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The Facts - What did the Survivors See of the Break-up of the Titanic?

by Bill Wormstedt

Up until 1985, when Bob Ballard discovered the wreck of the Titanic on the ocean floor, it was generally believed the Titanic sank intact, in one piece. Second Officer Lightoller, at the American and British Inquiries, and the books published by First-class passenger Colonel Gracie and Second-class passenger Lawrence Beesley, made statements to this effect immediately after the disaster, and this is what was accepted by the public for decades.

Even now, 18 years after the discovery of the wreck, the 'general perception' is still that only a very few survivors claimed to see the ship split apart before she sank. But what are 'the facts'? What did the survivors really see, and how many **did** claim to see the ship break up? An examination of the texts of both the 1912 American and British Inquiries gives us a very good idea. (Many newspapers also printed accounts of what was seen, however attempting to find and bring together these very many articles is beyond the scope of this article.

Also, a newspaper account may have been altered or exaggerated by a reporter, and it becomes hard to tell the exaggeration from what the witness actually saw and said.)

All survivors interviewed by the Inquiries will be examined below, with their own comments as to what they saw. Survivor accounts are in the same order they testified at the Inquiries. Accounts are edited only in respect of leaving out comments not related to the Titanic sinking itself. American Inquiry accounts are references by page number, British Inquiry accounts by question number.

The American Inquiry Accounts:

The following witnesses at the American Inquiry made no statement at all about the ship sinking.

- W. H. Taylor, Fireman in Lifeboat 15
- Thomas Jones, Seaman in Lifeboat 8
- G. Symons, Lookout in Lifeboat 1
- James Widgery, Steward in Lifeboat 9
- Samuel S. Hemming, Seaman in Lifeboat 4
- Helen W. Bishop, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 7
- Dickinson H. Bishop, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 7
- Olaus Abelseth, 3rd Class passenger in Collapsible A
- Norman Campbell Chambers, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 5
- Daisy Minahan, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 14, transferred to Collapsible D

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James R. McGough, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 7
Eleanor Elkins Widener, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 4

J. Bruce Ismay, Managing Director of the White Star Line in Collapsible C

Mr. Ismay did not see the Titanic sink.

Page 13:

Mr. ISMAY. I did not see her go down.

Senator SMITH. You did not see her go down?

Mr. ISMAY. No, sir.

Senator SMITH. How far were you from the ship?

Mr. ISMAY. I do not know how far we were away. I was sitting with my back to the ship. I was rowing all the time I was in the boat. We were pulling away.

Charles Herbert Lightoller, 2nd Officer on Collapsible B

Mr. Lightoller claims the ship sank intact.

Page 69:

Senator SMITH. Was the vessel broken in two in any manner, or intact?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Absolutely intact.

Senator SMITH. On the decks?

Mr. LIGHTOLLER. Intact, sir.

Alfred Crawford, Steward in Lifeboat 8

Though Mr. Crawford's claimed to see the ship go down, he does not state whether she broke apart or not.

Page 116:

Senator SMITH. Did you see the ship go down?

Mr. CRAWFORD. We saw her at a distance; yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. What shape was she in when you saw her last?

Mr. CRAWFORD. It seemed as if her bow was going down first.

Senator SMITH. At how much of an angle?

Mr. CRAWFORD. We saw all the lights going out on the forward part of her.

Senator SMITH. And still burning on the after part?

Mr. CRAWFORD. Yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. How much of the after part was out of the water?

Mr. CRAWFORD. There was a good bit of the stern part out of water.

Senator SMITH. How many decks?

Mr. CRAWFORD. I could not say how many decks there, sir, but it seemed all clear right from amidships to aft.

Harold S. Bride, Marconi Operator on Collapsible B

Harold Bride did claim to see the Titanic sink at a distance of 150 feet from the ship on page 165, but he didn't say anything about the ship breaking up.

Pages 897 and 898:

Senator SMITH. You swam out from under that boat, and at that time you saw the boat sink?

Mr. BRIDE. Which boat?

Senator SMITH. The Titanic.

Mr. BRIDE. A short time after that I saw the Titanic sink.

Senator SMITH. How many minutes afterwards?

Mr. BRIDE. The time was long enough to give me a chance of getting away from the Titanic itself.

Senator SMITH. From the side?

Mr. BRIDE. The distance I estimate at 150 feet.

Senator SMITH. You had time to get 150 feet away from the side, and then she sank?

Mr. BRIDE. Yes.

Herbert John Pitman, 3rd Officer in Lifeboat 5

Mr. Pitman saw the ship go down intact.

Pages 280 and 281:

Senator SMITH. Did you see the Titanic go down?

Mr. PITMAN. Yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. Describe, if you can, how she sank?

Mr. PITMAN. Judging by what I could see from a distance, she gradually disappeared until the forecandle head was submerged to the bridge. Then she turned right on end and went down perpendicularly.

