

United States Senate Inquiry

Day 11

Testimony of Archibald Gracie

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(The witness was sworn by the chairman.)

Senator SMITH.

Give us your full name and address.

Mr. GRACIE.

[Archibald Gracie](#), 1527 Sixteenth Street NW., Washington, D.C.

Senator SMITH.

And your business?

Mr. GRACIE.

Historian.

Senator SMITH.

Colonel, you were one of the passengers on the ill-fated [Titanic](#). Will you kindly, as succinctly and as tersely as possible, in your own way, trace the principal events leading up to the sinking of that ship on Sunday night, April 14?

Mr. GRACIE.

Do you want me to tell everything of my own knowledge, specifying in each case where it is outside of my own knowledge?

Senator SMITH.

We are particularly anxious for such information as bears upon the completeness of the ship, upon her management as you observed it, upon her equipment so far as you are able to testify to it, and the conduct of her officers and crew.

Mr. GRACIE.

I was awakened in my [stateroom](#) at 12 o'clock. The time, 12 o'clock, was noted on my watch, which was on my dresser, which I looked at promptly when I got up. At the same time, almost instantly, I heard the blowing off of steam, and the ship's machinery seemed to stop.

It was so slight I could not be positive of it. All through the voyage the machinery did not manifest itself at all from my position in my stateroom, so perfect was the boat. I looked out of the door of my stateroom, glanced up and down the passageway to see if there was any commotion, and I did not see anybody nor hear anybody moving at all; but I did not like the sound of it, so I thought I would partially dress myself, which I did, and went on deck.

I went on what they call the [A deck](#). Presently some passengers gathered around. We looked over the sides of the ship to see whether there was any indication of what had caused this noise. I soon learned from friends around that an iceberg had struck us.

Presently along came a gentleman, described by [Mr. Stengel](#) here, who had ice in his hands. Some of this ice was handed to us with the statement that we had better take this home for souvenirs. Nobody had any fear at that time at all. I looked on deck outside to see if there was any indication of a list. I could not distinguish any. At that time I joined my friend, [Mr. Clint Smith](#), and he and I in the cabin did notice a list, but thought it best not to say anything about it for fear of creating some commotion. Then we agreed to stick by each other through thick and thin if anything occurred, and to meet later on. He went to his cabin and I went to mine. In my cabin I packed my three bags very hurriedly. I thought if we were going to be removed to some other ship it would be easy for the steward to get my luggage out.

As I went up on deck the next time I saw [Mr. Ismay](#) with one of the officers. He looked very self contained, as though he was not fearful of anything, and that gave encouragement to my thought that perhaps the disaster was not anything particularly serious.

Presently I noticed that women and men had life preservers on, and under protest, as I thought it was rather previous, my steward put a life preserver around myself and I went up on deck, on the A deck. Here I saw a number of people, among others some ladies whom I had told when I first came on the ship at Southampton that I hoped they would let me do anything I could for them during the voyage. These ladies were [Mrs. E. D. Appleton](#), [Mrs. Cornell](#), and [Mrs. Browne](#), the publisher's wife, of Boston, and [Miss Evans](#). They were somewhat disturbed, of course. I reassured them and pointed out to them the lights of what I thought was a ship or steamer in the distance.

[Mr. Astor](#) came up and he leaned over the side of the deck, which was an enclosed deck, and there were windows and the glass could be let down. I pointed toward the bow, and there were distinctly seen these lights - or a light, rather one single light. It did not seem to be a star, and that is what we all thought it was, the light of some steamer.

Senator SMITH.
How far away.

Mr. GRACIE.
I could not judge, only by what they told me. I should say it could not have been more than 6 miles away.

Senator SMITH.
Was it ahead?

Mr. GRACIE.
Ahead toward the bow, because I had to lean over, and here was this lifeboat down by the side at that time, and I pointed right ahead and showed Mr. Astor so he could see, and he had to lean away over.

Some time elapsed, I should say from three-quarters of an hour to an hour before we were ordered to the boats. Then a young English officer of the ship, a tall thin chap, whose name was Murphy - I think it was Officer Murphy -

Senator FLETCHER.
[Murdoch](#)?

