

Jersey Women Tell Thrilling Tales

Daily Home News

Saturday 20 April 1912

EAST ORANGE, April 20---Generous praise was given yesterday to Col. John Jacob Astor, Major Butt, Vice President Thayer of the Pennsylvania Railroad, President Case of the Vacuum Oil Company, Clarence Moore, George D. Widener and other men who perished with the Titanic by Mrs. John C. Hogeboom, her sister, Miss Cornelia T. Andrews, and their niece, Miss Gretchen F. Longley, of Hudson, N. Y. They were resting at the home of another sister, Mrs. Arthur H. Flack, at 458 Central avenue, this city.

Miss Andrews told yesterday how they waited for the fourth lifeboat, because there was not room for the three together in the first three boats. When they got out on the water they found that their men companions, who had said they could row, had done so only for the purpose of saving themselves. Miss Longley had to take an oar with the one able bodied seaman in the boat.

In a boat alongside of them a sailor lighted a cigarette. He flung the match carelessly among the women, who screamed their protests.

"Ah, we're all going to hell, anyway," replied the sailor, "and we might as well be cremated now as then."

This is the story Mrs. Hogeboom told:

"At 11:45 Sunday night we were awakened by a terrific crash on the side of the ship where our staterooms were. I called to my sister and niece to find out what it was. In going out o [sic] the corridor we found many ice crystals, which had come in through the portholes.

"We made inquiries and the steward said, 'No danger,' and we were assured that all would be repaired in a few moments. We went back to bed without fear.

"A little after 12 we heard a commotion in the corridor and we made more inquiries, and they told us then that as a precautionary measure we had better put on life preservers. We had only five minutes to get ready. We put our fur coats on over our night dresses and rushed on deck.

"One lifeboat was already full, but there was no panic. The discipline in a was was [sic] good. No one hurried and no one crowded. We waited for the fourth boat and were slowly lowered seventy-five feet into the water. The men no effort to get into the boat. As we pulled away we saw them all standing in an unbroken line on the deck.

“There, they stood, Major Butt, Col. Astor, waving a farewell to his wife; Mr. Thayer, Mr. Case, Mr. Clarence Moore, Mr. Widener, and hundreds of other men bravely remaining on board.

“Before our boat was lowered they called to some men and said, ‘Can you row’ and they answered ‘Yes.’ But upon putting out, we found we had a Chinese and Armenian, neither of whom knew how to row. So there we were in mid-ocean with one able-bodied seaman. So my niece took one oar and assisted the seaman, and some of the other women rowed on the other side. We then pulled out about half a mile, as we feared the suction should the ship go down. We noticed then that the bow of the Titanic had settled a great deal.

“At about 2 o’clock we heard a mighty crash--the boilers had exploded and the lights went out. The ship literally broke in two, the bow end going down at once and in a few moments the whole ship had disappeared. Then we heard the most horrible shrieks and screams as more than 1,000 persons went down.

“Never in our lives can we forget this frightful scene, as we stood there in the lifeboats in midocean, surrounded by a sea of ice and icebergs. One icefield looked over a mile in length.

“Scarcely any of the lifeboats were properly manned. Two lifeboats, filled with women, capsized before our eyes, with no one to rescue them. The collapsible boats were only temporarily useful. They soon partially filled with water. In one boat eighteen or twenty people sat in water above their knees for six hours. Eight men in this boat were overcome, died and were thrown overboard. Two women were in this boat. One succumbed after a few hours and one was saved. This was only one of the hundreds of sad events. Every hour seemed like twenty-four. It was bitterly cold and we were all insufficiently protected from the weather.

“About dawn we saw a ship in the dim distance, seeming many miles away. This gave us our first hope, but at the same time the wind commenced to rise and the waves grew large. As our oarsmen and oarswomen were nearly exhausted, we did not know how long we could endure it. Had the wind increased, as it did a few hours afterward, we would never have escaped. Shortly after 8 o’clock the Carpathia reached near enough for us to row to it, we having rowed about nine miles, and being the last lifeboat to reach the rescue ship.

“With our frozen fingers and feet it was difficult to climb up the wet, slippery rope ladder, but a rope fastened around our waist protected us from slipping into the sea.

“The kindness of the Carpathia, captain, officers and passengers to all the survivors was wonderful and was appreciated by all.”

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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