

Canceled Passages Aboard Titanic

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Who Redeemeth Thy Life From Destruction

“WHO REDEEMETH THY LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION.”

At 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, 1912 *Titanic* departed her anchorage off Roches Point near Queenstown, Ireland, turned, and set a southerly, then westerly course into the Atlantic Ocean's gentle swells.

As can be best determined, there were aboard at this point 2,228 persons – 1,320 passengers and 908 "working" crew. The figure of 2,228 was reached after minute examination of records and lists prepared by *Titanic's* owners and the official governmental bodies who investigated her loss. These data, some of which have surfaced only during recent years, reduce to a fraction of a percent the possibility of inaccuracy. Yet, based on past and present experience, probability for error continues to exist.

It is not within the scope of these lines to describe how the figure of 2,228 was determined. What shall be examined is one reason why, for many years, the "total aboard" varied between 2,201 and 2,340, depending upon which of several sources were consulted.

Cancellations by passengers, transfers, and last-minute desertions by crew account for a major discrepancy in preliminary lists. Many accepted these early lists as irrefutable fact. Even after it was clearly demonstrated they had never been aboard, some passengers' and crew members' names persisted on published lists. Thus far, canceled bookings for more than 50 passengers have been authenticated, mainly in newspaper stories at the time of the disaster. Names of crew who deserted, failed to join or transferred prior to the voyage appear on a list compiled for the British Board of Trade.

One name not appearing on the crew list is **David ("Davy") Blair**, who had come over from *Oceanic* to join *Titanic* at Belfast as second officer. Perhaps because the White Star Line wished him to have the experience of serving aboard a liner it was rumored he would one day command, the company's management through its marine superintendent – had *Olympic* chief officer **Henry Tingle Wilde** transferred to the newer vessel. Blair did serve aboard during the trip from Belfast, but when Wilde joined *Titanic* at Southampton a disappointed Blair returned to *Oceanic*.

Saturday, April 6 a majority of *Titanic's* crew signed on for the voyage. On sailing day, April 10, the men who had signed on reported aboard, passed muster and were divided. They then were dismissed to stand by for departure. Men who signed on but did not report for muster were classed as "**Failed to Join.**" Those who came aboard, stood muster, then left the ship and failed to return by sailing time were regarded as "Deserted."

Prominent here on the crew list are the three Slade brothers, whose rounds of Southampton's waterfront pubs, their encounter with a recalcitrant dockside train and an officer who refused to lower the gangway have become part of *Titanic* lore. But what of "Junior Assistant 4th Engineer" Haveling's transfer on sailing date? Why? and to where?

We know that steward P. Kilford left because he was sick; but what was the "Consent" by which Sims and Burrows left?

Most remarkable of all stories of those who "missed" *Titanic* sailing is ship's fireman **Thomas Hart**, whose name does appear on the sailing list. Signing aboard at Southampton on April 6 with the rest of the "black gang" was a man who produced a Certificate of Continuous Discharge that bore Hart's name. The man was listed as "lost" and Hart's grieving mother began to make arrangements for her supposedly-drowned son's memorial service. One can scarcely imagine her shock and joy when, on May 8, her son walked into their Southampton home. Hart, it seems, had gotten drunk after signing for the voyage. His discharge book had been stolen and used by another to sign aboard. Following the theft, Hart walked about Southampton in a confused state, too ashamed to return home. Expediency finally overcame fear and shame. It was never determined who stole Hart's book, used it, and was lost.

Passengers who canceled bookings are more numerous, their reasons more diverse than the firemen, stewards and trimmers of *Titanic* crew who were left behind.

The American steel magnate Henry Clay Frick engaged a suite in February 1912 but canceled when Mrs. Frick sprained her ankle during a Mediterranean cruise. J. P. Morgan took over the booking but canceled when business interests lengthened his stay abroad. The booking was then assumed by Mr. and Mrs. J.



A reshuffling of the senior officers aboard Titanic saved the life of David Blair, who was first assigned as Titanic's second officer courtesy of Rosanne MacIntyre



J. P. Morgan, owner of International Mercantile Marine, parent company of the White Star Line, canceled his booking aboard Titanic at the last moment.

Horace Harding, but the couple was able to get an earlier sailing date aboard *Mauretania*. (The suite – B-52, 54 and 56 – finally received a tenant for the voyage when it was occupied by [Mr. J. Bruce Ismay](#).)