Mr. GRACIE.
No; not Murdoch. Murphy, I think it was. He was the sixth officer, or something of that sort.

Senator SMITH.

[Moody](#), was it not?

Mr. GRACIE.

Moody was his name. He said, "No man beyond this line." Then the women went beyond that line. I saw that these four ladies, with whose safety I considered myself entrusted, went beyond that line to get amidships on this deck, which was A deck. Then I saw [Mr. Straus and Mrs. Straus](#), of whom I had seen a great deal during the voyage. I had heard them discussing that if they were going to die they would die together. We tried to persuade Mrs. Straus to go alone, without her husband, and she said no. Then we wanted to make an exception of the husband, too, because he was an elderly man, and he said no, he would share his fate with the rest of the men, and that he would not go beyond. So I left them there.

Just prior to this time I had passed through A deck, or perhaps it was about this same time. Just about the time we were ordered to take the boats, I passed through the A deck, going from the stern toward the bow. I saw four gentlemen all alone in the smoking room, whom I recognized as [Mr. Millet](#), [Mr. Moore](#), and [Mr. Butt](#), and who I afterwards ascertained to have been [Mr. Ryerson](#). They seemed to be absolutely intent upon what they were doing, and disregarding anything about what was going on on the decks outside.

Then I found my friend Smith, and on deck A, on the bow side, we worked together under the [second officer](#) in loading and helping the women and babies and children aboard the different boats. I think we loaded about two boats there.

This was on the enclosed deck.

Senator SMITH.

On which side did you say, Colonel?

Mr. GRACIE.

This was the port side.

The only incident I remember in particular at this point is when [Mrs. Astor](#) was put in the boat. She was lifted up through the window, and her husband helped her on the other side, and when she got in, her husband was on one side of this window and I was on the other side, at the next window. I heard Mr. Astor ask the second officer whether he would not be allowed to go aboard this boat to protect his wife. He said, "No, sir; no man is allowed on this boat or any of the boats until the ladies are off." Mr. Astor then said, "Well, tell me what is the number of this boat so I may find her afterwards," or words to that effect.

The answer came back, "[No. 4.](#)"

The next scene was on the deck above.

Senator SMITH.

Was there a special reason why Mr. Astor asked to get into that boat with his wife?

Mr. GRACIE.

Yes; I think it was on account of the condition of his wife. If that had been explained to the second officer, possibly he might have been allowed to get in that boat.

Senator SMITH.

But that was the reason he gave?

Mr. GRACIE.

The second officer did not know that it was Mr. Astor at all. He did not know. I believe he told me that he testified before this committee to the effect that he did not know Mr. Astor, and when I recalled the circumstance to him and the conversation that passed between them he said, "Oh, is that the man?" He said, "Was that Mr. Astor." That was the conversation that took place.

Then we went to the [boat deck](#), which was the deck above. There were no men allowed in the boats that were loaded below, not one, except the crews necessary to man the boats. On the deck above we loaded about two boats, at least two boats. That deck was above deck A, at the bow on the port side. When we were loading the last boat, just a short time before it was fully loaded, a palpable list toward the port side began, and the officer called out, "All passengers to the starboard side," and Smith and myself went to the starboard side, still at the bow of the ship. Prior to our going to the starboard side we had rushed up and down in the vicinity of the bow, calling out, "Any more ladies? Any more ladies?" Then we went to the starboard side. On the starboard side, to my surprise, I found there were ladies still there, and Mrs. Browne and Miss Evans particularly, the ones whom I supposed had been loaded into a boat from A deck, below, about three-quarters of an hour before. There I saw also [Mr. George Widener](#) and [Mr. John B. Thayer](#). I speak of them particularly, because I knew them, and of course, Mr. Clint Smith was there with me, too.

As to what happened on the other side during our departure, the information I was given by the second officer was that some of the steerage passengers tried to rush the boat, and he fired off a pistol to make them get out, and they did get out.

Senator SMITH.

Who fired that pistol?

Mr. GRACIE.

Lightoller. That is what he told me. He is the second officer.

Senator SMITH.

Are you sure it was not Murdoch?

Mr. GRACIE.

I am sure it was not Murdoch.

Senator SMITH.

Or [Lowe](#)?

