

# British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry

## Day 9

### Testimony of Charles D. Mackay

Source : <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/BOTInq/BOTIndx02.php>

Examined by Mr. RAYMOND ASQUITH.

10673. Is your name Charles Donald Mackay?

- Yes.

10674. You were a bathroom steward on the "Titanic"?

- Yes.

10675. At the time the ship ran into the iceberg, were you in your quarters?

- Yes.

10676. Were you playing cards?

- I was playing bridge.

10677. Do you feel a shock?

- Yes.

10678. Where were your quarters?

- Amidships, practically amidships.

10679. Can you see this plan from there? Would it be these (*Pointing on the model.*)?

- No, further forward than that.

10680. Which deck?

- E, the working alleyway.

10681. Was it near the first class dining saloon you were?

- Yes.

10682. Just abaft of that?

- Yes, the afterend of the dining saloon, first class.

10683. Somewhere about there (*Pointing.*)?

- Yes.

10684. Did you feel the shock?

- Yes.

10685. Was it severe?

- No, not too severe.

10686. You just noticed it. What did you do when you felt it? Did you come out into the alleyway?

- Yes.

10687. You are speaking now of the alleyway on E deck?

- The ship's working alleyway.

10688. On E deck?

- Yes.

10689. Did you meet anyone there?

- I met quite a crowd.

10690. Were you told something about what had happened?

- No, we were told nothing.

10691. What did you do next?

- The first order I heard was from the second Steward to close all watertight doors on F deck.

10692. To close the watertight doors on F deck?

- That was the first order I heard given.

- 26 10693. How long after the accident was it you heard that order?  
- A matter of about a quarter of an hour.
- 27 10694. And did you go to F deck to obey that order?  
- No. The third class chief steward was sent for, for his men to do that order.
- 28 10695. Was that Mr. Kieran?  
- Yes.
- 29 10696. Did you see the Captain about this time?  
- No, I saw the Captain a matter of about 20 minutes after that.
- 30 10697. What did you see him do?  
- I saw him come down the working staircase and go along, I presume, to the Chief Engineer's room. About 10 minutes after that I saw him come back.
- 31 10698. You saw him come back, too?  
- Yes, and go up the same staircase.
- 32 10699. Shortly after that, did you get another order?  
- All hands were to be called and to get out of their quarters and proceed to the passenger decks.
- 33 10700. Who gave that order?  
- The second steward, Mr. Dodd.
- 34 10701. You said something about passengers?  
- The bedroom stewards were ordered to their passengers' rooms to tell passengers to get on warm clothing and proceed to the top deck, the boat deck.
- 35 10702. I think you were not a bedroom steward, you were a bathroom steward?  
- Yes.
- 36 10703. Does that mean that you had no particular passengers to look after?  
- We were told to get on the top deck and assist the passengers with their lifebelts.
- 37 10704. Did you take your own lifebelt?  
- No.
- 38 10705. What did you do?  
- I went to the top deck as we were ordered.
- 39 10706. What did you do when you got there?  
- Assisted passengers on with their lifebelts.
- 40 10707. When you say the top deck, I suppose you mean the boat deck?  
- Yes.
- 41 10708. Did you receive another order after that?  
- No, not then.
- 42 10709. When did you get your next order?  
- After we helped the passengers on with their lifebelts we were told to take our boat stations at our respective boats.
- 43 10710. Did you know what your boat station was?  
- Yes.
- 44 10711. What was it?  
- No. 3, starboard side.
- 45 10712. And did you go to No. 3?  
- Yes.
- 46 10713. Did you help to put people on board?  
- I did.
- 47 10714. Whom did you put on?  
- Women and children, and assisted one or two men.
- 48 10715. One or two men?  
- Yes.

