

BATTLED FOR LIFE WITH SAILOR AFTER THE TITANIC SANK

Jersey Journal

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McCormack Tells How Seaman Tried to Throw Him Out of Lifeboat---Special Blessing for Bayonne Survivor

Thomas McCormack, 19 years old, of 36 West Twentieth Street, Bayonne, a Titanic survivor, since his return from St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, Saturday, has been kept busy acknowledging the congratulations of his relatives and friends on his escape from death. McCormack tells a story of a struggle with a sailor for his life on one of the lifeboats which he boarded after jumping into the ocean from the sinking liner. The sailor and McCormack had a struggle in the lifeboat but the Bayonne man, who is a strong athletic young fellow, kept a stout grip on his antagonist and threatened to take the latter with him if he was thrown out into the ocean. Realizing that he had hold of a man who could and would have kept his word the sailor finally ceased his efforts to throw McCormack over the side of the boat and the Bayonne man was not disturbed after that, although the sailor and several of his companions glared threateningly at McCormack several times during the trip, which resulted in their being picked up by the Carpathia.

McCormack attended services at the Church of the Assumption in Bayonne last night and was taken to the altar by the rector, Rev. Father Mercolino, who administered special blessing to the South Hudson survivor of the disaster. In relating the story of his experience to relatives and friends McCormack said:

"When the Titanic first struck the iceberg I was in my stateroom preparing to retire. I heard the crash as the ship struck the ice and at once hurriedly dressed and ran on deck, followed by my cousin, Philip Kieran, of Jersey City.

"It was brotherly love that cost 'Phil' his life. As he was hurrying toward the deck his brother John called to him to go on, that he would be there in a minute. As we reached the stairs Philip looked around, and not seeing his brother, started to return to look for him. I kept on and did not see either of them again. When I reached the deck there were many excited persons there. I saw my cousin, Ernest McCoy of Union Hill. We were not long in finding out that the ship was sure to sink. We secured life preservers and strapped them securely on us. The ship was settling badly as we sprang into the water. Ernest jumped from

one side of the Titanic while I jumped from the other.

"After being beaten severely by sailors with oars I managed to get into one of the life and boats [sic] and my cousins, Alice and Kate McCoy of Union Hill sat on me and tried to cover me up.

"After a while one of the sailors saw my legs protruding, and seizing them asked me ' what in _____ ' I was doing in the boat. He dragged me out and tried to throw me into the water. I grabbed him by the throat and said if I went overboard I would take him with me. When he saw that he could not thro [sic] me over he finally desisted and I was allowed to remain.

"When we got aboard the Carpathia, we did not get the best of rations. That ship had not sailed with the intention of taking on seven hundred survivors from a wrecked boat. One of my cousins had some money in a purse which she wore with a chain around her neck, and with this money some brandy was bought which came in very handy.

"A Frenchman who was walking in the dining saloon of the Carpathia was kind to us. He gave me considerable food, which I shared with my cousins, and furnished me with a cap and socks in which I was badly in need of and which I shall keep as relics of the disaster. I understand several of those aboard the Titanic were shot, although I saw no one killed myself.

"It was certainly a terrible affair, and one that will rest in memory with the survivors for a life time."

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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