

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BUILDING OF THE TITANIC

by Joseph Wade

(Approximate date of writing—1973)

INTRODUCTION

Before we begin our story, I will give you a little bit of the background of where our story originates—the great shipyards of Harland and Wolff's in Belfast, Ireland. My father was a joiner, a craftsman of fine woodwork, and worked on the interior finish of the great ships being built. It was the custom in those days for sons to follow in their fathers' footsteps. When my older brother became of age, he started as an apprentice joiner. Two years later in 1908, when I reached the ripe age of 14, I, too, started as an apprentice in the art of fine woodworking, and so we were a family of wood workers. Apprentices were only accepted between the ages of 14 and 16. As boys, we were indentured for 6 years. Father had to deposit 5 pounds, which in those days, was a lot of money.

At the finish of our apprenticeship, the money was returned. My father, brother, and I left our home shortly after 5:00 in the morning. We had about a 40 minute walk to work. We started work at 6 o'clock and worked until 8:20 when we stopped for breakfast. We started again at 9. Our lunch period was from 1 until 2, and our day finished at 5:30, then a 40 minute walk back home. With an average rainfall of 230 or more days a year, many times we were well soaked on our way to and from work.

As apprentices, we spent time in the shops preparing the work, and time on the ships installing it. The great shipyard of Harland and Wolff covered miles of territory. They had the facilities to build and finish eight large liners. Later, six more slip-ways were added, increasing their capacity to 14. Up to this time, they had built and completed over 390 ships. The White Star Line, the Olympic, was designated 400, and the 401 was the Titanic.

This day, 14 April, 11:40 p.m., 59 years ago on her maiden voyage, the great ship struck an iceberg in the Atlantic which ripped a hole 300 feet long in her side. At 2:30 Monday morning, she sank with the loss of 1,503 lives. More than a million pounds and 2½ years of labour vanished beneath the ocean in a few hours. This was a disaster unheard of in the annals of the sea. Ships have been lost in great storms by collision with others, but never before had any ship been lost by an iceberg.

The Titanic had been called unsinkable, as she had watertight compartments which could be closed in event of a collision with another ship. With four of these compartments flooded, the Titanic could still float, but with no stretch of imagination could any one visualize a hole more than 300 feet being torn in a ship's hull by an iceberg. After the disaster, what was known as the North Atlantic Ice Patrol was formed. This patrol charted the ice floes and relayed the information to the shipping lanes.

BUILDING THE TITANIC

The keel is formed by a 3' steel bar, 20" wide the full length of the ship. On top of this are the shell plates, about 6' wide and about 30 or more feet long, and 18" thick. We are now on our way building the bottom of the hull. As all the plates have to be riveted, holes must be punched in them for the rivets. Incidentally, more than 3 million rivets were used in building the Titanic. There is a double bottom about 5 or 6 ft. above. This is the floor of the ship, or the tank top. As work progresses the frames or ribs are installed. Some of these are more than 65 ft. from the tank top to the bridge deck. When the bottom is being finished, shores have to be placed underneath to support the ship, and by the time the hull is completed, standing at the bow and looking below the ship, one sees a veritable forest of trees. To support the ship, it really takes a lot of shores (about 10" diameter). As work continues on the hull, workmen are busy in the shops—the boiler shops, the engine shops, the foundry, blacksmith, pattern shops, and in the joiner and cabinet shops where all the fine woodwork is made. There are plumbers, electricians, and many others are busy. It takes a great diversity of tradesmen to build a big ship!