- 49 10716. Why did you put men into the boat?  
- Because there were no other women there available to go, I suppose.
- 50 10717. The order was to put women and children in, was it not?  
- Quite right.
- 51 10718. When there were no women to go, you put in some men?  
- Yes.
- 52 10719. Can you say how many men you saw get into boat No. 3?  
- I cannot tell you.
- 53 10720. Can you give us any idea?  
- A matter of perhaps three or four; that is about all.
- 54 10721. After you had filled No. 3, I suppose that boat was lowered?  
- It was.
- 55 10722. What did you do next?  
- I helped to lower that boat.
- 56 10723. What did you do after it had been lowered?  
- Came along the line to No. 5.
- 57 10724. That was the next boat aft?  
- Yes.
- 58 10725. Did you help to fill and lower that?  
- No, pardon me, No. 7.
- 59 10726. You did not go to No. 5?  
- No. 7 went before No. 5.
- 60 10727. No. 7 went after No. 3?  
- Yes, to the best of my recollection.
- 61 10728. Did you put women and children into No. 7?  
- Yes.
- 62 10729. Any men into No. 7?  
- I believe so - a matter of one or two. I cannot state how many, for I do not know who were crew and who were passengers.
- 63 10730. After you had done that to No. 7 what did you do next?  
- I went back to No. 5.
- 64 10731. And did you do the same thing there?  
- No, I just watched the proceedings.
- 65 10732. What did you notice when you were watching the proceedings at No. 5?  
- She was filled up and lowered the same as the rest.
- 66 10733. Who were put into her? Could you see?  
- I could not say.
- 67 10734. Were they men or women?  
- Well, women, I suppose.
- 68 10735. Did you see?  
- Women, I said.
- 69 10736. You said "Women, I suppose." Did you see?  
- Well, when I say women, I mean to say women were the majority. I cannot say how many men there were lowered in that boat.
- 70 10737. Can you say whether any men passengers were put into that boat?  
- I cannot say. It is a hard job to tell a passenger from the crew when they are just simply called up out of their bed with simply an overcoat on.
- 71 10738. I am not blaming you. After you had looked on at the loading of No. 5, what did you do next?  
- I went along to No. 9.

- 72 10739. Did you help there?  
- The same proceedings took place.
- 73 10740. Did you help to put people into No. 9?  
- No, I watched proceedings.
- 74 10741. Did the same thing happen there? Women were put in if there were women?  
- All the women and children were put in first, and to fill up the boat men came after.
- 75 10742. Eventually did you get to No. 11?  
- I did.
- 76 10743. The first boat you mentioned was No. 3?  
- Quite right.
- 77 10744. Had you been to No. 1 before that?  
- No. 1 was on the davits.
- 78 10745. Did you see who were in it?  
- Nobody.
- 79 10746. What happened next? Did you watch what was done to No. 1?  
- No, No. 1 was on the davits when I left No. 7. After that I cannot say. I cannot tell you when No. 1 was lowered.
- 80 10747. No. 1 was on the davits when No. 3 was being lowered?  
- Yes, to the best of my recollection.
- 81 10748. And there was no one in No. 1 at all?  
- No; no one stationed by it even.
- 82 10749. The order of events was that No. 3 was lowered first?  
- Yes.
- 83 10750. And then No. 7?  
- Yes, and then No. 5, and then No. 9, to the best of my ability.
- 84 10751. And No. 1 was still on the davits when No. 7 was being lowered?  
- To the best of my ability, yes.
- 85 10752. I understood you to say you did not see anyone put into No. 1 and cannot give any evidence about it?  
- No, no evidence at all.
- 86 10753. You eventually went to No. 11.? Describe what happened with regard to that?  
- No. 11 was lowered to A deck.
- 87 10754. First of all, were crew put into it on the boat deck?  
- No.
- 88 10755. No one put into it?  
- No.
- 89 10756. It was lowered to A deck?  
- It was lowered to A deck empty.
- 90 10757. Did you go down to A deck yourself?  
- No, the first order I heard given was, Mr. Wheat, the second assistant-steward, had an order from Mr. Murdoch to take charge of that boat.
- 91 10758. That was on the boat deck?  
- Yes. Steward, Wilson and myself were ordered by Mr. Murdoch to collect all the women we could and take to that A deck, which we did.
- 92 10759. Did you collect women on the boat deck?  
- Yes, and we took them down the companion to A deck.
- 93 10760. About how many do you think you collected?  
- A matter of about 40 on A deck, we collected.
- 94 10761. On A deck?  
- Yes.