Another cancellation was Mr. George W. Vanderbilt and his wife Edith. Someone in his or her family objected to their sailing aboard the new ship, "*because so many things can go wrong on a maiden voyage.*" They canceled on April 9¹. Their luggage, in the charge of one of their servants, [Edward Wheeler](#), had already been sent to Southampton and placed aboard. There was no time to remove the luggage. Wheeler, booked as a second-class passenger, stayed aboard and was lost.

The United States ambassador to France, Mr. Robert Bacon, had reserved passage aboard *Titanic* for himself, his wife and daughter. But their departure was delayed by the tardy arrival of the new ambassador, Myron T. Hendrick. The Bacon family sailed April 20 on the maiden voyage of the S.S. *France* – an event saddened by *Titanic*'s loss.

After consulting accommodation charts, several people canceled their *Titanic* passages when they discovered their cabins to be unsatisfactory: Colonel J. Warren Hitchens, Mr. and Mrs. J. Clifford Wilson and their daughters Dorothy and Edith canceled their *Titanic* bookings and sailed aboard Rotterdam instead. Frank Kind, a Philadelphia jeweler, rebooked aboard the North German Lloyd liner *Washington*, which departed April 7 from Cherbourg.

Mr. and Mrs. James V. O'Brien of Cleveland, Ohio, in Ireland to settle a lawsuit they had instigated, planned to sail for America from Queenstown aboard *Titanic*. Sixty years later, on her 100th birthday in 1972, Mrs. O'Brien recalled how their business lasted longer than expected and she and her husband switched to a later ship. Not only Mrs. O'Brien but her 14 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren were also grateful, in 1972, of the change.



Ambassador Robert Bacon and his family booked passage aboard *Titanic*, but their delayed departure saved their lives.

(Library of Congress photograph)



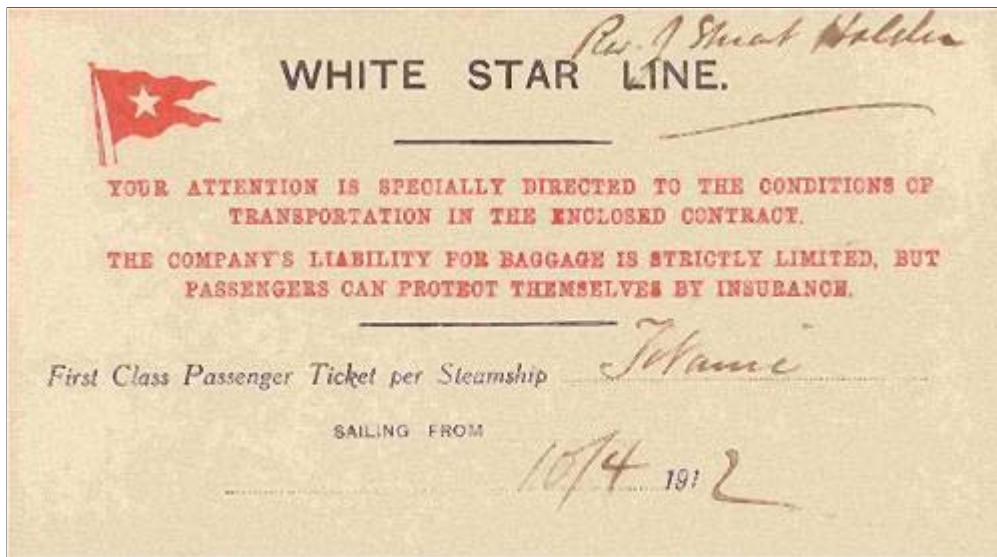
Mr. & Mrs. Henry Clay Frick canceled their booking of cabin B-52 when Mrs. Frick hurt her ankle at Madeira while on a cruise aboard *Adriatic*. (Corbis-Bettmann)

On furlough from his mission in Sialkot, India, en route from Karachi to Boston by way of the Mediterranean and France, the Rev. Henry S. Nesbitt, his wife and five children had planned to sail to New York aboard the *Majestic*. When this ship's sailing was canceled by the coal strike, Thomas Cook's Paris agents assured the Nesbitts that the new ship *Titanic* would take her passengers on her April 10th maiden voyage. Arriving at London, the Rev. Nesbitt unexpectedly learned of a serious illness that had befallen Mrs. Nesbitt's father.