At this point I would remind you that just the hull is built on the land. All the heavy machinery is installed after the ship is launched. Work on the "ways" has to be begun. The "ways" are the means by which the ship slides into the water. These runways are heavy oak timbers—about 6 or 7 feet wide - and extend to the waters edge on both sides of the ship. As these timbers must support the entire weight of the ship while launching, they must be very securely fixed. These are called the standing "ways." Directly above these "ways" and fitted closely to the bottom of the ship are another set of "ways." These are the sliding "ways" as they slide with the ship while launching. These are slightly narrower and are of pitch pine wood. There is about 1½ feet or so space between the upper and lower "ways." A short time before the launching date many barrels of tallow, soft soap, and oil are brought to the site. Tallow is a hard type of grease. This tallow is melted in large boilers. In its liquid state, it is poured directly between the "ways" and it hardens quickly. We now have a thick sandwich consisting of the standing ways and the sliding ways with lots of tallow filling. No less than 15 tons of tallow and 8 tons of soft soap and oil were used. A

successful launching requires plenty of grease and soap. Once the ship starts to move, this grease really gets squashed.

The terrific momentum generated by a ship as it is launched could carry it a long way down the river and could be disastrous. Therefore, a means to check it has to be made. This is in the form of anchors sunk in the river bed. Six such anchors were used—three on each side of the channel between which the ship would travel. These anchors were about a large pile of anchor chains 100 feet apart. On top of these anchors, was placed something like 70 or 80 tons. Links of an anchor chain are extremely heavy—175 lbs. each. A heavy cable is fixed to these anchors. The other end of these cables is brought up the slipways and fastened on to the deck of the ship. When the ship is completely in the water, the cables tighten and the great ship starts to drag the anchors and the heavy pile of chains and this checks the movement of the ship.

As time moves on towards the launching date, a gaily decorated grandstand is being erected at the bow of the ship. A large number of notables are usually on hand for the launching ceremony of a big ship. The night before the launching date, the shipwrights are busy knocking out the shores supporting the ship. Not all the shores can be knocked out. The years of experience and know-how determine just how many shores must be left. As time draws near to launch the ship, which must be at high tide, the river traffic must be halted an hour or two before and after the launch. The only thing now keeping the ship from moving are the extremely heavy hydraulic launching triggers—one on each side of the ship about midships and directly under the "ways".

The time is now for the big event. As all eyes are fixed on the great ship, a lever is pulled and the hydraulic power disengages the launching triggers, and at the same time, a powerful hydraulic ram exerts an enormous pressure on the bow of the ship. This is an extremely tense moment for all concerned, especially the chief shipwright who is responsible for the success of the launching. All went well and the great ship started to move very slowly. Just then, the usual christening was performed—the smashing of a bottle of champagne on the bow of the ship. With the crashing of timbers and sparks flying from the terrific friction on the "ways," the ship moves faster as the terrific momentum carries her along at the speed of about 10 miles an hour. When the ship is completely in the water, it creates an enormous swell on the river. As the ship travels on, the cables tighten and the drag chains are now doing their job of stopping the ship. The launching of the Titanic went off so smoothly that it was all over in a minute or so. A remarkable achievement for a ship almost 900 feet in length

When the ship is stopped, the waiting tug boats take her in tow to the "fitting out" wharf. Work begins on installing the enormous amount of heavy machinery. The Titanic was a triple screw ship. The outside propellers were run by what is called "reciprocating engines". The cylinders of these huge engines were 5 to 8' in diameter—which will give you some idea of their immense size. The center propeller is run by what is called a low pressure turbine. Turbine is an entirely different machine from the conventional type of engine—too complicated to go into detail. The exhaust steam as it leaves the engines has lost much of its power. This steam goes directly to and drives the low pressure turbine. All together, these huge engines develop over 45,000 h.p. This system of using the exhaust steam from the engines to drive the turbine was used on an earlier White Star. It was found to be so successful and economical, it was used on all future White Star ships.

The job of installing boilers was a large one. No less than 29 huge boilers went into the Titanic with 3 fire boxes in each end of them. You can imagine how much coal was required. After more decks have been added, the funnels and masts are out on board. Back in those years the "status" of a ship was determined by the number of funnels it had. The Titanic had 4, but things are not always what they seem to be. The fourth one was for "looks". This one in no way was used to take the smoke and gasses from the boilers, it was used for ventilating purposes. While all this iron work was being installed, the work of interior finish was going ahead. There were thousands of workman of all trades working on the interior. Although the Olympic and Titanic were "twin" ships, the Titanic was more luxurious.

