

Man Remembers Sinking of Titanic

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By LAWRENCE B. RASIE
Marshall B. Drew was 8 in the winter of 1911-12 when he stayed with relatives in Cornwall, England, and he recalls there was much ado about the pending return trip to New York aboard the new superliner "Titanic."

Drew, now 73, lives in his

small retirement home in Westerly, R.I., and devotes most of his time to nature photography and the Westerly Fine Arts Festival of which he is a cochairman.

He was one of 705 persons to survive the world's worst peacetime marine disaster, the sinking of the Titanic, April 14 and 15, 1912, when 1,513 died.

It was 65 years ago this morning that Drew woke up on a pile of life preservers in a lifeboat with 50 passengers and eight crewmen.

"I looked over the gunnel

and we were surrounded by icebergs. They were everywhere," he said, "and I was hungry."

Today, after a decade of retirement and a career that included 36 years teaching fine arts in Queens, N.Y., he still recalls the Titanic through the eyes of an 8-year-old boy.

Titanic left Southampton on the southern coast of England the morning of April 10, 1912, with much fanfare.

Capt. E. J. Smith ordered the ship up to a full 22 knots (nautical miles per hour), and headed for New York, following a North Atlantic shipping lane.

Drew said he later learned that the Titanic on April 14 got radio messages reporting five icebergs sighted by other ships in the North Atlantic lanes.

The Titanic was still doing 22 knots shortly before midnight April 14 when it struck an iceberg about 200 miles off Newfoundland.

The ship ground right into the iceberg which ripped a gash 300-feet long in its side and dumped an avalanche of ice and snow on the bow.

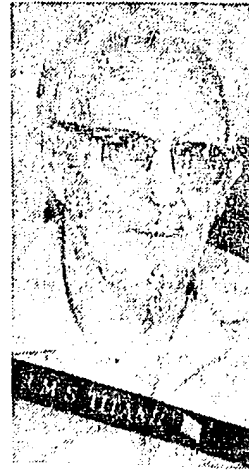
"I was not quite asleep and my aunt and uncle were still sitting up in the stateroom. I felt the ship shudder slightly and the sensation of movement stopped a moment, then continued, but backwards."

"Stewards were knocking on stateroom doors. They told us to get dressed, put on life jackets and to go up onto the main deck."

"We were four or five decks below. The elevator on our deck was not working so we walked up to the deck."

"There were people standing all around but it was very quiet and orderly, crewmen telling people to walk to the lifeboats. The officers wore sidearms, I believe."

"All the ship's lights were on, except in steerage. I re-



MARSHALL B. DREW

member it was pitch black down there. I didn't see a light."

"I got into a lifeboat with the other women and children. My aunt and uncle said goodbye on the deck, then she got in with me."

"Somewhere there was music. An orchestra was playing, but I couldn't see it. The night was clear and cold, the water calm."

"We were in lifeboat No. 11. I think it was on the very top deck (of the superstructure). I could see stars overhead."

"The crew had an awful time getting the davits to work, to swing the boats out over the water. They had never been tested. There had been no lifeboat drill earlier."

"Then they started to lower the boat, hauling on ropes, hand over hand, but they didn't work right. First your end was up and you stared out into space. Then your end was down and you

stared up at everybody else in the boat."

"It was at least 70 feet down to the water. It looked tall as a skyscraper. Four of the lifeboats were wrecked."

Drew says a lifeboat held 50 passengers and a crew of eight. There were 20 lifeboats for the entire ship, which had 2,224 persons aboard, most sources agree.

"We went into the water and it was calm. Everybody feared suction when the ship went down, so we rowed as hard as we could away from the ship."

"The lifeboats then lined up parallel with the ship, but very far away. I was watching it all light up. The rows of lighted portholes on successive decks disappeared as the ship settled."

"I've never forgotten that, the way row after row of those lights disappeared into the water," said Drew. "But I don't remember if the stern rose out of the water as she went: I don't remember seeing that."

"I was tired, just a boy, and I spotted a pile of life jackets and curled up on them and went to sleep."

"The next morning it was cold and clear and icebergs were all around us. It was maybe noontime when we were picked up by the liner Carpathia."

"She came right in among the icebergs and picked us up. Her captain later got the Congressional Medal of Honor for the rescue."

He shows a black band from a sailor's hat. It has emblems of American and British flags and the lettering "R.M.S. Titanic." Besides the clothes on his back it was the only thing he took off the Titanic.