taxed cold, tense fingers. Thus last memories differed, according to the station from which the passenger left. **Bride** recalled hearing the band playing on the Boat Deck aft of the wireless room, even after he was washed overboard. As a postscript, Black Brothers tried to get violinist Jock Hume's family to accept a one-off payment of five shillings (25p) in settlement of any claim.



The CQD position and the wreck – in 1992 the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) of the UK's Department of Transport in Southampton published a re-evaluation in a report prompted by the discovery of the wreck site, and by lobbyists for **Lord**. It concluded that the *Titanic* was at 41° 47' N, 49° 55' W when she struck an iceberg at 23:40 ship's time on April 14, and



in position 41° 43.6' N, 49° 56.9' W when she foundered at 2.20 a.m. on April 15. The corrected CQD position, worked out by **Boxhall** (**Smith** may have provided the first - 41° 44' N 50° 24' W – twenty minutes before) was 41° 46' N 50° 14' W, 13 nautical miles to the west of the wreck location (**Moore** of the *Mount Temple* was not far off when he told **Boxhall** that he was actually 8 miles to the east). **Boxhall** erred, understandable in the tense circumstances of his hurried calculations. The discrepancy is only partly due to *Titanic* drifting with the current after being dead in the water for over 2 hours. The MIAB report stated that *'the position arrived at, though different from that sent by Titanic in her distress calls, does lie practically on the line of her course through that position. Perhaps the error in the position as transmitted was caused by the wrong distance being allowed along the course line from the last known position.'* *Carpathia* [▲ postcard] found the survivors despite the error, due to phenomenal luck (she was on the 'wrong' course because her position was miscalculated, but it took her to the right spot) and **Boxhall** having the foresight to take flares into his lifeboat (seen by the *Carpathia*, who steered accordingly).

The MIAB report supported **Lord's** position. *Californian* did not see the *Titanic* but did see the rockets. The distance between them was greater than the 1912 Inquiry surmised, because if *Californian* had been nearby she would have been noticed by lookouts on the *Titanic*. The vessel seen by *Californian* was not *Titanic*, but a third ship. These conclusions seemed to contradict known evidence and indeed were disputed even among its compilers. However, the report agreed *Californian* should have acted on seeing rockets. But **Lord** was not drunk, as rumours suggested. And he was not a coward - he took his ship twice through the ice packs to attempt a rescue.

Funnily enough, some stories that might seem apocryphal are actually true, like the one about a man dressing as a woman to sneak on to a lifeboat. A young Irishman, **Edward Ryan**, admitted in a letter home doing just that (with a towel for a shawl – 'They didn't notice me. They thought I was a woman'). **Ryan** was probably the man **Lowe** caught in Boat 14 – 'I pulled this shawl off his face and saw he was a man. He was in a great hurry to get into the other boat, and I caught hold of him and pitched him in...because he was not worthy of being handled better.' **Daniel Buckley** also admitted hiding under a woman's shawl at the bottom of Boat 13 to avoid being thrown out.



Let us not dwell on the more outlandish fables, conspiracies and myths – such as the theory that she was sunk deliberately for an insurance fraud and was not even the *Titanic* but the *Olympic*; that she was sunk not by an iceberg but by her boilers exploding; that a German U-boat did it, that an Egyptian mummy was responsible (who popped up on deck just as *Titanic* was going down). But something strange did occur in the rescue – how did *Carpathia* sail at three knots greater than her supposed maximum speed, without mishap and through ice in the dark? 'A hand other than mine was on the wheel that night,' said Captain Rostron.
N.A.Bird, RUSI, UK