I will give you a brief description of some of the rooms. The first class Saloon was a magnificent room extending the entire width of the ship. The walls and ceiling were finished in white with gold relief. This was an era of wood carving, and beautiful carvings were used extensively all through the ship. The windows were colored leaded glass—giving the affect of windows in a large mansion. The tables and chairs were of quite sturdy construction—typical of that period. The main stairway was a beautiful piece of work. They were called fantail stairs—going down they spread out like a fan toward the bottom. Above the stairwell was a magnificent dome of light iron work and glass.

The first class smoking room, I believe, was one of the most expensive rooms afloat. Paneled in rich dark mahogany, it had a large open fireplace and an original oil painting above it. The panels were inlaid with wide strips of expensive mother of pearl. Truly a very lavish room. The Titanic was a real luxury ship and cost did not seem to matter much. They were catering to the wealthiest people in the world. The library was another beautiful room, "even if I say so," as I worked on much of the fine trim. The paneling was of sycamore and the dado (lower part) was dark

mahogany. Sycamore is a white, close-grained hardwood and was a striking contrast to the dark mahogany base. The stanchions, the solid steel posts that support the decks, were encased with sycamore and mahogany. The base of mahogany was square and the upper part (sycamore) was round and tapering toward the top where finely carved caps finished it off. The round part was fluted, shallow grooves running to the top. Beautiful and delicate wood carvings were much in evidence in this room. This was a very exquisite room with silken draperies on the windows.

The gym with all the latest gadgets to take off pounds is a must on a great ship. The sumptuous meals served with snack breaks in between, and very little to do can soon add pounds. The very elaborate and ornate Turkish Baths can also help get rid of those extra pounds.

The Olympic and Titanic were among the first ships to boast a large sized swimming pool. Another innovation on the Titanic was the palm courts and outdoor café. These were decorated to give the effect of being on shore. Ivy and climbing vines on the trellis work panels completed the illusion. This was a typical french café, and a French firm had the concession to run it.

There were many more public rooms—all very beautiful and luxuriously furnished. Reception Rooms, Restaurants, Lounges, Reading and Writing Rooms and Racquet Courts. The Barber Shops and the Beauty Salon were out of this world—especially the Beauty Salon. The special staterooms were fitted out in unparalleled luxury. These rooms were fitted out and decorated in the styles of the period—Louis, Empire, Georgian, Queen Ann, Italian and Dutch. A group of workmen were brought over from Holland to finish a suite in Dutch style. Each suite consisted of a sitting room with a fireplace, 2 bedrooms, 2 wardrobe rooms and private baths. As I said before, the Titanic was truly a luxury ship and it cost a lot of money to travel first class. These suites cost around 1,0000 pounds, or better than \$4,000 for the trip.

These have been just a few of the highlights of the Titanic—the luxury ship of the seas. It is now about 8 months since the ship was launched and it is now time to go into the drydock where the final coats of paint are put on the hull and all parts below the water line are closely inspected and the propellers are installed. The ship is now taken out of the dry dock and back to the fitting out wharf. The delivery date is drawing near and time is running out so there is much overtime and Sunday work was the rule. The clergymen and the churches had much to say about this Sunday work after the disaster.

It is now about ten months since the ship was launched and preparations are made for the delivery to the owners. In the meantime, the officers and part of the crew arrive and are getting acquainted

with the workings of the ship. The final day arrives and also the five powerful tugs. As three of the tugs get their tow ropes fastened to the bow and the other two tugs have tow ropes fastened to the stern, the great ship starts to move very slowly. A large crowd was on the dock to see the departure. The journey down the river, about 10 miles to a wide open stretch of water called the Carrick Roads was completed without a hitch. Here the tugs drop their tow lines and head back to the shipyard. The Titanic is now on her own. There is a lot of maneuvering in this spot as compasses and intricate machinery are tested and adjusted. Then a run down the coast for a few miles, testing the engines, then back again to lie at anchor. The ship lay there for 3 or 4 days. During these days, about 75 workmen of all trades were transferred by a tender (a supply ship) to the Titanic. These men were putting last minute finishing touches. The tender left the shipyard in the morning with the workmen and returned at night to bring them home.

