

Common Sailors Heroes of Titanic, Say Survivors

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**Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Caldwell Return
to Biggsville From Siam, and
Tell Graphic Story**

Did Not Realize Danger; Lifeboat Barely Equipped

**Survivors Say Shrieks of Drowning
Hundreds Most Awful Feature of
Their Experience - Saw Ship
Slowly Sink After the Ex-
plosion of Boilers**

Titanic Disaster Facts

Lifeboat No. 13, in which the Caldwell family escaped, had no lantern, water or food, and carried only inexperienced sailors who did not know how to loose her from the slings.

The heroism of the common seamen who lowered the life boats and made no effort to save themselves, though they knew the danger that was imminent, was one of the striking things of the tragedy.

There still was room in lifeboat 13 for others and that was true of practically all the boats launched.

There were no lifeboat drills on board and the sailors were entirely unfamiliar with handling the boats.

The large number who were drowned had confidence that the Titanic would remain afloat for hours and perhaps for days.

Their shrieks and cries for help when at last the big monster sank were appalling, and terrified the survivors.

Three survivors of the most disastrous shipwreck of the centuries passed through Monmouth yesterday afternoon on Burlington train No. 11. They were Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Caldwell and ten months old baby Alden, and were on their way to the home of the former's parents at Biggsville.

Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell submitted readily and cheerfully to an interview, and told graphically of their escape from the fate which overtook over 1600 of their fellow passengers and crew on the Titanic.

A Personal Narrative

"We occupied a second class cabin", said [Mr. Caldwell](#), "and I had taken a walk about deck Sunday evening and had gone to my cabin and retired about ten o'clock. It was twelve o'clock when our ship struck the iceberg, and the shock aroused Mrs. Caldwell more than it did me.

"I slipped on my overcoat and went on deck and made inquiry of an officer as to the trouble. He said we had struck an iceberg and I remarked a little carelessly, "I should think we had from the chill of the atmosphere", but was so little conscious of the real peril, and saw few signs of serious danger, that I went back to bed again.

"We were soon aroused, however, by the shouting of orders for all to get on deck and hastily dressing we left the stateroom."

Did Not Think Situation Serious

"We found that the boats were being lowered from the first cabin deck, the one above our own, and we were ordered to that part of the vessel. The upper deck was reached by means of an upright ladder, and after [Mrs. Caldwell](#) climbed up I went with the baby. I had him on my right arm and was obliged to make my way as best I could with the free use of one hand.

"As we joined the group gathered there, lifeboat No. 13 was about to be lowered and Mrs. Caldwell was put into it. She was the last woman left in the group, and I was about to lower the baby down to her when she said, "Can't my husband come too?" "There being ample room I was put into the boat with the baby, and then some other men followed and the work of lowering began."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell suggested that their experience while the boat was being lowered was the most dangerous they encountered throughout all the ordeal. The sailors were unfamiliar with the lifeboats, and the one they were in swung and jerked fearfully during the operation. To add to their danger they were lowered directly over the overflow stream from the vessel's side, and had not the men managed to veer the boat away they would have been swamped and drowned.

Inexperienced With Lifeboats

The members of the crew who were with them were utterly inexperienced in their handling of the life boat gear, and after they had reached the water in safety it was some time before they could release the slings. While this was being attempted another boat was lowered directly over them, and they were in imminent danger of being crushed. Fortunately their shouts were heard, and the other boat's descent was halted until the one below was out of danger.

The boat finally was released from the ropes by which it was lowered by the men cutting the fastenings with pocket knives. There was room for still more and this fact was true of nearly every boat that got away.

Unprepared for Emergencies

There was no lantern, no water, and no provisions in the boat in which the Caldwells made their escape, and the oars were tied. Had they not been rescued in a reasonable length of time the company could not long have survived the perils of starvation. It seemed that the lifeboats were ready for anything but actual use in time of emergency.

Just before the lifeboat embarked, the passengers were repeatedly assured that there was no danger, and were told that the "Olympic" was near and would take off the passengers and crew. Even the lights of the steamship were pointed out, but the assurances proved to be baseless.

Heard Shrieks of Drowning

The most tragic thing to Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell was the spectacle of the Titanic as she sank, and the hearing of the shrieks of those who were precipitated into the icy water. Their boat was about a half mile away when the big steamer disappeared, and they heard distinctly the cries for help. As these became less and less in volume and finally ceased, the survivors were horror stricken.