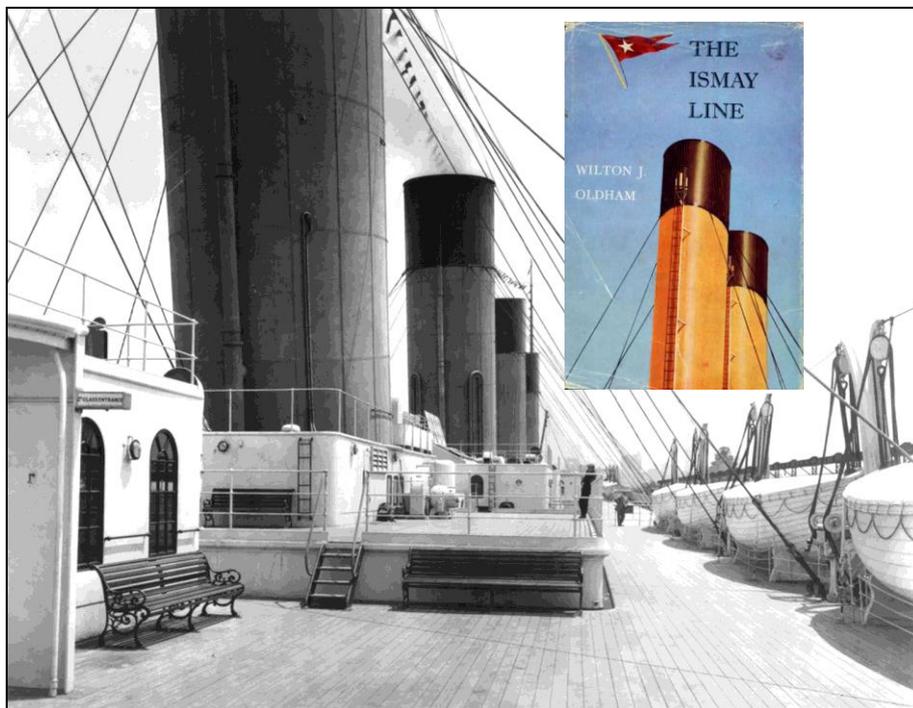
[This essay accompanies *TITANIC* commemorative PLAYING CARDS by **Bird Playing Cards** of London, England (www.birdplayingcards.com) in association with **The Titanic Historical Society** (www.titanichistoricalsociety.org www.titanic1.org).]



Established in 1963, **The Titanic Historical Society**, the original and largest Titanic society in the world, is a major source of Titanic and White Star Line information, with a mission to preserve the great ship's history in their **Museum**, and in special events and their own publications. Members of THS receive the authoritative *Titanic Commutator*. **The Titanic Museum's** collection in Indian Orchard, Massachusetts, was the first permanent exhibition of rare Titanic artifacts and documents donated by survivors.



Typical HEARST newspaper headline: *The Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA.), April 21, 1912

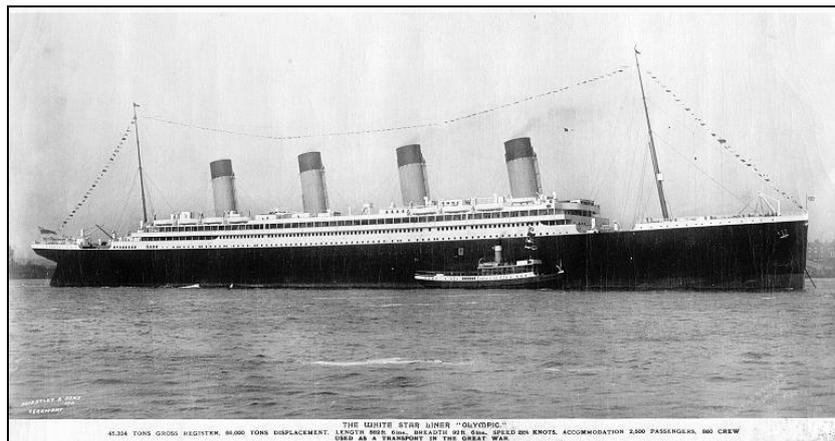


Titanic's Second Class promenade deck with book cover inset showing funnel colour



Californian was torpedoed and sunk by a U-boat on 9 November 1915, 98 km southwest of Cape Matapan, Greece, with the loss of one life.

Carpathia was torpedoed and sunk by U-55 on July 17, 1918; *Mount Temple* was sunk 455 miles NW of the western Azores on December 6, 1916, by the German raider *Moewe*; *Baltic* was scrapped in 1933, *Virginian* in 1948, *Frankfurt* in 1931 as *Sarvistan*, having been surrendered to Britain in 1919 and sold to Hong Kong owners; *Olympic* ('Old Reliable') – in a postcard ▼, almost indistinguishable from *Titanic* – was scrapped in 1937.



1912 postcard

ADVERTISERS
 WILL BE PAID FOR THE WEEK
 BY MAIL IN ADVANCE

THE NEW YORK HERALD.

