

To the Lifeboats

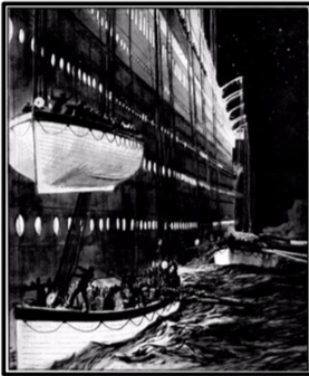
As the ship began to slowly sink deeper, passengers were made aware of the disastrous situation. At first, stewards told passengers that nothing was wrong to prevent panic. However, third class passengers quickly knew what was happening when their cabins began to fill with water. Captain Smith ordered the lifeboats to be uncovered around midnight. The passengers were confused about what to do, as there had not been one lifeboat drill since leaving Southampton.

In the next two hours, the *Titanic* began to sink more and more, and panic ensued. In 1864 the British Board of Trade required that any ship weighing 10,000 tons or more to have at least 16 lifeboats. The rule did not change even though the *Titanic* weighed well over 53,000 tons. There were fourteen main lifeboats that could carry 65 people each, two emergency sea boats that had an occupancy of 40 each, and four



collapsible boats that could hold 47 people each. If the math had been done correctly, the builders would have realized that there were only enough lifeboats to hold about half of the estimated 2,200 people aboard.

At 12:45AM the first lifeboat (number 7) was lowered into the water. Though the lifeboat could hold 65 people, it only contained 19 people including silent film star Dorothy Gibson. There has been some controversy as to why the lifeboats were barely full. Some survivors claimed that some passengers didn't realize the ship was sinking and chose to stay inside their nice cabins. It was also said that some of the officers helping passengers into the lifeboats thought the lifeboats could not handle as much weight as estimated.



As a traditional rule of sea, women and children were allowed on the lifeboats first. Many couples were separated and never saw each other again. As the ship began to slip into the water even more, passengers began to scramble to the lifeboats. The forward part of the deck was for first class and second class passengers, thus allowing them easier access to the lifeboats. Third class passengers had a lot more difficulty reaching the boat decks because many did not speak or read English and became lost in the passageways. The gates that restricted third class passengers to their own areas had been opened by stewards, but by the time they reached the boat deck, the lifeboats were gone.

The Final Moments

In just a few hours after hitting the iceberg, the *Titanic* was sinking fast. As each of the watertight compartments began to fill in the front part of the ship, the bow began to dip more and more into the water. As this happened, the weight created from the water made the stern rise out of the water. Imagine a seesaw, with more and more weight put on only one end of it. When this happens, the other end will rise. As the bow sank more, the funnel closest to the bow broke, crushing several passengers who were in the water, including John Jacob Astor. It was believed that the orchestra, led by Wallace Hartley, played close to the end before the ship began to rise vertically.

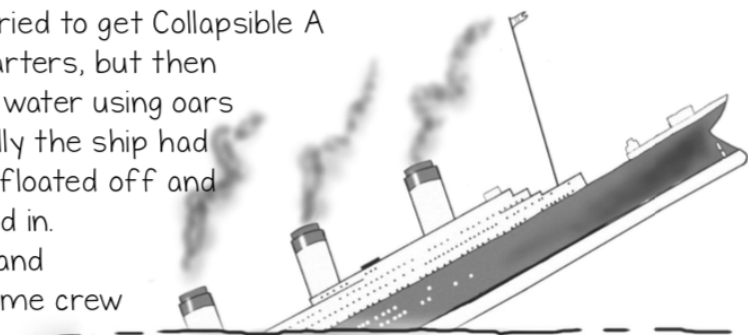
Those who were fortunate enough to make it to the lifeboats watched in dismay as the ship sank more and more. Around 2:00 a.m., one of the last lifeboats, collapsible C was lowered. J. Bruce Ismay stepped in and was later called a coward. Collapsible D was then the final remaining lifeboat, as collapsible A and B were stowed in the officers quarters. As realization sank in, those still aboard went into a panic. The crew formed a ring around Collapsible D and only women and children were allowed in. Shots were even fired to control the crowds, though it is not known if anyone was actually shot. Some passengers took drastic measures once they realized there were no lifeboats left.

Several groups of men tried to get Collapsible A and B out of the officers quarters, but then struggled to get them to the water using oars as a makeshift ramp. Eventually the ship had sunk so low that Collapsible A floated off and passengers swam and climbed in. Collapsible B had turned over and passengers climbed atop it. Some crew members and passengers did

not try to **escape** and went down with the ship willingly. Thomas Andrews, the ship's builder, was reportedly last seen inside the smoking room, quietly in thought. However, there have been many other rumors of what happened to him, as well as Captain Smith.

At 2:18 a.m. the lights inside the ship went out and the passengers still trying to find a way out were left in complete darkness. Then as the stern raised higher, the ship broke into half and the bow was quickly swallowed up by the cold ocean. The stern bobbed on the surface for a few seconds and then followed suit, sinking to the bottom of the sea at 2:20 a.m.

Even after the ship was gone, chaos still ensued. At 28° F, the water was freezing and the passengers' chances of survival were slim.



Aftermath

After the ship sank, the people in the lifeboats were shocked. Debates occurred on many of the lifeboats about whether or not to return to pick up those left calling for help in the water. Margaret Tobin Brown was in lifeboat 6 along with the helmsman Robert Hitchens, who was in charge of that lifeboat. Despite only having 28 people in the lifeboat, he refused to turn back, saying that they would find only dead bodies. Margaret Brown defied him by suggesting that she and other women help row. When Hitchens refused, she picked up an oar and began to row.

Other women also realized that their spouses may be those in the water and wanted to turn back, but were overruled. It was thought by some that the lifeboats would be swamped, therefore risking even more lives. Only one lifeboat (lifeboat 4) returned. It made two different passes and picked up nine people, but only 6 survived.

At 3:30 a.m. the rescue ship the *Carpathia* was sighted by passengers in lifeboats. The *Carpathia* was another ocean liner traveling with 743 passengers.



The Carpathia

Because there were still smaller icebergs and icefields near the lifeboats, the passengers in the lifeboats had to row towards the *Carpathia*, instead of it coming to them. The crew and passengers aboard the *Carpathia* quickly sprang into action as the *Titanic's* survivors came aboard. They found vacant cabins, provided soup, blankets, and hot drinks. A doctor aboard even turned the dining room into a makeshift hospital for those who were injured. The entire rescue took over four hours and 705 survivors of the *Titanic* were saved. As the *Carpathia* sailed towards New York, many families realized that their loved ones had been lost. Over 1,500 lost their lives that night.

The *Titanic's* distress call had been heard from different radios, and the news that *Titanic* was in trouble was out. However, the captain of the *Carpathia*, Arthur Rostron, wanted to use the wireless room to convey messages about names of the survivors and those lost, rather than make a news story. This led many newspapers to make up their own story. On Monday, April 15, 1912 the headlines read " *Titanic* Sunk, No Lives Lost", "All Saved from *Titanic* After Collision...Liner Being Towed to Halifax". It wasn't until later that evening, the real truth of the disaster was discovered.

On April 17, 1912 the White Star Line sent a small charter boat named the Mackay-Bennet to search the scene of the disaster. Over the course of nine days, 306 bodies were recovered, but many of them were unidentifiable due to injuries and being in the water so long. Those who weren't identified were buried at sea.