

## WOMEN REVEALED AS HEROINES BY WRECK

### *New York Times*

Saturday 20 April 1912

Mrs. J. J. Brown of Denver Tells Story of Her Seven Hours In Lifeboat --- \*\*\* --- Mrs. J. J. Brown, wife of a Denver mine owner, told yesterday afternoon to a reporter for THE TIMES at the Ritz-Carlton the story of her seven-hour vigil in an open boat after leaving the Titanic. Oftentimes it has been written that out of each great moment of history some man has emerged as master of the situation, some one hand and mind that has controlled where others held back. From verified statements and from circumstances explained by others the work of the women make them the central figures in the great sea tragedy. When seen at the Ritz-Carlton Mrs. Brown wore the same dress in which she had gone over the side of the liner in a lifeboat. The black and white silk facing of the black velvet outer coat was discolored, and her white topped shoes were spotted with salt water in which her feet had rested. "My hair? Oh, that I have not bothered with since Sunday," she said. "But this morning? Did you not rest last night?" "No," she said smilingly. "Why should I? There was work to do. I left the Carpathia at 3 o'clock this morning. There were many women there whom I had to look out for." In the women's parlor of the Ritz-Carlton sat the Russian Consul and a young Russian woman, who had lost her husband and all of her money in the disaster. This woman had been brought to the hotel to meet the Consul by the tireless Mrs. Brown, so that something could be done to assist her. The picture was as perfect a one of absolute democracy as could be obtained. The woman, who was returning to her luxurious home in Denver after seven hours in an open boat, during which time she continually used an oar; after four days in watching over others and waiting on the sick; after remaining up practically all night Thursday night, sat holding the hand of the little brown-eyed, baby-faced Russian woman, and repeating to her in German time and again that every thing was all right. The grief of the young widow was of that profound kind which has passed the stage of tears. When the interview was over and she was to go, whither she knew not, in a land where she was penniless, where she knew no word of its language, she stood for a moment looking at the stronger woman, who had mastered the situation and had been the leader. Hesitatingly she held out her hand, and then turning her face up like a little child, she paid the only tribute she understood as she kissed the older woman on the cheek, and mutely walked away with the Consul leading her by the hand. It was the final tribute to fortitude combined with tenderness "The whole thing," said Mrs. Brown, "was so formal that it was difficult for any one to realize that it was a tragedy. Men and women stood in little groups and talked. Some laughed as the first boats went over the side. All the time the band was playing. After a little while I helped put some women into a boat. I remember the last woman. She was French. She was very excited. I spoke to her in French and helped to put her into the boat. Somehow I did not seem to care about the thing of being saved. We thought that the ship was so big that she could not go down for a day at any rate. The passengers had been stepping from the deck into the boat in which I put the Frenchwoman. Then they swung it out over the water. I had then gone to an upper deck and was looking down at it and watching the picture. "I had noticed two men following me from place to place as I talked with the women here and there. These two men just then followed me to the upper deck and carried me down, and practically threw me into the boat with the words, 'You are going, too.' They were Edward P. Calderhead and James McGough, two American merchants. I owe my life to them, for there were no more boats, and I would be now with these who are at the bottom, for I had gone back upstairs, you see. "We were lowered to the water as gently as if it were a boat drill. Our boat could have carried several more. I can still see the men up on the deck tucking in the women and bowing and smiling. It was a strange sight. It all seemed like a play, like a drama that was being enacted for entertainment. It did not seem real. Men would say, 'After you,' as they made some woman comfortable and stepped back. I afterward heard some one say that men went downstairs into the restaurant. Many of them smoked.

Many of them walked up and down. For a while after we reached the water we watched the ship. We could hear the band. Every light was shining. "The man in the back of the boat, a quartermaster they said he was, told us to row away from the big steamer. I was getting cold. I took off my life belt because I knew how cold the water was and I felt that if I were to be drowned I wanted it over quickly---they say it takes but two minutes. I did not wish to linger. I figured it all out, and then I got an oar. In this way I managed to keep warm. "It was just midnight as we dropped down to the water, perhaps a minute or so after. It did not seem long before there was a great sweep of water which went over us all. A great wave rose once and then fell, and we knew that the steamer was gone. We could see as plainly as if it had been day. There may have been many swimming hut we had rowed at least a mile and a half by the time the steamer went down, and I saw none of this. I saw no dead people. To me there was not one tragic harrowing element near me. We were in a boat, we were safe and we were at work. I was simply fascinated. In a few moments the man in the back of the boat began to complain that we had no chance. There were only three men in the boat. For at least three hours he seemed to break the monotony of it. "We stood him patiently, and then after he had told us that we had no chance, told us many times, and after he had explained that we had no food, no water, and no compass I told him to be still or he would go overboard. Then he was quiet. I rowed because I would have frozen to death. I made them all row. It saved their lives. "Soon after the steamer went down we began to see the other boats. In the haze, with a sea as calm as glass, we talked to two boats which were near us. All of us, sixteen boats in all, waved back and forth to each other in the growing dawn. A strange man sat in the back of the boat. He seemed to be a foreigner. He never moved his bands once. I wonder why he did not freeze to death. He had on kid gloves and a monocle, which he never once dropped out of his eye. We picked up one man and I put him to work rowing and put some of our clothes around him. "A little while after the steamer dived down we saw plainly a fishing boat. We pulled hard to try to get near it, but it faded away in the mist. I think we rowed at least nine miles altogether in trying to reach this fishing boat, and in rowing back to where we believed we should wait for help. Then, suddenly, like a streak of lightning over the edge of the sky shot the searchlight of the Carpathia. I knew we were saved, and I began to look about me. She must have been ten miles away then. I made them keep on rowing, for I knew they might even then freeze before we were reachd. [sic] "Then, knowing that we were safe at last, I looked about me. The most wonderful dawn I have ever seen came upon us. I have just returned from Egypt. I have been all over the world, but I have never seen anything like this. First the gray and then the flood of light. Then the sun came up in a ball of red fire. "For the first time we saw where we were. Near us was open water, but on every side was ice. Ice ten feet high was everywhere, and to the right and left and back and front, were icebergs. This sea of ice was forty miles wide, they told me. Imagine some artist able to picture what we saw from that boat at dawn in that field of ice, with the red sun playing on those giant icebergs. "We did not wait for the Carpathia to come to us. We rowed toward it. We were picked up at 7 A. M. We were lifted up in a sort of nice little sling that was lowered down to us. After that it was all over. The passengers of the Carpathia were so afraid that we would not have room enough that they gave practically the whole ship to ourselves. "I was hurrying here to see my son who is in Medford, Ore. He was married very young and went out there to live. His baby is ill, and, of course, I had to get home to see what I could do. I left my daughter in Paris, and am going back in May. We are to visit friends in London. I have not been made afraid by my experience. I have no fear of water. I simply did what was to be done. For fifteen years I have labored in Denver with Judge Lindsey in rescue work, and when my time came I did what I could." It has been learned that the women passengers of the Titanic who were rescued, refer to "Lady Margaret," as they call Mrs. Brown, as the strength of them all. [Note: The identification of the young Russian woman mentioned in the article as Mrs. Kantor is tentative. This is one of four articles that appeared under this general headline. The other three relate to (1) the Countess of Rothes, (2) Malvina Cornell, Charlotte Appleton, Caroline Brown, Edith Evans and the Fortune Family, and (3) the Graham family, and can be found through those passengers' summary pages.]

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Courtesy of Mark Baber

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