

British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry

Day 6

Testimony of Frank H. Morris

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

Examined by Mr. RAYMOND ASQUITH.

5275. Is your name Frank Herbert Morris?

- Yes.

5276. And were you first class bath-room steward on the "[Titanic](#)"?

- Yes.

5277. At the time of the collision I think you were asleep?

- Correct.

5278. Were you wakened by the shock?

- No. Were you called by someone?

- Yes.

5279. By another steward?

- By the saloon steward.

5280. Were you told to get up and dress and go on deck?

- Yes.

5281. Did you dress and take your lifebelt?

- No, I did not dress right away; I sat on my bunk for a while; then the second steward [\[Dodd\]](#) came in and told us to go on deck.

5282. How long was that after the collision, do you know?

- I could not swear to the time.

5283. About how long?

- About ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

5284. Did you go up to the [boat deck](#)?

- Yes.

5285. Did you meet anyone on the way?

- I met the second steward.

5286. Did he give you any orders?

- He told us to go below and get bread from the baker's shop.

5287. And did you do that?

- I did.

5288. Did you find any bread?

- No.

5289. Did you then go up to the boat deck?

- Yes.

5290. Did you know your boat station?

- I did.

5291. Had you seen a boat list?

- I had.

5292. When had you seen the boat list first?

- In the [first class pantry](#).

5293. But when?

- On Thursday.

5294. Which was your boat?

- Port 16.

26 5295. That was the aftermost boat on the port side?
- Yes.

27 5296. Did you go to that boat?
- I did.

28 5297. Was there an Officer directing operations there?
- Well, I could not tell you that.

29 5298. Was there some one who seemed to be in charge?
- Well, I believe there was a sailor or quartermaster; I could not swear who it was.

30 5299. And were the passengers being put into that boat?
- Yes.

31 5300. Were they put in on the boat deck or was the boat lowered to another deck?
- No, put in on the boat deck.

32 5301. Were any orders given about who was to be put in?
- Women and children first.

33 5302. Did you help to put them in?
- I did.

34 5303. Was the boat lowered then?
- I did not stand by 16 all the time.

35 5304. Did you see No. 16 lowered?
- No, it was being lowered away while I was standing by [No. 14](#).

36 5305. Could you say how full 16 was when you saw it?
- It looked pretty full to me, but I could not swear to the number.

37 5306. Did you see anyone refused who wished to get into boat 16?
- The women and children were crying and we had great trouble to get the women into the boats.

38 5307. You had great trouble in putting them in?
- Yes, we had to push them in.

39 5308. Did any men try to get in?
- Not in 16; they did in 14.

40 5309. Fourteen was the next boat you went to?
- Yes.

41 5310. And in that boat some men tried to get?
- Yes, some third class passengers who were foreigners.

42 5311. Did they succeed in getting in?
- No.

43 5312. Was there an Officer in charge of No. 14?
- Well, there was in the last part, when the boat was pretty well full, [Officer Lowe](#) came along.

44 5313. Did you get into boat No. 14?
- After I was called.

45 5314. You were told to do so?
- Yes.

46 5315. Was that by the Fifth Officer, Mr. Lowe?
- Yes.

47 5316. Were any other members of the crew in that boat?
- I think there were two firemen, two sailors, and I think there were two more stewards besides myself.

48 5317. That would make seven members of the crew altogether?
- Yes.

49 5318. (*The Commissioner.*) Three stewards; did you say, two firemen?

- I believe there were two firemen, but I could not swear.

50 5319. And two sailors?

- Yes.

51 5320. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Do you know the names of any of them?

- No.

52 5321. How many women and children had you. Can you say at all?

- Well, I counted 53 when we pulled away from the "[Titanic](#)."

53 5322. You counted 53?

- Yes.

54 5323. Fifty-three women and children apart from the men?

- Yes.

55 5324. Apart from the crew?

- Yes.

56 5325. Were there any men passengers?

- Yes.

