

The Unknown Adult

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ET Research

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COUNTERFOIL number 30887 lay on the wooden surface. Money joined it for a few minutes, and then money took wing and parted from the ticket. A moment later the ticket itself was taken up.

One of the opening scenes of the 1997 James Cameron movie *Titanic* has a parallel in real life.

And like the fictional gambling cameo in an approximation of *The Grapes* in Southampton, the ticket exchange may well have taken place in a public house.

That pub was likely a tavern called O'Callaghan's, in Daunt's Square, Cork, Southern Ireland – named after the same Daunt family that gives its name to the rock that marks the official start of the Transatlantic voyage to New York.



Edge of Daunt's Square, Cork, looking into Patrick Street, 1900.

The seller – and it was sold at a loss – was James Moran.

Nothing is known of Moran, except that he had originally bought ticket number 30887 in the early Spring of 1912 from Munster agents of the White Star shipping line.

In all probability the intending emigrant of that name was in his late teens or early twenties, very likely from Cork itself, a strapping farmhand or a city clerk. For many anonymous young adults, emigration was almost literally a rite of passage.

We can surmise that Moran, like many of his countrymen, was fond of a drink - and it would be nice to think that his fondness for Murphy's stout or a 'drop of the cratur' helped to save his life.

If he was a regular at O'Callaghan's pub, propped on a stool, rubbing his eyes after a hard week's work, he very likely knew William O'Doherty well. William was the barman.

Perhaps they spoke on occasion of Moran's American mission, how he was waiting for others to join him in the annual exodus. New York first, then maybe down to Philadelphia. How it was maddening that the others were humming and hawing.

Something happened at the end of this alcohol opera – weeks of talk may have gone by, but eventually Moran wasn't for leaving. Something, or someone, kept him back.

Ship's Name.	Official Number.	Steamship Line.	Master's Name.	Registered Tonnage.	Aggregate superficial area of upper and lower decks, plus Passengers.
<i>ss. Titanic</i>		<i>White Star</i>	<i>E G Smith</i>	<i>21831</i>	<i>26</i>

I hereby Certify that the Provisions actually laden on board this Ship are sufficient, according to the req for 1150 Statute Adults, for a voyage of 17 Days 11th April 1912, (Signature) *E*

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT TH

(1) Contract Ticket Number.	(2) NAMES OF PASSENGERS.	(3) CLASS. (Whether 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.)			(4) Port at which Passengers have contracted to Land.	(5) Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers. In the case of First Class Passengers this column need not be filled up.	(6) AGES OF PASSENGERS for First Class			
		Adults	Children	Infants			Adults of 12 years and upwards.		Not accompanied by husband or wife.	
						Male	Female	Male	Female	
<i>28924</i>	<i>✓ Keith Buckley</i>	<i>1</i>			<i>New York</i>					<i>20</i>
<i>30884</i>	<i>✓ Julia Barry</i>	<i>1</i>								<i>27</i>
<i>7</i>	<i>✓ James Moran</i>	<i>1</i>								<i>22</i>

Moran's name as it appears in the *Titanic* passenger manifest.

"Give us a look at that ticket." It emerged from an inside jacket pocket, uncrumpled itself, and the brow of the barman furled instead as he studied the paper of possibility...

Moran drops out of the picture. We don't know if he later emigrated – perhaps he was the James Moran who voyaged from Queenstown in September 1912, arriving in New York on the *Titanic's* sister ship, the *Olympic*, just before she was withdrawn from service for a re-fit aimed at providing extra safety.

What we do know is that the "James Moran" who travelled on the *Titanic*, whose name is faithfully recorded in a score of modern passenger lists, was not James Moran.

He was William O'Doherty.

FATE OF A YOUNG CORKMAN

The first name on the list of passengers represents a young Corkman who travelled under the name of James Moran. The real name is William Doherty, a young man, aged 22 years and nine months, whose relations live at the Old Market Place, Blarney Street.

Mr Doherty was, up to the eve of his sailing, employed at Mr W. O'Callaghan's (vintner), Daunt's Square. In an interview with the father, he stated that his son had purchased the ticket off an acquaintance some time since.

He had very little hope as to his son's safety, for he had failed to get any information. The fate of the young man caused the greatest anxiety, not only among his relations, but also among his acquaintances.

