

United States Senate Inquiry

Day 7

Testimony of Frank Osman

Source : <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/USInq/AmInq01Indx2a.php>

(The Witness was sworn by Senator Burton.)

Senator BURTON.
How old are you?

Mr. OSMAN.
Thirty-eight, sir.

Senator BURTON.
You are a seaman?

Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

Senator BURTON.
What is your duty - able seaman or deckhand, and for how long?

Mr. OSMAN.
Since I was 14 1/2.

Senator BURTON.
Navy and merchant marine both?

Mr. OSMAN.
Both navy and merchant service.

Senator BURTON.
Which first?

Mr. OSMAN.
Navy.

Senator BURTON.
Now long?

Mr. OSMAN.
Eleven years and three months.

Senator BURTON.
Since then you have been with the White Star?

Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

Senator BURTON.
On which boats have you been besides this one?

Mr. OSMAN.
The [*Oceanic*](#) was the only one besides this one.

Senator BURTON.
Where were you when the collision occurred?

Mr. OSMAN.
Outside the [seamen's dining room](#).

Senator BURTON.
Tell what happened.

Mr. OSMAN.
I was waiting for one bell, which they strike, one bell just before the quarter

..Informed through cre
..Arrives before 0:40

..Officers in charge

..Women & Children first

of the hour, before the four hours, when you get a call to relieve; and I heard three bells strike, and I thought there was a ship ahead. Just after that I heard the collision, and I went out in the foresquare, that is, the [fore-well deck](#), just against the seamen's mess room. Looking in the forewell square I saw ice was there. I went down below and stepped down there, and seen the ship was getting a bit of a list. Then they passed the order that all the seamen had to go up and clear away all the boats. All of us went up and cleared away the boats. After that we loaded all the boats there were, and I went away in [No. 2](#) boat, the fourth from the last to leave the ship.

- 26 Senator BURTON.
Was yours lowered first, second, or third?
- 27 Mr. OSMAN.
Fourth from the last, about the sixteenth boat to lower.
- 28 Senator BURTON.
Who had command of that boat?
- 29 Mr. OSMAN.
The fourth officer, [Mr. Boxhall](#).
- 30 Senator BURTON.
Did he direct the loading of the boat?
- 31 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir; the chief officer, [Mr. Murdoch](#).
- 32 Senator BURTON.
How many were in that boat? First the seamen and then the passengers.
- 33 Mr. OSMAN.
There was one able seaman, sir, a cook, and a steward, and an officer. That was all the men there was in the boat out of the crew. There was one man, a third class passenger, and the remainder were women and children.
- 34 Senator BURTON.
You were the able seaman?
- 35 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.
- 36 Senator BURTON.
How many women were in the boat?
- 37 Mr. OSMAN.
I could not say exactly how many there were, but there were between 25 and 30, all told.
- 38 Senator BURTON.
Including the seamen?
- 39 Mr. OSMAN.
Including the crew. This was one of the emergency boats.
- 40 Senator BURTON.
Did you have any trouble in lowering the boat?
- 41 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir; the boat went down very easy, very steady indeed.
- 42 Senator BURTON.
Was it full?
- 43 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir; full right up.
- 44 Senator BURTON.
Did you get along comfortably or was there suffering?

45 Mr. OSMAN.
There was only one lady there, a first class passenger - I did not know her name - who was worrying. That was the only thing that was said.

46 Senator BURTON.
In what order were you taken onto the [*Carpathia*](#)?

47 Mr. OSMAN.
I was the first boat back, sir. After I got in the boat the officer found a bunch of rockets, which was put in the boat by mistake for a box of biscuits. Having them in the boat, the officer fired some off, and the *Carpathia* came to us first and picked us up a half an hour before anybody else.

48 Senator BURTON.
Did you steer for a light?

49 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir; we saw a light; but the other boats were making for it , and the officer was not sure whether it was a light or whether it was not, and as he had the rockets they could repeat the signals.

