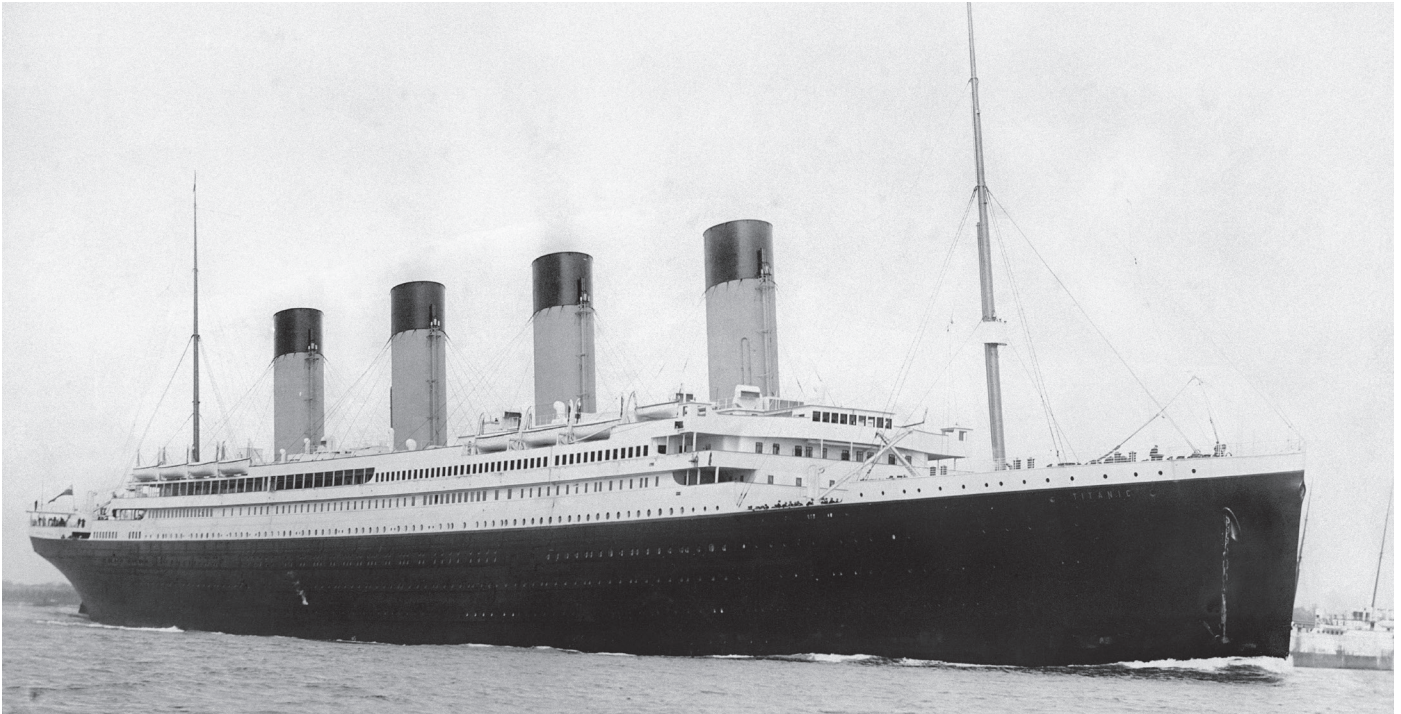


The Titanic (Part II): The Day the “Unsinkable” Sank



The Titanic leaves on its first journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

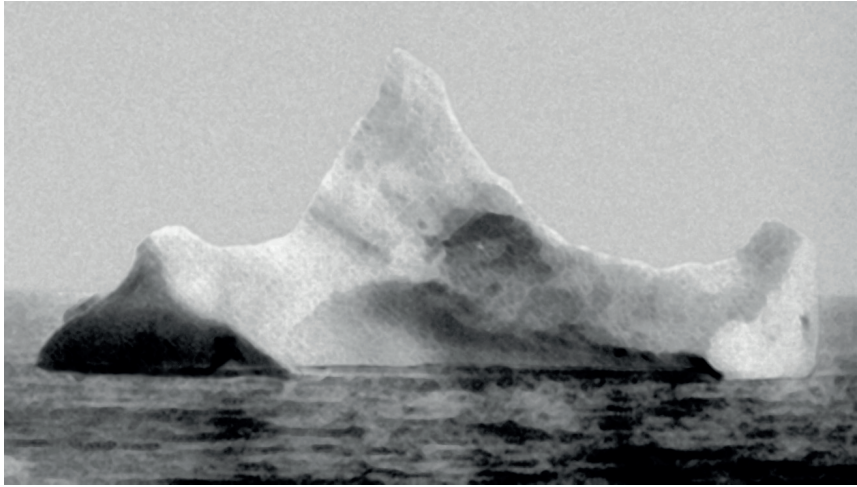
Why It Matters

- About 1,500 people were killed when the boat sank.
- Afterwards, new safety regulations were enforced requiring ships to carry more lifeboats. Additionally, the International Iceberg Patrol was created to warn ships of nearby icebergs.

