

LONE SURVIVOR IS PENNILESS

Elizabeth Daily Journal

Friday 26 April 1912

Mrs. Peter Reniff is Left Destitute

SAW NO LIGHTS OF OTHER SHIPS AS TITANIC SUNK

Made penniless by the recent Titanic disaster in which she lost her husband, two brothers, cousin and two friends, Mrs. Peter Reniff, of 21B Florida street, is to-day facing the world, depending on her friends and one brother, Frederick Jefferies, who lives at the Florida street residence, for support.

With the vessel sank the entire savings of the family as well as all of Mrs. Reniff's clothing with the exception of that which she wore when leaving the ship. Her jewelry and many valuable gifts, which she was bringing to this country from her native land, England, were also lost.

Practically the only articles of value which she saved were her engagement and wedding rings, which she had on her finger when she left the vessel.

Although she is still under the care of a physician and has not yet fully recovered from her nervous breakdown, Mrs. Reniff was in a better frame of mind this morning to relate her experience.

According to the woman there were no lights of another vessel to be seen when the Titanic was sinking, as claimed by some of the ship's officers. "The first lights I saw," she said, "were those of the Carpathia, as the boat steamed toward us at daybreak."

"The enormous loss of life," she continued, "is due only to the fact that the number of lifeboats was inadequate. To say that the vessel floated for nearly three hours is not so," she declared. "I was among the first of the second cabin passengers to reach the deck, and as I was being lowered in the lifeboat I could see that mighty steamer sinking rapidly."

At the time when the Reniffs left this city a few months ago they had a comfortable home and sufficient funds to warrant them a comfortable living for some time to come. They took all their money with them and the remainder of it, which was carried by Mr. Reniff on the return trip, was lost with him.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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TELLS OF SEEING MEN SHOT DOWN ON TITANIC

Newark Evening News

Friday 19 April 1912

Special Service of the NEWS

ELIZABETH, April 19---Almost prostrated by the terrible experiences which she had undergone since the Titanic went down, Mrs. Peter Renouf, of 21b Florida street, returned to her home here today. She told of seeing men shot down by officers while trying to force their way into boats, and declared that it was only in this way that some of the men could be forced back.

Mrs. Renouf's husband, her two brothers, Clifford and Ernest Jeffries; a cousin, Charles Cann, and Herbert Denbouy, a friend of the family, formed a party. All were lost except Mrs. Renouf. All of the party but the Renoufs were residents of England.

Mrs. Renouf is in a condition bordering on hysteria, and it was between sobs that she told her story to a News reporter who found her at the home of her brother, Frederick Jeffries, in this city. She is about thirty years old. Mrs. Renouf said that she cannot realize the awful calamity and that it haunts her all the time. She will make her home with her brother for a while at least.

"The shock evidently was not very severe," said Mrs. Renouf, "for it did not awaken either myself or my husband. The first we knew that the boat had struck an iceberg was when my brothers came running into our stateroom and told us to get ready to leave, as there was danger that the boat would go down. Neither of us could hardly believe it, and at first we thought that they were joking. They soon convinced us, however, that they were serious.

"My brothers pulled me out of bed, and handing me a blanket told me to take it and protect myself as best I could, for we could not take any chances of getting more covering. All of us then hurried on deck and we were placed with the second cabin passengers. My husband wanted to remain by my side, but the officers would not let him. They said 'Women and children first.' I believed my husband and brothers would follow in another boat. That was the assurance the officers gave me.

"Suddenly there was a rush on the part of several men to get into the lifeboats, which were already crowded with women and children. They pushed women aside and became frenzied. It seemed for a while as if they would leap into the boats. Then the officers raised their guns and shot these men down. I don't suppose there was anything else to do. It was horrible.

"It seemed only about half an hour after we left the Titanic when she went under. I had hoped that my husband and the rest of the party were fortunate enough to get into another boat, but I

gave up all hope after the survivors grouped on the Carpathia and I could not find any other member of our party among them.”