50 Senator BURTON.
Did you see that light?

51 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

52 Senator BURTON.
What did you think it was?

53 Mr. OSMAN.
I thought it was a sailing vessel from the banks.

54 Senator BURTON.
When did you last have a sight of that light?

55 Mr. OSMAN.
About an hour afterwards.

56 Senator BURTON.
What do you think about it? Did it sail away?

57 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir; she sailed right away.

58 Senator BURTON.
You are sure you saw that light?

59 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir; quite sure, sir.

60 Senator BURTON.
What was it, a stern light?

61 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir; a masthead light.

62 Senator BURTON.
Does a sailing ship have a white light on her masthead?

63 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

64 Senator BURTON.
You are sure that light was not a star?

65 Mr. OSMAN.
I am sure it was not a star.

66 Senator BURTON.

Just what happened when you were on the boat? Did you see this iceberg?

67 Mr. OSMAN.
Not until the morning.

68 Senator BURTON.
Are you sure it was the one?

69 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir; you could see it was the one, sir.

70 Senator BURTON.
How high was it?

71 Mr. OSMAN.
At a rough estimate it was 100 feet out of the water.

72 Senator BURTON.
What shape was it?

73 Mr. OSMAN.
It was round, and then had one big point sticking up on one side of it.

74 Senator BURTON.
What was its color?

75 Mr. OSMAN.
It was apparently dark, like dirty ice.

76 Senator BURTON.
How far away from it were you when you saw it?

77 Mr. OSMAN.
About 100 yards.

78 Senator BURTON.
How did you know that was the one you struck?

79 Mr. OSMAN.
We could see it was the biggest berg there, and the other ones would not have done so much damage, I think.

80 Senator BURTON.
Was there any mark on the side, as if it had collided with something?

81 Mr. OSMAN.
It looked as if there was a piece broken off after she struck, and the ice fell on board. I went and picked up a piece of ice and took it down below in my [sleeping room](#).

82 Senator BURTON.
There was some little time that you were down below, was there not?

83 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir; a matter of 10 minutes.

84 Senator BURTON.
Not more than 10 minutes?

85 Mr. OSMAN.
Not more than 10 minutes.

86 Senator BURTON.
I do not see, quite, how you account for all the time after the collision before you took to the boat.

87 Mr. OSMAN.
It is only just like walking out of the door.

88 Senator BURTON.
About what time was this boat lowered in which you went away?

..People calm, follow ord

..Filling Rules (generic)

89 Mr. OSMAN.
I could not say exactly the time.

90 Senator BURTON.
About how long after the collision?

91 Mr. OSMAN.
About an hour, I suppose - an hour and a half.

92 Senator BURTON.
You say the boat listed. Did it list to the port or the starboard?

93 Mr. OSMAN.
To the starboard.

94 Senator BURTON.
How much?

95 Mr. OSMAN.
A matter of about that angle (*indicating*). A gradual list, it was; four or five degrees.

96 Senator BURTON.
Did you take any part in loading any of the other boats?

97 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes; I helped load four of the boats on the starboard side.

98 Senator BURTON.
Was there any panic?

99 Mr. OSMAN.
No; there was no panic at all. I was helping women and children in the boat and the crew was lowering boats.

100 Senator BURTON.
Was there any panic?

101 Mr. OSMAN.
I never seen no panic there.

102 Senator BURTON.
When you were down on that lower deck, did you see persons moving about there?

103 Mr. OSMAN.
No; there was nobody there at all, because Mr. Murdoch was singing out, "Is there any more women and children here to put in my boat?"

104 Senator BURTON.
I mean, before you went up to man the boat, were there any people moving about where you were, down on the lower deck?

105 Mr. OSMAN.
Oh, no, sir; there was nobody there.

106 Senator BURTON.
Where are the seamen's quarters?

107 Mr. OSMAN.
Up here, underneath the forecastle head.

108 Senator BURTON.
They are on the upper deck, underneath the forecastle head?

109 Mr. OSMAN.
That is it, sir.

110 Senator BURTON.
How many seaman are there?

111 Mr. OSMAN.
Forty-four, altogether.

112 Senator BURTON.
You did not have all the boat's crew there, then; there are more than 44 in the crew, are there not? You mean by that able seamen, do you not?

