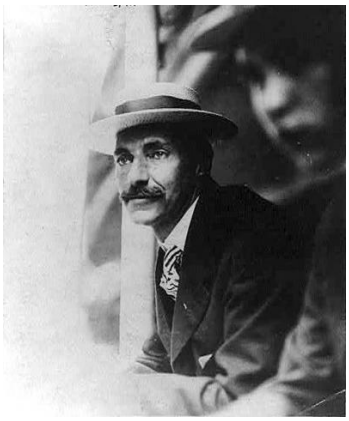
THE PASSENGERS



0. THE PASSENGERS - Story Preface

1. TITANIC - INSIDE AND OUT

2. TITANIC'S CREW

3. MAIDEN VOYAGE

4. THE PASSENGERS

5. ICEBERGS

6. TITANIC'S WIRELESS

7. ICE WARNINGS IGNORED

8. ICEBERG RIGHT AHEAD

9. A DOOMED SHIP

10. DOOMED PASSENGERS

11. WIRELESS TRANSMISSIONS

12. RESCUE OF THE LIVING

13. RECOVERY OF THE DEAD

14. NEWSFLASH!

15. HEROES

16. A DISINTEGRATING VESSEL

17. THE REST OF THE STORY

John Jacob Astor IV was 47 years old when he and his second wife were returning to the U.S. on the *Titanic*. He was the wealthiest person aboard the ship (and one of the wealthiest in the world). Image online, courtesy Bain Collection at the Library of Congress.

Many members of New York's elite society were on board for the historic sailing. Although J. P. Morgan himself could not make the trip, many of his friends did.

John Jacob Astor IV (age 46), great grandson of the famous fur trader, was the richest man on board. He was also the most controversial since his young wife Madeline (age 18) was expecting a baby. Some folks thought the pregnancy came a little soon after the Astors' marriage.

Molly Brown (later coined the "unsinkable") was not the only colorful personality on board. Isador and Ida Straus, owners of Macy's Department Store, had been married many years and were devoted to each other. Later, after catastrophe descended on the ship, all three would demonstrate amazing calm and fortitude. So would Archibald Gracie, Ben Guggenheim and Lawrence Beesley, a second-class passenger.

Eva Hart, a 7-year-old English girl, was traveling in second class with her parents. Esther, the mother, was troubled by all the outlandish claims that had been made about the new ship. Eva later recalled her mother's comments:

> *I don't like this ship because a vessel*
> *called unsinkable was flying in the face of God.*

Some of the passengers were emigrating to America. (The complete, handwritten list of all passengers is now freely available on-line.) Frederick (age 40) and Augusta (43) Goodwin were traveling third-class with their six children (ages 19 months -16). They planned to set up a new home in Niagara Falls, New York.

Accommodations for third-class (also called steerage) passengers, like the Goodwins, were functionally basic. On the other hand, compared to the price of a first-class ticket, their passage was relatively cheap.

Many of these passengers, and their fellows, never made it to their final destinations. The general room for steerage passengers could have been the place where people, unable to get to the upper decks, breathed their last.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-PASSENGERS-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-PASSENGERS-Fatal-Voyage-The-Titanic

Questions 2 Ponder

Are Premonitions Real or Merely Coincidental?

Do you think that Esther Hart—Eva Hart's mother—had a premonition that something bad might happen during *Titanic*'s maiden voyage? Explain your answer.

Have you ever had a premonition that something—good or bad—might happen ... then it did? How do you explain such a thing?

Media Stream

J.P. Morgan
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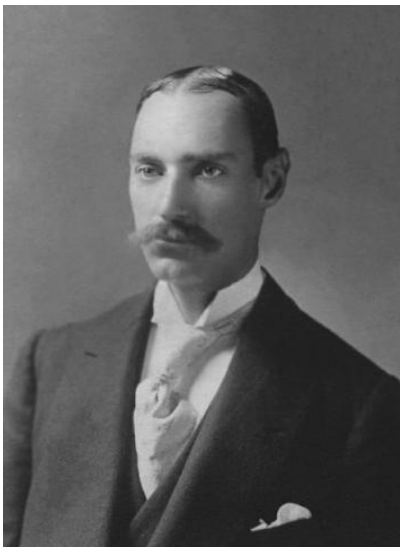

John Jacob Astor IV
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Madeline Astor

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The Astors

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Isador and Ida Straus

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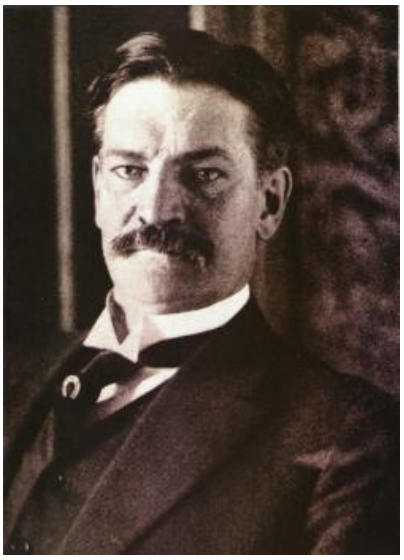

