

NAME Mr. Henry Rogers

# WHITE STAR LINE

ROYAL AND UNITED STATES MAIL STEAMERS

**ISMAY, IMRIE & CO.,**

1 COCKSPUR STREET, S.W.,  
38 LEADENHALL STREET, E.C.,  
LONDON,  
30 JAMES STREET  
LIVERPOOL  
AND  
CANUTE ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON

Agent at PARIS—  
NICHOLAS MARTIN, 9, Rue Scribe



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9 BROADWAY, NEW YORK,  
84 STATE STREET, BOSTON

JAMES SCOTT & CO., Agents  
QUEENSTOWN

NAME Mr. Charles Frederick Waddington Sedgwick

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# TITANIC

## Past and Present

by Edward S. Kamuda

*Additional text and editing by Karen Kamuda, Paul Loudon-Brown*

While passengers and crew were having lunch, wireless operators, John George "Jack" Phillips and Harold Bride, were busy catching up on a backlog of passenger messages. The previous evening the wireless set had broken down and not until early Sunday morning were the two men able to send or receive messages. Wireless telegraphy was fairly new, and many ships had none. Bride and Phillips worked for the Marconi Company who installed the sets on ships as a franchise, encouraging people to use the new technology to send messages back to land. Operators were paid per message. Until the miracle of wireless telegraphy, when a ship was at sea for weeks there was virtually no communication until she landed.

At 1:40 pm the operators' working routine was disturbed by an incoming message from the White Star liner Baltic: "Captain Smith, Titanic. Have had moderate variable winds and clear fine weather since leaving. Greek steamer Athinai reports passing icebergs and large quantities of field ice today in latitude 41.51 N. longitude 49.11 W...Wish you and Titanic all success. Commander." This particular message was handed directly to Captain Smith, who, instead of posting it in the chart room, gave it to Bruce Ismay who casually put it in his pocket. Later in the day Smith asked for it back. Smith was very

aware of the danger from ice. On Friday he had received ice warnings from the French Line vessel La Touraine and on Saturday Furness, Withy & Company's steamer Rappahannock reported having passed through heavy field ice.

Titanic steamed on and had passed this area without spotting any ice but messages from Baltic and the Cunard liner Caronia indicated that ice would continue to pose a threat during the voyage. Smith altered course steaming sixteen miles further south before making the turn, at the so-called "corner" and headed due west towards the Nantucket Lightship.

From the German steamer Amerika wireless operator Otto Reuter sent at 1:45 PM: "Amerika passed two large icebergs in 41 degrees 27' N., 50 degrees 8' W., on the 14th April."

Previous messages had been promptly delivered to the bridge but this one never got there. Titanic's wireless unexpectedly went dead and Phillips, busy trouble shooting, shoved aside probably the most critical ice warning. (This important document is in the Titanic Museum, Titanic Historical Society collection). By early evening, Phillips finally got the set operating.

Approaching the iceberg danger zone, Titanic remained on course, her powerful quadruple-expansion engines and single low pressure turbine drove the liner smoothly through the water

at a moderate 22.5 knots. The temperature was falling fast and by 8:55 PM it was only one degree above freezing. Second Officer Charles Lightoller sent word to the ship's carpenter John Hutchinson to see that the fresh water supply did not freeze. Soon afterwards Captain Smith entered the bridge and together with Lightoller discussed the conditions.

They noted the lack of wind and the unruffled sea. Up in the crow's nest lookouts Frederick Fleet and Reginald Lee had been told to keep a "sharp eye peeled" for small ice and growlers.

The night was crystal clear; there was no moon and the sky was filled with stars. The sea looked as smooth as plate glass, paradoxically, a disadvantage for the lookouts. Without waves breaking around an iceberg's base leaving a wake, it would be hard to spot without reflective moonlight, especially if a berg was showing its dark side.

Having assured himself that all was well, Captain Smith retired for the night, with the instruction "If in the slightest degree doubtful, let me know." Lightoller continued to peer into the darkness. Out beyond the ship's bow lay an inky, black expanse of water.

Phillips, the senior operator was interrupted by a message from the Atlantic Transport Line steamer *Mesaba*. The message read: "Ice report. In latitude 42 north to 41.25 north, longitude 49 west to longitude 50.3 west. Saw much heavy pack ice and great number large icebergs, also field ice. Weather good, clear."

