

British Wreck Commissioner's Inquiry

Day 9

Testimony of Albert V. Pearcey

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

Examined by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

10326. Were you a third class pantryman on the "Titanic"?

- Yes.

10327. Had you been in the employment of the White Star Line for some five years?

- Yes.

10328. You were transferred to the "Titanic" from the "Olympic"?

- Yes.

10329. And were you employed as a third class pantryman on the first voyage of the "Titanic"?

- Yes.

10330. Were you off duty when this collision occurred on that Sunday night?

- Yes.

10331. Were you standing with others outside the pantry?

- Yes.

10332. Is that on E deck?

- Yes, I think it is E deck. I am not quite sure.

10333. Do you remember where it was?

- Just outside the pantry door in the main alleyways. Just under the main alleyway of E deck.

Mr. Laing:

Just behind the third class dining room.

The Commissioner:

On what deck did you say?

10334. (*The Attorney-General.*) He said E deck, but I am not sure that he is right.

- I am not sure I am right. I know it is just outside the pantry.

10335. I am going to put a question that will clear that up. Was it on the same deck as the third class stewards had their quarters?

- Yes.

10336. On the same deck as the third class dining saloon?

- Yes.

The Attorney-General:

Then it is F deck.

The Solicitor-General:

It is marked, My Lord, "Third class Pantry" - just on the after side of it.

The Attorney-General:

It is just after the third class dining saloon.

The Commissioner:

No, it is apparently close to the boiler casing.

The Attorney-General:

It is also abaft of the third class dining saloon.

The Commissioner:

On the port side?

- On the starboard side it is close to the dining saloon.

The Attorney-General:

So it is, I think, on the other. Both on the port and starboard side it is just abaft of the third class dining saloon. The boiler casing is marked in between.

26 The Commissioner:
On the plan I have there is only one dining saloon marked.

27 The Attorney-General:
I think they are both marked "Third class Dining Saloon."

28 The Solicitor-General:
The title is "Third class Dining Saloon."

29 The Attorney-General:
It is all one?
- your Lordship sees.

30 The Commissioner:
Yes, I understand.

31 10337. (*The Attorney-General - To the witness.*) Did you feel the collision?
- Not at all.

32 10338. What was it that first indicated to you that there had been a collision with the iceberg?
- There was just a small motion, but nothing to speak of.

33 10339. What happened immediately after this motion?
- The order was "All watertight doors to be closed."

34 10340. Are you referring to the watertight doors of this F deck?
- Yes.

35 10341. Were they closed?
- Yes.

36 10342. Did you help to close them?
- Yes.

37 10343. Did several other men help with you?
- Yes.

38 10344. Where did you close them?
- I closed them on towards aft. I closed the pantry doors of my pantry on the starboard and port sides.

39 The Attorney-General:
Does your Lordship see them marked on the plan, on the starboard and port sides of the pantry.

40 The Commissioner:
Yes.

41 10345. (*The Attorney-General.*) Both of them are on the afterpart of the pantry. (*To the witness.*) You said you were a third class pantry man. What was your duty? Had you any duty in connection with the passengers?
- No, not at all.

42 10346. You had not to look after them at all?
- No.

43 10347. Your business was entirely in the pantry?
- Yes.

44 10348. Who was the chief third class steward?
- Mr. Kieran.

45 10349. Did he give any orders that you heard?
- The order that I heard was, "Assist all passengers on to boat deck."

46 10350. (*The Commissioner.*) That meant, I suppose, "Assist all passengers"?
- Assist third class passengers. When Mr. Kieran gave that he would mean to say the third class passengers.

47 10351. Get on to the boat deck?
- All passengers get on to the boat deck.

48 10352. (*The Attorney-General.*) You understood that to mean the third class passengers who were under his charge?
- Certainly.

49 10353. Was anything said about lifebelts?
- I did not hear it, Sir.

50 10354. Did you help?
- Yes.

51 10355. Tell us what you did?
- The lifebelts I put on their heads, and I tied the strings round them.