Several days of leisurely sightseeing were abruptly set aside. It was now essential that the family cross the Atlantic as soon as possible to reach the ailing man's side. After considerable trouble, caused by the Good Friday closure of the Cunard offices, they were able to make a last-minute booking on the Cunard liner *Carmania*, which had a Saturday, April 6 departure date. Traveling by the Cunard boat train to Liverpool where they hastily boarded *Carmania*, the Nesbitt family reached New York late in the afternoon of April 14, only to read in the following day's newspapers of the loss at sea of the liner on which they had planned to sail. Had not the merest chance enabled them to sail aboard *Carmania*, the Nesbitts would have been

"automatically" transferred from *Majestic* to *Titanic* and might have suffered the privations of the disaster.

On exhibit at Liverpool's Merseyside Maritime Museum is a yellowed envelope whose black-and-red printing announces that it contains "First Class Passenger Ticket per Steamship..." (Then, written in fading brown ink): *Titanic*.



Because Reverend Holden's wife was taken ill, their tickets, once contained in this unique envelope, were never used.

The reverend framed the envelope with the inscription, "Who Redeemeth Thy Life from Destruction" and retained it for years after the sinking. (Merseyside Maritime Museum)

Also written in the same fading ink at the envelope's top right edge, is the name of the passenger for whom the ticket was intended: "Rev. J. Stuart Holden." Yet, one searches in vain for the name and ticket number that was so surely issued.

Having received his ticket, the Rev. Holden – vicar of St. Paul's Church, Portman Square, London – was preparing for his departure to America aboard *Titanic* to speak at the Christian Conservation Congress (a six-day convention opening at Carnegie Hall April 20) when his plans were interrupted by his wife's sudden illness. On April 9, one day before sailing, the Rev. Holden postponed his trip to stay at his wife's side. He returned his ticket, but retained the envelope in which it has been delivered. The envelope was subsequently framed, and in gratitude to God for his miraculous escape, Rev. Holden penned in his own hand on the mat within the frame, an expression of faith and thanksgiving.

From Psalm 103, verse 3, the phrase not only speaks for Rev. Holden, but represents the unspoken thanks for all who, for one reason or other, were not aboard *Titanic* when she departed Queenstown on Thursday, April 11 at 1.30 p.m. with 2,228 persons aboard, or among the 1,523 lost less than 85 hours later. "WHO REDEEMETH THY LIFE FROM DESTRUCTION."



Rev. J. Stuart Holden's wife became ill, causing him to

The Rev. Holden was not the only clergyman planning to attend the Christian Congress who did not sail from England

aboard *Titanic*.

According to an article in *The New York Times* April 20, 1912, two other European speakers who had been invited to speak at the convocation also canceled their passages aboard *Titanic* maiden voyage when forced by circumstances to change their plans: Archbishop Thomas J. Madden, of Liverpool, and the Rev. J.S. Wardell Stafford, Fraternal Delegate of the Wesleyan Church of Great Britain to the six-day evangelical rally. (This is the same Christian rally which the British editor, [William Thomas Stead](#) had been invited to address. Mr. Stead did not cancel, and was lost in the disaster.)

"JUST MISSED IT" CLUB FOLLOWS SEA WRECK

To Date Only About 6,000 Were About to Take
Titanic But Changed Their Minds

It's certain that two boats the size of *Titanic* could not carry the crowds that 'just missed taking' the lost ship. To date 3,482 Americans, 2,950 Britons and 476 scattered, all more or less prominent, have entered the "Just Missed It Club."

It appears that 4,965 of these had engaged passage, but canceled their reservations before the *Titanic* sailed. Of this number, 899 had premonitions of disaster. The rest were in Paris and couldn't break away.

Of the balance, 732 are glad they were not aboard at the time, as they surely would have come home on the *Titanic*.

Firesides of future generations are sure to be thrilled by grandfather's story of how his paternal ancestor 'just missed it...

Milwaukee [Wisconsin] Journal, April 1912²

Thus was the matter of "missed" passages on *Titanic* somewhat jocularly dismissed by an American newspaper in April 1912. However, the fact does remain that there were a number of people who, for one reason or another – including some who were hired, had actually received tickets or confirmed their passage – did cancel their trips.

As noted, among the crew, some, such as the three Slade brothers, had their passages canceled for them. [Thomas Hart](#) did not sail as a crew member, but "Thomas Hare" did; fireman [John Coffey](#) made it part way, as far as Queenstown, before deserting.