Lawrence Garvey, formerly of Elizabeth, is also said to have been among the lost. He was frequently in the Renouf party. While he lived in Elizabeth, Garvey made a reputation in amateur circles as a football player.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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Titanic Survivor Mrs Renouf Tells of Tragedy

Elizabeth Daily Journal

Friday 19 April 1912

THRILLING STORIES BY TITANIC'S SAVED; TEN ON WAY TO ELIZABETH LOSE LIVES

Mrs. Peter Reniff, Only Rescued Member of Local Party of Eight, Gives to Journal Story of Most Appalling Calamity in History of Navigation--Peacock Party Lost

Thrilling but awful almost beyond description, was the story of the Titanic disaster given this morning by Mrs. Peter Reniff, of 20B Florida street, who was a passenger on the lost vessel. Unaware of the fact that her husband and two brothers went down on the giant steamer, Mrs. Reniff was brought to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Paul, of 237 Baltic street, late last night. Her story is a tale of heroism and self-sacrifice probably never before surpassed in the history of the world.

After striking the iceberg the Titanic was racked from stem to stern with a series of explosions and sank like a rock. The scenes following the collision were appalling. Strong men knelt on the deck of the sinking ship and wept like children. Women and little ones were almost hurled into the boats. The crew preserved some semblance of order among themselves. Cold and a choppy sea added to the discomfort of the passengers in the small boats, many of whom witnessed the last gasps of the wounded leviathan. Mrs. Reniff was one of these.

It is believed that all of the party with her perished. Despite the fact that the name of Miss Emily Rugg, of Southampton, England, was among the list of the saved, no trace of her was found on the Carpathia last night. All hope has been given up for the rest of the party who started merrily from England last Saturday.

Peter Reniff was for several years a resident of this city. He was well known here, a member of Grace Church and prominent in athletics. He was a member of the Hawthorne Athletic Club. The rest of the party consisted of Mrs. Reniff's brothers, Clifford and Ernest Jefferies, of England; her cousin, Charles Cann; Lawrence Gavey, who lived for five years in this city; Miss Emily Rugg, of Southampton; and Herbert Denbuoy, of England. All were on their way to this city.

Fred Jefferies, of 20B Florida street, another brother of Mrs. Reniff, met her at the wharf last

night and brought her to the home of the Pauls in this city. Mrs. Paul crossed to England with the Reniffs last December, but she returned to this city several weeks ago.

Mrs. Reniff's condition is so serious that it was deemed unsafe to tell her of the loss of her husband, brothers and friends. She thinks that they were picked up by another ship and has not given up hope of seeing them again. How vain are her hopes is shown by the authentic reports of the disaster. Her story follows:

Mrs. Reniff's story

"I had just gone below when the crash came. It must have been just after 11 o'clock, as all of the women are ordered off the deck at that time and I had been on the port side of the boat talking to my husband and brothers. It was a beautiful, clear night, the stars appearing like glittering steel points against the dark sky. When the watch ordered women off the decks, I went down into my stateroom and I was partially undressed when the collision occurred. The shock was awful. Not fully realizing what had happened, I was dressing myself again when my husband and brothers burst into the cabin.

"They had been in the smoking room, and had seen the iceberg as it bore away from the vessel and told me to dress hurriedly although they thought there was little danger. Nearly all of the passengers though that the Titanic could not sink. Some of them took the collision as a joke and others were annoyed at the jouncing which they had received. My husband and brothers, who were fully dressed, helped me to put on my wraps and hurried me to the deck.

"There for the first time the passengers saw their peril and the utmost confusion prevailed. People were hurrying back and forth. Orders were being shouted in all directions and the crew was busy, getting ready to launch the lifeboats. The first and second class passengers were calm in the face of the disaster but when the steerage passengers burst up from below, the scramble for places in the boats and the bedlam of noise was awful. I saw no flagrant instances of cowardice. Everyone was terribly excited and people forgot everything but their eagerness to get off the sinking ship. It was trembling from stem to stern. The foreigners from the steerage were like animals, but an officer with a revolver stood by every boat and ordered the women to go first.

Husband Helped Save Her

"The boats filled up rapidly, and cast off. I was in one of the last boats. My husband pushed me forward and he was standing there on the deck as the lifeboat went over the side. Rocket after rocket was shot from the deck of the Titanic.

"For a few minutes the boats were grouped together near the sinking ship while the officers watched the last loads of passengers come over the side.

"The crowd was just starting to settle when the last boat went into the water. The halyard of one of the dories snapped as it was being lowered and the boat with its load of passengers fell fifteen or twenty feet into the water. It landed right side up and I do not think that any of the

passengers went overboard.