57 5326. How many?

- I think I counted two, but I could not swear, not to be correct.

58 5327. Do you know whether they were first, second, or third class?

- One was a second class passenger.

59 5328. (*The Commissioner.*) One of the men?

- Yes.

60 5329. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) You cannot say about the other?

- No.

61 5330. Can you say to what class the women belonged?

- I think some were third class passengers, the ladies, Irish women.

62 5331. You think some of them were Irish women?

- Yes, by the way they spoke.

63 5332. I do not know whether you can say at all, how many you thought were Irish women?

- No.

64 5333. Was the Fifth Officer in the boat himself?

- Yes.

65 5334. What orders did he give you after you were lowered?

- He told us to pull away from there, and not to pull too far.

66 5335. How far away did you pull?

- About a quarter of a mile on a rough estimation.

67 5336. And did you wait there till the "Titanic" sank?

- No, when we pulled away from her, Mr. Lowe asked how many were in the boat, and he said we had not enough, and he said we would have to pull back and see who we could pick up.

68 5337. You are now speaking of the time before the "Titanic" sank, are you?

- Yes. As we were rowing round in the vicinity of the "Titanic" we came upon four lifeboats, and Officer Lowe asked who was in charge, if they had an Officer, and they said "No"; and he said, "Consider yourself under my charge." Then we put our women and children into their boats, and then he asked if our sail was all right, and we put up the mast of the sail because he said it might be useful in the night. After the boat was down he said we would have to do our best to try and pick up as many as we could.

69 5338. (*The Commissioner.*) Did you pick up any passengers from any other lifeboat?

- No.

70 5339. Did you put any of your passengers into any other lifeboat?

- We put all our passengers in.

71 5340. Then did it leave your boat empty?

- Yes.

72 5341. And what did you do then?
- We pulled towards the wreckage to see who we could pick up.

73 5342. That is to say, after the "Titanic" had gone down?
- Yes.

74 5343. And how many did you pick up?
- Three.

75 5344. Did you pick up no more?
- No; we only heard those three crying for help.

76 5345. And when you were picked up by the "[Carpathia](#)" were there on your boat only the seven men of the crew and these three persons whom you had picked up?
- No, because we had picked up another collapsible boat that was making towards the "Carpathia."

77 5346. What happened with that boat?
- The gunwales had not been properly fixed of this collapsible boat.

78 5347. Did you take the passengers on the collapsible boat into your boat?
- Yes.

79 5348. How many were there?
- I think there were about eighteen; I could not swear to the number at the time.

80 5349. Now, did you take any more people on board your boat before your boat was picked up by the "Carpathia"?
- No, only the three we picked up out of the water.

81 5350. Did you take any more?
- No.

82 5351. Then you had eighteen that you took from the collapsible boat?
- Yes.

83 5352. And three you had taken out of the water?
- Yes.

84 5353. That was 21?
- Yes.

85 5354. And you had the seven men of the crew?
- Yes.

86 5355. That is 28?
- Yes.

87 5356. When you were picked up by the "Carpathia" that was the number you had on board?
- Yes.

88 5357. How many was your boat constructed to carry?
- I suppose the lifeboat is constructed to carry about 60 or 70.

89 5358. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Apart from these three whom you picked up out of the water, did you see anyone else alive in the water?
- No.

90 5359. Did you row about and look for people?
- We were rowing all night.

91 5360. On the scene of the wreck?
- Yes.

92 5361. With regard to the people whom you took off the collapsible boat, were they women or men, or both?
- I think there were some men; we were a little excited to try and save them because they were on the point of sinking, and I never took that much notice who they were, but I think there were women amongst them, but they were nearly all men - three stewards were amongst them.

93 5362. Were they the only members of the crew in the collapsible boat?

- That is all I could recognise at the time.

94 5363. You think there were some women, but they were mostly men?
- Yes.