Mr. GRACIE.

I am sure it was not. That is what Mr. Lightoller himself told me. I did not hear the pistol. That is what I was told by Lightoller himself. That is all hearsay, Senator.

I want to say that there was nothing but the most heroic conduct on the part of all men and women at that time, where I was at the bow on the port side. There was no man who asked to get in a boat, with the single exception that I have already mentioned. No woman even sobbed or wrung her hands, and everything appeared perfectly orderly. Lightoller was splendid in his conduct with the crew, and the crew did their duty. It seemed to me it was rather a little bit more difficult than it should have been to launch the boats alongside the ship. I do not know the cause of that. I do not know whether it was on account of the newness of it all, the painting, or something of that sort. I know I had to use my muscle as best I could in trying to push those boats so as to get them over the gunwale.

Senator SMITH.

You refer now to the tackle?

Mr. GRACIE.

I refer to the port bow, at the side.

Senator SMITH.

Do you refer now to the tackle or to the davits or to any particular part of the mechanism?

Mr. GRACIE.

No; I do not. I refer to it in a general way, as to there being difficulty at that point in that way, in trying to lift them and push them over the gunwale.

The crew seemed to resent my working with them, but they were very glad when I worked with them later on. Every opportunity I got to help, I helped.

When I arrived on the other side, as I have said, there were these women, and of a sudden I heard the cry that there was room for more women on the port side; so I grabbed by the arm these two ladies, Miss Evans and Mrs. Browne, and conducted them to the port side. But I did not get but half way - that is, directly at the bow - when the crew made what you might call a dead line, and said, "No men are allowed beyond this line." So I let the ladies go beyond, and then about six ladies followed after the two that I had particular charge of.

From Mrs. Browne I learned what happened thereafter; that she was after Miss Evans, and Miss Evans could have gotten over first, and could possible have been pulled into the boat and gotten away; but she sacrificed her own life in order that Mrs. Browne might go first. Mrs. Browne was able to board the boat; but this young lady I think must have collapsed and lost her nerve, and could not climb over the gunwale in order to get in. If there had been some man there to help her, she possibly would have been saved.

Senator SMITH.

Describe this gunwale, as you call it?

Mr. GRACIE.

This gunwale is the side of the deck which prevents people from falling into the sea.

Senator SMITH.

A rail?

Mr. GRACIE.

The rail, yes.

Senator SMITH.

How high from the deck?

Mr. GRACIE.

I should think it was about 3 feet or 3 1/2 feet high from the deck.

Senator SMITH.

And it was of wood?

Mr. GRACIE.

It was of wood.

Senator SMITH.

Was there more than one rail on it.

Mr. GRACIE.

There was this one rail that was about so thick (*indicating*) on the top.

Senator SMITH.

What else was there between there and the floor of the deck?

Mr. GRACIE.

Between there and the floor was part of the ship that was underneath.

Senator SMITH.

But would it have been possible to crawl under that rail?

Mr. GRACIE.

Oh, no; no, indeed. There was no open space underneath the rail. It was solid.

Meanwhile the crew were trying to launch a boat, a [collapsible canvas boat](#), as they call it, that was on the hurricane deck, or the bridge deck. This was let down from the bridge deck, and we tried to slide it along those oars that they put in there for that purpose. There was no other boat at that time being lowered from the deck davits.

Finally this boat came down on the deck. I do not know whether it was injured or not by the fall, but we were afraid that it had been injured.

I may say that before this happened one of the men on the deck, when loosening this boat from the hurricane deck, called out, "Is there any passenger who has a knife?" I said I had my penknife, if that would do, and I passed that up. For just what purpose it was used I do not know. It struck me as rather peculiar that they should find the want of some tool for the purposes for which it was intended.

Senator SMITH.

How long after this did the boat go down?

Mr. GRACIE.

