

Wreck of the Titanic Little Girls Account

Leatherhead, Advertiser, Epsom District Times and County Post

Saturday 18 May 1912

Mrs. Tate, of Elm Villas, Leatherhead, has just received from her daughter (Mrs. Collyer) a copy of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, containing an account of the wreck of the Titanic, as depicted by her daughter Margery, eight years of age. It will be remembered that Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Collyer, who are natives of Leatherhead, left England with their little daughter on board the Titanic with a view of making their home in the United States, where Mr. Collyer had purchased some land with the object of starting fruit growing. Mrs. Collyer and her little daughter were among the survivors, but Mr. Collyer went down with the ill-fated liner. Little Margery Collyer tells her story to a representative of the paper in the following terms:-

"It was on a Wednesday we took the train to Southampton. Some of our friends were at the station to see us go, and some of them saw us off on the boat, I didn't think there was any boat in the world as big as the Titanic.

"The night the Titanic hit the iceberg I was asleep. It was about 11 o'clock. I didn't feel the bump and the ship started to back like a train, and I heard my mother say to my father that she guessed the works had stopped. He dressed himself and went on deck. "

" I could hear feet on the decks. The boat seemed to have stopped. Then mother dressed me, took me by the hand and led me upstairs. She was in her night-dress, and I didn't have all my clothes on. I had a big dollie that I got two Christmases before, and we were in such a hurry that I left it behind. I cried for my dollie, but we couldn't go back.

"When we got on deck father was there going along the decks and trying to see the iceberg. But it had floated away. he said that some men had been playing cards when the ship hit the ice, and that all their cards fell on the floor, but they picked them up and went right on with the game.

"The decks were full of people. Some of them were crying. An officer said we should all put on life preservers, and my mother put one on me, and then fastened one around herself. Papa put one on too.

"I was crying for my doll, but nobody could go back and get her. Then someone said we should get into a boat and two men lifted me up and put me in a boat. My father raised me in his arms and kissed me, and then he kissed my mother. She followed me into the boat.

"The women in one of the other boats said they wanted somebody to row for them and father got in that boat".

"The stars were shining, and it was just like day. Some sailor put a rug around my mother to keep her warm. There were so many in our boat that we had to sit up all the time. Nobody could lie down. my mother was so close to one of the sailors with the oars that sometimes the oar caught in her hair and took big pieces out of it.

"There was one officer in our boat who had a pistol. Some men jumped into our boat on top of the women and crushed them and the officer said that if they didn't stop he would shoot.

Another man jumped and he shot him. My mother says I called out: 'Don't shoot!' but I don't remember it.

"The sailors had to row fast to get away from the ship. We could hear the band playing, but we didn't see the musicians. Only, when we left, all the people on the decks were kneeling down praying, while the band played, 'Nearer My God To Thee'.

"When the band finished one of the musicians, jumped into a boat with his instrument, and I guess he got away.

" While we were rowing away we heard a lot of people crying, and the women in our boat asked the officer what the noise was. He said the people on the decks were singing.

"I saw the Titanic go up in the air before she sank, and she looked ever so big.

"When we got a little way off another boat came near us, and an officer in our boat said he guessed he would go back to the wreck in it. I don't know who he was, but he put some of the people from the other boat in ours, and got in that. Then he went back with some sailors and pulled six men into the boat. "We rowed around for seven hours. All the time I was frightened a whole lot, and sometimes I cried. I cried hardest when I thought of my dollie back there in the water with nobody to mind it and keep it from getting wet.

"The women in the boat just sat up and didn't say anything. We were all very tired and cold, when we saw a big light. Somebody said it was a boat, but I thought it was just a star. But it kept getting bigger and bigger, and then we saw that it was a boat. Then all the sailors rowed hard.

"We had to sleep on the floor on the new ship, and it wasn't so nice as it was on the Titanic: but everybody was very kind to us. We thought papa would be there, but the boat he was on didn't get to the ship."

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