At this point I had a very intimate connection with the Titanic. From all the apprentices, I was chosen to sail on the tender to the Titanic. The job I had was to deliver important papers, etc. to personnel on board and to contact certain officers and bring back other pertinent information. As a young teenager I was really having a swell time. We made three trips each day.

Well, the final night arrived and I and other workmen disembarked and boarded the tender. We were later than usual as all the workmen's tool boxes had to be taken off. With all of us safely on board, the Captain brought our tender a short distance away. There we lay for the final moments of the drama. Suddenly the stillness of the night was broken by the very loud noise as the winches started to hoist in the anchors. These anchors were some 15 tons, and each link of the chains was 175 lbs. With the anchors safely in place all was silent again. With lights blazing from a thousand portholes, floodlights from stem to stern and to the masthead, the Titanic, in the inky blackness of a starless night, presented a magnificent and awesome spectacle which I can never forget.

The water started to churn at the stern of the great ship. Very slowly, she started to move and she was on her way. Just then, all of us in the tender gave a loud cheer as we waved goodby. In response, the Titanic gave deafening blasts from her sirens. As I can recall, there were four or five short blasts and one long one which meant farewell, goodbye. As the great ship vanished into the darkness, we turned and headed back to the shipyard. It was a quite a journey, not much conversation, and no one ever dreaming of the terrible tragedy that was to overtake the great ship. The stillness of the dark night was broken by the steady throbbing of the engines of the tender.

When the Titanic sailed away that night, it was to Southampton—her home port. It was after taking on board the enormous supplies and her many notable passengers that she set out on her

fateful maiden voyage on April 10. Leaving Southampton, she headed for Cherbourg, France, for passengers, then on to Queenstown, South Ireland for more passengers and mail. On April 11, she headed west for New York on her tragic journey with 1,316 passengers and 891 crew members. Work was going on as usual in the Joiner and Cabinet Shop where I was in my 4th year as an apprentice. A few days later there appeared to be much uneasiness and uncertainty as officials gathered in the main offices, obviously there was something wrong. Then the rumors started to fly. "Titanic Sunk" "Don't believe it" "Just a wild rumor" There was no work done that day. Every one was so shocked that all we did was to gather in groups and talk, still none convinced that the great ship of which we were all so proud, was lost. We went to work the next day, but it was just the same. Authentic news was very slow in coming in as the wireless was in its infancy. As little bits of news trickled in, the city began to realize that a terrible disaster had occurred. Throughout this anxious time there were wild. Rumors, heartbreaking to those who had loved ones on board.

It was not until the Carpathia docked in New York with all the passengers that were saved that the authentic news was obtained. The Carpathia, en route from New York to the sunny Mediterranean, was 58 miles away when she received the frantic call from the Titanic. The Titanic had long gone under when she arrived at the scene. All that could be done was to gather the lifeboats together with their half-frozen occupants and bring them on board. Some of Harland & Wolff's most brilliant designers and engineers were lost, including the well-known Tommy Andrews and Archie Frost. Young Tommy was recognized as one of the greatest in the shipbuilding industry. His young wife was in a frantic state as she sat in the shipyards main office for days, refusing to move until the sad news was in that her husband was gone.

It was Thursday night before the Carpathia arrived in New York.. There were many heart breaking scenes as tens of thousands of anxious people jammed the docks. Many of them with friends and relatives who had sailed on the Titanic. Reporters by the hundreds, all with one intent, to get first hand news of the night of terror. Many people had been irked by the fact the Carpathia had been silent and gave no news from that early Monday morning other than to say that all the survivors had been taken on board and were headed back to New York. As usual after a big disaster such as this, inquiries and accusations leave many unanswered questions. About a mere 10 miles away was the Californian, bound from London to Boston. She had stopped for the night on account of the fog and ice. They had seen the lights and the rockets from the Titanic—a short time after, all the lights vanished. The Californian was unaware of the disaster until next morning. They had only one wireless operator on board and he had locked up the wireless room at 11 and retired for the night. Why no effort was made to start moving in the direction of the lights and rockets was one of the unanswered questions. Several other ships received the Titanic's

frantic call for help, including the sister ship, Olympic, but all were so far away that they were unable to render any help.