Screams of Lost Frightful

Just as the boats were leaving the side of the steamer the chief steward of the second class cabin jumped off the Titanic into one of them. The impact nearly capsized the boat but it righted itself. The steward was allowed to remain in it. The big boat could be plainly seen. She parted in the middle. There was an awful roar followed by violent explosions. The whole steamer seemed to rock and steady herself for the final plunge. Then she went down. The screams of those who had been left on board were frightful. I shall hear them to my dying day.

"I remember hardly anything after the sinking of the ship. We floated around for hours, it seemed. It was bitterly cold and all of the passengers in our boat suffered. I do not know how many there were. I think that they all survived. I remember hearing someone say that several men had been shot by the officers while trying to escape with the women and children, but I saw no acts of violence. We suffered horribly. Although the sea was smooth waves broke frequently over our boat and we were drenched through. Some of the women were scantily clothed.

Man Dead on Raft

"I remember that we picked up a life raft a great distance from where the Titanic sank. There was one man on it. He was dead. I do not remember what they did with his body. I seemed to be dazed and forgot everything else that happened until we sighted the Carpathia. The I fainted and awoke to find myself on board her.

"I was dreadfully cold and was confined to a berth on the Cunard liner until we landed. There were two doctors on board and they did great work. It was a frightful experience and the only wonder of it is that so many escaped alive. The seamen kept up their spirits. One of them told me that when the Titanic sank he was drawn down into one of the funnels and that he was shot out again when the air rushed from the ship. He said that he swam sixteen miles before he was picked up.

"I did not see the captain of the Titanic after the collision nor had I seen him during the evening. The officers and men performed their work nobly and only praise can be given them."

Peacock Family Lost

Mrs. Reniff and Fred Jefferies, her brother, both deny absolutely a story published in New York evening papers last night to the effect that Ernest and Clifford Jefferies, second class cabin passengers, who went down with the Titanic, were members of the notorious "Doc" Owen gang of card sharps who live by fleecing passengers on trans-Atlantic liners.

The only two second cabin passengers by the name of Ernest and Clifford Jefferies who were on board the Titanic were the brothers of the local woman. They left Southampton on the Titanic for their first trip to this country, according to Fred Jefferies and he cannot account for

their names being mixed up with the Owen gang.

Mr. Jefferies was so incensed over the story that he declared he would sue those who were responsible for its publication.

The story in which the names of the Jefferies appeared stated that the Owen gang had planned to fleece Col. Astor.

Among the scores who waited in vain when the Carpathia landed the survivors of the Titanic disaster in New York last night, was Benjamin Peacock, 36 years old, of 609 South Broad street. Although none of the lists of the survivors published gave the names of Peacock's wife, his two children and two brothers, he held a hope that they might possibly have been saved. It was left to one of the sailors on the Titanic, one of Peacock's friends, to break the sad news that his wife and two little ones had gone down with the vessel.

Peacock met the man on the dock. "I'm sorry, Ben," said the seaman, looking with pity at the grief-stricken face of the suffering man. "They have all gone down."

Peacock now believes that his brothers did not sail on the Titanic. Their names were not in the lists furnished by the steamship company.

Since Monday, Peacock has not slept. He is on the verge of a collapse from the awful suspense and uncertainty. All last night he sobbed like a child over the loss of his wife and babies, one of whom he had never seen. He was in doubt as to whether or not his family were aboard the boat until he came across their names in a partial list of the steerage passengers given out at the offices of the White Star Line. About three weeks ago he sent passage money to his wife in England. He believed that his two brothers, who had seen service in the British navy, had booked passage on the Titanic, but is now satisfied that their sailing must have been delayed.

There was just one chance in a hundred, he declared on Monday, that his wife Treasteal, his 4-year-old daughter Treasteal, and his infant son, 9 months old, had not boarded the White Star liner at Southampton for America, but his worst fears were confirmed by the news last night. Mrs. Peacock received the money to bring her to America the day before the Titanic left England. With her two children she must have embarked the next day.

Believes Brother Lost

Another who waited in vain for the return of a loved one was Miss Frances Sheppard, a trained nurse, of Newark, who is staying at the home of Mrs. J. H. S. Clark, of 561 North Broad street, this city. Miss Sheppard's brother, Jonathan Sheppard, of Southampton, England, is believed to have been a member of the crew of the Titanic. He was third engineer on the liner's sister ship, Olympic, and was promoted to the same station on the larger vessel. There is a faint hope that he did not sail with the Titanic on her maiden voyage.