95 10762. But you told me you collected some from the boat deck?  
- Yes, I said a matter of about 40 on the boat deck.

96 10763. Which do you mean, the boat deck or the a deck?  
- The boat deck. We had our orders from the boat deck to collect all the women we possibly could.

97 10764. And you collected about 40 on the boat deck and took them down?  
- Yes.

98 10765. (*The Commissioner.*) And took them down to A deck?  
- Yes.

99 10766. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Did you collect any more on A deck?  
- Yes.

100 10767. How many more, about?  
- I cannot say; we collected a few more. I cannot tell you within two or three.

101 10768. I do not expect you to, but can you say roughly?  
- I can give you a rough estimate of what the boat carried.

102 10769. That is what I want to know?  
- That is counting men, women, and children, 74 to 78, counting nine children.

103 10770. (*The Commissioner.*) This is No. 11?  
- Yes.

104 10771. It took away 70 to 80, you say?  
- No, 74 to 78, counting nine children - not all adults.

105 10772. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) You spoke of collecting some people on A deck itself?  
- Yes.

106 10773. When you say that, do you mean that you collected people who were already on A deck, or that you went to other parts of the ship and collected them there?  
- After we brought the people down from the boat deck that we collected, we filled up the boat from the a deck with passengers that were there.

107 10774-75. With the passengers that were already on A deck?  
- Yes.

108 10776. And you did not collect any others from other parts of the ship?  
- No.

109 10777. Can you say how many of that 74 or 78 that were in your boat were crew?  
- Yes, I could give you exactly - five stewards and one fireman rowing; the assistant second steward at the helm, two sailors, one forward and one aft.

110 10778. (*The Commissioner.*) Is that eight altogether?  
- No, that makes nine.

111 10779. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Nine, counting yourself?  
- I said five stewards, one fireman, two sailors (one forward and one aft.), and the assistant second steward at the helm.

112 10780. (*The Commissioner.*) Then there were six stewards?  
- Well, one is the boss of the department; I hardly call him a steward.

113 10781. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Do you know the names of the sailors that were in the boat?  
- I could not tell you; I have not the slightest idea.

114 10782. Or of any other members of the crew that were in the boat?  
- Let me see. Yes, William Wilton was one.

115 10783. He was a steward?  
- Yes. McMicken.

116 10784. What was he?  
- A steward. Thessinger, Mr. Wheat and myself. That is all I can answer for. I cannot answer for the others because they were new men on the ship.

