

Titanic's Cargo Gear

by Captain Charles B. Weeks

Titanic Research

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Titanic's cargo gear. Chronologically she came during a transition from square rigged sailing ships to the breakbulk freighter of WW II and later fame. As it turns out her cargo gear was a little of several types of gear used at various times. She had a combination of Gin Blocks on wire spans, rotating electric cranes, and one swinging heavy lift boom. *Titanic* had six cargo holds, 1, 2 & 3 were forward and 4, 5&6 were aft. The Gin Blocks (large diameter metal blocks hung from span wires or boom heads) on *Titanic* were similar to those found on the stay of a square rigged ship.



Titanic, and there was the answer. They hung a Gin Block, rove off with a cargo runner, from a span wire, which ran from the Eyes of the ship up to the cross trees on the Fore Mast. The block was spotted directly over the hatch; the runner was hauled by the steam winch. Now a Gin Block spotted directly over the hatch has some limitations in its use. You can make the hook go up or down, but it is very hard to move a draft of cargo of any weight sideways. The solution to that I suspect lays in photographs of Berths 43 & 44 in Southampton. They show gantry mounted electric cranes on the pier. There is a photograph of this on page 86 of John P. Eaton and Charles A. Haas's book "Titanic Triumph and Tragedy". I suspect these cranes hoisted the draft of cargo up from the pier and either set it on the Fore Deck alongside the hatch, or they used the crane to do the whole job from pier to hold. If the draft was deposited on the Fore Deck by the crane, then a Longshoreman hooked the ship's runner to the draft and the winch aft of #1 Hatch hoisted the draft up till it cleared the coaming then let

gravity swing it sideways till it was directly under the Gin Block, at which time it was lowered into the hold. Discharging was done the same way but in reverse.

In New York I believe, based on my own experience, that they married the ship's runner to a House Fall from the pier. Thus they had two winches and runners working so they could hoist the draft up out of the hold or off the pier apron then, Burton the draft athwartship and lower away. According to the Rigging Plan there could be similar Gin Blocks on stays rigged at each hold except #4.



Mounted on the after side of the Fore Mast was a single Heavy Lift (Jumbo) Boom. It was primarily to service #2 Hold. Those books on *Titanic*



So we see that just as *Titanic*'s engines transitioned from reciprocating to turbine so to her cargo gear was a transition to a more modern type gear.

Bibliography

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Titanic, by Fine Arts Models.

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