

## Peter Dennis Daly by his grandson

"What follows is the story of PDD and his Titanic involvement as told to me by my father (Richard) and supplemented by my uncle Nicanor (who in the 20's settled in Buenos Aires, Argentina) joining other established Dalys there: Paul, (bachelor), Victoria (spinster), Edward (first son of Peter Bernard's second family, and Victor, second son of same) and of course my father.

PDD a married Englishman with 9 children and living in Lima Peru had the custom of returning to England in the company of some friends every 2 to 3 years on business, to visit family and friends (In my grandfather's case to also have himself fitted for suits, shirts, and shoes as he was a fussy dresser, and to get away from all those kids the rest of family and hangers on. My father used to say that there were never less than 20 people at the dinner table.

On his trip in 1912 he was caught up in the hoopla of the Titanic and decided to make this maiden voyage in the unsinkable ship. His friends did not want to join him, but he had a valid excuse: his eldest son Nicanor had been living and working in New York for a couple of years and he hadn't seen him in quite a while.

On the night of the tragedy, after dinner he stayed up late in the lounge reading. Sometime before 11.30 he decided to call it a day and retired to his cabin to get ready for bed. A short while later he was startled by a thump and a vibration that lasted some seconds. His cabin on "E" deck starboard side only 2 decks above boiler room # 6 and less than 60 feet from the forward well deck was (as was later determined, very close to the impact zone). Quite concerned he determined it best to go topside and find out what had happened. There was a lot of ice in the forward well deck, chunks of all sizes. People were milling around. Some of the crew appeared and told them that they had brushed against a "small iceberg" but nothing to be worried about. He decided to tour the whole ship but found nothing amiss. Still he thought it best to ("stick around" ) and wait for any developments should they occur. Some time later he decided to look around one more time and was startled to see that some of the crew were uncovering the lifeboats and working the davits. Again he was assured that this was just a practice nothing to worry about. After that things started to unfold at an ever increasing pace. First there developed a noticeable list forward, then the loading of the boats, by now he was worried and returned to his cabin, changed into long woolen underwear, sweaters and walking boots. He placed his money, documents and valuables in his money belt, put on his topcoat, grabbed his lifebelt and went topside again. The scene had changed considerably, the ship was now listing sharply, rockets were being fired, boats were being lowered half empty, people either didn't want to leave the safety of the ship, or men were fighting to get into lifeboats. Pandemonium was all over the place. Shots were being fired. Soon it became evident to him that there would not be enough boats to save everybody, so he resigned himself to his fate.

It was at this time that a hysterical lady asked him to save her and he replied "Only God can save you now" (I had heard this story 20 years before Walter Lord's book). Not only that but also in order to calm her, PDD removed his own lifejacket and fastened it on her, I say this not at all cynically, it was not an act of chivalry or Noblesse Oblige, but he saw it as an act of kindness for he well realized that with or without a lifejacket nobody would survive that freezing water.) He stood by the rail (boat deck, or above the bridge?) Praying whether to jump or wait for the water to lift him off. (This had long been a subject of speculation around our dinner table. Never resolved till I read "Unsinkable" by Daniel Allen Butler who sold me on the version that it was the snapping of the stays due the vessel's pitch that tumbled funnel number one forward and to port that created a tidal wave that swept PDD and others clear off the boat and into the water.) Once in the icy water he realized that his waterlogged topcoat was dragging him

down so he struggled to take it off (the lack of a lifejacket made this possible and maybe saved his life). He swam as fast as he could to the first boat he could see, but it was crowded, and they fended him off. He kept swimming further away trying a few more times but no one would pick him up, including one time when he was hit in the head with an oar. Utterly exhausted and freezing he swam further out and reached a boat where he pleaded to be saved. A lady in the boat recognized him (as the father of nine kids?) and succeeded in talking everyone to pick him up. They laid him in the bottom of the boat and covered him with a blanket. A few hours later they were picked up by the Carpathia. On reaching New York he was taken to (St Vincent's but I have not been able to confirm this) a Hospital. There, the Doctors diagnosed him as having incipient gangrene and told him that in order to survive they would have to amputate both legs above the knees! My grandfather flatly refused telling them that he would live or die with his legs on. Furthermore he told them that "If the good Lord has seen fit to save me in this terrible disaster I have faith that he will carry me through. His faith (and the skill of the Doctors) proved him right. Some weeks later he was discharged and returned to his wife and children in Lima Peru.

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Albert Daly, USA

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