(*Cork Free Press*, April 17, 1912)

Despite the references to Doherty, descendants today are adamant that the name was O'Doherty. The family appeared to have truncated it to Doherty ('O' meaning *from* in Gaelic, or 'Of Doherty,' the latter being the clan name.)

It doesn't much matter. Some of the family at the time had baptismal certificates in the name of O'Doherty, others as Doherty.

And identity itself didn't much matter – passport laws were still a few years off, and no proof of one's person was required when boarding a ship. Mary Mullin was taken aboard the *Titanic* as Mary Lennon, while even the Duff Gordons in first class travelled incognito. All that mattered was your money – hence the parallel phenomenon of prepaid tickets, sent from abroad.

The 1911 Census at home in Ireland reveals that William O'Doherty was a 21-year-old barman, living at home with his father William Snr, 55, a retired Royal Irish Constabulary officer, railway policeman, and grocer, and his mother Anne (53).

Among other children in the family were Thomas Peter (23), railway porter, Annie (18), John James (16), another barman, and Bartholomew (15).



Annie and John James O'Doherty, siblings to William Jr.

The *Irish World* of New York confirmed in its May 11, 1912, issue:

James Moran, Cork, sold his ticket to Willie Doherty, Cork, who was lost under the name James Moran.

O'Doherty's intended destination is unclear, but it seems he intended to seek out the assistance of an immigration inspector named G.P. McDonough at the Ellis Island clearing station.

His niece, Philomena Cobley, says that her grandmother, William O' Doherty's mother, Anne, gave her son £5 towards his transatlantic ticket, "as his father didn't want him to go."

In a family memoir she writes: "Grandma was suicidal and racked with grief and had to be locked in her room for three days when confirmation came there were no more survivors.

"I can just imagine the suspenseful vigil that they endured and the torment at their loss."

BELIEVED PASSENGERS

William Doherty, 12 Old Market Place, employed by Messrs W.F. O'Callaghan, Daunt's Square...

(*Cork Examiner*, April 17, 1912)

The third-class passengers who embarked from Cork included... W. Doherty of 12 Old Market Place...

(*Cork Constitution*, April 17, 1912)

A 1912 street directory shows that O'Doherty's father, William Snr, was operating a shop at 12 Old Market Place.

The *Cork Examiner* edition of May 8, 1912 printed a picture of William O'Doherty, the passenger now known to have died as 'James Moran.'

The image, headlined 'ANOTHER VICTIM' shows two men, one seated, the other standing. It is a portrait taken at the American studios in Cork.



ANOTHER VICTIM

(Photo by American Studios Cork)

Mr. J. O'Doherty (standing), a native of Cork who perished in the *Titanic* disaster.

The picture caption on page eight of that newspaper's edition declares the man standing in the photograph to be "Mr J. O'Doherty, a native of Cork, who perished in the *Titanic* disaster." The

other individual, much the same age, is unidentified.

It now turns out that the other man is 'J. J. O'Doherty' – William's brother John James, who did not travel, and is seen seated, to left. (See John James' other picture, above, for comparison.)

The intended newspaper identification is of William O'Doherty, who embarked the *Titanic* and was lost. The *Cork Examiner* had the right picture, but made an error in the caption.

Misadventure and misfortune seem to have characterised William's short life. According to folklore, the family of his mother Anne (née Golden, of Donoughmore, Co.Cork), was blighted by a disgruntled tenant with a **piseóg** (pronounced pish/ogue, a curse).

Drowning would bedevil the family, the curse vowed. And so it turned out.

A brother and a nephew of Anne's would later be drowned - along with three of her own children, including William O'Doherty, the *Titanic*'s 'hidden' passenger.

Peter Crowley, grandnephew of William (grandson of John James, the sitting brother in the 1912 newspaper picture), takes up the story:

"When William bought his *Titanic* ticket from James Moran for a bargain price he would join the list of those cursed to die by water. William's uncle James had drowned in a stream having fallen from a horse.

"Of William's five siblings, Michael had already drowned in a cauldron of hot water on the family farm, aged three, when supposed to be under the supervision of Anne's sister Mary.

"His brother Bartholomew also drowned in a sense, due to a leaky valve in his heart." That happened at age 19, a few years after William joined the list in April 1912.

