

# United States Senate Inquiry

## Day 14

### Testimony of Berk Pickard

Source : <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/USInq/AmInq01Indx2a.php>

*(Before Senator William Alden Smith, at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.)*

*(The witness was sworn by Senator Smith.)*

Senator SMITH.

State your name, age, residence, and occupation.

Mr. PICKARD.

[Berk Pickard](#); No. 229, Hebrew Immigrant Society. At the time I took passage on the [Titanic](#) I came from London. I am 32 years old. I am a leather worker; a bag maker. I was born in Russia, in Warsaw. My name was Berk Trembisky. I was for a long time in France and I assumed a French name. As regards private business, I am Pickard.

I was one of the third class passengers on the *Titanic*. My cabin was [No. 10](#) in the steerage, at the stern. I first knew of the collision when it happened, about 10 minutes to 12. We had all been asleep, and all of a sudden we perceived a shock. We did not hear such a very terrible shock, but we knew something was wrong, and we jumped out of bed and we dressed ourselves and went out, and we could not get back again. I wanted to go back to get my things but I could not. The stewards would not allow us to go back. They made us all go forward on the deck. There were no doors locked to prevent us from going back. I did not take much notice of it, and I went to the deck. The other passengers started in arguing. One said that it was dangerous and the other said that it was not; one said white and the other said black. Instead of arguing with those people, I instantly went to the highest spot.

I said to myself that if the ship had to sink, I should be one of the last. That was my first idea, which was the best. I went and I found the door. There are always a few steps from this third class, with a movable door, and it is marked there second class passengers have no right to penetrate there. I found this door open so that I could go into the second class, where I did not find any people, only a few that climbed on the ladder and went into the first class, which I did. I found there only a few men and about two ladies. They had been putting them into lifeboats and as no women were there; we men sprang in the boat. We had only one woman and another young girl. There were two women. They just stood in front of me. We were lowered down, and when I was lowered down I saw the whole ship, as big as she was the right side a little bit sinking, and I was far from imagining that it was the beginning of the end. When I was going away from the ship, of course I was rather frightened; I was sorry at not being on the ship, and I said to the seaman, "I would rather be on the ship." He was laughing at me, and he said, "Do you not see we are sinking?" I was rather excited, and I said, "It is fortunate that the sea is nice, but perhaps in five minutes we will be turned over." So I was in the boat until 5 o'clock in the morning.

In regard to the ship, I saw the ship very quickly started sinking, and one rail went under and then another, until in a half an hour, from my point of view, the ship sank altogether.

The steerage passengers, so far as I could see, were not prevented from getting up to the upper decks by anybody, or by closed doors, or anything else. While I was on the ship no one realized the real danger, not even the stewards. If the stewards knew, they were calm. It was their duty to try to make us believe there was nothing serious. Nobody was prevented from going up. They tried to keep us quiet. They said, "Nothing serious is the matter." Perhaps they did not know themselves. I did not realize it, the whole time, even to the last moment. Of course, I would never believe such a thing could happen.

The [lifeboat](#) I got into was an ordinary lifeboat. I do not know what number it was; I am sorry to say I did not look at it. There was some seaman in charge of it, who belonged to the ship. What kind of employment the seamen were in I do not know, but they belonged to the ship.

The only warning given to the steerage passengers after the collision was that we were ordered to take our lifebelts and go to the deck. There was no water in the steerage when I left.

That is all I know about it. I was one of the first to go. Of course, if I had stayed until a little bit later, I would have seen a little bit more. I was one of the luckiest ones, I think.