Mr. Caldwell said he was positive that none of the immense crowd that went down with their ship realized their danger until it actually was upon them. They all felt the Titanic was so big and so strongly constructed that the thought of her sinking was unbelievable. It was this that resigned so many to staying on board, they thought that no matter how seriously she was injured she would keep afloat for hours and perhaps for days. Even Mr. Caldwell himself when he embarked in the lifeboat thought it would be more prudent to stay on the larger vessel. He did not realize the steamer was sinking until their boat's distance from the ship gave them a view of her slowly settling by the head and they watched the eclipse of the lights in the port holes as she sunk lower and lower.

Heard Sound of Explosion

"We distinctly heard the sound of the boilers exploding and then the bow of the steamer sunk from view, and soon all that could be seen was the black bulk of the stern. Soon this disappeared and the cries of the drowning came to us over the water. Some of these were rescued by the life boats, but the exposure was too severe for many of them, and they

succumbed. It was two o'clock when the Titanic disappeared and we had left her just an hour before. We rowed about for two or three hours and when the Carpathia hove in sight we made our way toward her. The sea was as smooth as glass, and this fact minimized our danger.

"It must have been about seven o'clock when we were taken on board, for the sun was shining brightly. The men went aboard by rope ladders, the women were taken up in slings, and our baby was raised aloft in a mail sack. We were treated with great kindness, although it was a task to cook food quickly for such a large number. We had to sleep on the floor, many of us, but we were safe."

Might Have Been Averted

That the wreck was due to carelessness and pride in making a new record, is Mr. Caldwell's firm belief. He asserted one of the lookouts in the crow's nest was in boat No. 13, and declared he had given warning of the Titanic being in the vicinity of icebergs.

No heed was given to the warning, and the big ocean greyhound plunged ahead to her doom simply to gratify the demand that she break all records.

This opinion of Mr. Caldwell's is sustained in dispatches from Washington regarding the testimony being given there to the board of inquiry investigating the disaster.

The Real Heroes

Mr. Caldwell said that he did not see any of the notables whose names have figured so prominently in the dispatches, but thinks they, with many others, did not realize the imminence of their danger. He said it seemed to him the real heroes of the disaster were the sailors who lowered the life boats, and were perfectly aware of the danger the Titanic was in, but heroically stood by and saw the boats leave with still room for others, and made no effort themselves to crowd in. This seemed to him the most remarkable exhibition of heroism one might witness. This he should remember as long as he lives.

End of a Long Journey

The frightful experience of the Caldwell family was practically the culmination of a round-the-world journey. Mr. Caldwell has been a teacher in the college at Bangkok, Siam for three years, but on account of Mrs. Caldwell's health deemed it best to return to this country.

They left Siam February 21 and leisurely journeyed by way of the Suez Canal to Europe. They had a delightful visit to some of the points of interest in the old world, and when they were planning their ocean trip to America hoped they might be able to take passage on the new Titanic. They were especially pleased when they discovered a stateroom was available and congratulated themselves on sharing with others the maiden trip of the most wonderful boat ever launched.

This was the feeling of many of their fellow passengers and only emphasized the horror of the

tragic end of the voyage.

Met Dr. W. R. King

Mr. Caldwell asked after Dr. W. R. King and said he had met him when the latter was in Siam in his investigation of missionary work. The family naturally was glad to be nearing their journey's end, and was the object of interest to many of their fellow passengers as the train drew near Monmouth. The baby especially came in for his share of attention and was hailed as the hero who saved his father's life. He had not suffered from the exposure and his rosy cheeks indicated good health.

Recall Some Minor Things

After they had gone pretty thoroughly over their story Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell recalled some minor incidents that shed sidelights on their experiences. After getting into the lifeboat Mr. Caldwell, who was carrying the baby, stretched himself beneath the seats on the bottom so as to save the little one from the cold as much as possible.

Both he and Mrs. Caldwell were fully dressed, but the baby had but his nightdress on beneath a steamer robe which had been wrapped about him. Mrs. Caldwell said the women stood while some of the men appropriated the seats. One man in particular, a big fellow, occupied the choice seat in the middle of the boat and utilized Mrs. Caldwell as a back rest the entire time they were afloat. "He was a coward", said Mrs. Caldwell.

Second Class Suffered Severely

It was in the second-class cabin that the greatest number of men were lost. The small number of women who perished showed clearly the willingness of the men to give them every possible chance.

Acknowledgements

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