95 5364. (*The Commissioner.*) Now, can you tell me when you arrived on the "Carpathia" how many men and how many women were there in your boat?
- I could not tell you; I think there were about six or seven, but I could not swear to it.

96 5365. Six or seven what?
- Women.

97 5366. Out of the 28?
- Yes, I think there were that number, but I could not swear. Out of the 28, as I understand, there were 10 of the crew, perhaps I was wrong.

98 Mr. Raymond Asquith:
I think there would be 11, counting the Fifth Officer.

99 5367. (*The Commissioner.*) Of the 18 that you took from the other boat, I understand that three were members of the crew?
- Yes.

100 5368. And you already had seven?
- Yes.

101 5369. That was 10?
- Yes.

102 5370. You picked three people from the water?
- Yes.

103 5371. Were they men or women?
- Men.

104 5372. Was any one of those three a member of the crew?
- Yes, one.

105 The Commissioner:
Then you are right, Mr. Asquith, there were eleven.

106 5373. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith - To the Witness.*) Are you quite sure that you are right in saying this boat was No. 14?
- Yes.

107 Mr. Raymond Asquith:
I ask that question, my Lord, because another Witness named Scarrott, has given evidence who says he was in boat 14, and he describes the boat as having about sixty-four.

108 The Solicitor-General:
It is the second Witness that was called, my Lord.

109 Mr. Raymond Asquith:
One of them must have made a mistake about the number.

110 The Commissioner:
It is not so far wrong, Mr. Attorney.

111 The Attorney-General:
No.

112 5374. (*The Commissioner.*) This man says there were fifty-three passengers in his boat, No. 14, and seven that would make sixty; and then for some reason or another they were transferred to another boat. There would be about sixty in this boat No. 14 according to this man. (*To the Witness.*) I want to know this: Can you tell me what boat it was you transferred your passengers to?
- I could not tell you.

113 5375. Did you transfer them all?
- Yes.

- 114 5376. They were nearly all women?
- We transferred all the women and children.
- 115 5377. Why did you do it?
- Well, I suppose this was Officer Lowe's idea: if we rowed back to the wreckage and picked up a lot, our boat would not hold them all. That was his idea, to save as many as possible.
- 116 5378. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Did you know a man named Scarrott, a seaman?
- No.
- 117 5379. You cannot say whether he was in your boat or not?
- No.
- 118 5380. Was there fresh water in your boat?
- Yes.
- 119 5381. Do you know whether there were any compasses or provisions?
- We never attempted to look.
- 120 5382. (*Mr. Scanlan.*) Had your boat a light?
- Well, they looked for a lamp, but did not find it; the boat was full at the time when we were looking for it.
- 121 5383. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) Did you pick up another collapsible boat after?
- Yes, full up.
- 122 5384. (*The Commissioner.*) You came up to another collapsible boat full?
- Yes.
- 123 5385. (*Mr. Raymond Asquith.*) You mean you transferred the people from the second collapsible boat to your boat?
- No, we picked up two boats altogether.
- 124 5386. (*The Commissioner.*) By picking them up you mean you came up to them?
- Yes, we took one collapsible boat in tow.
- 125 Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.
- 126 5387. I think the idea of transferring your passengers into the other boat was to give you a free boat to go to the rescue of people who were drowning?
- I expect that was Mr. Lowe's idea; I was not in charge.
- 127 5388. Is it the case that you could only see three people in the water?
- Oh, we saw hundreds in the water, but they were not crying for help; they might have been unconscious, they might have been dead, we could not say to that.
- 128 5389. In getting your boat station for No. 16 that meant the arrangements were that in emergency you would go to 16?
- Yes.
- 129 5390. But you were sent to 14?
- No, I was not sent to 14.
- 130 5391. (*The Commissioner.*) He went to 16.
- 131 5391a. (*Mr. Scanlan.*) Yes, my Lord. (*To the Witness.*) But the boat you went with was 14?
- Yes.
- 132 5392. The purpose of giving you this station was that you would be one of the crew of No. 16?
- Yes.
- 133 5393. Can you tell me whether, of the seven who were in No. 14, who rowed away in No. 14 when it was lowered, any single one of them was given as his station this No. 14?
- I could not tell you that.
- 134 5394. Do not you think, if there had been a muster, that the men would better have been able to go at once to their own stations?
- They might have done so; they might have been called upon for other orders.
- 135 Examined by Mr. HARBINSON.
- 136 5395. Coming up from the saloon that night was there any evidence of confusion on the boat deck?