Soon after that the water came up on the boat deck. We saw it and heard it. I had not noticed in the meantime that we were gradually sinking. I was engaged all the time in working, as I say, at those davits, trying to work on the falls to let this boat down. Mr. Smith and myself thought then that there was no more chance for us there, there were so many people at that particular point, so we decided to go toward the stern, still on the starboard side, and as we were going toward the stern, to our surprise and consternation, up came from the decks below a mass of humanity, men and women - and we had thought that all the women were already loaded into the boats. The water was then right by us, and we tried to jump, Mr. Smith and myself did. We were in a sort of cul-de-sac which was formed by the cabin and the bridge, the structure that is right on the boat deck. We were right in this cul-de-sac. I have a diagram here which may explain the position better. The top of the page is the bow (*indicating on diagram*), and on the right, or on the starboard side, is where this last boat that I speak of was, where the first officer, Murdoch, was at work trying to launch the boat. I would like to point out to you there my position with Mr. Smith. I will put a star there on the diagram and then you can see it better (*marking on diagram*). It was where that star is, where I put that cross. That is the port side and this is the starboard side, and this is the structure that was on the boat deck, and this is the top of the hurricane deck or the bridge deck, where the funnels came down to the top and where I was right where that cross is (*indicating on diagram*).

Senator SMITH.

What occurred there?

Mr. GRACIE.

[Mr. Smith](#) jumped to try to reach the deck. I jumped also. We were unsuccessful. Then the wave came and struck us, the water came and struck us, and then I rose as I would rise in bathing in the surf, and I gave a jump with the water, which took me right on the hurricane deck, and around that was an iron railing, and I grabbed that iron railing and held tight to it; and I looked around, and the same wave which saved me engulfed everybody around me. I turned to the right and to the left and looked. Mr. Smith was not there, and I could not see any of this vast mass of humanity. They had all disappeared. [Officer Lightoller](#) tells me that at the same time he was on the bridge deck, where I have marked it "L", and that the first officer, [Murdoch](#), was about 15 feet away, where you see that boat near the davits there. That boat, I understand, was thrown overboard.

Senator BURTON.

What do you say became of that boat?

Mr. GRACIE.

It was thrown overboard.

Senator FLETCHER.

It was never launched?

Mr. GRACIE.

It was never launched; no, sir.

Senator SMITH.

That is not the boat that was taken from the top of the officers' quarters, the collapsible?

Mr. GRACIE.

There were two; one on the port side and this one on the starboard side. This knife which was called for may have been wanted for the boat on the other side, on the bridge deck there. I heard that they called for two knives. There is where the officers' quarters were, possibly.

Senator SMITH.

So far as you know, was this boat to which you have referred put to any use that night?

Mr. GRACIE.

Yes.

Senator SMITH.

Describe it.

Mr. GRACIE.

That is the boat that I came to when I came up from below. I was taken down with the ship, and hanging on to that railing, but I soon let go. I felt myself whirled around, swam under water, fearful that the hot water that came up from the boilers might boil me up - and the second officer told me that he had the same feeling - swam it seemed to me with unusual strength, and succeeded finally in reaching the surface and in getting a good distance away from the ship.

Senator SMITH.

How far away?

Mr. GRACIE.

I could not say, because I could not see the ship. When I came up to the surface there was no ship there. The ship would then have been behind me, and all around me was wreckage. I saw what seemed to be bodies all around. Do you want me to go through the harrowing details?

Senator SMITH.

No; I am not particular about that. I would like to know specifically whether, while this ship was sinking, and you were in close proximity to it, you noticed any special suction?

Mr. GRACIE.

No; I noticed no suction, and I did not go down so far as that it would affect my nose or my ears. My great concern was to keep my breath, which I was able to do, and being able to do that was what I think saved me.

Senator SMITH.

Was the water cold?

Mr. GRACIE.

I did not notice any coldness of the water at that time. I was too much preoccupied in getting away.

Senator SMITH.

Did it have any bad effect on you?

Mr. GRACIE.

No, not then, but afterwards, on the raft. I was on the raft, which I will speak of, all night; and I did not notice how cold the water was until I got on the raft. There was a sort of gulp, as if something had occurred, behind me, and I suppose that was where the water was closing up, where the ship had gone down; but the surface of the water was perfectly still, and there were, I say, this wreckage, and these bodies, and there were the horrible sounds of drowning people and people gasping for breath.

While collecting the wreckage together I got on a big wooden crate, some sort of wooden crate, or wood of that sort. I saw an upturned boat, and I struck out for that boat, and there I saw what I supposed were members of the crew on this upset boat. I grabbed the arm of one of them and pulled myself up on this boat.