Belfast was a saddened city as it mourned the loss of some of its most brilliant citizens. A monument was later erected in their memory in the center of the city.

This brings to a close that which was to be the greatest ship building triumph of the era, but ended in the most disastrous sea tragedy of all time. Captain John Smith, who was to have retired after taking the Titanic on her maiden voyage, went down with ship—a tragic ending to a glorious career of the sea. Many months later when things quieted down somewhat, another chapter in the history of the White Star line was written. The keel was laid for another great ship, the Britannic, to replace the Titanic. Work proceeded normally without much fanfare. War clouds began appearing over the World and there was much apprehension as to the future of the ship. This was another luxury ship and incorporated in it were changes from lessons learned from the Titanic disaster. This ship was about 3/4 finished when the tragic war engulfed the country. Work was slowed down for a short time. Then work began in post haste as workmen began ripping out all the beautiful interior work. It was to be made into a hospital ship and wide open spaces were needed to accommodate hundreds of hospital beds. The ship was finished in record time and was a very impressive picture, all in white with large red crosses on her sides. The ship left the dock quietly and secretly with none knowing its whereabouts. A month or two later the city was again stunned with the news of another disaster. The Britannic struck a mine in the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean area and sank. There were no hospital patients on board, just the crew, doctors and nurses. It happened in day time and some 20 crewmen died. Another tragic ending for a great ship and a severe blow for the White Star Line.

As you've begun our story I will
give you a little bit of the back-
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The great shipyards of Harland
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My father was a joiner, a craftsman
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worked till 8-20 when we stopped for breakfast. We started again at 9. Our lunch period was from 1 till 2 and our day finished at 5-30, then a 40 minute walk to home. With an average rainfall of 230 or more days, many times we were well soaked on our way to work and to home. As apprentices we spend time in the shops preparing the work and time on the ships installing the work. The great shipyards of H & W cover miles of territory. They have the facilities to build and finish 8 large liners. Later 6 more slipways were added making their capacity to 14. Up to this time they had built and completed over 390 ships. On the ways at this time work was proceeding on two very large liners, twin ships. The White Star Line, the Olympic was 400, the other 401 was the Titanic. This day 14th April, 11-40^{PM} 59 years ago on her maiden voyage the great ship struck an iceberg in the P Atlantic which ripped a hole 300 ft long in her side.

2:30 Monday morning she sank with a loss of 1,503 lives more than a million £ⁿ and 2½ years of labour vanished beneath the ocean in a few hours. A disaster unheard of in the annals of the sea.

Ships have been lost in great storms & by collision with others, but never before had any ship been lost by an iceberg. The Titanic had been called unsinkable as she had watertight compartments which could be closed in event of a collision with another ship.

With 4 of these compartments flooded the Titanic could still float, but with no stretch of imagination could any one visualize a hole more than 300 ft being torn in a ship's hull by an iceberg. After the disaster, what was known as the C. Atlantic ice patrol was formed. A ship which charted the ice floes and relayed the information to the shipping lanes

Building the Titanic

The keel is formed by a 3" steel bar 20" wide the full length of the ship. On top of this ~~is~~ are the shell plates - about 6 ft wide and about 30 or more ft long. These are $1\frac{1}{2}$ thick. We are now on our way building the bottom of the hull as all the plates have to riveted holes must be punched in them for the rivets. Incidentally more than 3 million rivets were used in building the Titanic.