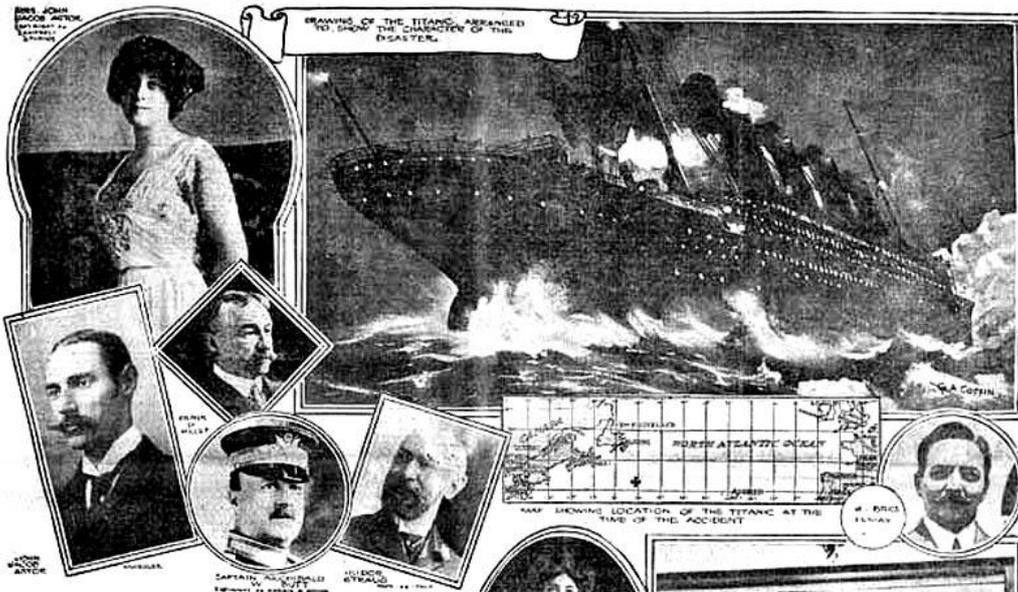
THE WEATHER.
 Clearing slightly warmer
 with light variable winds

WHOLE NO. 27,620

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1912—TWENTY-EIGHT PAGES

PRICE THREE CENTS.

THE TITANIC SINKS WITH 1,800 ON BOARD; ONLY 675, MOSTLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, SAVED



MOST APPALLING DISASTER IN MARINE HISTORY OCCURS WHEN WORLD'S LARGEST STEAMSHIP STRIKES GIGANTIC ICEBERG AT NIGHT

Scores of World's Most Widely Known Persons, Including Colonel John Jacob Astor and His Wife, William T. Stead and Isidor Straus Among Those Whose Fate is in Doubt.

J. Bruce Ismay, Head of the White Star Line; Mr. and Mrs. George D. Widener, the Countess of Rothes and Mrs. Henry B. Harris Are Some of Those Saved.

In the darkness of night and in water two miles deep the Titanic, seven of the White Star fleet and greatest of all ocean steamships, sank in the western of the sea at twenty minutes past two o'clock yesterday morning.

Despatches received late last night from the Cape Race Wireless station in Newfoundland and a telegram reluctantly made at the same time by the New York office of the White Star Company warrant the fact that of the 2,200 persons who were aboard the great vessel when she received her mortal wound in collision with an iceberg more than 1,500 have gone to their death in her shattered hull, while 675, most of whom are women and children, have been saved.

Among these given figures are included, the loss of the Titanic—counted, most powerful, greatest of all the ocean fleet—while spending her voyage on her maiden voyage will take rank in maritime history as the most horrible of all recorded disasters of the sea.

A despatch from St. John, N. F., received at fifteen minutes past two o'clock this morning gives rise to the hope that the steamship Vestris may have some of the Titanic's survivors on board. The message said she would bring to St. John such survivors as she "may rescue." Hope arises from the fact that the Vestris is putting in here at all, which she would scarcely need to do were there not some human misery for that cause. She was ordered bound for Liverpool.

One point is known from which may be derived a sad confirmation. In a desperate situation when the salvation of all was not possible the women and children were cast for first. These were sent away in the first of the boats launched from the sinking ship, the only boats apparently which did not share the fate of the main vessel.

Accounts and little are saved the horrors that attended the sinking of the French ship, La Bourgogne, in 1896, when the women and children were huddled under feet and cast down with shoves.

The Carpathia's Survivors List
 A partial list of the survivors who are aboard the Carpathia, headed by the port, and by those on board it of the wrecked Titanic.



It was learned late last night that the full text of the message New York aboard the Carpathia, of the Countess of Rothes, the loss of 810 from the steamship Olympic reporting the sinking of the Titanic, only indicated would be 1,493 persons.

The full text of the despatch received from the Olympic is as follows:—

"Carpathia reached Titanic's position at daylight. Titanic sank about twenty minutes past two o'clock in the morning, in 41.16 north latitude, 50.14 west longitude. All her boats accounted for, including about 575 souls saved, crew and passengers included. Nearly all saved women and children. Layland Berg California remained and searching exact position of disaster. Loss likely 1,500 souls.

"It is hoped here that this is an error, unless the Titanic had on board more passengers than was reported. The U.S. at gives out, showed 1,316 passengers and a crew of 866, or 2,170 persons in all, including the 674 reported to have been saved and to be holed for.

"By midnight floating cinders in front of the White Star office.

"All the News That's Fit to Print."