Senator SMITH. Did she seem to be broken in two.

Mr. PITMAN. Oh, no.

Joseph Groves Boxhall, 4th Officer in Lifeboat 2

Officer Boxhall did not see the Titanic actually sink.

Page 245.

Senator SMITH. Did you see the Titanic sink?

Mr. BOXHALL. No; I can not say that I saw her sink.

Frederick Fleet, Lookout in Lifeboat 6

Lookout Fleet did not see the ship go down, as he was too far away.

Pages 327 and 328.

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Senator SMITH. Did you see her go down?

Mr. FLEET. No, sir.

Senator SMITH. Why not?

Mr. FLEET. The lights were out, and we were too far away.

Senator SMITH. You could not see her when she disappeared?

Mr. FLEET. No, sir.

Major Arthur G. Peuchen, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 6

Major Peuchen did not seem to actually see the ship break apart, but assumed she did from the sounds he heard, and the wreckage he saw the next morning.

Pages 338 and 339:

Maj. PEUCHEN. We commenced to hear signs of the breaking up of the boat.

Senator SMITH. Of the Titanic?

Maj. PEUCHEN. Of the Titanic. At first I kept my eyes watching the lights, as long as possible.

Senator SMITH. From your position in the boat, did you face it?

Maj. PEUCHEN. I was facing it at this time. I was rowing this way [indicating], and afterwards I changed to the other way. We heard a sort of a rumbling sound and the lights were still on at the rumbling sound, as far as my memory serves me; then a sort of an explosion, then another. It seemed to be one, two, or three rumbling sounds, then the lights went out.

Senator SMITH. From what you saw, do you think the boat was intact, or had it broken in two?

Maj. PEUCHEN. It was intact at that time. I feel sure that an explosion had taken place in the boat, because in passing the wreck the next morning - we steamed past it - I just happened to think of this, which may be of some assistance to this inquiry - I was standing forward, looking to see if I could see any dead bodies, or any of my friends, and to my surprise I saw the barber's pole floating. The barber's pole was on the C deck, my recollection is - the barber shop - and that must have been a tremendous explosion to allow this pole to have broken from its fastenings and drift with the wood.

Harold Godfrey Lowe, 5th Officer in Lifeboat 14

Mr. Lowe states that he did see the Titanic sink. But he does not state, nor was he asked, if the ship broke apart.

Pages 410 and 411:

Senator SMITH. Did you see the Titanic sink?

Mr. LOWE. I did, sir.

Senator SMITH. How did the Titanic go down?

Mr. LOWE. She went down head first and inclined at an angle. That is,

when she took her final plunge she was inclined at an angle of about 75°.

Robert Hitchens, Quartermaster in Lifeboat 6

Quartermaster Hitchens claimed not to be able to see the ship when it went down.

Page 452:

Senator SMITH. How far were you from the Titanic at the time she went down?

Mr. HITCHENS. About 1 mile, sir.

Senator SMITH. About a mile from the Titanic?

Mr. HITCHENS. Yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. Could you see the Titanic?

Mr. HITCHENS. I could not see her; not after the lights went out; no, sir.

Senator SMITH. You could see the lights?

Mr. HITCHENS. We could see the lights go out; yes, sir.

George Thomas Rowe, Quartermaster in Collapsible C

Mr. Rowe did hear explosions as the Titanic sank, and saw the stern go under, but did not state whether he saw or thought the ship broke up.

Pages 525 and 526:

Senator BURTON. Did you hear any explosions?

Mr. ROWE. I heard one, sir, after we left the ship. It was not an explosion; a sort of a rumbling.

Senator BURTON. What do you think it was?

Mr. ROWE. I have no idea what it was.

Senator BURTON. Do you think it was boilers exploding?

Mr. ROWE. It was not an ordinary explosion, you understand; more like distant thunder.

Senator BURTON. Was that before or after the ship sank?

Mr. ROWE. Before she sank, sir.

Senator BURTON. Were there more than one of those explosions?

Mr. ROWE. I only heard the one, sir.

Senator BURTON. How far from the ship were you when she went down?

Mr. ROWE. About three-quarters of a mile, sir.

Senator BURTON. Did you see her go down?

Mr. ROWE. I saw her stern disappear at the finish, sir.

Senator BURTON. It was while she was still floating that you heard the explosions?

Mr. ROWE. Heard this rumbling sound, sir.

Senator BURTON. You are quite sure of that, are you?

Mr. ROWE. Positive, sir.

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Alfred Olliver, Quartermaster in Lifeboat 5

Quartermaster Oliver states he did not see the sinking clearly, but thought she had broke apart:

Pages 530 and 531:

Senator BURTON. Did you see the boat sink?

Mr. OLLIVER. I can not say that I saw it right plain; but to my imagination I did, because the lights went out before she went down.

Senator BURTON. How did she sink?