There is a double bottom about 5 or 6 ft above. This is the floor of the ship or the tank top. As work progresses the frames or ribs are installed. Some of these are more than 65 ft from the tank top to the Bridge deck. When the bottom is being finished, shores have to be placed underneath to support the ship and by the time the hull is completed, standing at the bow and looking below the ship one sees a veritable forest of trees. To support the ship it really takes a lot of shores. (about 10" dia)

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The terrific momentum generated by a ship as it is launched would carry it a long way down the river and could be disastrous, therefore a means to check it has to be made. This is in the form of anchors sunk in the river bed. 6 such anchors were used. 3 on each side of the channel between which the ship would travel. These anchors were about 100 ft. apart. On top of these anchors a large pile of anchor chains was placed, something like 70 or 80 tons.

Links of an anchor chain are extremely heavy, 175-lbs. each.

A heavy rope or cable is fixed to these anchors. The other end of these cables is brought up the slipways and fastened on to the deck of the ship.

When the ship is completely in the water the cables tighten and the great ship starts to drag the anchors and the heavy pile of chain and so check the movement of the ship.

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The time is now for the big event.

As all eyes are fixed on the great ship, a lever is pulled and the hydraulic power disengages the launching triggers, and at the same time a powerful hydraulic ram exerts an enormous pressure on the bow of the ship. This is an extremely tense moment for all concerned, especially the chief shipwright who is responsible for the success of the launching. All went well and the great ship started to move very slowly. Just then the usual christening was performed, the smashing of a bottle of champagne on the bow of the ship. With the crashing of timbers and sparks flying from the terrific friction on the ways the ship moves faster as the terrific momentum carries her along at a speed of about 10 miles an hour. When the ship is completely in the water it creates an enormous swell on the river. As the ship travels on the ropes tighten and the drag chains are now doing their job of stopping the ship. The launching of the Titanic went off so smoothly that it was all over in a minute or so. A remarkable achievement for a ship almost 900 ft in length.

When the ship is stopped, the waiting tug boats take her in tow to the fitting-out wharf. Work begins on installing the enormous amount of heavy machinery. The Titanic was a triple screw ship.

The outside propellers were run by what is called reciprocating engines. The cylinders of these huge engines were 5 ft 9 ^{dia} 8 ft which will give you some idea of their immense size. The center propeller is run by what is called a low pressure turbine. Turbine is an entirely different machine from the conventional type of engine. Too complicated to go into detail. The exhaust steam as it leaves the engines has lost much of its power. This steam goes directly to and drives the low pressure turbine. All together these huge engines develop over 45,000 H.P. This system of using the exhaust steam from the engines to drive the turbine was used on an earlier U.S. Star

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I will give you a brief description of some of the rooms. The first class Saloon was a magnificent room extending the entire width of the ship. The walls and ceiling were finished in white with gold relief. This was an era of woodcarving, and beautiful carvings were used extensively all through the ship.

The windows were colored leaded glass giving the effect of windows in a large mansion.

The tables and chairs were of quite sturdy construction as of that period. The main stairway was a beautiful piece of work.

They were called fantail stairs. Going down they spread out like a fan toward the bottom.

Above the stair well was a magnificent dome of light iron work and glass.

The first-class smoking room, I believe was one of the most expensive rooms afloat. Panelled in rich dark mahogany, it had a large open fireplace and an original oil painting above it. The panels were inlaid with wide strips of expensive mother-of-pearl. Truly a very lavish room. The Titanic was a real luxury ship and cost did not seem to matter much.

They were catering to the wealthiest people in the world.

The library was another beautiful room, "even if I say so" as I worked on much of the fine trim. The panelling was of sycamore and the dado (lower part) was dark mahogany. Sycamore is a white close-grained hardwood and was a striking contrast to the dark mahogany base. The stanchions, the solid steel posts that support the decks. These stanchions were encased with sycamore & mahogany. The base of mah was square and the upper part sycamore was round and tapering toward the top where

a finely carved cap finished it off. The round part was fluted, shallow grooves running to the top.