- 117 10785. Was the last name you mentioned a steward, too?  
- Mr. Wheat was the assistant.
- 118 10786. I thought you mentioned another name?  
- Thessinger. He was a bedroom steward on E deck. The other men were strangers to me; I cannot think of their names.
- 119 10787. (*The Commissioner.*) McMicken, Thessinger, and who else?  
- Wilton, McMicken, Thessinger, Mr. Wheat, and myself. They were the only men I can remember. The fireman's name I do not know; the two sailors' names I do not know, and the other stewards I do not know, because they were strangers to the ship. They never came from the "Olympic" to the "Titanic" with us.
- 120 10788-10789. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) That means, including yourself, there were ten members of the crew in this boat?  
- Nine, do you not make it?
- 121 10790. I thought I made it ten, but it does not matter?  
- Five stewards, one fireman, two sailors, and the assistant second steward at the helm.
- 122 10791. But you have not counted yourself?  
- Yes, I am counting myself as one of the five.
- 123 10792. That makes nine. You have told us there were also nine children?  
- There were 74 to 78, counting nine children ranging up to six years of age.
- 124 10793. Were all the rest women, or were there some male passengers?  
- There were two second class ladies, one second class gent, one first class lady, and the rest were all third class ladies.
- 125 10794. The rest were all third class ladies?  
- Yes.
- 126 10795. How do you come to know that?  
- Well, I do know; I cannot tell you why, but I do know. They were all third class people bar the four I have mentioned, bar the crew which was nine.
- 127 10796. You mean you could distinguish the first from the third, and that you counted them?  
- I cannot distinguish altogether, but I know when I got on board the "Carpathia" I found out they were third class.
- 128 10797. That is what I wanted to know. What did you do when you got into the boat in the water with people in it? Did you row away from the ship?  
- No, we had a bit of difficulty in getting away.
- 129 10798. What difficulty did you have?  
- The after fall would not run clear in the first place - it took three men to get the stern of her away from the flush of the water running from the ship's side.
- 130 10799. After you got free, did you row away from the ship?  
- Yes.
- 131 10800. How far away?  
- To the best of my ability a quarter of a mile.
- 132 10801. Were you within sight when the ship went down?  
- We watched all proceedings.
- 133 10802. Did you see a light while you were in the boat?  
- A supposed light do you mean?
- 134 10803. Well, I do not know whether it was a supposed light or not. Did you see what you thought was a light?  
- Yes, we thought there was a ship's stern light.
- 135 10804. Was it a white light or a coloured light?  
- It was a reddish light.
- 136 10805. And you thought it was the stern light of a ship?  
- Yes.

- 137 10806. Could you say in which direction it was with regard to the "Titanic", whether it was on the port or the starboard side of the "Titanic"?  
- Well, when I say it was the stern light of a ship, I should suppose she was going the same way as ourselves.
- 138 10807. On which side of the "Titanic" was it?  
- Starboard.
- 139 10808. On the starboard side; and you thought it was the stern light of a ship going the same way as yourself in advance of you?  
- Yes.
- 140 10809. And did you row towards that light?  
- For a matter of about two hours as hard as we could row.
- 141 10810. And did you lose sight of it in the end?  
- Yes.
- 142 Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.
- 143 10811. Who was in charge of No. 11?  
- Mr. Wheat, the assistant second steward.
- 144 10812. Were all nine of you able to row?  
- Yes.
- 145 10813. And you found that nine of you could manage this boat, even with that very full load of passengers?  
- Yes.
- 146 10814. Had your boat a lamp?  
- No.
- 147 10815. Did you look for it?  
- Yes.
- 148 10816. Had she got a compass?  
- No.
- 149 10817. Did you look for it?  
- Yes.
- 150 10817a. You are quite sure it had not?  
- Yes.
- 151 10818. How long have you been going to sea?  
- 17 years the 7th of last May.
- 152 10819. I suppose you have experience of a number of lines?  
- Yes.
- 153 10820. Have you had training in the managing of lifeboats?  
- Yes.
- 154 10821. Where?  
- The Royal Mail Company, the Union Castle Company.
- 155 10822. And what others?  
- The American Line and the White Star.
- 156 10823. Is that training given to stewards and stokers and firemen as well as to sailors?  
- It is given to all hands in the ship.
- 157 10824. Does it go the length of getting you into the boats and rowing you round the harbour?  
- Yes.
- 158 10825. Is that frequently done?  
- Well, in one or two companies, yes, out of the four I have been in.
- 159 10826. What are the one or two in which it is frequently done?  
- The Royal Mail Company, the Union Castle, and the Union before the Union and Castle were amalgamated.
- 160 10827. How often?

- The day before sailing, and the day of sailing.

161 10828. And on those vessels is it also the practice to have during the voyage a boat muster or a fire muster?  
- On a seven weeks' voyage fire and boat muster takes place at the end of each week; fire muster on the saturday, boat stations on the Sunday at the muster.