On the fourth day of the *Titanic's* journey, all was going smoothly. The passengers went to sleep peacefully that evening, not dreaming of the danger speedily approaching.

Ice Ahead!

Two sailors were stationed on the upper deck to keep an eye out for dangers like icebergs. But icebergs can be hard to spot in the vast ocean. By the time they noticed it, the massive liner was frighteningly close to the **hulk**¹ of ice and approaching at high speed. They quickly alerted the captain, who ordered the ship to turn **abruptly**.² It was too late. Turning such an enormous vessel took time. Too much time. At about 11:40 p.m., there was a sickening crash as the iceberg tore a giant hole in the *Titanic*'s side.



*This enormous iceberg was photographed just a few hours after the *Titanic* sank. It is very possible that this was the iceberg that destroyed the *Titanic*.*

Captain Smith hurried down with the ship's designer, Thomas Andrews, to take a look at the damage. Their conclusion: the ship would sink within the hour. Immediately, the captain ordered the wireless radio operators to send out **distress signals**³ to ships in the area. The *Carpathia* received the signals and immediately set out to help. However, the ship was still a good three hours away.

Rescue Operations

Time was of the essence. True, there were not enough lifeboats for all those on board, but they had to at least try to save as many people as they could.

Under Smith's direction, the crew scrambled to alert the passengers and assist them onto lifeboats. Sleepy passengers awoke to a frantic pounding on their cabin doors. Panic rising in their throats, they opened up their doors to find members of the crew waiting outside. The crew urged them to dress warmly and rush down to the deck to board the waiting lifeboats.

But there were not enough lifeboats for everyone. The crew had to choose whom to allow to board. Women and children first, the crew declared. Officers surrounding the lifeboats prevented any young men from getting on. The crew worked with several brave male passengers to help the women and children climb onto the boats. They knew that in all likelihood, they themselves would not survive. Indeed, most of the crew would not survive the night.

The musicians on board stood on the deck playing their instruments. They did this in an effort to calm the people in the **chaos**⁴ all around them. They kept on playing as people boarded the lifeboats and played on until the very end. Every one of them drowned that night. They died bravely, trying to do their part to keep the rescue operations going calmly and smoothly.

1 **hulk** – something giant or heavy

2 **abruptly** – suddenly

3 **distress signals** – signals used to call for help

4 **chaos** – total disorder and confusion

The third-class passengers were down below in the lower levels of the boat. Many of them were never alerted of the danger. When they finally realized what was happening, they tried to run up towards the top deck, from where the lifeboats were being launched. It was hard, however, to find their way through the complicated layout of the *Titanic*. By the time they arrived on the deck, most of the lifeboats were already filled with first- and second-class passengers. Tragically, 75 percent of third-class passengers drowned. This was in contrast to just 45 percent of first- and second-class passengers.

As all this was going on, the ship was gradually tipping. By 2:00 a.m., the ship's **propellers**⁵ could be seen above water. Captain Smith told the crew they were free to go and try to save themselves. "It's every man for himself," he said.

Approximately 20 minutes later, a deafening roar was heard as the air filled with the terrible sounds of the ship going down. Some of the passengers remaining on the ship jumped into the water and grabbed on to pieces of wood to try and stay afloat. In some cases, they managed to swim towards a lifeboat and climb on.



An artist's depiction of the Titanic sinking

Saved by the Carpathia

The survivors sat shivering in their lifeboats, the icy waters strewn with pieces of wreckage all around them. They paddled and paddled... to where? Would they ever set foot on dry land again, or would they too meet their end in the freezing waters of the Atlantic?

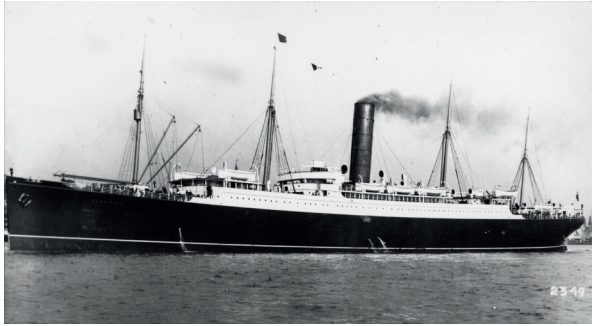
A little over an hour later, at about 3:30 in the morning, a welcome sight met their eyes. The ship *Carpathia*, who had received the distress signals about three hours earlier, had finally arrived.

The *Carpathia* was owned by a competing shipping company, Cunard. Somehow, that didn't matter anymore. The *Carpathia* picked up all the survivors over the next few hours.

In all, they rescued 705 of the 2,200 passengers on the *Titanic*. Tragically, the rest of those on board did not survive.