Beautiful and delicate wood carvings were much in evidence in this room. With their silken draperies on the windows this was a very exquisite room. (If some of you remember the "sewing box" I brought here a short time ago, the small white panels of sycamore that were inlaid, were little pieces of this same sycamore. So you can see that box has some significance.)

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The special staterooms were fitted out, in unparalleled luxury. These rooms fitted out and decorated in the styles of the period. Louis, Empire, Georgian, Queen Ann. Italian, and Dutch. A group of workmen were brought over from Holland to finish a suite in Dutch style.

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As I said before the Titanic was truly a luxury ship and it cost a lot of money to travel first class. These stutes cost around £1,000 or better than \$4,000 for the trip.

I have been just a few of the highlights of the Titanic, the luxury ship of the seas.

It is now about 8 months since the ship was launched and it is now time to go into the dry dock where the final coats of paint are put on the hull and all parts below the water line are closely inspected and the propellers are installed.

The ship is now taken out of the dry dock and back to the fitting out wharf. The delivery date is drawing near and time is running out so there is much overtime and Sunday work was the rule. The clergymen and the churches had much to say about this after the disaster.

It is now about 10 months since the ship was launched - and preparations are made for the delivery to the owners. In the meantime the Officers, and part of the crew arrive - and are getting acquainted with the workings of the ship.

The final day arrives and also the five powerfull tugs. As three of the tugs get their tow ropes fastened to the bow and the other 2 tugs have tow ropes fastened to the stern. the great ship starts to move very slowly. A large crowd was on the dock to see the departure. The journey down the river, - about 10 miles to a wide open stretch of water - called the Carrick roads was completed without a hitch. Here the tugs drop their tow lines and head back to the shipyard. The Titanic is now on her own. There is a lot of maneuvering in this spot as compasses and intricate machinery are tested & adjusted. A run down the coast for a few miles testing the engines. then back

again to lie at anchor. The ship
lay there for 3 or 4 days. During
those days about 75 workmen
of all trades were transported by a
tender, (a supply ship) to the Titanic.
These men were putting last minute
finishing touches. The tender left
the shipyard in the morning with
the workmen and returned at night
to bring them home.

At this point I had a very intimate
connection with the Titanic.
From all the apprentices I was chosen
to sail on the tender to the Titanic.
The job I had was to deliver important
papers etc to personnel on board and
to contact certain officers and bring
back other pertinent information.
As a young teenager I was really
having a swell time. We made
three trips each day.

Well the final night arrived and
I and the other workmen disembarked
and boarded the tender. We were
later than usual as all the work-
mens tool boxes had to be taken off.

With all of us safely on board the
captain brought our tender a short
distance away. Here we lay for
the final moments of the drama.
Suddenly the stillness of the night
was broken by the very loud noise
as the winches started to hoist in
the anchors. These anchors were
some $15\frac{1}{2}$ tons and each link of
the chains was 175 lbs.

With the anchors safely in place
all was silent again. With lights
blazing from a thousand portholes,
floodlights from stern to stern and
to the mast head, the Titanic, in
the inky blackness of a starless night
presented a magnificent and awesome
spectacle which I can never forget.
The water started to churn at the
stern of the great ship. Very slowly
she started to move and she was
on her way. Just then all off
us on the tender gave a loud
cheer as we waved good by.

In response the Titanic gave
deafening blasts from her sirens

As far as I can recall there was four or five short blasts and one long one which means farewell good bye. As the great ship vanished into the darkness we turned and headed back to the shipyard. It was a quiet journey, not much conversation and no one ever dreaming of the terrible tragedy that was to overtake the great ship. The stillness of the dark night was broken by the steady throbbing of the engines of the tender.

When the Titanic sailed away that night it was to Southampton her home port. It was after taking on board the enormous supplies and her many notable passengers that she set out on her fateful maiden voyage on April 10.

Leaving Southampton she headed for Cherbourg, France for passengers then on to Queenstown, S. Ireland for more passengers and mail.