Senator SMITH.

Did anybody resist you at all?

Mr. GRACIE.

What is that?

Senator SMITH.

Was there any resistance offered?

Mr. GRACIE.

Oh, no; none whatever. I was among the first. I suppose the boat was then about half full.

Senator SMITH.

How many were on it?

Mr. GRACIE.

I suppose there must have been between 15 and 20.

Senator SMITH.

Was Officer Lightoller on it?

Mr. GRACIE.

Yes; Officer Lightoller was on that same boat.

Senator SMITH.

At that time?

Mr. GRACIE.

At that same time. Then I came up to the surface and was told by Lightoller what had occurred. One of the funnels fell from the steamer, and was falling toward him, but when it was going to strike him, young [Mr. Thayer](#), who was also on the same boat, said that it splashed near him, within 15 yards, he said, and it splashed him toward this raft. We climbed on this raft. There was one man who was in front, with an oar, and another man in the stern with what I think was a piece of a board, propelling the boat along. Then we loaded the raft, as we

now call it, with as many as it would contain, until she became under water, until we could take no more, because the water was up to our waists.

Senator SMITH.

Just one moment. That was while you were on the bottom of the overturned boat?

Mr. GRACIE.

Of the overturned boat; yes, sir.

Senator SMITH.

Was that a collapsible?

Mr. GRACIE.

That was a collapsible canvas boat.

Senator SMITH.

What was the bottom, oval or flat?

Mr. GRACIE.

The top was irregular, and about 3 1/2 feet wide, I should say. It was like a canoe - distinct, therefore, from the lifeboats - and it was about, I should say, between 25 and 30 feet long.

Senator SMITH.

Were you standing on top of this overturned boat?

Mr. GRACIE.

Not at first. We did not stand on it until just before sun up. Our concern now was to get out of the wreckage and to get away from the swimmers in the water before they tried to get on the boat, and all of us would be lost. You do not want the details of that, nor the horrors of it? That does not concern you.

Senator SMITH.

No; that does not concern us much. I will change that. That will not be helpful to us in our deliberations.

Mr. GRACIE.

We were taken through the wreckage and away from the screams of the drowning people, and we were on the lookout then in every direction for lights and ships to come to our rescue, hallooing all the time "Boat ahoy," or "Ship ahoy," our spirits kept up all the time by what we thought were steamship lights and boat lights, but I think most of those lights we saw were the lights of the lifeboats of the *Titanic*, particularly one that was steering ahead of us, with green lights, and throwing up rockets, I think, or making lights every little while - not rockets, but making a light. I do not know what kind of light they had, but it was a green light that was every little while conspicuous from some lifeboats directly ahead of us.

Senator SMITH.

There were no explosions of any kind from that lifeboat?

Mr. GRACIE.

Which lifeboat, the lifeboat we saw ahead?

Senator SMITH.

The one with the green light. Was the green light the only light you saw?

Mr. GRACIE.

No; the only light that was right straight ahead of us; and then right to the port side we finally did see the lights of a ship, and that was finally the *Carpathia*, and the [Marconi man](#) who was on the raft said he thought this was the *Carpathia*, because he had conversed with the operator on the *Carpathia*. That was the nearest ship, he thought, to us at the time. We had to keep the equilibrium of the boat all night long, from half-past 2. I say half-past 2; I might say from 2.22, because my watch, that I spoke of before, when I looked at it afterwards on the

Carpathia, had stopped, and the time indicated was 2.22. So that would indicate the time between the collision and the time that I went down with the ship. We stood upon this collapsible boat in the early morn, just before dawn, so that we might be seen the better, and also, it was not quite so cold, although our feet were in the water. Then, as the sun came up, a welcome sight was the four lifeboats of the *Titanic* on our starboard side. Lightoller blew his whistle and ordered them to come over and take us off of our upset boat. "Aye, aye, sir," they replied, and immediately turned toward us, and two boats came right up close and then began the difficult task of a transfer, and some were loaded. We got on the nearest lifeboat, the bow of this, and some went on this one and some went on the one adjoining. The complement of the lifeboat I was on was filled up to 65.

