

HENRY BLANK DECLARES CURIOSITY SAVED HIM

Newark Evening News

Friday 19 April 1912

It was the desire of Henry Blank, a jeweler of this city, who lives in Glen Ridge, to find out what caused the shock to the Titanic when she struck the iceberg Sunday night that gave him a chance in one of the boats that saved his life.

Mr. Blank was enjoying a cigar in the smoking-room in the stern on the main deck when there came a jar. The shock was very slight so far aft and no one paid much attention to the incident. He said he had felt worse jars to the ship when her propeller had jumped out of the water.

"I stepped out of the smoking-room to the main deck, a distance of but a few feet," said Mr. Blank. "Only a few people were there, but a few others came up later. I started down to see what had happened and when I got to the third deck, two decks below, I discovered that water was rushing in. It was then up to my ankles on the third deck.

"I hurried to my stateroom on the deck above, and got a few of my valuables, but not much. When I got to the main deck again they were beginning to lower the boats. Every woman and child in sight was ordered into the boats. But there were not enough there to fill the boats and in that way some of the men got a chance for their lives.

"Two sailors were placed in charge of each boat and then eight oarsmen were picked out from the passengers. I was given a place in one of the boats. Ours must have been one of the first boats over. But the water was inky black as we went over the side in the night and we could not tell whether other boats had preceded us or not."

"Did you pull an oar?" was a question put to Mr. Blank.

"Now don't make me a hero," he said.

"The minute the boat struck the water we began to pull away," continued Mr. Blank. "We were afraid that if the ship went down she might draw us under with her. We had gone about a mile and a half when we saw her plunge forward and then down out of sight. Before she sank we heard the explosion of her boilers.

"There was no confusion whatever on the Titanic up to the time our boat was lowered. Everything was quiet and orderly. Many of the passengers had not yet left their rooms.

"I saw Colonel John Jacob Astor on the deck, but I did not notice Mrs. Astor. It is my belief that

she had not left her room up to that point. I did not see Major Butt.

“The boats were filled to their capacity. After leaving the ship we scattered. No one had jumped overboard up to the time I left the Titanic, so far as I know. After we were some distance from the ship I heard revolver shots on board, but I don’t know what part of the ship they came from.

“I am not much of a sailor and don’t know much about the water, but the sea seemed comparatively calm to us in the boats. There was floating ice everywhere and the water was very cold. The women in our boat began to get chilled and the men took off their coats and wrapped them about them. Even the men began to suffer from exposure, except those who were at the oars.

“For five or six hours we were in suspense, and then we saw the Carpathia. It was an hour after we sighted her before we were taken on board. As we approached she threw open her ports and lowered rope ladders. In this way she took in the occupants of two or three boats at a time.

“On the Carpathia we were treated with the utmost kindness. The women got places in the staterooms, but we men bunked in the smoking-room and on the decks. I didn’t have my clothes off from Sunday night until I got home last night.

“It was the general belief on the Carpathia that we were the only survivors. We knew that other boats were in the vicinity, but we were pretty well convinced that they could have made no rescues.”

Mr. Blank was met at the pier last night by Mr. Davidson, a Glen Ridge neighbor, who conducted him to the Hotel Seville, where Mrs. Blank was waiting. Although fatigued, Mr. Blank was at his business today.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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