113 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

114 Senator BURTON.
You do not mean quartermasters, and such as that?

115 Mr. OSMAN.
No; I do not count quartermasters with the seamen.

116 Senator BURTON.
Do you count lookout men with the able seamen?

117 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes. They all live in the same place. But the quartermaster is in a different place, on the other side.

118 Senator BURTON.
You do not mean that those were all of the crew, even excluding the quartermasters, do you?

119 Mr. OSMAN.
That is all there is in the crew, sir.

120 Senator BURTON.
Just count those again?

121 Mr. OSMAN.
There was 25 altogether in both watches, 13 in one watch and 12 in the other; then there was 2 deckmen, the cook of the forecastle, 2 window cleaners, 6 lookout men, and 2 masters-at-arms counted with the seamen.

122 Senator BURTON.
You are just counting the men in your mess?

123 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

124 Senator BURTON.
How many quartermasters?

125 Mr. OSMAN.
Six quartermasters. One boatswain, boatswain's mate, carpenter, and joiner.

126 Senator BURTON.
How far were you away from the boat when she sank?

127 Mr. OSMAN.
Sixty to 100 yards.

128 Senator BURTON.
Was there much suction?

129 Mr. OSMAN.
There was no suction whatever. When we were in the boat we shoved off from the ship, and I said to the officer, "See if you can get alongside to see if you can get any more hands, to see if you can squeeze any more hands in." So the women then started to getting nervous after I said that, and the officer said "All right." The women disagreed to that. We pulled around to the starboard side of the ship and found we could not get to the starboard side because it was listing too far. We pulled astern that way again, and after we got astern we lay on our oars and saw the ship go down. After she got to a certain angle she exploded, broke in halves, and it seemed to me as if all the engines and

everything that was in the after part slid out into the forward part, and the after part came up right again, and as soon as it came up right down it went again.

130 Senator BURTON.
What do you think those explosions were?

131 Mr. OSMAN.
The boilers bursting.

132 Senator BURTON.
What makes you think that?

133 Mr. OSMAN.
The cold water coming under the red-hot boilers caused the explosions.

134 Senator BURTON.
You reasoned that out?

135 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes; but you could see the explosions by the smoke coming right up the funnels.

136 Senator BURTON.
Did you see any steam and smoke coming?

137 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes.

138 Senator BURTON.
Did you see any sparks?

139 Mr. OSMAN.
It was all black; looked like as if it was lumps of coal, and all that.

140 Senator BURTON.
Coming up through the funnels?

141 Mr. OSMAN.
Through the funnels.

142 Senator BURTON.
That is, there was a great amount of black smoke coming up through the funnels just after this explosion?

143 Mr. OSMAN.
Just after the explosion.

144 Senator BURTON.
And there were lumps of coal, etc, coming up?

145 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes; pretty big lumps. I do not know what it was.

146 Senator BURTON.
Did any water come up?

147 Mr. OSMAN.
I never seen no water; only the steam and very black smoke.

148 Senator BURTON.
Why did you not go back to the place where the boat had sunk after she had gone down?

149 Mr. OSMAN.
The women were all nervous and we pulled around as far as we could get to her, so that the women would not see, and it would not cause a panic, and we got as close as we would dare to by the women. We could not have taken any more hands into the boat; it was impossible. We might have got one in. That is about all. The steerage passengers were all down below, and after she got a certain distance it seemed to me all the passengers climbed up her.

..(No) Class discrimin
..Crew and 3rd class
..Finds gates locked



150 Senator BURTON.
Steerage passengers, too?

151 Mr. OSMAN.
All the passengers there were.

152 Senator BURTON.
That were left on board?

153 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes.