52 10356. You helped them with the lifebelts - helped to tie them on?
- Yes.

53 10357. Then when you had done that, where did you go?
- I passed all the passengers I could see forward to the boat deck.

54 10358. How did you pass them forward to the boat deck?
- Through the emergency door.

55 10359. Where was that emergency door to which you are referring?
- The one right forward.

56 10360. Where does it lead through?
- Right through the saloon companion.

57 10361. What saloon?
- The first class.

58 10362. Right through the first class saloon companion?
- Yes.

59 10363. That would be on the next deck, would it not, on the upper deck?
- Yes.

60 10364. Deck E?
- Yes.

61 10365. Would that be leading into the alleyway?
- Yes.

62 10366. As the people came along there you passed them through this door, did you?
- Yes.

63 10367. Where did the people come from?
- They came from forward.

64 10368. The people came from forward?
- The people came from forward.

65 10369. Were they men or women?
- All men, Sir.

66 10370. They were all from forward?
- Yes.

67 10371. You passed them up to that door; did you give them any directions?
- Yes, passed the directions right up. There were stewards besides me.

68 10372. Right up the whole way?
- Right through the saloon to the companion - right through that door right up the saloon companion leading to the top deck.

69 10373. To the boat deck?
- Yes.

70 10374. And you and others directed them?
- Yes.

71 10375. Were there stewards posted at stations all along the way?

- Yes.
- 72 10376. From forward?
- Yes.
- 73 10377. Up to the companion?
- Yes.
- 74 10378. Did you go down to the passengers quarters at all?
- No, not at all.
- 75 10379. It was not part of your duty?
- It was not part of my duty at all.
- 76 10380. You were carrying out what you were told by the steward - to assist them up to the boat deck?
- Yes.
- 77 10381. Did a great number of passengers come along that alleyway?
- Yes.
- 78 10382. Did you remain there until there were no more coming along the alleyway?
- As far as I could see.
- 79 10383. You remained there until you could see no more passengers coming along the alleyway; is that right?
- Yes.
- 80 10384. What did you do then?
- I went to the boat deck myself.
- 81 10385. What was the time then?
- Between one and half-past. It was nearly half-past one.
- 82 10386. You had nothing to do with the passengers who came from the afterpart of the ship?
- No.
- 83 10387. When you found there were no more passengers coming along, you went up to the boat deck yourself?
- Yes, I went up to the boat deck myself.
- 84 10388. Did the other stewards go with you?
- Yes.
- 85 10389. And those who had been stationed there and who had been assisting in the directions?
- Yes.
- 86 10390. When you got to the boat deck will you tell us what you saw?
- I saw two babies on the deck; I picked them up in my arms and took them to the boat.
- 87 10391. Do you know what boat it was you took them to?
- A collapsible boat.
- 88 10392. Was there any Officer there?
- Yes.
- 89 10393. Who?
- The Chief, Mr. Murdoch.
- 90 10394. Do you remember whether the collapsible was on the starboard or the port side?
- On the starboard side.
- 91 10395. Did Mr. Murdoch give you any order?
- Yes.
- 92 10396. What was it?
- He told me to get inside with the babies and take charge of them.
- 93 10397. Were you attached to any boat; had you a station on any boat?
- Yes.
- 94 10398. What was it?
- No. 3 on the starboard side.

95 10399. That was the second boat - the first lifeboat after the emergency?
- Yes.

96 10400. Did you notice what had happened with regard to any of the other boats on the starboard side when you were ordered into the collapsible?
- Not at all.

97 10401. When you came on the boat deck you did not see?
- No.

98 10402. Did you notice whether No. 3 boat, your own boat, was there or not?
- Yes, it was gone.

99 10403. You did notice that No. 3 boat was gone?
- Yes, My boat was gone.

100 10404. Where was the collapsible when you were told to get into it?
- By the side of No. 3 on the starboard side.

101 10405. On the starboard side?
- Yes, on the starboard side close to number 3. That was the boat I was stationed in.

102 10406. Close by where number 3 would have been if it had been in its ordinary place?
- Yes.

