

Titanic sank



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“ Deeply regret advise you TITANIC sank this morning after collision with iceberg, resulting in serious loss of life. Full particulars later.”

-J. Bruce Ismay, Director of the White Star Line

The Titanic was a luxury cruise liner with a disastrous fate. It set sail on the 10th of April, 1912. No one could have predicted the unimaginable. It was a great tragedy, but some good was able to come of it. The Titanic influenced many generations for the better, despite the terrible losses.

Thousands of years ago, man grew curious of the new lands they could possess, but there was only one way to travel to these new lands; by ship over rough waters. It first started with the Vikings sailing the Atlantic in open boats. The risks were, of course, great. The invention of covered ships in the later centuries was an improvement, but they were still at the mercy of wind and waves. Traveling by ship was very dangerous. The passengers suffered weeks of seasickness, disease, and even death because of the unsanitary and cramped conditions. As more and more immigrants wanted to make the journey across the Atlantic in the late 1800's, steamships and ocean liners were created to meet the demand.

To transport the wealthy members of first class, more luxurious boats were built. The new steamships boasted better service and faster speeds than had ever been seen before. The journey for less affluent immigrants making their way to America was not as glamorous. A report in 1911 by Anna Herkner from the Immigration Commission said, Immigrants lie in their berths for most of the voyage, in a stupor caused by the foul air. The food often repels them. It is almost impossible to keep personally clean. When the Titanic was

first announced to be built, the conditions were advertised to be the best of its kind, even for third class passengers.

The RMS Titanic was from a new class of ocean liner. It was called a floating palace at sea and it claimed to have the amenities of a five-star hotel. The ship boasted nine decks that held a crew of 899 and 1, 300 passengers. On the one-week voyage, a staggering amount of food, chefs and tableware were needed to satisfy the enormous amount of passengers onboard. There were 127, 000 pieces of silverware, along with 60 chefs and assistants. Also on board were 40 tons of potatoes, 36, 000 oranges and 16, 000 lemons. There were 840 staterooms in all, 416 in First Class, 162 in Second Class and 262 in Third Class.

Powering the Titanic was no small feat. 29 triple-furnace coal-fired boilers gave the giant steamship the power to move with 162 coal burning furnaces on board. There was 6, 611 tons of coal stored in the ship's bunkers. Approximately 825 tons of coal were used per day. The ship was so gargantuan that Charles Lightoller, the Titanic's second officer, said, You could actually walk miles along the decks and passages covering different ground all the time. I was thoroughly familiar with pretty well every type of ship afloat but it took me 14 days before I could, with confidence, find my way from one part of the ship to another.

Building the Titanic would prove to be a major challenge. The White Star Line, the owners of the Titanic, hired the Harland & Wolff shipping yard in Belfast, Ireland to house the project. The Titanic was so intricate, and gigantic, that it took three years and 15, 000 men to complete it. Thomas

Andrews, the chief designer, oversaw the men as they built 26 house-sized boilers. Twenty horses were needed just to haul the gigantic anchor. 3 million rivets were used to keep each of the pieces in place, around a third of which had to be hammered in by hand. The work was rigorous, but the outcome was what some called a floating palace and the epitome of naval architecture. Titanic was fitted with a grand staircase, elegant cabinets, fans to ensure fresh air, elevators, restaurants that offered fine dining, and the best telegraphing system of the time.

First class passengers were among the wealthiest and most important people of the time. They included famous businessmen and millionaires like John Jacob Astor IV and Benjamin Guggenheim, railway magnate Charles M. Hays, the Countess of Rothes, an eminent journalist named W. T. Stead and noted couturiere, Lady Duff Gordon. The first class conditions on board were arguably better than had ever been seen before. Amenities included veranda cafes, a large smoking room, restaurants, a dining saloon and a reading and writing room. While dining, the first class passengers were treated to gourmet meals and a live orchestra. The more spry passengers could play shuffleboard, use the gym, play squash on the designated courts, and use the onboard swimming pool, the first of its kind. First class had 39 private suites located on the higher levels of the ship. Each suite included two large bedrooms, two walk-in closets and a private bathroom. They even had a large living room for guests! The suites cost up to £870 which is equal to \$79,000 today.

