

Mrs. Frank Warren Describes the Tragedy to The Oregonian

by John Lamoreau

Portland Oregonian

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Frank and Anna Warren were the only first class couple from Oregon on the Titanic. Mrs. Warren, who was 60 years of age at the time of the sinking, reported in great detail the horrific events of the tragedy. Her account was published in Oregon's largest newspaper. Following is the complete story from the April 27th, 1912 edition of the Portland Oregonian.

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Mrs. Frank M. Warren, one of the survivors of the wrecked steamship Titanic, has arrived home and is now resting as comfortably as could possibly be expected after her frightful experience, but the shock is one from which she can never fully recover. Coming home with her daughter from New York, her son remained to watch for the recovery of the body of his father and is now in Halifax, awaiting the arrival of the McKay Bennet with the bodies that have been found.

To her family Mrs. Warren made the following statement of her experiences previous to and following the disaster:

"We started from Cherbourg on the evening of the 10th, proceeding to Queenstown, at which port we arrived about noon of the 11th, and after a delay of about 45 minutes continued on our voyage. From the

time of leaving Queenstown until the time of the accident, the trip was remarkably smooth and it was very bright and sunny except for about half an hour of fog on one occasion.

"The general impression prevailing aboard the vessel was that the speed on the fourth day would be better than that shown on any preceding day and that we would arrive in New York sometime on Tuesday afternoon. The impression also prevailed among the passengers that the course of the vessel was more southwest than due west, the supposition being that this was to avoid fog. On Sunday, the day of the accident, the weather was particularly beautiful; there were no clouds, the sea was smooth and the temperature very moderate throughout the day.

"After dinner in the evening and until about 10 p.m. we were seated in the lounge on the dining saloon deck listening to the music. About the time stated we went to one of the upper decks, where Mr. Warren wanted to take a walk, as was his custom before retiring. He did not, however, as the temperature had fallen very considerably and the air was almost frosty, although the night was perfect, clear and starlight.

"I arose immediately, turned the lights on and asked Mr. Warren what terrible thing had happened. He said 'nothing at all,' but just at that moment I heard a man across the corridor say, 'we have certainly struck an iceberg.'

"I then asked Mr. Warren to go and see what was the matter. He first started out partly dressed, but decided to dress fully before going out; after doing which he went to one of the corridors and returned in a very few minutes with a piece of ice, saying it had been handed him as a souvenir.

"By that time I had dressed and had laid out the lifebelts but Mr. Warren said there was absolutely no danger and that with her watertight compartments the vessel could not possibly sink and that in all probability the only effect of the accident would be the delaying of our arrival in New York three or four days.

"Following this, we then went to our rooms, put on all our heavy wraps and went to the foot of the grand staircase on D deck, again interviewing passengers and crew as to the danger. While standing there a Mr. Perry, I think his name was, one of the designers of the vessel [sic], rushed by, going up the stairs. He was asked if there was any danger but made no reply.

"But a passenger who was afterwards saved told me that his face had on it a look of terror. Immediately after this the report became general that water was in the squash courts, which were on the deck below where we were standing, and that the baggage had already been submerged. Just at this point a steward passed, ordering all to don lifebelts and warm clothing and go to the boat deck at once, saying that this move was simply a precautionary measure.

"According to my impression, the time was about 45 minutes after the accident. We went back to our room for a third time, seized the lifebelts and hastened to a point two decks above, where an officer assisted in adjusting our lifebelts.

"Continuing up to the boat deck we tried to get out on the port side, but we were unable to open the door. Noticing the starboard door standing open we went out that way. This boat deck was the top deck of the vessel, uncovered and only a few houses on it, such as contained the gymnasium, a lounge etc.

"At the time we reached this deck there were very few passengers there, apparently, but it was dark and we could not estimate the number. There was a deafening roar of escaping steam, of which we had not been conscious while inside.

"The only people we remembered seeing, except a young woman by the name of Miss Ostby, who had become separated from her father and was with us, were Mr. Astor, his wife and servants, who were standing near one of the boats which was being cleared preparatory to being lowered. The Astor's did not get into this boat. They all went back inside and I saw nothing of them again until Mrs. Astor was taken onto the Carpathia.

"People came in so rapidly in the darkness that it was impossible to distinguish them, and while I did not see him again, I thought that he also was in, as there seemed to be still room for more when the boat was lowered.

"There were according to my recollections, either 35 or 36 people in the boat, and I was not aware that Mr. Warren was not with us until afloat and his name was called with no response.

"The boat in which I rode was commanded by Officer Pitman and manned by four of the Titanic's men. The lowering of the craft was accomplished with great difficulty. First one end and then the other was dropped at apparently dangerous angles, and we feared that we would swamp as soon as we struck the water.

Mr. Pittman's [sic] orders were to pull far enough away to avoid suction if the ship sank. The sea was like glass, so smooth that the stars were clearly reflected. We were pulled quite a distance away and then rested, watching the rockets in terrible anxiety and realizing that the vessel was rapidly sinking, bow first. She went lower and lower, until the lower lights were extinguished, and then suddenly rose by the stern and slipped from our sight about 2.10. We had no light in our boat and were left in intense darkness save for an occasional glimmer of light from other lifeboats and one steady green light on one of the ship's boats which the officers on the Carpathia afterwards said was of material assistance in aiding them to come direct to the spot. While drifting around, another boat came alongside us and reported, as I remember, 24 or 25 passengers aboard and but one of the Titanic's crew and no light.

"With daylight the wind increased and the sea became choppy, and we saw icebergs in every direction; some lying low in the water and others tall, like ships and some of us thought they were. Our boat was picked up about 4.10 a.m. by the Carpathia and too much cannot be said of the courtesy, kindness and unceasing care of the officers[,] crew and passengers of this vessel, who worked from morning until night and almost from night until morning in the relief of the survivors.

"I was in the second boat picked up. Others were adrift many hours longer and consequently suffered more. The captain of the Carpathia stayed until there were no more boats to pick up and he felt he must get out of the ice before sundown. We left the scene of the disaster about noon with the Californian still standing by, and as we turned back, as far as I could see in all directions, was a continuous floe of ice, marked by detached icebergs. It was well along towards night before we were clear of the field.

"I did not know, and to my knowledge it was not known by the survivors until their arrival in New York, that a warning had been given Captain Smith of the presence of bergs and that notwithstanding this the speed was not lessened. Another thing which caused me a great deal of anxiety while on the Titanic was the absence of drills. In my previous experience on the sea it had been customary, at least on Sunday, for the crew to be mustered to the boats for fire or boat drills, but this was not done on the Titanic.

"From the time of the accident until I left the ship there was nothing which in any way resembled a panic, and I believe that a panic would have been impossible owing to the immense size of the vessel, but there

seemed to be a sort of aimless confusion and an utter lack of organized effort.

"Mr. Lightoller, one of the officers of the Titanic who went down with the vessel, but afterwards was saved, told me that Colonel Gracie assisted him in cutting loose one of the life rafts and in pushing it overboard. Both were carried down with the vessel by the suction, but afterwards found safety on the same raft which they had previously cleared.

"I was also told by other survivors that several of the rafts, the lashings of which were never cut, were carried down with the vessel.

"These and, of course, many other stories and rumors were current among the passengers as to the different facts and happenings."

Acknowledgements

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