- None at all.

137 5396. Or in any part of the ship?
- There was a little confusion round boat 14 with those foreigners, the men. That is all the confusion I saw.

138 5397. Were there many women there at the time?
- There did not look to be many.

139 5398. Had many other boats been launched at this time on that side?
- I helped to lower 12 away.

140 5399. You say that a number of your crew, you believe, were Irish?
- Not the crew.

141 5400. I mean your passengers?
- Yes.

142 5401. Those who were in your boat?
- Yes.

143 5402. When did you discover that; was it on the boat deck or afterwards, during the night?
- On the boat deck.

144 5403. Were all the women who were standing round taken into the boat. Did you leave any behind?
- Some women got into the other boats, I believe; but I could not say.

145 5404. But your boat was not full at that time?
- I did not count; I do not know what the carrying capacity of the boats is.

146 5405. Who gave you the order to lower?
- Officer Lowe.

147 5406. How long was it after your boat was lowered until you transferred the women and children to the other boat you have mentioned?
- I could not tell you the time.

148 5407. Was it before the sinking of the "Titanic"?
- I believe it was.

149 5408. You believe it was?
- I believe so; I am not going to swear to it though.

150 5409. You said you pulled about a quarter of a mile away?
- Yes.

151 5410. Were you that distance from the "Titanic" when she sank?
- No, we were making towards her when she sank.

152 5411. Do you suggest that having at this time transferred the women and children from your boat to another boat, it was only possible to pick up three passengers?
- Yes.

153 5412. Did you hear many cries?
- No, I did not.

154 5413. You knew, of course, that there must have been a great number of people left behind on the "Titanic"?
- I expect so.

155 5414. Was it very dark at the time?
- Yes.

156 5415. Did you pull about and look for other passengers?
- Yes, I did - we all did.

157 5416. Did you shout or in any way try to attract the attention of passengers who might be in the water?
- No.

158 5417. You did nothing?
- All was silent.

159 5418. All was silent?
- Yes, we just heard a cry here and there for help.

160 5419. Have you been in this hall while other Witnesses have been giving evidence?
- I have one or two days, but I have not stopped here.

161 5420. Did you hear one of the Witnesses say yesterday that the cries were agonising?
- No.

162 5421. You did not hear that?
- No.

163 5422. Would that statement, if it were made, have been true?
- The cries when she went down were awful.

164 5423. After the "Titanic" sank, were you not in a position to go close to where she had gone down?
- No, we never knew whether there would be any suction or not.

165 5424. From where you were lying by you could see the position of the "Titanic" and see lights on the "Titanic"?
- Yes.

166 5425. Was it not your duty immediately the "Titanic" sunk to pull to the place where she had been, to try to rescue any passengers that might be in the water?
- We did so.

167 5426. And you say it was only possible under all the circumstances to rescue three?
- Yes.

168 Examined by Mr. COTTER.

169 5427. How long have you been in the employ of the White Star Line?
- I believe about five years.

170 5428. Were you in any other company before that?
- No.

171 5429. Have you ever taken part in boat drill?
- I have.

172 5430. Or bulkhead drill or fire drill?
- Yes.

173 5431. Can you tell us whether there were any hand bulkhead doors on board the "Titanic," and where were they situated, to your knowledge?
- There were some in the working alleyway.

174 5432. You know where the third class dining-rooms are?
- Yes.

175 5433. Were there any bulkhead doors, separating those dining-rooms, in the alleyways leading from one section to another?
- Yes.

