

TELLS OF RESCUE FROM TITANIC

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Galesburg Evening Mail

[Tuesday 23rd April 1912](#)

Frank Kurun of Galesburg Tells How He Saved Himself and Daughter

WAS IN A BOAT FIRST PICKED UP

Jumped from Lower Deck Into Life Boat As It Was Being Lowered

His Brother Drowned

Frank Kurun, together with his little daughter, Mary, returned on the ten o'clock train last night from New York City where they were kept in the hospital with the survivors of the Titanic wreck. The Galesburg man was among the few male survivors of the marine disaster and when interviewed this morning by an Evening Mail reporter told a graphic story of the wreck and of his escape. As was reported in this paper yesterday, Kurun is a labor contractor of this city and conducts what is known as the old Lindell Hotel on Depot street. He was just returning from a business trip to his native land where he disposed of a farm and other property. He is a Pole by nationality, and speaks English brokenly. He was booked as a steerage passenger with his brother and little five year old daughter, Mary, on board the Titanic. He said he picked out the best boat so they could enjoy the trip to America better.

Was Asleep When Ship Hit Berg.

Kurun was asleep at the time when the ill-fated boat struck the iceberg. He heard no crash or other disturbance but was aroused by people rushing about and the shrill cries of distress from his fellow passengers. He looked at his watch and discovered that it was 11:00 o'clock. He heard someone give an order to put on life preservers and although there was considerable of a panic among the steerage passengers at the time, he succeeded in getting one of the big cork belts, which he put on. He took his little girl in his arms and together with the other passengers crowded about the hatchways trying to get up on the upper decks. Being a big man he was able to get to the front of the crowd. The officers and crew kept ordering the passengers back and some drew revolvers. Again and again the panic stricken crowd was driven back, Kurun still maintaining his position among the forefront.

Leaped Into a Lifeboat

Suddenly he saw a lifeboat being lowered over the side. He sprang forward and with his daughter in his arms, dived head first over the side of the deck, lighting ten feet below in the boat, which was being rapidly let over the side. There were already fifty passengers in the boat, but room was made for him, although this was done under protest. The report yesterday that Kurun was among those on the raft with Col. Gracie was unfounded but the circumstances of his escape as above outlined were taken from the survivor's own lips this morning.

Was in Lifeboat Many Hours

When asked whether any shots were fired at men trying to get on the lifeboats, he replied that he had not heard or seen anything of the sort, but had seen the officers draw revolvers. The lifeboat in which he was seated was not far off from the liner when it sank. Kurun did not see the boat break in two, but he saw the big hole in its side. He said that before he left the boat, the water was coming up through the steerage hatchways and caused the people to be greatly frightened. When the Titanic sank, he heard the cries of the people and saw men struggling in the water after the boat went down. There was much ice floating about. Of the fifty-two persons on board the lifeboat, most of them were women and children, there being over a dozen children. It was four hours and a half before the Carpathia was sighted and almost five hours before the half frozen survivors were taken aboard.

Lost over \$700 in wreck

Kurun says that he had about \$750 in money in his trunk which was lost when the ship went down. He was on the return trip and his business transactions had netted him in the above named amount. "I don't care much for the money," he said, I can make that over again. I am thankful that I have my life and that of my girl Mary. Upon arrival of the rescue ship in New York, Kurun and his child were taken to the St. Vincent's hospital. All the Catholics were taken to this place and the other persons were sent about to the other hospitals. The clothes he was wearing were utterly ruined. Kurun was given another suit by the White Star Company. He was wearing this suit this morning. He was in the hospital two days and a half. The brother of the Galesburg man, who was coming to America for the first time, was lost in the wreck. His name was Kovec. Kurun did not see him after the first alarm was given "I am still sick," said Kurun. "but I feel very lucky to be here. It was a horrible thing."

Related Biographies:

[Franz Karun](#)

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FRANK KORUN REACHES HOME

Galesburg Republican Register

Tuesday 23 April 1912

Titanic Survivor, Daughter and Austrian Friend Saved From Ocean Grave

TELLS EXPERIENCES

Last Man to Get in Boat — For Hours Among Ice Floes.

When Frank Korun, one of the Titanic survivors, stepped from the Burlington train at 10 o'clock, Monday night, with his little daughter, Amie, clasping his hand, there were awaiting him a happy family group of his wife and four other children and the moment that he reached the platform they surrounded him and the little girl and an affectionate reunion ensued warming all that saw it. The stalwart Austrian was deeply affected by the warm greeting and as for little Amie she knew how much better it was to be in her mother's arms than on the crowded boat in the Atlantic, dodging ice floes and freezing in Christmas temperature. With Mr. Korun was a fellow Austrian who was with the party that came over on the Titanic and who also was saved from the wreck. These wended their way to the Kurun home a happy group, once more reunited after an experience that comes to but few. When Mr. Korun was seen this forenoon by a representative of the Republican Register, he was still suffering from the effects of his experiences, and evidently had sustained an attack of delirium from which, however, he is recovering. "I feel it in my head," he said, in broken English and he put his hand on his forehead. He was just out of the hospital in New York where, with his daughter, he spent over two days. A number crowded around to hear his story which was all the more dramatic as owing to his scanty knowledge of English it had to be told in fragments.