The New York Times.

THE WEATHER.
Unsettled Tuesday; Wednesday, fair, cooler; moderate easterly winds, becoming variable. 2:30 p. m. water 50° at Pier 11.

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NEW YORK, TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1912—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES.

ONE CENT

TITANIC SINKS FOUR HOURS AFTER HITTING ICEBERG; 866 RESCUED BY CARPATHIA, PROBABLY 1250 PERISH; ISMAY SAFE, MRS. ASTOR MAYBE, NOTED NAMES MISSING

Col. Astor and Bride, Isidor Straus and Wife, and Maj. Butt Aboard.

"RULE OF SEA" FOLLOWED

Women and Children Put Over in Lifeboats and Are Supposed to Be Safe on Carpathia.

PICKED UP AFTER 8 HOURS

Vincent Astor Calls at White Star Office for News of His Father and Leaves Weeping.

FRANKLIN HOPEFUL ALL DAY

Manager of the Line Insisted Titanic Was Unsinkable Even After She Had Gone Down.

HEAD OF THE LINE ABOARD

J. Bruce Ismay Making First Trip on Gigantic Ship That Was to Surpass All Others.

The admission that the Titanic, the biggest steamer in the world, had been sunk by an iceberg and had gone to the bottom of the Atlantic, probably carrying more than 3,000 of her passengers and crew with her, was made at the White Star line offices, 10 Broadway, at 8:30 o'clock last night. There P. A. S. Franklin, Vice President and General Manager of the International Mercantile Marine, conceded that probably only those passengers who were picked up by the Cunarder Carpathia had been saved. Advice received early this morning tended to increase the number of survivors by 500.

The admission followed a day in which the White Star line officials had been optimistic in the extreme. At no time was the admission made that every one aboard the huge steamer was not safe. The ship itself, it was confidently asserted, was unsinkable, and inquiries were referred here, she would reach port, under her own steam, probably, but sorry with the help of the Atlantic liner Virginian, which was reported to be towing her.

As the day passed, however, with new authentic reports from the Titanic or any of the ships which were known to have responded to her wireless call for help, it became apparent that authentic news of the disaster probably could come only from the Titanic or the Carpathia, the Parthian, and the Virginian is much less, and as they moved the position of the Titanic was traced further and further out of shore.

From the Titanic's position at the time of the disaster it is doubtful if any of the ships saved the Olympic could establish communication with her.

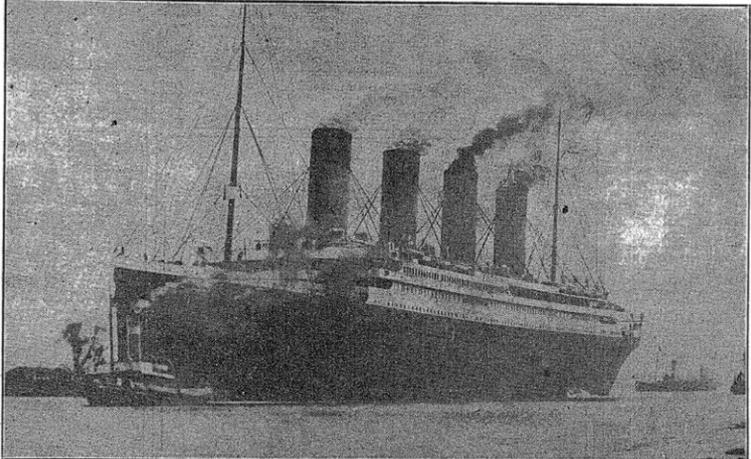
Message back at 8:30 A. M. Monday. In the White Star office the hope was held out all day that the Virginian had taken off some of the Titanic's passengers and efforts were made to get into communication with these boats. Until such communication was established the White Star officials refused to accurately list the number of survivors.

But by midnight came the message from Capt. Haddock of the Olympic to Cape Race, Newfoundland, telling the whereabouts of the Titanic and the rescue of 600 of her passengers by the Cunarder Carpathia. The Carpathia's position was reported to be 41° 26' north and 50° 14' west. This is about 30 minutes of latitude, or about 14 miles, due south of the position at which she struck the iceberg. All her hosts are accounted for and about 655 souls have been saved of the crew and passengers, most of the latter presumably women and children.

There were about 2,100 persons aboard the Titanic. The Leyland Line California is remaining and searching the position of the disaster, while the Carpathia is returning to New York with the survivors.

It can be positively stated that up to 11 o'clock to-night nothing whatever had been received at or heard by the Marconi station here to the effect that the Parthian, Virginian or any other ships had picked up any survivors, other than those picked up by the Carpathia.