William's father, William Snr, came from Cloone, near Mohill, Co. Leitrim. The son of a poor farmer (less than 10 acres), he was described as a labourer when joining the police force on the 6th July 1876.



William O'Doherty Snr

He and Anne were married on the 21st January 1886 in Fornaught Church in Donoughmore, Co Cork. William was eventually promoted to Sergeant, but some time later was demoted to Constable.

“This came about, I believe, due to RIC suspicions about his political leanings, possibly influenced by Anne’s family, the Goldens, who later took an active part in the War of Independence and hid IRA guns in the farmhouse.”

William Snr remained in the RIC until he was pensioned on the 11th September 1902. By this stage, the family had moved into Cork City, where Anne ran a grocery shop while William Snr worked for the Railway Police.

The O’Doherty children were regular visitors to their mother’s home place, spending the summers on the farm there. “This leads me to suspect that William knew another *Titanic* passenger, William Foley, a native of Donoughmore. There is a good chance they would have known each other from attending Mass at the very least.”

The O’Dohertys were industrious. Mother Anne was an excellent seamstress, and made all the clothes for the family. William (*Titanic*) and John James worked in Public Houses as barmen. William, as we have seen, worked at W. F. O’Callaghan’s pub in Daunt’s Square, and John James at Henchy’s tavern nearby.

Young Annie – their sister - was later a midwife for the Blarney/Gurrane area. She met and married a Captain in the Irish Republican Army [Old IRA] during the War of Independence waged against Crown forces in Ireland.

Peter Crowley says: “There is a certain amount of mystery concerning the reasons surrounding William’s decision to travel to America. The story I have been told by my mother is that William was going with a girl of whom his mother disapproved.

“So, to break the relationship, she opted to pack her son off to America where her brother William and sisters Teresa and Frances would look after him. William Snr didn’t want him to go, but Anne, being stubborn, paid five pounds to James Moran, whom we believe may have been a neighbour who was too ill to travel.

“The original price of the ticket was six pounds ten shillings [records show £6 19s 2d], and it was booked for a brand new liner. A few days before he was due to leave, my grandfather John James paid for a photograph to be taken in the American Studios in Cork. The picture was printed in the days after the sinking.”

“Another story had it that the girl was waiting for him in America and they would be married. Either way, when the news came through that there were no more survivors, William’s mother was suicidal and racked with grief and self-reproach. She had to be locked in a safe room for three days.”

To have lost three children in tragic circumstances had a profound effect on the family. Worse was to follow for Annie, William’s revolutionary sister, when three of her own children died at a young age.

The family, while rarely speaking from one generation to the next about the traumas endured, nonetheless kept alive the story of William’s demise on the *Titanic*.

The extant photographs of the two brothers, John James and William, bear a striking resemblance to the two men photographed together by the American studios in 1912, subsequently published in May 1912 under the headline ‘Another Victim.’



William O'Doherty (at a younger age) compared to the man in the newspaper picture

This original is now missing, having failed to be returned by the newspaper. What does survive however is another photograph of William O'Doherty, taken by the same American studios of Patrick Street, Cork city.



The image is on a postcard (in Carte de Visite style), addressed on the back in handwriting to 'B Doherty, 12 Old Market Place' – William O'Doherty's home, and the same local address repeatedly later given for the reported *Titanic* victim.

If there was ever a stamp, it has gone. Perhaps it was hand-delivered by an acquaintance who had been seeing him off. Because family tradition is that the postcard picture was transmitted from Queenstown as William was preparing to board the RMS *Titanic*.

If only it had been stamped and posted...

On the back are written a final few words to William's older brother. It reads:

*Dear Tom,
Just a few lines, as I received your kind wishes.*

It is unsigned.

One might call the sender the Unknown Adult.

But if he had been feeling playful, he could have signed it... *James Moran*.

Notes

The family of William O'Doherty is now attempting to have his name added to a list of Irish passengers displayed at the *Queenstown Experience* exhibit in Cobh, Ireland – at least by way of asterisk to the cipher 'James Moran.'

A version of this story previously appeared in the *Atlantic Daily Bulletin*. The correct identity was originally published in *The Irish Aboard Titanic* (1999) by the author.

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