103 10407. Had it been moved or was it where you usually saw it?
- It was where I always saw it.

104 10408. Did you notice whether the emergency boat had gone or not?
- No.

105 10409. Did you notice anything more at all about the boats except that number 3 was gone?
- No, I never noticed anything more.

106 10410. Were there people in the collapsible boat?
- Yes.

107 10411. Were they women or men?
- All women, Sir.

108 10412. And children?
- Children and women.

109 10413. And some of the crew?
- Five of the crew with the Quartermaster.

110 10414. Did that include yourself?
- There were three firemen, Myself, and a Quartermaster.

111 10415. Do you remember how many you were in the boat?
- Just about sixty-six.

112 10416. Does that include the crew?
- That is without counting the crew.

113 10417. About sixty-six passengers?
- Sixty-six passengers and five of the crew - seventy-one.

114 10418. (*The Commissioner.*) That means seventy-one in all, does it?
- Yes.

115 10419. (*The Attorney-General.*) Did you count the passengers at all?
- I took notice of the passengers - what there was there. I counted there were just about sixty-six.

116 10420. You mean when you could see?
- Yes.

117 10421. Do you remember how the collapsible was launched at all into the water?
- No. It is launched, of course. It is put down the side.

118 10422. It is put over the side?
- It was swung out.

- 119 10423. By the davits?
- Yes.
- 120 10424. Swung out by the davits?
- Could you tell us, was that where No. 1 boat was or No. 3?
- No. 3.
- 121 10425. That is what you mean, is it?
- Yes.
- 122 10426. As I understand you, No. 3 boat, that is the first lifeboat on the starboard side?
- Yes.
- 123 10427. And your boat took its place?
- Yes.
- 124 10428. The collapsible boat?
- Yes.
- 125 10429. And by means of the davits which were there ordinarily for No. 3 boat you were lowered into the water?
- Yes.
- 126 10430. Probably that is how it is you noticed No. 3 boat was gone?
- Yes.
- 127 10431. Were there any women or children on the deck in the neighbourhood of the boat when you left?
- I did not notice. I never noticed at all.
- 128 10432. I want to quite understand what you mean when you say you never noticed. Do you mean that you did not see any, or you do not know whether any were there?
- I did not see any women there at all.
- 129 10433. You did not see any women there at all; is that it?
- Yes.
- 130 10434. That is in the neighbourhood of the boat, I asked you?
- Yes.
- 131 10435. Did you notice whether there were any women and children on the deck at all when you left?
- No.
- 132 10436. Do you mean you did not see any?
- I did not see any.
- 133 10437. Your boat was launched over the side by means of the falls? What happened to it, do you remember? What happened when you first got to the water? Did it float all right?
- Yes.
- 134 10438. Were the sides up - the canvas bulwarks?
- Yes.
- 135 10439. Was it dry when you got into the water?
- Yes.
- 136 10440. Who was in charge?
- The Quartermaster.
- 137 10441. Do you remember his name?
- No, I do not.
- 138 10442. Tell us what happened to it. I want you to tell us all you can. You got into the boat; there was the Quartermaster in charge. I suppose some of you started rowing?
- Yes; I handed the babies over to the passengers, and I took the oars.
- 139 10443. You took the oars with the rest of the crew?
- Yes.
- 140 10444. Did any of the passengers help you to row, or was it all done by you - the crew?
- Done by the crew.

141 10445. How far did you row? Did you row right away from the ship?
- Yes. We rowed away from the ship. We rowed her a distance out.

142 10446. You rowed out a distance from the ship?
- Yes.

143 10447. You could not tell us how far?
- No.

144 10448. Did you notice when you rowed away whether the ship had any list?
- Yes, the ship had a list on her port side.

145 10449. Did you notice whether she was down by the head?
- No, I did not notice.

146 10450. Did you notice whether she appeared to be going deeper into the water forward - did you notice that?
- No.

147 10451. Then you rowed away?
- Yes.

148 10452. Did you see the vessel go down?
- Yes.