First News of the Disaster. The first news of the disaster to the Titanic was received by the Marconi wireless station here at 12:05 o'clock last night (as told in yesterday's New York Times.) The Titanic was first heard giving the distress signal "C. Q. D.," which was answered by a number of ships, including the Carpathia,



The Lost Titanic Being Towed Out of Belfast Harbor.



CAPT. E. J. SMITH, Commander of the Titanic.

PARTIAL LIST OF THE SAVED.

Includes Bruce Ismay, Mrs. Widener, Mrs. H. B. Harris, and an Incomplete name, suggesting Mrs. Astor's.

CAPE RACE, N. F., Tuesday, April 16.—Following is a partial list of survivors among the first-class passengers of the Titanic, received by the Marconi wireless station this morning from the Carpathia, via the steapsip Olympic:

- Mrs. JACOB F. BROWN and maid.
- Mr. HARRY ANDERSON.
- Mrs. ED. W. ALPERTON.
- Mrs. ROSE ARBOTT.
- Mrs. M. M. BURNETT.
- Mrs. M. P. CARRIBER.
- Mrs. W. M. M. CLARKE.
- Mrs. C. CHIRNAC.
- Mrs. E. C. CROSBIE.
- Mrs. H. ROBERTS.
- Mrs. J. H. HARRIS.
- Mrs. ALICE HANFORD.
- Mrs. MARGARET BAYS.
- Mrs. BRUCE ISMAY.
- Mrs. P. A. KERNYAK.
- Mrs. SIMILE KERNYAK.
- Mrs. P. P. LEADER.
- Mrs. BERTHA MASTON.
- Mrs. BENNET LIVER.
- Mrs. MARY GLENN.
- Mrs. RICHARD LINDSTROM.
- Mrs. GEORGETTE J. LEISNER.
- Mrs. GEORGETTE A. MADILL.
- Mrs. TUCKER and maid.
- Mrs. J. R. TRATLER.
- Mrs. J. B. TRATLER, Jr.
- Mrs. HENRY WOOLMER.
- Mrs. ANNA WARD.
- Mrs. RICHARD M. WILLIAMS.
- Mrs. J. M. WARREN.
- Mrs. WILHELM A. WILSON.
- Mrs. OLGA D. WIDENER and maid.
- Mrs. J. FETWAK WHITE.
- Mrs. MARGARET YOUNG.
- Mrs. THOMAS POTTER, Jr.
- Mrs. EDNA S. ROBERTS.
- Countess of ROYSTER.
- Mrs. C. C. HOLMANN.
- Mrs. SUSAN P. ROBERSON (probably ROBERSON).
- Mrs. EMILY B. ROBERSON.
- Mrs. ANNETTE ROBERSON.
- Master ALLISON and nurse.
- Mrs. E. T. ANDREWS.
- Mrs. NINETTE FANHART.
- Mrs. E. W. ALLEN.
- Mr. and Mrs. D. BISHOP.
- Mr. H. BLANK.
- Mrs. A. BASSINA.
- Mrs. JAMES BRAYNER.
- Mr. GEORGE A. RAY.
- Mrs. C. BOWWELL.
- Mrs. J. M. BROWN.
- Mr. and Mrs. R. L. BECKWITH.
- Mrs. W. H. TAYLOR.
- Mrs. ELLA THOR.
- Mr. and Mrs. E. E. TAYLOR.
- GILBERT M. TUCKER.
- Mr. J. R. TRATLER.
- Mr. JOHN B. ROBERSON.
- Mr. W. RUTHERFORD.
- Mrs. MARGARET NEWELL.
- HELEN W. NEWCOMB.
- Mr. FINNAND OMOND.
- Mr. R. C. O'NEIL.
- Mrs. HELEN S. O'NEIL.
- Mrs. MARGARET J. DONAGHO.
- Mrs. OLIVIA.
- Mrs. D. W. MERVIN.
- Mr. PHILIP EMOCK.
- Mr. JAMES O'NEIL.
- Mrs. RUBY MANN.
- Mr. FERRIS MANNING.
- Mrs. W. E. MERRIN.
- Mrs. ANNE BARNETT.
- Master ANTON FERCHEN.
- Mrs. ELEANOR BISHOP.
- Mrs. "BETTE".
- Mrs. WILLIAM BUCKENELL.
- Mrs. O. H. BARKSWORTH.
- Mrs. H. H. STEPHANSON.
- Mrs. ELIZABETH BOWMAN.

and when Capt. Haddock's message proved this to be untrue only the admission was made at the White Star office that the Titanic had sunk. Mr. Franklin said that Capt. Haddock's message was brief and "indicated" that all the crew had been saved. The inference was not that all the passengers had been saved. Rather it was that many of those had died and presently Mr. Franklin admitted the fact that there had been a terrible loss of life on the Titanic.