Senator SMITH.

How many women were there?

Mr. GRACIE.

There were a considerable number of women; possibly half the number were women.

Senator SMITH.

What was the number of that boat, do you know?

Mr. GRACIE.

I do not. I tried to find out what the number of that boat was, but I did not find out what number it was.

Senator SMITH.

On your way to the *Carpathia* did you see any ice or icebergs?

Mr. GRACIE.

Away off in the distance we saw these icebergs, in the direction from which we had come during the night, and toward the port side. We were transferred successfully from the raft. The second officer stayed until the last, lifting up the body of one of the crew and putting it right down by me, where I chafed his temples and his wrists to see whether there was any life in him. Then rigor mortis set in and I thought the man was dead, and there was no more use trying to resuscitate him. Then it seemed an interminable time before we got to the *Carpathia*, the boat I was in towing another boat behind, and after two hours, possibly, we finally reached the *Carpathia*, and the women were put in these seats and lifted up to the deck. I got hold of one of the ladders that was hanging down the side and I ran up that ladder.

Senator SMITH.

Do you know any of the women in your lifeboat by name?

Mr. GRACIE.

No; I do not. There was a splendid Frenchwoman, who was very kind to us, who loaned us one of her blankets to put over our heads - that is, four of us. One poor Englishman, who was the only other passenger besides Mr. Thayer and myself who was saved on this raft - he was bald, and for that reason he needed this protection, which was very grateful to him. It was very grateful to me, too. The people on the *Carpathia* received us with open arms, and provided us with hot comforts, and acted as ministering angels.

Senator SMITH.

Is that all?

Mr. GRACIE.

I have here some pictures that were taken by a cousin of mine on the *Carpathia*, who had a very good camera, which will show you the lifeboats, or some of them, as they arrived on the *Carpathia*. I hand these to you, with the distinct understanding that they are to be returned to me immediately, if that is agreeable to you.

Senator SMITH.

We are greatly obliged to you for your courtesy in responding to the committee's wish.

Senator FLETCHER.

You did not state where your stateroom was?

Mr. GRACIE.
My stateroom was on C deck; [No. 51](#).

Senator FLETCHER.
Did you yourself notice any air ports open?

Mr. GRACIE.
No.

Senator FLETCHER.
Do you know they were closed?

Mr. GRACIE.
I could not give you any information on that point, because I did not go down to any lower deck than C deck.

Senator FLETCHER.
You say there were two collapsible boats that were never launched?

Mr. GRACIE.
They were thrown overboard from the hurricane deck, at the bow.

Senator FLETCHER.
Was nobody in them?

Mr. GRACIE.
There was nobody in them.

Senator FLETCHER.
One on each side?

Mr. GRACIE.
One on each side. If you want those pictures explained, I can explain them for you. On the back of them you can see what they represent.

Senator SMITH.
How many men were on top of this overturned collapsible boat when the relief lifeboat came alongside?

Mr. GRACIE.
About 30; I know that, because the second officer called out, "How many are there aboard here?" The reply came back, "Thirty." Of my own knowledge I know there were 8 in front of me, and my own 2 made 10. We were in column of twos.

Senator SMITH.
Were there any women on it?

Mr. GRACIE.
There were no women on this boat, and we had to keep the equilibrium while standing up all the time. If one of us had fallen, we would have fallen to our knees, and then to the water, and that would have been the end of us.

Senator BURTON.
You say you were awakened about 12 o'clock?

Mr. GRACIE.
Yes, sir.

Senator BURTON.
By whom?

Mr. GRACIE.
I was awakened by the noise.

Senator BURTON.
You were not awakened by any steward or any employee on board the boat?

Mr. GRACIE.
No, sir.

Senator BURTON.
I believe Senator Smith has asked the other question I intended to ask, as to how many people there were on the collapsible, and you said about 30?

Mr. GRACIE.
About 30; 27 of the crew and 3 passengers.

Senator SMITH.
We are very much obliged to you. That is all. Your pictures are here with Senator Fletcher.

(Witness Excused.)

Day 11

Testimony of Archibald Gracie, recalled

Senator SMITH.
[Col. Gracie](#), would you like to make some additional statement beyond the one which you have just made?