The *Carpathia*'s crew and passengers offered the survivors dry clothing, blankets, food, and drink. Still, there was only so much they could do to comfort the shaken and heartbroken people. Many of them had lost family members on the ship.

5 **propellers** – the rotating blades that cause the ship to move forward



The Carpathia, the ship that rescued the survivors

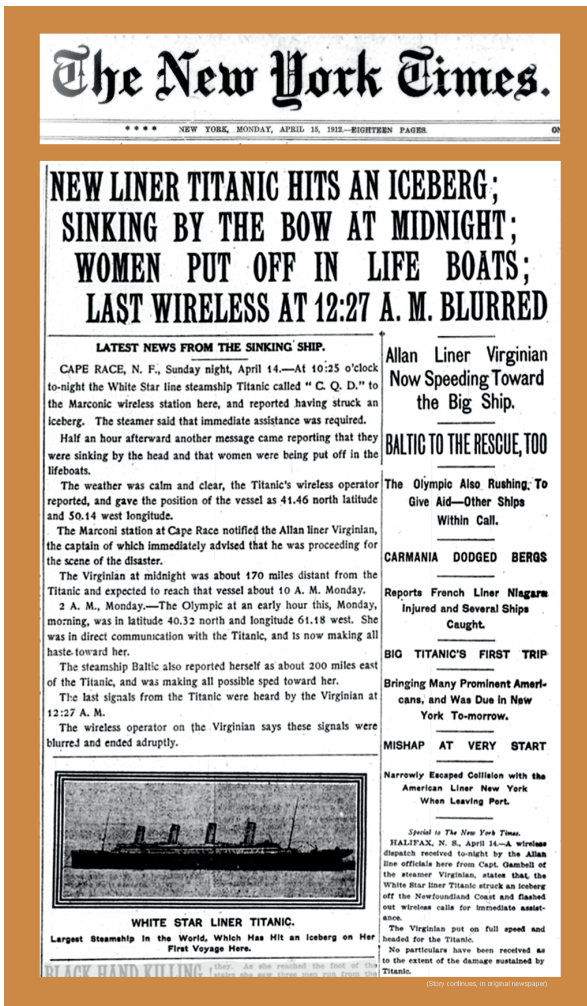
The Aftermath

On April 18, the Carpathia arrived at last in New York City. Crowds of people had come to greet the survivors.

It was an **international**⁶ disaster. Passengers on the ship had come from all over, and the world was overwhelmed with horror. An investigative board was established to try and figure out how the **calamity**⁷ had occurred.

After they looked into the affair, they changed the law to require ships to carry enough lifeboats for all passengers on board. They also created the International Iceberg Patrol to keep track of icebergs and warn ships in the **vicinity**⁸.

The *Titanic* sank over 100 years ago, but the bravery of the rescuers and the lessons learned still inspire us today.



The next morning's edition of the New York Times describing the Titanic's accident

- 6 **international** – involving more than one country
- 7 **calamity** – disaster
- 8 **vicinity** – the area; close by



1. **Circle the choice that has the same meaning as the following sentence from the lesson:**
The survivors sat shivering in their lifeboats, the icy waters strewn with pieces of wreckage all around them.
 - A. The survivors sitting in the lifeboats were very chilly. The cold water was filled with ruins from the ship.
 - B. The freezing water was filled with survivors. The lifeboats were in ruins.
 - C. The survivors were sitting in the cold water. There were also lifeboats and ruins from the ship.
 - D. The lifeboats were filled with ruins from the ship. The survivors were helped by the freezing water.

2. **Circle the vocabulary word that best fits the sentence.**
*When my little sister tries to bake a cake, everything in her (**calamity, vicinity**) gets covered in batter.*

3. **Mark each statement as T (true) or F (false).**
 - The lookouts noticed the iceberg right away.
 - The iceberg tore a hole in the side of the *Titanic*.
 - The musicians aboard the *Titanic* miraculously survived.
 - The nearest ship was only a half hour away.

4. **Place a check mark next to each statement that correctly describes the rescue operations.**
 - Passengers were told to board lifeboats on a first-come-first-served basis.
 - Passengers were awakened by crew members who told them to dress and come to the deck.
 - The musicians played on the deck as people boarded the lifeboats.
 - 75 percent of third-class passengers did not survive.

5. Which of the following statements best summarizes the lesson?

- A. The *Titanic* was the biggest ship ever built.
- B. Because of the *Titanic*, new safety regulations were made to prevent such a tragedy from happening again.
- C. The sinking of the *Titanic* was a great tragedy as only a small portion of the passengers survived.
- D. The *Carpathia* rescued the survivors of the *Titanic*.

6. Of all the people involved in the rescue of the *Titanic* passengers, who do you think acted the most bravely? Why?

7. What is the main idea of the section titled “Saved by the *Carpathia*”?

8. What was the effect of the *Titanic* on future ocean liner trips?