On April 11, she headed west for
NY on her tragic journey with
1,316 passengers and 891 of a crew
Work was going on as usual in
the Joiner's Cabinet shop where
I was in my 4th year as an
apprentice. A few days later
there appeared to be much uneasiness
an uncertainty - as officials gathered
in the main offices. Obviously there
was something wrong. Then the
rumours started to fly.

Titanic sunk, don't believe it, can't
believe it, just a wild rumour.

There was no work done that day.
Every one was so shocked that
all we done was to gather in groups
and talk, still none of us were
convinced that the great ship
of which we were all so proud
of was lost. Went to work next
day but it was just the same.

Authentic news was very slow
in coming in as wireless was
in its infancy. As little bits of news
trickled in, the city began to realize
a terrible disaster had occurred

I throughout this anxious time there were many wild rumours, heartbreaking to those who had loved ones onboard. It was ^{not} until the 'Carpathia' docked in N. Y. with all the passengers that were saved that the authentic news was obtained. The 'Carpathia', en route from N. Y. to the sunny Mediterranean was 58 miles away when she received the frantic call from the Titanic. The Titanic had long gone under when she arrived at the scene, all that could be done was to gather the lifeboats together, with their half frozen occupants and bring them onboard. Some of Harland & Wolffs most brilliant designers and engineers were lost, including the well known Tommy Andrews and Archie Frost. ^{Young} Tommy was recognized as one of the greatest in the shipbuilding industry. His young wife was in a frantic state as she sat in the shipyard's main office for days refusing to move until the sad news was in that her husband was gone.

It was Thursday night before the Carpathia arrived in N.Y.

There were many heart breaking scenes as tens of thousands of anxious people jammed the docks. Many of them with friends and relatives who had sailed on the Titanic. Reporters by the hundred, all with one intent to get first hand news of the night of terror. Many people had been irked by the fact the Carpathia had been silent and gave no news from that early Monday morning other than to say that all the survivors had been taken on board and were headed back to N.Y.

As usual after a big disaster such as this, inquiries and accusations leave many unanswered questions. About a mere 10 miles away was the Californian, bound from London to Boston. She had stopped for the night on account of the fog. They had seen the lights and the rockets from the Titanic. A short time after all the lights vanished.

The Californian was unaware of the disaster until next morning. They had only one wireless operator on board and he had locked up the wireless room at 11 and retired for the night. Why no effort was made to start moving in the direction of the lights and rockets was one of the unanswered questions. Several other ships received the Titanics frantic call for help, including her sister ship Olympic but all were so far away that they were unable to render any help. Belfast was a saddened city as it mourned the loss of some of its most brilliant citizens.

A monument was later erected in their memory in the center of the city. This brings to a close which was to be the greatest ship building triumph of the era but ended in the most disastrous sea tragedy of all time. Capt John Smith who was to have retired after taking the Titanic on her maiden voyage went down with his ship. A tragic ending to a glorious career of the sea. END

Many months later when things quieted down somewhat another chapter in the history of the White Star line was written.

The keel was laid for another great ship the Britannic, to replace the Titanic. Work proceeded normally without much fanfare. War clouds began appearing over the world and there was much apprehension as to the future of the ship. This was another luxury ship and incorporated in it were changes from lessons learned from the Titanic disaster.

The ship was about $3/4$ finished when the tragic war engulfed the country. Work was slowed down for a short time. Then work began in great haste as workmen began ripping out all the beautiful interior work. It was to be made into an hospital ship and wide open spaces were wanted to accommodate hundreds of hospital beds. The ship was finished in record time,

and was a very impressive picture, all in white with large red crosses on her sides. The ship left the dock quietly and secretly with none knowing its whereabouts.

A month or two later the city was again stunned with the news of another disaster. The Britannic struck a mine in the Aegean sea in the Med. area and sank.

There were no hospital cases on board, just the crew, doctors and nurses.

It happened in day time and some 20 crewmen died. Another tragic ending for a great ship and a severe blow for the White Star line.

The end

(Olympic & Titanic Models 18½ ft. long)
Lifeboats - carry 60 people plus
water, food, flares etc