176 5434. What deck are those bulkhead doors on?
- Some on [E deck](#) in the working alleyway on the port side, and the starboard side I believe, where the first class passengers were, and some on [F deck](#).

177 5435. You know where they are?
- Yes.

178 5436. Where were you when the ship struck?
- We were asleep.

179 5437. In the [glory hole](#)?
- Yes.

180 5438. Were you in your bunk?
- I was; I was asleep.

181 5439. Did anybody come and tell you there had been an accident?
- The saloon steward came and woke us and said, " She has hit something."

182 5440. Were there any orders from the Second Steward or the Chief Steward?

- From the Second Steward. He came in about 10 minutes after.

183 5441. That is Mr. Dodd?
- Yes.

184 5442. What did he say?
- "All go up on deck and take a lifebelt with you."

185 5443. Did he suggest you should stand by your boats?
- I never heard him give that order. He gave us orders: "All up on the boat deck."

186 5444. The "Titanic" carries a bugler, I suppose?
- Yes.

187 5445. Did you hear the bugle going at all, giving the call, "all hands to the boats"?
- No.

188 5446. You would understand it if you had heard it?
- We would have understood it all right.

189 5447. There was no call given?
- No.

190 5448. Did you see the Chief Steward?
- No.

191 5449. You did not see the Chief Steward?
- No.

192 5450. Did you see the storekeeper?
- [Thompson](#)? I saw one storekeeper.

193 5451. Did he say anything about coming down to the storeroom, as something had happened?
- I heard him tell some of the fellows to come to the storeroom and get biscuits.

194 5452. That is the duty of several stewards, providing they know their duties, and have had them told them, to go down to the storeroom to get biscuits to store the boats?
- That is on the lifeboat list, I believe.

195 5453. Did any of them go down there to your knowledge?
- Well, I believe there were a lot down there; I could not swear. I met some going down on the way.

196 5454. When you got on deck what did you see with regard to women and children?
- I saw them all standing round the lifeboats.

197 5455. Many?
- I could not swear to the number.

198 5456. Who was in charge; who did you see in charge, an Officer or who?
- I never saw any Officer; I was not taking as much notice as that.

199 5457. Was there nobody giving orders at all on the boat deck?
- I heard an Officer shouting.

200 5458. What did he shout?
- "Get the boats clear."

201 5459. Who told you to go down to the baker's shop for bread?
- The Second Steward.

202 5460. Where was he when he told you that?
- In the companion that leads from the deck up to the top deck.

203 5461. The man's companion?
- Oh, no.

204 5462. The second cabin companion?
- No, a working companion leading from E deck right through the pantries.

205 5463. It is a kind of crew's companion. When you got to the baker's shop was there anyone there?
- When I was getting to the baker's shop I asked a fellow if there was no more bread left, and he said "No," that it had all gone up.

206 5464. Who was there?
- Some stewards; I do not know their names.

207 5465. Was the chief baker there?
- I did not see him.

208 5466. They had already sent the bread up. Did you join the ship in Belfast?
- Yes.

209 5467. You went over to Belfast for her, so that you would have a thorough knowledge of the ship by the time you got to Southampton. Did you hear any orders given, if orders were given - for the stewards to know exactly how to get up to the boat deck?
- Yes.

210 5468. Did you hear any orders for them to go and get the third class women out?
- No.

211 5469. Or the second cabin?
- No.

212 5470. You heard no orders at all?
- No. Orders might have been given, but I was not there when they were given.

213 5471. Had you any difficulty in lowering boat 14?
- Not at first. When it was half way down the ship's side the tackle got hitched up.

214 5472. Could you account for that at all?
- I think the tackle got twisted.

215 5473. Through its being new?
- That might have been so.

216 5474. Had you much trouble in getting it into its ordinary shape to get down?
- No.

217 5475. Was the ship listing to starboard when you were lowering that boat?
- I think there was a list to port.

218 5476. A list to port?
- I think so.