Mr. GRACIE.
Yes, sir; if I might be allowed to do so.

Senator SMITH.
Please do so.

Mr. GRACIE.
I want to speak of [Maj. Butt](#) and [Mr. Clarence Moore](#) and [Mr. Millet](#). I testified that they were in the [smoking room](#). I want it understood that the time they were in the smoking room was about 1 o'clock. That was not while the boats were being lowered. I do not know what they did after that, after I saw them, but I did not see them on the upper deck or on the deck at all. That is the last I saw of them.

Senator SMITH.
This time that you speak of was after the collision?

Mr. GRACIE.
After the collision.

Senator SMITH.
And about an hour before the boat sank?

Mr. GRACIE.
All of that. It was more than an hour.

Senator SMITH.
An hour and 20 minutes.

Mr. GRACIE.

Yes, fully that. So that whatever they did after that is not in my testimony at all.

Senator SMITH.

You did not see any of them after that?

Mr. GRACIE.

I did not see any of them after that. I only mention that fact, because they were perfectly imperturbable, showing their confidence in the ship, that no disaster was going to take place. In fact a great deal of my testimony is given for that purpose, to show how unconcerned everybody was about this serious disaster until the very last.

Senator SMITH.

That is all, Col. Gracie.

(Witness excused.)

GRACIE, Colonel Archibald (2)

53 ans- 1ère classe- billet 113780- £28 10s- embarqué à Southampton- écrivain/ historien- canot pliable B puis canot 12.

" ... there arose to the sky the most horrible sounds ever heard by mortal man except by those of us who survived this terrible tragedy. The agonising cries of death from over a thousand throats, the wails and groans of the suffering ... none of us will ever forget to our dying day."

"After sinking with the ship, it appeared to me as if I was propelled by some great force through the water. This might have been occasioned by explosions under the water, and I remembered fearful stories of people being boiled to death. Again and again I prayed for deliverance, although I felt sure that the end had come. I had the greatest difficulty in holding my breath until I came to the surface. I knew that once I inhaled, the water would suffocate me. When I got under water I struck out with all my strength for the surface. I got to air again after a time, which seemed to me to be unending. There was nothing in sight save the ocean, dotted with ice and strewn with large masses of wreckage. Dying men and women all about me were groaning and crying piteously. By moving from one piece of wreckage to another, at last I reached a cork raft. Soon the raft became so full that it seemed as if she would sink if more came on board her. The crew for self-preservation had therefore to refuse to permit any others to climb aboard. This was the most pathetic and horrible scene of all. The piteous cries of those around us still ring in my ears, and I will remember them to my dying day. 'hold on to what you have, old boy!' we shouted to each man who tried to get on board. 'One more of you would sink us all!' Many of those whom we refused answered as they went to their death, 'Good luck – God bless you!'"

Source:

***Titanic: A Survivor's Story*, by Col. A. Gracie**

WASHINGTON MAN TELLS HARROWING DETAILS OF WRECK

Washington Times

Friday 19 April 1912

Col. Gracie Describes Scenes on Titanic After the Accident

Last of the survivors to leave the sinking Titanic, Col. Archibald Gracie, of Washington, tells a story of horrible hardship in the icy waters after he was swept, clinging to a wooden grating, from the topmost deck when, with a frightful roar, the broken ship plunged beneath the swirling sea, and remained for several hours battling with other humans in a mass of tangled wreckage before he was rescued.

Descriptions given by Colonel Gracie of the terrible scenes following the collision of the Titanic and the iceberg are nearly the same as told by the other survivors, who say the actual account of the awful disaster is beyond the limit of human expression. His rescue, he states, was nothing short of miraculous, as time and again he was washed by the dark waters from his improvised raft. His ability as a strung swimmer aided him materially, he says.

Colonel Gracie says that soon after he was swept into the sea and was struggling to keep above water, he encountered J. B. Thayer, jr., and together they fought for their lives.

"Too much praise can not be given to the valor of the men and women who were the actors in the terrible tragedy, as greater deeds of heroism were never done by man," he said. "Only in rare instances was it necessary for the officers to use force to prevent frenzied men from pushing aside women.