Lost All His Money

With only the suit of clothes he now has on, he made his escape. The \$700 that he received from the rent of his land near Krom, Austria, all in cash, and all his belongings in his trunk valued at \$150 are at the bottom of the Atlantic. The company paid his fare to Galesburg for the misfortune left him without a cent.

Tells of Wreck

"I was a third class passenger and sleeping in a room at the rear of the boat he remarked. "With me were my little girl, and also my brother-in-law, John Markum, who was coming to this country to get work, and who left his wife and five children in Austria." The man's voice grew soft and tremulous as he thought of the wife and five children across the waters. He then

produced a rude drawing of the big ship, to show where his room was, not far from the rear of the boat. The damage he indicated to the front end and side of the vessel. "I was fast asleep when the ship hit the iceberg," he continued. "So were the rest in my room. I got up and dressed in the suit I have on and my little girl put on her dress. I put on a life preserver and the rest of our party did the same. It was about 11 o'clock when someone woke us up. When we got to the top I could see that the forward end of the boat was sinking down and that there was quite a decline that way. There was a life boat lowered and I think that it was the last one put down. They put my little girl down first, letting her down with a rope. Then they let me down. I do not why they did this, perhaps it was because it was the last boat and there was still room for somebody. When I got into the boat I found that I was the only man there. All the rest were women and children. Of course the sailors were in the boat to pull it. I think that I was the last man to get off the ship. There were fifty-two people on the boat. There were seven babies in the company. Thirty passengers were on it. At a quarter to one o'clock when we were about three hundred feet from the steamship, it sank. Its forward end went down and it seemed to raise right in the air and dive." At this point Mr. Korun took his drawing and lifted it up straight to indicate the position of the ship when it took the plunge. "I heard two big booms", he continued "I think it was the boilers exploding. I did not see the ship break in two. An awful scene followed, people drowning and crying for help. I shall never forget the sight." "I did not feel the suction from the ship when it went down."

Dodged the Ice

"Then for four and a half hours we were in the boat. The sea was smooth but it was full of chunks of ice, some small and some large. It was cold like Christmas and we shivered from it. My little girl was in the same boat and was very brave. I tried to keep her warm." "What became of my brother-in-law? I do not know. He went on top too, but I lost sight of him. You could not see much there. He went down with the ship." "My little girl did not have her cap on, and was out in that cold that way. No one died on our boat, but we all suffered from the cold. It was five thirty o'clock when we were taken onboard the Carpathia . Of the thirteen boats that were together ours was the sixth. We had no lights on our boat. There was no moonlight during the hours before daylight and we did not have even any matches. There was nothing to do but to row and keep out of the way of the ice. It was daylight when we were found. "When we got aboard the Carpathia , people cried and took on terribly over the shock. Oh, yes, I felt it, too. never had been through anything like that. They got the doctors for me and did everything they could for me. The experience made me sick, affected my head, too much sea I guess, and it made my little girl sick, too. Many who were rescued were hysterical when they were taken aboard. I did not row any when I was on the boat. The sailors did all that. "After the Carpathia reached New York I went to the hospital and was there two or three days. I am feeling better now and the company furnished me with a ticket to Galesburg." Mr. Korun told how the men tried to get on the boat and were warned back. He tells how his little girl was taken first in the boat, and is not clear as to how he was allowed to get on the boat, but says he was let down with a rope. He is overjoyed to be back once more in Galesburg. An interesting question raised is as to whether he can recover from the steamship company the money that he lost and his friends are awaiting the outcome of the investigation at Washington. He still says he feels the effects and yet is hopeful that he will overcome them.

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Galesburg Republican Register

Monday 22 April 1912

Frank Karun, a member of the Austrian immigrant colony in this city, will have some stirring things to tell when he returns to the city of the loss of the big steamship Titanic and his rescue later by the Carpathia . Just at present Mr. Karun is at the St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City recuperating from the nervous shock which the accident caused to all of the survivors. A message from the hospital, however, announces that he is saved and that his niece is also a survivor. A sister's husband, who was coming from Austria, went down with the ship. Karun and the little five year old niece, Anna Mary, caught first onto a floating board. They swam away from the ship as it was sinking. The child's father could not swim and he pleaded that his daughter be given a chance to survive. The little girl clung to the neck of her uncle as they made their way into the freezing sea. They were later pulled up on the life raft by others already there. According to the meagre information received by Galesburg relatives, Mr. Karun must have been a member of the little crew of thirty who caught the life raft constructed of canvas and cork which floated around in the icy water until the steamship Carpathia arrived. These men fought others away after the raft had her full quota and stood for five hours in the icy water knee-deep until daybreak and relief. The lower extremities were benumbed and one by one the men were falling from exhaustion when the relief came. One man went hysterical when the announcement was made that there was a steamer in the distance. So close were the thirty crowded together that they could scarcely move.

Besides the loss of his brother-in-law Kovac, Mr. Karun lost a trunk with \$700, the profits of a sale of a family farm he had inherited in Austria, and \$250 in personal effects.

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