149 10453. Were you facing her when she went down?
- Yes.

150 10454. Were her lights burning?
- Yes, the lights were burning.

151 10455. Up to the last?
- Yes.

152 10456. Can you give us any idea of how long it was after you had started rowing away from the "Titanic" before she sank?
- No, I cannot. It was 20 minutes to two when we came away from her.

153 10457. That will help us. It was 20 minutes to two, you remember, when you started rowing away from the ship's side - is that right?
- Yes.

154 10458. That is what you mean, is it?
- Yes.

155 10459. Not when you came up on deck, but when you started rowing away?
- Yes, when we got away. It was just in time.

156 10460. How do you remember it was 20 minutes to two?
- Because I looked at the time.

157 10461. That is what I wanted to know. Where did you look at the time?
- One of the passengers had the time.

158 10462. And it was 20 minutes to 2?
- Yes.

159 10463. Will you tell the Court what you saw? Explain to the Court what you saw when the vessel sank?
- Of course, when she sank she went down. She went down this way (*Showing.*) I could not exactly say. I am only rough myself, and I cannot describe it.

160 10464. Let us see if we can help you. Did she appear to be plunging down by the head or the stern?
- She was plunging forward.

161 10465. Did you see her stern out of the water at all?
- Yes, Sir.

162 10466. Was the stern upstanding?
- Yes.

163 10467. So that the stern was up in the water like that (*Showing.*)?
- Yes.

164 10468. Could you see underneath her?
- No.

165 10469. Could you tell that her keel was visible?
- Yes, the keel was visible.

166 10470. Then, when you saw that, what did you next see happen to the stern?
- She went down, you see. It upset me, and I could not exactly say.

167 10471. It upset you and you cannot give us a description of what happened?
- No.

168 10472. Did you remain in this collapsible boat until you were picked up by the "Carpathia"?
- Yes.

169 10473. And all your passengers?
- Yes.

170 10474. As you went away with your 66 passengers and crew, and so you were picked up by the "Carpathia"?
- Yes.

171 Examined by Mr. SCANLAN.

172 10475. When this collapsible boat was lowered was the water practically up to the deck?
- Not on that side - not on our side. That was the starboard side.

173 10476. Had you a light in this boat?
- No.

174 10477. Was there a compass in it?
- I do not know.

175 10478. Was there a supply of biscuits?
- I do not know.

176 10479. Had you sufficient of a crew to row this boat?
- No.

177 10480. Did you require the assistance of passengers?
- No; we did not require them.

178 10481. You had 5 members of the crew in this boat?
- Yes.

179 10482. How many would you have needed in order to row her?
- It would want 8 - 8 or 9 crew.

180 Examined by Mr. HARBINSON.

181 10483. Did anyone give you any instructions to stand at the first class emergency door?
- No.

182 10484. Did you hear anyone give any instructions to any of the other stewards as to where they were to stand?
- No.

183 Examined by Mr. COTTER.

184 10485. Where is your third class pantry situated?
- Amidships.

185 10486. From the time the vessel struck until you went to the boat did you go down to your pantry at all?
- No.

186 10487. Did you go near to the third class dining room?
- No.

187 10488. Did you see any stewards along E deck taking passengers aft - women passengers and children?
- No.

188 10489. You did not see them?
- Not E deck. You say aft. I was not there. I was at the other end.

189 10490. I mean taking them from forward to aft?
- No.

190 10491. When you got up to the boat deck who was standing by that collapsible boat? Was there any Officer there?
- Yes.

191 10492. Who was it?
- The Chief Officer, Mr. Murdoch.

192 10493. Did you see Mr. Lightoller about anywhere?
- No.

193 10494. What Officer got into your boat? Was there any Officer there?
- Only a quartermaster.

194 10495. There was no Officer at all in your boat?
- The quartermaster.

195 10496. He is the petty Officer of the boat. Was there any water in the collapsible boat by the time you got to the "Carpathia"?
- No.

196 10497. It was all right?
- Yes.

197 (The Witness withdrew.)