A number of passengers did not sail because they were delayed by business or personal reasons. One passenger, already booked (and his name on the passenger list) missed the sailing because his car broke down on the way to Cherbourg.

According to the August 8, 1912 *Daily Independent* of Monessen, Pennsylvania, after writing to friends that she would sail on *Titanic's* maiden voyage, Miss Maude Powell changed her mind and remained a bit longer in England. She had been medical missionary in Peking, China for six years. She sent a letter to her American friends advising them of her change in plans, but somehow the letter had gone astray, and they believed her lost. U. S. immigration records

change his travel plans
(Courtesy of Martin Leggett)



George W Vanderbilt did not sail aboard *Titanic* on the advice of family. ([Source](#))
Photo taken c. 1900).



Charles Ross sailed aboard the *Carmania* three days before *Titanic's* maiden voyage. ([Source](#))

confirm she ultimately sailed from Southampton aboard the *Kronprinz Wilhelm* on July 3, 1912, arriving in New York one week later.

There were 18 third-class passengers, booked at Queenstown, who did not board. Some cancellations (most not noted here), were apparently based on various psychic forebodings.

Clergymen appear to have done especially well in missing the boat: Rev. J. Stuart Holden, Rev. Henry Nesbitt, Rt. Rev. T. J. Madden, Rev. J. S. Wardell Stafford. All were spared to carry on God's work in greener pastures.

Transferring to earlier or later ships; pending business or judicial dealings; personal or family problems; desertion; inadequate accommodations . . . Regardless of the cause, there were a number of bona fide cancellations for *Titanic's* 10 April departure from Southampton.

For those who chose not to travel, for those who could not or would not go, it was a time of gratitude and thanksgiving, a time of reflection – a time of acknowledgement to the Supreme Being "*who redeemeth thy life from destruction.*"

PASSENGERS WHO CANCELED BOOKINGS ABOARD TITANIC

- ADELMAN, Mr. and Mrs
New York Evening Mail
- ANDERSON, Mr. and Mrs.
Walter New York Evening World
- BACON, Robert, wife and daughter
New York Times
U.S. Ambassador to France, was delayed by late arrival of his successor, Myron T. Hendrick. Changed to the *France*, which departed France on her maiden voyage 20 April 1912.
- BILL, Mr. and Mrs. Edward W.
London Daily Mirror, 18 April 1912
Mrs. Bill had a dream of *Titanic* being wrecked; they sailed on *Celtic* instead.
- BOND, Mrs. Florence and maid
New York Evening World
- CARLSON, Frank
Walter Lord, *The Night Lives On*, p. 46
Driving to Cherbourg, his car broke down and he missed the boat. However, his name remained on passenger list.
- CRAIG, Norman, KC, MP
New York Evening World
Had booked cabin C-132
- DAVIES, S. P.
Minneapolis, MN Morning Tribune, 20 April 1912
Of Winnipeg, Manitoba; canceled because illness forced him to take an earlier ship.
- EASTMAN, Miss Annie
New York Evening World
Had booked cabin D-31
- FRANKS, Alfred
Birmingham [England] Daily Gazette, 16 April 1912 Changed his mind after booking. A few days before 10 April, took a ship from Liverpool instead.
- FRICK, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Clay
New York Times
Booked for suite B-52; canceled when Mrs. Frick hurt her ankle at Madeira on a cruise aboard *Adriatic*.
- HANAN, Mr. and Mrs.