162 10829. On boats crossing the Atlantic, is there a boat muster each week?  
- One each end - not for the boats to be lowered in the water.

163 10830. I mean, calling the men on the boat deck and showing them their stations?  
- Yes.

164 10831. I call that a boat muster. Do you agree with me there?  
- Yes, a boat muster; that is quite right.

165 10832. Had you got a boat station?  
- Yes.

166 10833. What was it?  
- No. 3.

167 Examined by Mr. HARBINSON.

168 10834. I did not catch whether you picked anybody up after the "Titanic" went down?  
- No.

169 10835. You did not see anybody?  
- We could not have picked up anybody if we had seen them.

170 10836. The boat was so full?  
- Yes.

171 10837. You did not see anybody near you?  
- Nobody at all.

172 Examined by Mr. HOLMES.

173 10838. Are you quite certain about the order in which these boats were lowered, Nos. 3, 5 and 7?  
- I have told you to the best of my ability; I am open to contradiction.

174 10839. Do you know a man named Jewell?  
- No.

175 10840. He has told us that No. 7 was the first boat in the water on the starboard side?  
- I beg to differ.

176 10841. At all events you are satisfied that 5 and 3 were in the water before No 1?  
- Yes.

177 10842. When No. 11 was lowered, was No 13 still on the davits?  
- No; No. 13 was being lowered when we were on the water's edge.

178 10843. About the same time?  
- About the same time.

179 10844. And before you were lowered, did you get any order from the Officer on deck what you were to do?  
- In what way do you mean?

180 10845. What you were to do when you got into the water?  
- No orders at all.

181 Examined by Mr. COTTER.

182 10846. When you got the boat lowered how far did you pull from the ship's side before you stopped?  
- A matter of about a quarter of a mile.

183 10847. Can you give us any idea of the time which elapsed between the lowering of No. 11 boat and when the ship struck?  
- No; I will not make any stated time, for I do not know.

184 10848. You cannot give us any idea at all?  
- I will not attempt to, because I do not know.



185 10849. Did you see the ship sink?  
- Yes.

186 10850. Did you row back again?  
- No.

187 10851. You simply rowed away?  
- We did not row at all; we stood off about a quarter of a mile. From the time we left the ship to the time she sank we were a quarter of a mile away watching all proceedings.

188 10852. How many women were in that boat? Can you give us any idea?  
- Well, I say there were 74 to 78.

189 10853. Women?  
- No, all told.

190 10854. I mean how many women?  
- Well, I will allow you to abstract it; there were nine crew and one second class passenger.

191 10855. A second class gentleman?  
- Yes.

192 10856. That is 10?  
- Yes.

193 10857. That makes 64 passengers?  
- Yes, counting nine children; I do not know what they were.

194 10858. Can you tell us in what order your boat reached the "Carpathia" the following morning? Were you the first or the last?  
- Now you have got me guessing. I should say we were the last but three or four in.

195 10859. Were there any complaints in your boat before you got to the "Carpathia"?  
- Yes.

196 10860. Can you tell us what the complaints were?  
- Yes, they complained about being crushed up so much, and they could not sit down properly, and other people complained because they had to stand all night.

197 10861. Any complaint against the conduct of the men?  
- Yes.

198 10862. What?  
- Because we smoked.

199 Examined by Sir ROBERT FINLAY.

200 10863. You were told to collect the women. That order was given to you on the boat deck?  
- Yes.

201 10864. Where did you collect the women and children from?  
- All round the boat deck.

202 10865. They were on the boat deck already?  
- Yes.

203 10866. Then you collected them there and took them down to A deck?  
- We collected all we possibly could. That would amount to, say 40. I cannot be right to perhaps five or seven.

204 10867. Who helped you to do that?  
- A man by the name of Wilton.

205 (The Witness withdrew.)