Archibald Gracie

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Ben Guggenheim

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Lawrence Beesley

Image online, courtesy the Titanic: Legacy of Betrayal blog site.
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Eva Hart

Image online, courtesy the Sandi Altner blog site.
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Titanic survivor dies at 91

Eva Hart was 7 in 1912; wrote autobiography in '94

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Eva Hart was 7 years old and bound for a new life in Canada when her father woke her in the middle of the night, carried her outside in a blanket and told her: "Hold Mummy's hand and be a good girl."

It was the last thing he ever said to her, and she never saw him again. Later that night, wide awake and clinging to her mother in a lifeboat, the little girl watched as the Titanic rose almost straight up on her bow and plunged to the bottom of the sea, carrying her father and more than 1,500 other passengers and crewmen to their deaths in the North Atlantic.

As one of only 705 Titanic passengers who survived, Eva Hart never forgot what she had seen and heard that night. When she died on Wednesday at a hospice in London at the age of almost 91, she was regarded as a lost link of living memory with the maritime disaster that rocked the world on April 15, 1912.

Of the eight remaining survivors, seven were too young at the time to know what was happening, according to Karen Kornish of the Titanic Historical Society in Springfield, Mass., and one, wearing her 100th birthday, no longer remembers.

But even during Mrs. Hart's last years, her memory remained vivid and chilling.

"I saw that ship sink," she said in a 1993 interview. "I never closed my eyes. I didn't sleep at all. I saw it, I heard it, and nobody could possibly forget it."

There have been shipwrecks with greater loss of life before and after the Titanic, but none have clamped such a chilling grip on the popular imagination.

That is partly because the Titanic was on her maiden voyage carrying many prominent and wealthy passengers, but it is mainly because of a well-publicized exercise in hubris.

The White Star Line had proclaimed the Titanic the "unsinkable ship," a claim that caused Miss Hart's mother such apprehension that even as they walked up the gangplank, her daughter later recalled, she renewed her warning that calling a ship unsinkable was "flying in the face of God." She was so convinced of impending doom, her daughter later said, that she slept during the day and stayed awake in her cabin at night fully dressed.

The iceberg that sliced the Titanic's hull below the waterline belied White Star's claims. The network of massive bulkheads that supposedly made the Titanic unsinkable had not been extended high enough. Water gushing into one compartment simply flowed over the top of the bulkheads.

Returning to England, where her mother remarried, Miss Hart was plagued with nightmares until, after her mother's death when Miss Hart was 23, she confronted her fears head on, returning to the sea and locking herself in a cabin for four days until the nightmares went away.

She held several jobs, becoming a professional singer in Australia, working as a Conservative Party organizer, and serving as a magistrate in England. She described her life in a 1994 autobiography, "In the Shadow of the Titanic."

Until recent years, Miss Hart chose not to talk about the disaster, but when she did open up, she was outspoken, denouncing efforts to salvage artifacts from the Titanic as "grave robbing," and excoriating White Star officials for failing to provide enough lifeboats.

"If a ship is torpedoed, that's war," she once said. "But strikes a rock in a storm, that's nature. But just to do because there weren't enough lifeboats, that's ridiculous."

Her anger was fueled by memory.

"I can remember the colors, the sounds, everything," she said. "The worst thing I can remember are the screams."

But even worse, she conceded, was the silence that followed.

"It seemed as if once everybody had gone, drowned, finished, the whole world was standing still. There was nothing, just this deathly, terrible silence in the dark night with the stars overhead."

Miss Hart, who never married, leaves no immediate family.

The remaining Titanic survivors are Edith Brown Haisman, Barbara West and Millvina Dean, all of England; Michael Navratil and Louise Laroche of France; and Eleanor Shuman, Winnifred Tongerdon and Lilian Aspland of the United States.

TITANIC SURVIVOR. Benjamin and Esther Hart and their daughter, Eva, were on the Titanic when it hit an iceberg in April 1912. Mr. Hart went down with the liner.

Eva Hart's Obituary and Reminiscences

Image online, courtesy the Library of Virginia website.

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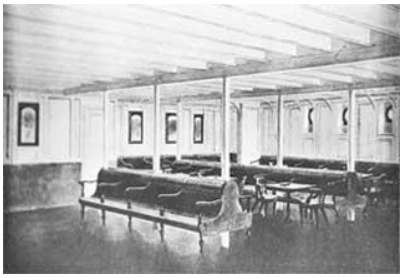

3rd Class General Room

Image online, courtesy the cruiselinehistory.com website.

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The Goodwin Family

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