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Ten teams of chain makers worked on *Titanic's* anchor chains. Those chains were 3 3/8 inches in diameter. Note the cross piece on each chain link. It is called a "stud link chain." That middle bar is intended to stop the link from kinking or from deforming if it is under a heavy load. This 1911 photograph appears in [Chain and Anchor Making in the Black Country](#), a 2006 book by Ron Moss.

After she was launched on May 31, 1911 the ship was outfitted for sea duty. It took many months before those tasks were completed. She was finally ready for a sea trial on April 2, 1912.

Who was in charge of *Titanic*? Although most of the officers were the same, the crew that managed the sea trials was different from the crew assigned to the maiden voyage. Significantly, the chief executive officer William Murdoch was replaced by the less-well-liked (but friend-of-the-captain) Henry Tingle Wilde. E.J. (Edward John) Smith was the captain. Murdoch served as 1st officer during the voyage.

With the addition of Wilde to the officer staff, the crew had an extra officer on board. David Blair, 2nd officer during the trials, was "beached" when the ship left Queenstown, its last stop before New York.

It wasn't just a question of crew shuffling. Blair, in an effort to keep the Crow's Nest binoculars from being stolen, allegedly stowed them in his cabin. Later, when they were needed by Frederick Fleet as he scanned the horizon for icebergs, no one knew where the glasses were.

Captain Smith, known for his fast crossing speeds, may have planned to retire after *Titanic's* maiden voyage. He had set a record with *Titanic's* older sister, *Olympic*. Charles Lightoller, the 2nd officer, and 3rd officer Herbert John Pitman were experienced seamen. So were the other senior officers.

Bruce Ismay, son of the founder of White Star Lines, represented the company during the crossing. His presence (and actions) would raise troubling questions during subsequent hearings. Thomas Andrews, with eight of his best men, would trouble-shoot problems.

The company had already solved one major problem. At the time of *Titanic's* historic voyage, a coal strike meant insufficient supplies for each ship. Several Atlantic crossings had been canceled in favor of *Titanic*. People and coal, originally assigned to other ships, were reassigned to *Titanic*.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/TITANIC-S-CREW-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/TITANIC-S-CREW-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic>

Questions 2 Ponder

Should a Ship Leave Port When Needed Equipment is Missing?

No one knew where the ship's binoculars were located, when *Titanic* set sail on her maiden voyage. As it happens ... the binoculars were actually aboard, locked safely away in the Crow's Nest cabinet, but the person who knew that was no-longer onboard.

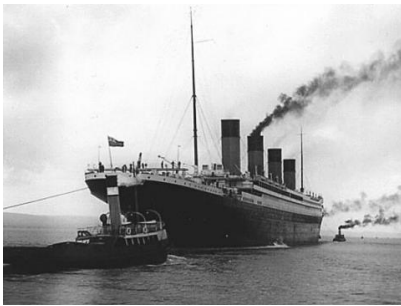
David Blair, who was scheduled to make the transatlantic crossing, was replaced by Charles Lightoller not long before the ship left port. As Blair left *Titanic*, he had the locker key in his pocket but forgot to give it to Lightoller. The change-in-personnel likely saved Blair, but it cost others their lives.

Fred Fleet, the Crow's-Nest lookout who survived the disaster, testified that if he'd had the binoculars he could have seen the iceberg in time. How much in time? "Enough," he said under oath, "to get out of the way." (See Fleet's testimony, section 5358.)

How likely is it that a passenger ship, like *Titanic*, would be allowed to sail today without the crew knowing how to access (and properly use) every piece of important equipment? Explain your answer.

Can you think of a situation in today's world that might compare to *Titanic's* problem? (HINT: What about the Boeing 737 Max 8 and its stall-prevention system?)

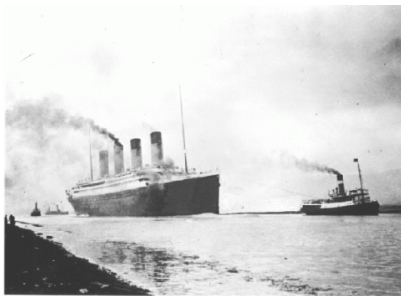
Media Stream



Titanic's Sea Trial

Image online, courtesy [ssmaritime.com](http://www.ssmaritime.com) website.

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Sea Trials - Titanic

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Edward John Smith - Captain of Titanic

Photo of Captain Smith aboard Titanic, online courtesy Southampton Maritime Museum.

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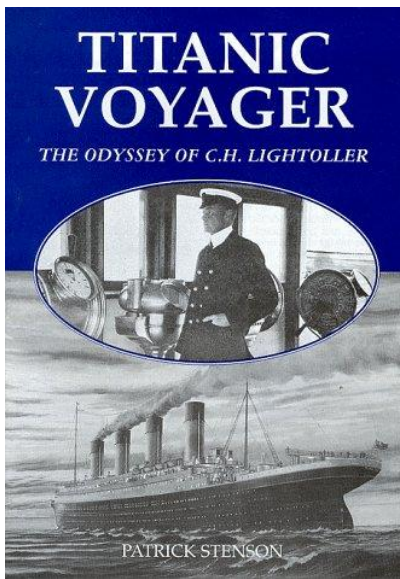
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Edward-John-Smith-Captain-of-Titanic>



William Murdoch

Image online, courtesy the Titanic Wiki website.

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Charles Lightoller

Image online, courtesy Amazon.

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3rd. Officer Herbert J. Pitman on left
2nd. Officer Charles Lightoller on right

Herbert J. Pittman

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Bruce Ismay

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Coal Shortage - Impact on Titanic

Image online, courtesy Titanic Photographs.

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