The reason of Capt. Haddock's wireless had been given at the White Star office. Capt. Haddock of the Olympic made a wireless message to the White Star office here at 8:30 A. M., after all the passengers and crew had been rescued to the boats and transferred to the Virginian. The steapsip Carpathia, with 655 rescued Titanic survivors, was being towed to port by the Virginian.

Biggest Liner Plunges to the Bottom at 2:20 A. M.

RESCUERS THERE TOO LATE

Except to Pick Up the Few Hundreds Who Took to the Lifeboats.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST

Cunarder Carpathia Rushing to New York with the Survivors.

SEA SEARCH FOR OTHERS

The California Stands By on Chance of Picking Up Other Boats or Rafts.

OLYMPIC SENDS THE NEWS

Only Ship to Flash Wireless Messages to Reach After the Disaster.

LATER REPORT SAVES 866. BOSTON, April 15.—A wireless message picked up late to-night relayed from the Olympic, says that the Carpathia is on her way to New York with 866 passengers from the steamer Titanic aboard. They are mostly women and children, the message said, and it concluded: "Great fears are felt for the safety of the balance of the passengers and crew."

Spied in the New York Times.

CAPE RACE, N. F., April 15.—The White Star liner Olympic reports by wireless this evening that the Cunarder Carpathia reached, at daylight this morning, the position from which wireless calls for help were sent out last night by the Titanic after her collision with an iceberg.

The Carpathia found only the lifeboats and the wreckage of what had been the biggest steamship afloat.

The Titanic had foundered at about 2:20 A. M., in latitude 41° 26' north and longitude 50° 14' west. This is about 30 minutes of latitude, or about 14 miles, due south of the position at which she struck the iceberg. All her hosts are accounted for and about 655 souls have been saved of the crew and passengers, most of the latter presumably women and children.

There were about 2,100 persons aboard the Titanic. The Leyland Line California is remaining and searching the position of the disaster, while the Carpathia is returning to New York with the survivors.

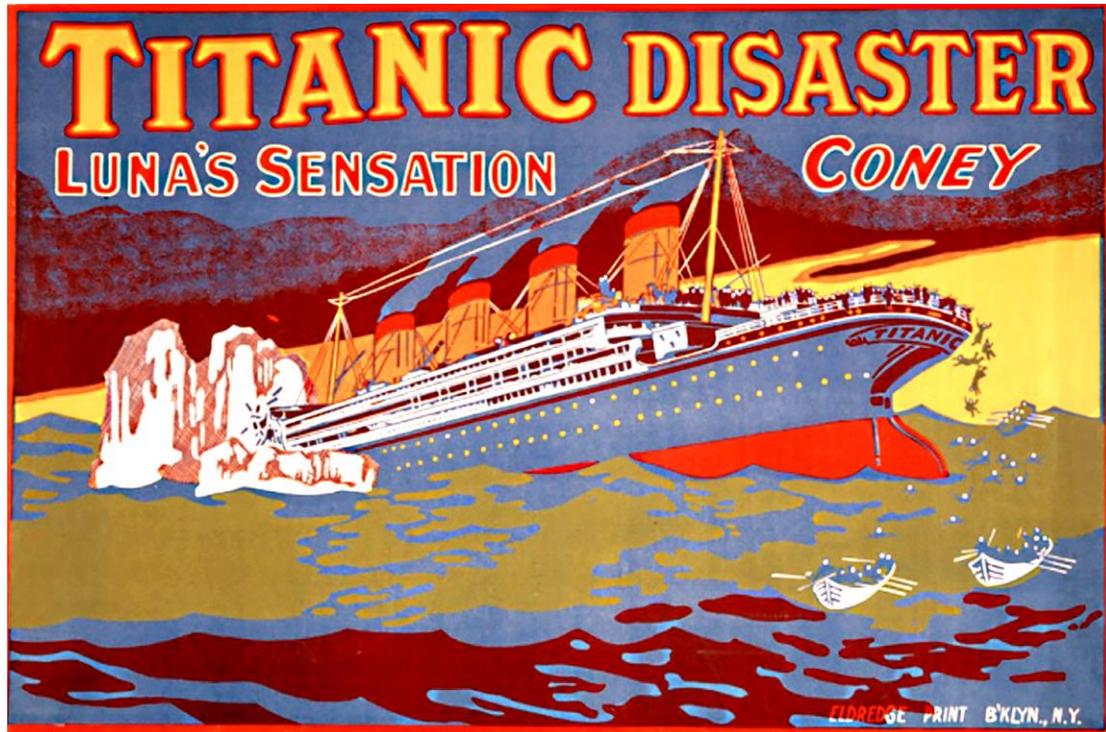
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In the Best Possible Taste: Titanic Mania