"No fiction tells of heroines who acted as did the brave women, wives of the men left behind. Officers were compelled to drag many of them away because they refused to leave their loved ones."

The Washingtonian had given up all hope of being saved and was resigned to his fate, he says, when the huge ship sank. He had seen the last lifeboat lowered and was standing on the topmost deck witnessing the wild scenes amid the awful wailing of women and the crying of children when the sinking ship with hardly a moment's warning fairly plunged into the maw of the ocean.

"Emotions never before experienced by man thrilled me, as I stood there and felt the great ship trembling, as the mammoth [sic] waves struck her side, and looked down into the black

waters at the lifeboats being tossed about with their burden of agonized humanity,” narrated Colonel Gracie to a representative of The Washington Times.

“Thoughts of being scalded to death possessed me for a few minutes as I heard the engines groaning, and felt the hot steam on my face resulting from the water rushing in below. I expected death, but had a momentary fear of being scalded. I was wavering between a determination to pump [sic] and trust to Providence or remain till the last.

“While the combating emotions were seething within me there was a roar and the ship began to disappear. A thousand thoughts flashed through my mind in that moment, and with a grim determination to die bravely I grabbed the brass rail and clung tightly. In a second the great cold waves reached me and I was swept like a chip into the raging sea, going down in the base of a huge funnel in the whirling water. I was spun around and around, and I held my breath with supernatural strength.

“It seemed like minutes before I reached the surface and was able to recover sufficiently to make an attempt to swim. Around me was wreckage, and I frantically grabbed at driftwood. Moans rent the air, women and children in the lifeboats being hysterical in their fear and sorrow. Occasionally a man struggled by me, and I think I discerned two or three women half floating on the waves, held up by an improvised life preserver of some sort.

“While in this helpless condition expecting every minute to be washed away from the wooded grating which supported me I encountered J. B. Thayer, jr.

Pulled Aboard Raft

“We rescued several half-dead men and held them on the raft until we stood nearly knee deep in the water and there was danger of us going to the bottom, and then we were forced to keep unfortunates away. We warned away quite a number of men who swam or were washed toward us.

“The hours we spent on that raft cannot be imagined. Cold and benumbed, we waited for more than two hours before there was the slightest hope of our being rescued. Some prayed. We all thought of home and the anguish and sorrow the disaster would cause. We were prepared to die.

“Day never broke on a more desolate scene, half clad men and women, the latter weeping and wailing, being cast about on the limitless water. Those on the big wooden grating---about thirty in number---were standing in water, the stronger supporting the weak and guarding against the tired and exhausted ones falling into a watery grave. Little was said by anyone, groans of agony being about the only human sound.

“It was like awakening from a frightful dream, as we recalled the scenes of the past two hours, and remembered how human life had been lost amid acts of bravery never chronicled by pen. We were speechless as we reflected on how the hand of death had been laid on the gayety and pleasure of the floating palace a few hours before, transforming hundred of happy souls

into creatures of deepest sorrow or victims of the greatest tragedy of the seas of all time. It did seem as though we had passed through a nightmare, but our cold, water-soaked bodies brought us back to the terrible realization of our fate.

“With daylight there was hope, but we had grown used to the expectation of death, and not a trace of joy was discernible on the faces of the survivors on our raft. Dark specks on the rolling waves indicated to us that the lifeboats filled with the women had not yet been sighted, and no doubt would be found before many hours, but we were resigned.”

Praise For Heroes

Returning to a description of the scenes immediately after the Titanic crashed into the mammoth iceberg, Colonel Gracie told of the heroic work of Major Butt, John Jacob Astor, Clarence Moore, Jacques F. Futrelle, H. B. Harris, and other men, who stood aside in obedience to the law of the sea that the woman and children might live. None of them, he said, failed to show his manhood. He stated that he aided John Jacob Astor in helping his young wife into a lifeboat, she pleading to be left to die with him.

“My last view of Major Butt---one that will live forever in my memory---was with that brave soldier coolly aiding the officers of the boat in directing the disembarkation of the women from that doomed ship. The recollection of him that is seared into my very brain is impressed by his last assertion of that manliness and chivalry so peculiarly his, that stately demeanor so well known to all Washingtonians. He died like the soldier and brave man he was.”

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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