

The Last of the Lost

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Titanic Research

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A preliminary report on the Palaeo-DNA Project and the unidentified Titanic victims in the Halifax, Nova Scotia, cemeteries

A Preliminary Report on the Palaeo-DNA Project and the Unidentified TITANIC

Revised abstract of a May 4, 2002 talk presented at the 2002 Convention Titanic International Society, May 3-5, 2002 Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel Ottawa, Ontario

The origin of this project came about in 1996 when a Canadian family from the Province of Ontario contacted the former City of Halifax through their clergyman. The clergyman provided family data and sought permission to inscribe the name of Catherine Jane Wallis, the family grandmother, on the gravestone of Body No. 281 in the TITANIC plot at Fairview Lawn Cemetery in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Stephen King of the City's Parks and Grounds Department was cognizant that on September 23, 1991 the process of inscribing six names on the gravestones of unidentified victims in the cemetery was done in great haste with no formal City vetting or approval process in place. No formal report on the six identifications was prepared for the city's cemetery files in 1991, and five years later Mr. King decided that the Ontario family's request should be formally reviewed. One name was inscribed in 1991 with a typographic error, and the evidence re the apparent identification of Frank Couch as Body No. 253 is now somewhat uncertain.

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