154 Senator BURTON.
Did you see any of them climb up there?

155 Mr. OSMAN.
It looked blacker. She was white around there (*indicating*), and it looked like a big crowd of people.

156 Senator BURTON.
Then you think the passengers, first, second, and third class, went up on the top deck?

157 Mr. OSMAN.
On the top deck; yes.

158 Senator BURTON.
Do you think there were any passengers down in here when she went down (*indicating on diagram*)?

159 Mr. OSMAN.
I do not think so. I could not say as to that.

160 Senator BURTON.
Was there any panic amongst these steerage passengers when they started manning the boats?

161 Mr. OSMAN.
No; I saw several people come up from there, and go straight up on the [boat deck](#). That is one thing I saw; and the men stood back while the women and children got in the boat.

162 Senator BURTON.
Steerage passengers, as well as others?

163 Mr. OSMAN.
One steerage passenger, a man, and his wife and two children, were in my boat; all belonged to the one family.

164 Senator BURTON.
You took the man?

165 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes; that was the only man passenger we had in the boat.

166 Senator BURTON.
What do you think? Do you think they believed the ship would float?

167 Mr. OSMAN.
I thought so, myself. I thought it was going down a certain depth, and would float after that.

168 Senator BURTON.
Did you hear any conversation around among the passengers as to whether she would sink or not?

169 Mr. OSMAN.
No; I never heard anything amongst the passengers as to whether she would sink. The only thing I heard was one passenger was saying he was going in the

boat, and stand by the ship.

170 Senator BURTON.
You heard one passenger say that?

171 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes.

172 Senator BURTON.
Would you rather have gotten into the boat, or stayed on the ship?

173 Mr. OSMAN.
I was put into the boat.

174 Senator BURTON.
Which would you rather have done?

175 Mr. OSMAN.
You see it was rather dangerous to stop aboard.

176 Senator BURTON.
The *Titanic* was dangerous?

177 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes.

178 Senator BURTON.
So in your judgment it was safer to have gone in the boat than to have stayed on the *Titanic*?

179 Mr. OSMAN.
Oh, yes, sir.

180 Senator BURTON.
That was when you left?

181 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

182 Senator BURTON.
What did you think when the first boat was launched?

183 Mr. OSMAN.
I did not think she was going down then.

184 Senator BURTON.
Did you carry any messages for any of the officers around the ship?

185 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir. All the seamen were taking the covers off and getting the falls out. They stow all the falls on the inside of the boats.

186 Senator BURTON.
Did the boat gear run off all right?

187 Mr. OSMAN.
The gear worked all right in my boat.

188 Senator BURTON.
How many boats did you help load?

189 Mr. OSMAN.
Three on the starboard side, one on the port, and then I got in my own boat.

190 Senator BURTON.
Did the gear run all right in all cases?

191 Mr. OSMAN.
Yes, sir.

192 Senator BURTON.
Was the gear all in the boat that should have been; in your boat?

193 Mr. OSMAN.
In my boat, so far as I know. I do not know whether they were supplied with biscuits in my boat. I do not think they do that for an emergency boat.

194 Senator BURTON.
Were there biscuits in your boat?

195 Mr. OSMAN.
No, sir. There was water in the boat, but there were no biscuits.

196 Senator BURTON.
Do you think if life rafts had been on board you could have launched those and saved any passengers?

197 Mr. OSMAN.
There was plenty of time left, sir.

198 Senator BURTON.
To have launched life rafts?

199 Mr. OSMAN.
Plenty of time.

200 Senator BURTON.
If you had had life rafts, then, in your opinion, could you have saved some more passengers?

201 Mr. OSMAN.
We could have saved some more. If they had had rafts and boats, they had time enough to save every soul aboard there.

202 Senator BURTON.
Which, in your judgment, are better, the rafts or the boats, on a steamer of that size?

203 Mr. OSMAN.
Rafts are as safe as anything.

204 F. OSMAN

205 Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of April, A.D. 1912.
[SEAL.]

206 E. L. CORNELIUS,
Notary.