Immediately after the disaster written accounts were rushed out; but, eerily, a book on just such a tragedy predates it by 14 years. In 1898 Morgan Robertson, a former sailor, published *Futility* (later *The Wreck of the Titan*), a story set on an ocean liner called *Titan*. 'She was the largest craft afloat and the greatest of the works of men. In her construction and maintenance were involved every science, professional and trade known

to civilization.’ Sounds familiar. Titan is ‘considered practically unsinkable.’ She carried too few lifeboats to accommodate all the passengers. *And* she sinks to the bottom of the North Atlantic after hitting an iceberg while cruising too fast during her maiden voyage - and on an April night! A 1912 edition cashed in on the *Titanic* catastrophe.



Titanic at Coney Island

Two years after *Titanic* foundered, Coney Island visitors thrilled to a new dramatic attraction. Models of *Titanic* and *Carpathia* re-enacted the events of April 1912. The placard (above) featured the ship sinking by the bow (which happened), having struck the iceberg bow on (wrong), rather than on her starboard side. The colour of the funnels is wrong too. They had black tips.

Titanic Movies

The first *Titanic* movie opened on May 14, 1912, just *one month* after the ship went down. Its star (and co-writer) was an actress called Dorothy Gibson who had escaped the sinking ship with her mother on lifeboat number 7, the first to be launched. When she arrived in New York a few days later, Gibson and her producer/lover Jules Brulatour, began work on *Saved from the Titanic*, a 10-minute short (spliced with snippets of newsreel) partly filmed on a freighter in New York Harbour. Gibson wore

the same evening dress she'd worn as she stepped into the lifeboat on April 15.



There have been eight major Titanic films, ranging from the excellent 1958 *A Night to Remember* (▲ with Italian version), scripted by Eric Ambler, to the dire Nazi propaganda film *Titanic* (1943). James Cameron's expensive 1997 extravaganza uses the doomed ship as a backdrop for a pretty conventional love story. Jean Negulesco's surprisingly accurate *Titanic* (1953) benefits from highly polished playing by Clifton Webb and Barbara Stanwyck. *Atlantic* (1929), an early British talkie, follows the main strands of the Titanic story and features the melodramatic trademarks of heroism and self-sacrifice. The beautiful and accomplished Madeleine Carroll starred, which makes the film more than watchable.

The appalling, and appallingly expensive, 1980 film *Raise the Titanic!* prompted its producer Lew Grade to moan - 'it would have been cheaper to lower the Atlantic.'

All Titanic films make errors of fact. Sometimes for dramatic purposes characters are simplified into baddies and goodies, and events mangled or invented, as in Cameron's film, where First Officer Murdoch is shown shooting passengers and then himself. In all films the wireless room is absurdly capacious. Because much action takes place in what was in reality a cubby hole the space is opened up so actors can move about.

.....

Captain Stanley Lord

A Night to Remember is unequivocally critical of Captain Lord of the *Carpathia*. Lord was still alive and very upset (although he only read a review), particularly by the portrayal of him snoozing in his pyjamas in a comfy berth during the critical moments (he was actually taking a brief

nap in uniform in the chart room). He petitioned the Board of Trade for exoneration. In 1965, three years after Lord died aged 84, the petition was rejected for lack of new evidence.

However shabbily he was treated, his failure to wake his radio operator and contact the ship nearby to see why rockets were being fired was a terrible dereliction. He blamed 'slackness' on the bridge that night; but the blame was his. He was, however, otherwise an exemplary mariner as his record and testimonials make clear. His conduct and seamanship on April 15 was irreproachable.

Could Lord have saved *Titanic*'s passengers?

No, not all of them, nor even most, despite what Lord Mersey wrote in his report:

'When she first saw the rockets the Californian could have pushed through the ice to the open water without any serious risk and so have come to the assistance of the Titanic. Had she done so she might have saved many if not all of the lives that were lost.'