Second class passengers were mostly tourists, made up of professions such as teachers and clergy. Many chauffeurs and nannies for the first class also

traveled in second class. The second class conditions were definitely not as luxurious as the first class, but they still were very respectable. The rooms designated to second class were located in the middle of the ship and mostly consisted of cabins with bunk-beds. Each cabin had either two or four beds. There was room for around 550 passengers total.

They did not have private washrooms, but they were treated to sinks and mirrors in each room and the bed linens were changed everyday. The facilities for second class included an outdoor promenade, a smoking room, a library and a dining room. Afternoon tea and coffee was also served to all second class passengers in the library. The dining room could seat 2, 400 people at one time and a pianist was provided to entertain the guests.

The third class passengers were not travelling on the Titanic for luxury, they traveled in search of the freedom and opportunity provided by America. Third class, or steerage, was mainly immigrants that came from a variety of places. They came from Ireland, England, Scandinavia, some Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe and even some from Lebanon. The third class conditions were certainly not as cushy as the other classes, but it was still a higher level of luxury than many of the passengers had ever seen.

They enjoyed a general room to socialize in and there was even a piano for the passengers to entertain themselves with. There was also a smoke room and a dining room. The dining room could seat up to 473 people at a time, so they had to eat in shifts. The meals were very basic, but they were appreciated. At the time, most ships required steerage passengers to provide their own food which was supposed to last the entire journey. The

cabins were pretty cramped throughout the journey. Cabins fit up to 10 people each and over 1000 passengers had to share only 2 bathrooms, but for those escaping the poverty and persecution of their homelands, the conditions were more than amazing.

Some of those immigrants that were escaping poverty were a small group of fourteen Irish immigrants from a little village called Addergoole. They were affectionately nicknamed the Addergoole 14. Annie Kate Kelly, Delia McDermott, Annie McGowan, Catherine Bourke, John Bourke, Mary Bourke, Mary Canavan, Pat Canavan, Bridget Donohue, Nora Fleming, James Flynn, Catherine McGowan, Delia Mahon and Mary Mangan were the names of the fourteen. They traveled in two main groups. Annie McGowan was related to Catherine McGowan. Catherine McGowan had immigrated to Chicago twenty-two years earlier and had made the journey back to Addergoole to take her niece, Annie, back with her. Her's was a story of success in America.

While she was home, she told the village tales of her successful business and all the opportunities she had in Chicago. It encouraged the fourteen to travel with her. Annie Kate Kelly, Nora Fleming, Bridget Donohue and Delia McDermott already had plans to travel to America, but going with Catherine, to them, meant safety and security. Catherine Bourke was a close friend of Catherine McGowan. She and her husband John had only been married a year and had been childhood sweethearts. They realized that the only way they could live the life they wanted with each other was to go to America. Mary Bourke, upon hearing the news of her brother emigrating, decided to travel with them. Mary Mangan also lived in America, but had traveled back to tell her parents of her engagement. Pat Canavan, his sister, Mary Canavan

and his friend, James Flynn all decided to travel in search of a better life. They were the largest group all to leave from one place, which made the loss of the town so great. Only three of the original Addergoole 14 would survive.

Ireland was a very hard place to live at the time. It was a poverty stricken country. Every family was poor and worked around the clock to just to make ends meet. Because life was so tough, villages were very close knit and relied on each other to survive. Because nutrition was so bad, people only lived to about forty or fifty. Because of the awful conditions and the low prospects of work, emigration was common and was looked at as almost a right of passage. People left Ireland as early as fourteen. If they had the means to go, they would. The price of a ticket in third class on the Titanic was just over seven pounds sterling.

It would take over three years for an average Irish family to afford this price. Those who were lucky enough to make it to America sent money home to provide a way for the next generation to come.

The week the fourteen were set to make their journey, fourteen wakes were held in their honor. They were not real wakes, but what they called American wakes. When immigrants were leaving for America, their families would throw one final party for them. They would sing, dance and say their goodbyes. For most but a lucky few, this was the last time they would see their village, friends and family. They were bittersweet affairs.