

Primary Source: The Titanic Is Sinking

from Daily Illinois State Journal April 15, 1912

RMS Titanic was an ocean liner built in 1912. One of the largest liners of the time, it had many modern design elements and luxury features. The Titanic began its maiden voyage, or first trip, on April 10, 1912 carrying over 2,300 passengers and crew. The ship was to travel from Southampton, England to Cherbough, France, then to Queenstown, Ireland, and finally to New York City. While there were many prominent and wealthy people on board, most of the passengers were poorer people, many of whom were immigrating to the United States.

Late at night on April 14, just four days into the journey, the Titanic struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic. Radiomen on the ship called for help, or "C.D.Q." Between the water pouring in and the explosions on board, probably from exploding boilers, the Titanic had no hope. It sank below water two hours and 40 minutes after hitting the iceberg.

There were not enough lifeboats on board; only enough to hold about half of the people. The sea water was below freezing. The first rescue ship, RMS Carpathia did not arrive until around two hours after the Titanic sank. Consequently, approximately 1,500 to 1,600 people died, or two-thirds of those on board.

This is a early report of the Titanic's accident published on April 15, 1912 in the Daily Illinois State Journal.

Titanic, Greatest Ocean Vessel Afloat Strikes Iceberg Near New

Foundland

And is Reported to be Slowly

Sinking

Cape Race, N.F., April 14.—At 10:25 o'clock last night the steamship Titanic called "C. Q. D." and reported having struck an iceberg. The steamer said that immediate assistance was required.

Half an hour afterwards another message came, reporting that they were sinking by the head and that women were being put off in the lifeboats.

The weather was calm and clear the Titanic's wireless operator reported and gave the position of the vessel as 41:46 north latitude and 50:14 west longitude.

**Boats leave for
scene.**

The Marconi station at Cape Race notified the Allen liner, *Virginian*, the captain of which immediately advised that he was proceeding to the scene of the disaster.

The *Virginian* at midnight was about 170 miles distant from the *Titanic*, and expected to reach vessel about 10 a. m. Monday.

The *Olympic* at an early hour Monday morning was in latitude 40:32 north and longitude 61:18 west. She was in direct communication with the *Titanic* and is now making all haste toward her.

Steamer Baltic Near En Route.

The steamer *Baltic* also reported herself as about 200 miles east of the *Titanic* and was making all possible speed toward her.

The last signals from the *Titanic* were heard by the *Virginian* at 12:27 a.m. The wireless operator on the *Virginian* says that the signals were blurred and ended abruptly.

NOTED PERSONS ABOARD

New York, April 15. – One assuring feature of the accident to the *Titanic* is that a large number of ships appear to be within the big liner's call. Besides the *Virginian* of the Allen line, which appears to be the first to have heard of the *Titanic*'s distress, and the White Star liners, *Baltic* and *Olympic*, both of which were reported on the way to the scene.

There is also the *Cincinnati*, of the Hamburg-American line, and the Cunarder *Mauretania*, the Hamburg-American liner, *Prince Albert*, and *The Amerika* of the same line, and the North German Lloyd liner, *Prinz Frederick Wilhelm*, bound from this port to Plymouth, all of which and many smaller liners are shown on today's steamship chart as probably within the zone of wireless communication with the *Titanic*.

Passengers in addition to several prominent ones previously mentioned are Alfred G. Vanderbilt, who joined the ship at Cherbough, and the Countess Rothes, Mr. and Mrs. Isador Strauss, Mr. and Mrs. Emil Taussig, Mrs. J. S. Stuart White, Mr. and Mrs. H. J. Allison, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Carter, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Chaffess, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Fortune, Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Douglas, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Harper, Mrs. E. D. Appleton, Norman C. Craig, M.P., Mr. and Mrs. Washington Dodd, William C. Dulles, Col. Archibald Gracie, Mr. and Mrs. Henry B. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Hoyt, Fletcher Fellowes, Lambert Williams, Col. Washington Roebling, Adolph S. Saalfeld, W. J. Clinch Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Spedding, Clarence Moore and Robert W. Daniel.

P.A.S. Franklin, vice president of the International Mercantile Marine, said early today that it was

difficult to credit the report that the Titanic had met with an accident, as the White Star line had received no wireless message from her.

Mr. Franklin said the reported accident should cause no serious anxiety. He felt satisfied, he said, that if the ship had been in collision with an iceberg, she is in no danger, as “with her various water tight compartments, she is absolutely unsinkable, and it makes no difference what she hit.”

Questions

1. Name three ships that the article says are heading toward the *Titanic*.
2. What does *credit* mean here: "it was difficult to credit the report that the Titanic had met with an accident"?
3. If you read this article, and you had family members aboard the ship, how would you feel? Explain your answer.
4. This article quotes sources who minimize or seem to disbelieve the report of the accident. In actuality, the sinking of the *Titanic* was a large-scale disaster. Why do you think these sources minimized the impact of the accident?