219 The Commissioner:
That is the first we have heard of that, I think. Is there evidence that she had a list to port.

220 The Attorney-General:
Oh, certainly, my Lord. I will call your Lordship's attention to it.

221 Mr. Cotter:
Before she sank, my Lord; we have evidence that there was a list to port.

222 The Attorney-General:
There is no doubt there is some already, and there is a good deal more to come.

223 The Commissioner:
He is talking about the time when he was lowering his boat.

224 The Attorney-General:
Yes. I am sure there is evidence.

225 5477. (*Mr. Cotter - To the Witness.*) How long was it from when she struck till you lowered boat 14. Can you give us some idea?
- Well, in my own estimation I should say it was about 1 or a quarter-past 1.

226 5478. That would be thirty-five minutes after she struck?
- Yes.

227 5479. And she had a list to port then. Did your boat catch the ship's side at all going down?
- No.

228 5480. She was clear all the way. Are there any foreigners in the stewards' department of the "Titanic"?
- Yes.

229 5481. Many?
- No, one or two, not many.

230 The Commissioner:
I do not know what the point is; what you asked the question for. What is the point of it?

231 Mr. Cotter:
I want to point out, my Lord, that there were Italians and Germans in this crew.

232 The Commissioner:
But what is the point, supposing there were?

233 Mr. Cotter:
The point is they would not understand orders if they got them.

234 5482. (*The Attorney-General.*) If your Lordship will look at page 104, question [4054](#), you will find one question yesterday put to the Electrician. I will read it: "We climbed up the davit and down the boat falls, and I got into a boat, and Scott dropped into the water." Your Lordship remembers that: "(2.) You are speaking of the port side, as I understand? - (A.) Yes, port side. (2.) Did you notice at all whether there was any list on the ship at this time? - (A.) There was a slight list to port." There is a good deal of evidence which your Lordship will hear about it.

235 5483. (*Mr. Cotter - To the Witness.*) Did you see anything of these men - the restaurant people?
- No.

236 5484. You did not see them?
- No.

237 Examined by Mr. EDWARDS.

238 5485. You said you rescued certain people from a collapsible boat which was in a sinking condition. Do you know what was the matter with the collapsible boat?
- I should think the sides had not been fixed properly.

239 5486. You do not know of your own knowledge?
- No.

240 5487. Can you give the name of any single one of the persons who was transferred from that collapsible boat to your boat?
- Yes.

241 5488. Will you give the names?
- [Brown](#).

242 5489. What is he?
- First class Steward.

243 5490. Can you give any other name?
- [Lucas](#), First class Steward.

244 5491. Anybody else?
- And the First class Barber.

245 5492. Do you know his name?
- Gus Whiteman. [[August Weikman](#).]

246 5493. Anybody else?
- No.

247 Examined by Mr. LEWIS.

248 5494. How close were you to the spot where the "Titanic" sank when you picked up the three men?
- Well, I could not tell you the exact spot where she went down, but we were pretty well near her, because when we rowed to these three persons there was wreckage all round us.

249 5495. You could only find three to pick up?
- Who were shouting.

250 5496. You made every possible effort, I take it?
- Our Officer did the finest action he could have done.

251 5497. If there had been more you would have picked them up.
252 Examined by Mr. LAING.
253 5498. You are a First class Steward?
- Yes.
254 5499. Would you be in a position to hear orders given to the third class Stewards?
- No.
255 5500. With regard to the restaurant people, are they a separate gang altogether, a separate body?
- Yes.
256 5501. Under some separate person?
- Yes.
257 5502. Nothing to do with the stewards as stewards?
- No.
258 5503. Were there any foreigners among the stewards - among the First or Second or Third class Stewards,
apart from the restaurant?
- Yes, one or two.
259 5504. What were they?
- Saloon Waiters.
260 5505. Could they talk English?
- Oh, yes, very good.
261 The Attorney-General:
I have no question.
262 (The Witness withdrew.)