Phillips replied: "Received, thanks." *Mesaba's* wireless operator waited to hear that the message had been relayed to the captain and sent two words: "Stand by." Instead Phillips continued sending the backlog of passenger messages to Cape Race. Another ice warning that was never delivered to the bridge.

At ten o'clock, First Officer William Murdoch

relieved Lightoller. The two men chatted briefly about the falling temperature, now down to 32 degrees and the emphatic reminder to the lookouts to be on their toes for any signs of icebergs. Lightoller then went below leaving Murdoch to the darkness and freezing night air.

By 11:30 PM most passengers had gone to bed, but a few night owls were gathered around a card table in the first class smoking room. In the main dining saloon, stewards preparing for Monday morning breakfast, carefully arranged gleaming silverplate and fine china edged in 22k gold on immaculate damask linen. As her passengers slept or relaxed, *Titanic* in a blaze of light from her sidelights illuminating the ambient darkness, forged steadily ahead, speed unabated, a white wave of foam curling around her bow. The clock on the first class grand staircase decorated with a carved panel of two classical figures representing Honor and Glory crowning Time showed 11:40 PM

A few moments later Fleet in the crow's nest began to make out what was at first, a small, irregular black object directly in their path. "There is ice ahead" he said to Lee, the other lookout, as he instinctively rang the crow's nest bell three times indicating to the bridge that something lay directly ahead.

Sixth Officer James Moody answered the telephone; "What did you see?" "Iceberg, right ahead!" shouted Fleet. Without emotion in his voice Moody said "Thank you." replaced the receiver and called loudly to Murdoch "Iceberg, right ahead." By now the First Officer had already seen the iceberg and rushed to the engine room telegraph moving the handles to "Stop" then "Full Speed Astern" and immediately ordered "hard a starboard." Moody standing behind the helmsman, Quartermaster Robert Hitchens, replied, "hard a starboard. The helm is hard over, sir."

The 46,000-ton liner seemed to take a prolonged length of time, gradually responding to her helm and began to turn to port. Murdoch intended to order "hard a port" to bring the stern away from the iceberg but it was too late; she struck. And as the iceberg glided by, breaking iron rivet heads fastening the steel shell plates causing massive leakage below the waterline, tons of ice fell onto the fo'c'sle and well deck. Murdoch closed the electric switch controlling the watertight doors. Deep inside the ship's alarm bells rang as the massive watertight doors sealed each of the liner's sixteen compartments.

Walter Belford was Titanic's night chief baker. "We were working on the fifth deck amidships baking for the next day. There was a shudder all through the ship about 11:40 PM. The provisions came tumbling down and the oven doors came open.

Captain Smith rushed onto the bridge; "What have we struck?" he asked. "An iceberg, sir," replied Murdoch. Then the First Officer explained what he had done.

After receiving an initial report that no damage was found, Smith ordered the carpenter to go down and "sound" the ship. When he returned he had bad news that Titanic was taking on water. Soon passengers began noticing the lack of vibration from the engines and worried about the impact from the collision.

J. Bruce Ismay, in his suite on B-deck, was awakened by scraping noises. He quickly put on an coat over his pajamas, made his way to the bridge and asked Smith "Do you think the ship is seriously damaged?" Smith replied, "I am afraid she is."

Thomas Andrews had gone below and gave his assessment of the damage to Smith. In less than 10 seconds Titanic's first six watertight compartments had been opened to the sea by the iceberg. The first five; the forepeak, number

1, 2, 3 holds and number 6 boiler room were flooding uncontrollably. The flooding in boiler room number 5 was controlled by the engine room pumps, but the sheer weight of water, in the first five compartments, drew the liner's bow down, pulling her head lower and lower. A critical design flaw her watertight compartments which did not reach high enough, allowed water to flow from one compartment into another like liquid flowing in an ice cube tray. That Titanic would founder was a mathematical certainty. The only question was when? Andrews estimated another hour. The recent theory put forward that Titanic sank principally due to poor grade steel or brittle steel is not only untrue, it is also a moot point.

At first there was an understandable reluctance from some passengers in first and second class when stewards ordered them to put on their lifejackets and go up on deck. To leave the warmth and safety of their stateroom at midnight when all was quiet and nothing seemingly alarming happening didn't make sense. In third class it was a different story, a complicating factor was United States Immigration regulations which required gates on immigrant ships (Titanic was officially listed as an Emigrant Ship) to separate steerage (third class). Stewards had difficulty with language and perhaps fearing a stampede for the lifeboats, some stewards kept passengers below until they received word for them to be allowed on deck.

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