- New York Evening World
- HARDING, Mr. and Mrs. J. Horace
New York Times
Booked suite B-52 after it had been given up by Henry Frick and J.P. Morgan; canceled and took *Mauretania* instead
- HART, George
New York Evening Mail
- HITCHENS, Col. J. Warren
Philadelphia Inquirer
Could not get suitable accommodations
- HOLDEN, Rev. J. Stuart
New York Times, 20 April 1912 (et al)
Vicar of St. Paul's, Portman Square, London. Canceled 9 April due to wife's illness.
- JENKINS, Dr. J. C.
New York Evening World
- KIND, Frank
Philadelphia Evening Bulletin
Booked from Amsterdam, saw accommodation plan at Paris, canceled. Transferred to NDL *Washington*, departed 7 April 1912
- LANCASTER, Charles
(per New York Times: Head of Liverpool Chamber of Commerce)
- LAWRENCE, Arthur
New York Times
Was booked for cabin E-37
- LEWIS, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton P. (? Charlton; ?Charles T.)
New York Times
Were booked for cabin D-32 (see WOOD)
- MADDEN, The Rt. Rev. T. J.
New York Times, 20 April 1912
Archbishop of Liverpool, England
- MELODY, Mr. A.
New York Evening World
- MIDDLETON, Hon. J. Conan
New York Evening Mail
- MORGAN, Mr. John Pierpont
New York Times
Booked suite B-52. Was delayed by business (suite then booked by Mr. and Mrs. J. Horace Harding).
- NESBITT, Rev. Henry S., wife and five children
Self-published pamphlet
Re-booked 10 April 1912 *Titanic* departure to 6 April 1912 *Carmania* departure because of family emergency.
- NORMAN, Maxwell
New York Times
From Boston. Changed to *Oceanic*
- O'BRIEN, Mr. and Mrs. James V.
Cleveland [Ohio] Plain Dealer, 14 June 1912
Were in Ireland because of a lawsuit, which lasted longer than expected. Had to switch to another ship.
- PUFFER, Mr. C. C.
New York Evening World
- ROBERTS, Mrs. Elizabeth Walker, and maid
New York Evening World
Saved as Mrs. Elizabeth Robert, and maid

- ROSS, Sir Charles
Toronto Globe, 17 April 1912
Booked to return on *Lusitania*, whose voyage was canceled by coal strike. Could not wait for *Titanic*, re-booked on *Carmania* sailing 3 days ahead of *Titanic*.
- STAFFORD, Rev. J. S. Wardell
New York Times 20 April 1912
- THOMPSON, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, and son Harold (Pvt. correspondence)
The Thompson family had to cancel their *Titanic* trip when their son was badly hurt while playing.
- TURNER, Mr. and Mrs. George H.
New York Evening Mail
- VANDERBILT, Mr. and Mrs. George
New York Times (et al)
Canceled their passage 8 April 1912 when a family member objected to their traveling on a maiden voyage
- WHITE, Mr. A.J.
New York Evening World
- WILKINSON, Miss Ada
New York Evening World
- WILKINSON, Mrs. S. George
New York Evening World
- WILSON, Mr. and Mrs. J. Clifford Philadelphia Inquirer
- WILSON, Miss Dorothy and Miss Edith
Philadelphia Inquirer
Could not get the accommodations they wanted; Re-booked on the *Rotterdam*
- WOOD, Mr. and Mrs. Frank P.
New York Evening World
Booked for cabin D-32 (see LEWIS)

At Queenstown, in addition to the names of 115 adults and five children who boarded, there also appear on the list names of 18 people who did not use the tickets they had purchased for passage aboard *Titanic*.

It is interesting to speculate why these ticketed passengers did not board, and, if they had, who would have been saved and who would have added their names to the 1,523 lost.

Ticket number	Passenger Name Occupation	Age
30944	Jordan, Mary Spinster	19
30979	O'Brien, Denis Farmer	21
35850	Tyndon, James Farmer	21
36209	Scanlon, James Farm Laborer	20
43131	Gilligan, Margaret Spinster	19
334912	O'Connell, Pat General Laborer	17
336439	Dwan, Frank General Laborer	65
358573	Thomas, Pat General Laborer	26
364853	Callaghan, Nora Spinster	18
364854	Jordan, Annie Spinster	19
365653	{Courtney, Bridget Housekeeper	25
	{Courtney, Margaret Infant	11 mos.
366715	O'Sullivan, Michael Farmer	23
366984	Dunne, Mary Spinster	33
367167	Martin, Mary Spinster	19

371110	Ryan, Pat General Laborer [adult]	
382654	Concannon, John Carpenter	22
386588	Forhan, Delia Spinster	25

Endnotes

1. On 30 April The New York Times reported that Edith's mother, Mrs. Susan Dresser, had expressed the objection. But Mrs. Dresser died in 1883. Edith Vanderbilt's sister, also named Susan Dresser, might have been the family's Cassandra.
2. Quoted in Behe, George, *Titanic: Psychic Forewarnings of a Disaster*, Patrick Stephens, Ltd., Wellingborough, England, 1988.

Acknowledgements

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Courtesy of Shelley Dziedzic

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