

## W.C.Porters Letters to Wife and Partner

### ***Worcester Telegram***

Wednesday 17 April 1912

W.C.Porters Letters to Wife and Partner

Tells of Pleasant and Successful Trip and of His Anxiety to Hurry Home on the Titanic

"I have had a fine trip, enjoyed every minute of it, and have found business prospects quite bright, but how do I wish it was today instead of the 10th of April that I was going to sail for home," was one of the last messages from Walter C. Porter, written March 31, from Austria, to his business partner, Walter E. Bigelow of Samuel Porter & Co., last manufacturers.

Mr. Porter who sailed for home aboard the White Star liner Titanic, had been abroad since Feb. 20, when he sailed on the Megantic for Liverpool in company with George Q. Clifford of the George E. Belcher last Co., of Stoughton and John E. McGuire of the Dunbar Pattern Co., Brockton, both of whom were with him on the Titanic when the fatal crash against the iceberg came.

Mr. Porter's trip abroad was strictly on business for his company, so said Mrs. Porter at her home, 10 Lenox street, and Mr. Bigelow at the office of the last company - 25 Union street.

Mr. Porter, who attended to the sales end of the business, went abroad to become acquainted with customers and to work up friends for the company's business. The trip had taken him through England, Scotland, France, Germany, Switzerland and Austria, and the letters received from him while away, all gave evidence that he was pleased with the success of his trip.

Mr. Porter's letter told that he was in excellent health, and that his pleasure trips were and incidental nature.

The last mail messages from European cities arrived in Worcester Monday night. Mrs. Porter received two letters of a private nature and Mr. Bigelow, the partner, got one dealing with the business outlook, and news of Mr. Porters plans for returning to Worcester.

In Mr. Bigelow's letter, Mr. Porter told of the coal strike in England and of how it threatened to hold up shipping. He said he felt quite sure it would not delay his return. "While the coal strike in England is very serious," said Mr. Porter in his letter. "I have received assurance from the White Star line officials that the steamship Titanic upon which I intend sailing for home, will leave on schedule time. How I wish it was today I was was to sail, instead of April 10."

In addition, Mrs. Porter said she was sure her husband had sailed aboard the Titanic, as he sent her a cablegram announcing his intention just before time for the steamship to sail. Mr. Bigelow had received cablegrams also and said yesterday that he has little hope but that his business partner and boyhood friend had sailed on the ill-fated ship, but he added that he has not lost hope of Mr. Porter being rescued.

Mrs. Porter and the family yesterday were maintaining a show of great courage when friends dropped in to inquire for the latest news regarding the Titanic passengers. "We are hoping for the best," said Mrs.

Porter "We find it difficult to obtain all the authentic news we would like."

Mr. Bigelow has received two messages from officials of the White star line, the continued on page 4

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first assuring him of Mr. Porter's welfare and of the fact that the Titanic was not in danger of sinking. The second was less communicative and advised him that the company officials would telegram him the minute tidings from the rescued passengers or Mr. Porter in person, were received.

The sinking of the Titanic is the second marine tragedy in which Mr. Porter has figured, and in the first, when a young man about to embark on his business career, he is said to have nearly lost his life in a wild sea off the coast of South America.

Before entering the last business with his father, Mr. Porter, then 21 years old, accompanied some friends on a cruise from Boston to the South America coast in a pleasure yacht.

The party had proceeded through the West Indies and had headed for the South American coast when the yacht was struck by a severe storm. As Mr. Porter has told the story to his friends and members of his family, the boat was partially dismantled and was tossed about on a wild sea for several days.

Mrs. Porter said yesterday that she had understood, from her husband's version of the trip that, that while the yacht was not altogether wrecked, the party had the narrowest kind of escape."It was a pleasure boat of good size for those days, " said Mrs. Porter " I think the boat's size saved it from the storm."

Mrs. Porter took the occasion to express thanks and appreciation for the courtesy of the Telegram in throwing open its information channels to her in her anxiety Monday night and said it had assisted her greatly in bearing up under the worry of waiting for information from the steamship company.

The Telegram office was besieged early and late yesterday and last night for news of the titanic survivors, and a large portion of the calls were from the friends of Mr. Porter.