If he was on the steamer, it is probable that he was lost, as none of the engineers were saved. Miss Sheppard, although worn out by the strain, and on the verge of a nervous breakdown, went to New York this morning in an effort to learn if he was really on the wrecked vessel. Sheppard had followed the sea for years. He had been in two other disasters, but in each case he managed to escape.

In Boat With Ismay

Extremely happy because none of the members of his family lost their lives in the wreck of the Titanic, but expressing sorrow at the magnitude of the disaster, Joseph W. Carter, of 43 South Broad street, was able to add details to the story of the manner in which the tragedy was brought to the homes of Elizabethans. Mr. Carter was seen at his home in South Broad street this noon, but could only tell in generalities what happened to his relatives when the Titanic met her doom.

Speaking of the wreck, Mr. Carter said when seen by a Journal man, that everyone was safe, meaning his nephew, William Ernest Carter, of Philadelphia, his wife Lucille, aged 14. and William, aged 10. Mr. Carter said that while he had not seen his nephew personally to talk with him about the details of the wreck, he had learned much from conversation with another nephew who greeted him at the Cunard line pier last night and to whose home Mr. Carter and his family were [sic] taken by automobile when they disembarked from the Carpathia. This nephew is William Carter Dickerman, who lives at Madison avenue and Fifty-seventh street, New York.

Mr. Carter said that his nephew was rescued in the same lifeboat carrying J. Bruce Ismay.

Like the other passengers, the Carters were practically destitute when landed from the Carpathia. Mr. Carter was in evening clothes, and had been forced to wear that dress since being picked up by the Carpathia. His wife was also in evening dress, while the two children were wrapped in clothing carried by the maid, who was rescued with them when she took them from their cabins where they were asleep at the time of the crash.

Jumped Into Sea

Taking his chance with the rest of the men on the Titanic, Mr. Carter was separated from his wife and children, bidding them goodbye as they were carried over the side of the ship in the lifeboat which was filled with other women and children. They were in one of the first boats, and at that time the situation did not seem as serious as it later developed. Mr. Carter remained by the ship, but as it was seen to sink lower and lower he leaped into the sea, and was picked up by the tenth lifeboat. This was the boat containing J. Bruce Ismay, general manager of the White Star Steamship Company.

Deep Interest Here

The deep interest of the people of Elizabeth in the Titanic disaster was evidenced last night by

the anxious and persistent efforts of hundreds of persons to get the first news of the landing of the Carpathia and the authentic details of the catastrophe from those who passed through it.

Those having friends and acquaintances aboard the unfortunate ship were especially anxious to hear of them and those who did not go to the dock stayed up as long as there was any hope of getting more news. In spite of the weather, many persons were out on the streets buying the latest newspaper extras and talking over the features of the disaster.

The Journal office was kept busy from 9 o'clock until midnight answering inquiries as to the possibility of the Carpathia's making a landing or any news of the survivors. The lateness of the hour and the hope of getting a complete account to-day finally led to an abatement of interest in the news.

With the arrival of morning the absorbing topic was taken up with greater zeal. The first newspapers were eagerly scanned and the telephone and telegraph wires kept hot between here and the new centres in New York until all obtainable details had been learned.

To-morrow evening the members of Hawthorne Lodge, No. 156, Order Sons of St. George, and the members of Britannia Lodge, Daughters of St. George, will attend service in the First M. P. Church, Fourth and Franklin streets, at which time they will be notified of the date of the memorial service to be held in memory of the brothers who lost their lives by the Titanic disaster. All members are urged to be present. The Rev. Mr. Bajderston will preach a patriotic sermon to the members.

Snyder Saved by Delay

Frederick J. Snyder, of 314 Court street, who arrived this morning from Europe on the Mauretania, had planned to sail on the fated Titanic.

He as delayed three days, however, and sailed on the Mauretania. The delay probably saved his life. When the news of his arrival home this morning spread to his friends a crowd thronged his home to congratulate him.

Mr. Snyder said the first news of the fate of the Titanic reached the Mauretania last Tuesday by wireless, and from that time until the voyage came to an end this morning there was a pall of sorrow over the Mauretania's passengers.

A New York man committed suicide by leaping from the Mauretania into the ocean last Sunday night. The boats were lowered, but he was not recovered.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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