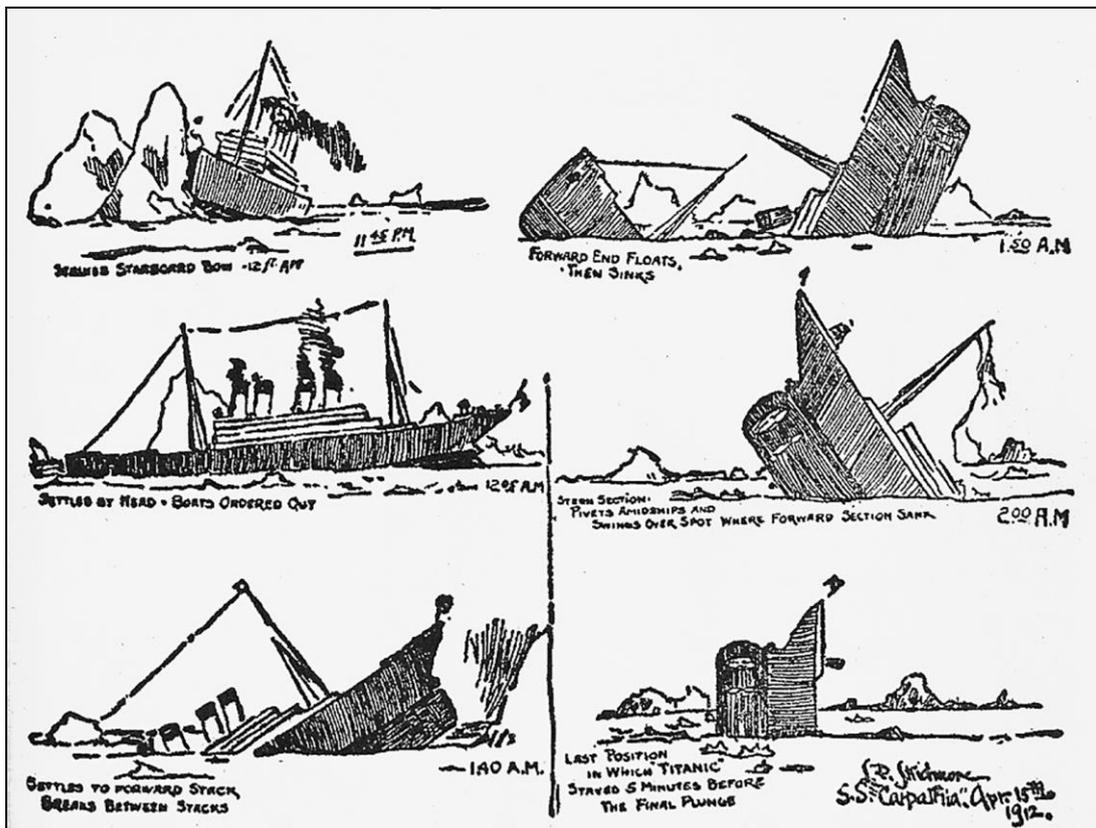
Californian could not have arrived where *Titanic* sank soon enough to reduce the death toll significantly, whatever the distance between them; whether the 8-12 miles of Lord's detractors or the 19-21 miles Lord claimed. He heard about the rockets at 1.10 am (maybe 30 mins after the first one was fired); *Titanic* foundered at 2.20 am. So he has a little over one hour to come to the rescue. If the two ships were separated by about 19 miles, it would have taken more than two hours for the *Californian* (13 knots max) to get going and work up speed, thread her way through the ice field (allow 30 mins) and arrive at *Titanic's* position, after slowing down for some distance to avoid bodies and lifeboats. The earliest she could have arrived would have been about 3.20 am – assuming Lord calls his 'sparks' at 1.10, discovers *Titanic's* fate and reacts immediately.

If the vessels had been only 8 miles apart, *Californian* might have arrived at 2.45 am, with dead and dying in the water. Not, therefore, in a position to pluck people off the sinking ship, even if that were feasible. *Californian* had a crew of 48 but her actual *sailors* only numbered about 23. They would be hard pressed to launch her lifeboats (six in all, combined capacity 218 persons) in time to pick up those still alive in the water. Hypothermia does not wait. The water temperature was 28 degrees Fahrenheit, which would kill within 30 minutes...

Lord had done everything right up to the moment when he is alerted about ‘rockets’ (not ‘distress rockets’). Then, compounding the ‘slackness’ of the watch officers, he fails.

If Lord had known that *Titanic* was sinking, he would have been justified, under maritime law, in refusing to endanger his ship or passengers by steaming hurriedly through an ice field at night. He could have stayed put and entered his reasons in the log. However, Lord’s career proved him to be a brave and upright man who would not have shirked moral duty. He did not know the true situation. Regrettably, he deigned to investigate. Lord was obliged to resign from Leyland but, armed with their good reference, he was hired by the Nitrate Producers Steamship Co, where he remained until 1927, resigning for health reasons.

If his ‘sparks’ had stayed at his post another 15 minutes he might have been the hero of the hour, not Captain Rostron of the *Carpathia*.



The sinking of the *Titanic*, according to *Titanic* passenger John B. Thayer’s Jr’s (incorrect) timetable of the sinking, sketched by a passenger on the *Carpathia*, L.D. Skidmore of Brooklyn.