All the Worcester steamship ticket agencies kept in constant touch with the White star line officials in Boston all day yesterday, but received no news that did not come in the dispatches of The Associated Press.

Worcester people were appalled yesterday when they read the early morning extra edition of The Telegram of the enormous loss of life when the Titanic, a floating palace which earlier in the day before had been proclaimed unsinkable by officials of the company that owned it had gone down with 1300 aboard.

Mr. Porter lived in Worcester all his life, save for little more than a year, when he carried on a grocery and general provision store in Holden. He was identified with his father, Samuel Porter, in the last manufacturing business from the time he left school with one or two brief intervals.

He was born in the old Porter home on Benefit street, the son of Mr. & Mrs.Samuel Porter, May 13, 1865, attended public schools of Worcester and at the age of 21 went to work for his father. He withdrew from the Samuel Porter Last Co. employ in 1891 and carried on the Holden grocery a little more than a year when he went back to his fathers employ and during the ensuing years worked in every department of the shops.

Mr. Porter, with Mr. Bigelow, bought out the last company business, Aug. 1, 1903 and since that time they have conducted it. The partners had been friend since boyhood and when speaking of Mr. Porter yesterday, Mr. Bigelow said his partner has been a man whom it has been a pleasure always to be associated with.

The coal strike in England prevented Mr & Mrs. Arthur E. Nye of 37 Harvard street, from being passengers on the Titanic which was sunk Tuesday. They had their passage all secured and had been assigned a stateroom on the new ocean liner, when, at the last minute, they were obliged to cancel their tickets and take a later boat because the coal strike delayed trains to such extent that Mr. Nye was unable to keep an appointment that he had with a business man in Southhampton. Rather than miss the engagement with him he missed the maiden voyage of the Titanic and he and Mrs. Nye were congratulating themselves yesterday when they learned for the first time that the boat had gone down.

Mr. Nye, who has been on a six weeks business trip to Europe in the interests of J. Russel Marble of which he is a member, and Mrs. Nye returned to Worcester on the 4:30 o'clock train from New York yesterday afternoon, and within an hour Mr. Nye was telling his experiences to a Telegram reporter. Mr. Nye said he sailed Feb. 20 from New York on the Celtic for a short trip entirely for business, and during his absence visited England, Holland, Germany, Paris and Cherbourg.

He concluded his business last week in Southhampton and made all arrangements to sail on the Titanic, Friday. The delay of the arrival of the man to meet him caused by the coal strike was what caused him to cancel his reservation on the Titanic and engage passage on the George Washington, which sailed Sunday, April 7. He said the George Washington followed the course of the Titanic all the way over, and while off the banks of Newfoundland it ran among a large number of icebergs and fields of ice, Thursday and Friday. The most were encountered off the Grand banks, Friday.

There was no trouble, however, and the trip was uneventful, except that instead of getting in New York when due, Monday, the boat did not dock until yesterday morning. It was detained in the lower bay of New York 24 hours after being anchored off Nantucket, Sunday, on account of fog. This was the only disagreeable feature of the entire trip, according to Mr. Nye, who returns to his duties in the store this morning to receive the congratulations of friends over his narrow escape from being on the Titanic.

Another Worcester couple who had a narrow escape from being on the Titanic is Mr. & Mrs. Charles A Kabley, who have just returned from a trip to Germany. Mrs. Kabley wanted to come back on the boat, but was urged by her husband for some reason unknown to both, not to do so and he had his own way about it.

Michael Cohen, 38 Water street, said last night, that he thinks his sister, Mrs. Naomi Levine and her three children are among the passengers of the giant Titanic. He telegraphed his brother-in-law, in New York yesterday afternoon when he learned of the disaster. He expects a reply today. He waited until nearly midnight for one last night.

Mr. Cohen is particularly anxious about his sister for the reason that in a letter he received from her husband last week, he wrote that Mrs. Levine and the children were to leave Southhampton on the day the Titanic sailed from Southhampton. In the letter Mr. Levine did not mention from which port his wife would sail.

"My sister and her three children have been living in London for about six months with one of our sisters." said Mr. Cohen last night. "Recently her husband, who is in New York, wrote to have her and the children join him in New York."

Mr. Cohen went over the list of those saved but he was unable to find his sister's name among the

survivors.

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