Mr. OLLIVER. She was well down at the head at first, when we got away from her at first, and to my idea she broke forward, and the afterpart righted itself and made another plunge and went right down. I fancied I saw her black form. It was dark, and I fancied I saw her black form going that way.

Senator BURTON. Did she careen over, tip over sideways, or did she go ahead?

Mr. OLLIVER. She went ahead, like that [indicating].

Senator BURTON. Did you hear explosions?

Mr. OLLIVER. I heard several little explosions, but it was not such explosions as I expected to hear.

Senator BURTON. Were these before or after she sank?

Mr. OLLIVER. Before she sank and while she was sinking.

Senator BURTON. What did you think those explosions were?

Mr. OLLIVER. Myself, I thought they were like bulkheads giving in.

Frank Osman, Seaman in Lifeboat 2

Seaman Osman states that he saw the Titanic break apart.

Page 541:

Mr. OSMAN. We pulled astern that way again, and after we got astern we lay on our oars and saw the ship go down. After she got to a certain angle she exploded, broke in halves, and it seemed to me as if all the engines and everything that was in the after part slid out into the forward part, and the after part came up right again, and as soon as it came up right down it went again.

Edward Wheelton, Steward in Lifeboat 11

Mr. Wheelton is not specifically asked, nor does he state what happened as the ship went under.

Pages 547 and 548:

Senator NEWLANDS. Did you see the ship go down?

Mr. WHEELTON. I did, sir.

Senator NEWLANDS. Could you see the passengers on the ship when it went down?

Mr. WHEELTON. I could not, sir.

George Moore, Seaman in Lifeboat 3

Seaman Moore did mention that the ship broke in half.

Page 563:

Senator NEWLANDS. How far were you from the ship when it sank?

Mr. MOORE. I should say just over a quarter of a mile, sir.

Senator NEWLANDS. You heard the cries of the people in the water, did you not?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, sir; everybody heard that, sir.

Senator NEWLANDS. Did you see the ship go down?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, sir.

Senator NEWLANDS. What was the appearance of the ship at that point of time?

Mr. MOORE. I saw the forward part of her go down, and it appeared to me as if she broke in half, and then the after part went. I can remember two explosions.

G. A. Hogg, Lookout in Lifeboat 7

Lookout Hogg said he saw the ship sink, but gave no details.

Page 580:

Senator PERKINS. Did you see the Titanic disappear?

Mr. HOGG. Yes, sir.

Senator PERKINS. What was her position when she went down?

Mr. HOGG. She seemed to go down by the head, sir.

Senator PERKINS. At an angle of how many degrees?

Mr. HOGG. Oh, her stern was well up in the air as she went down.

Walter John Perkis, Quartermaster in Lifeboat 4

Walter Perkis was not asked for details on the sinking, not did he give any.

Page 582:

Senator PERKINS. Did you see the Titanic go down?

Mr. PERKIS. Yes, sir.

Senator PERKINS. And you were how far from her at that time?

Mr. PERKIS. Six lengths from her, sir.

John Hardy, Steward in Collapsible D

John Hardy did not say whether the ship sank intact or not.

Page 591:

Senator FLETCHER. How far away were you when the Titanic went down?

Mr. HARDY. We could get a full view of her, unfortunately.

Senator FLETCHER. You could get a full view?

Mr. HARDY. Yes, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. In what way did she go down?

Mr. HARDY. She went down head first.

Senator FLETCHER. The stern almost perpendicular?

Mr. HARDY. Not perpendicular, but almost. Her stern was right out of the water.

William Ward, Seaman in Lifeboat 9

Ward did not give any details of the ship sinking.

Page 599:

Senator FLETCHER. Did she go down gradually after you left her, or did she stay up and then suddenly turn downward?

Mr. WARD. She went very gradually for a while. We could just see the ports as she dipped. We could see the light in the ports, and the water seemed to come very slowly up to them. She did not appear to be going fast, and I was of the opinion then that she would not go. I thought we were only out there as a matter of precaution and would certainly go back to the ship. I was still of the opinion she would float.

Senator FLETCHER. Then did she suddenly turn down?

Mr. WARD. She gave a kind of sudden lurch forward, and I heard a couple of reports, reports more like a volley of musketry than anything else. You would not exactly call them a heavy explosion. It did not seem to me like an explosion at all.

Edward John Buley, Seaman in Lifeboat 10

Mr. Buley was convinced the ship broke in half.

Pages 609 and 610:

Senator FLETCHER. After you left her, her bow continued to go under?

Mr. BULEY. Settled down; yes, sir. She went down as far as the afterfunnel, and then there was a little roar, as though the engines had rushed forward, and she snapped in two, and the bow part went down and the afterpart came up and staid up five minutes before it went down.

Senator FLETCHER. Was that perpendicular?

Mr. BULEY. It was horizontal at first, and then went down.

Senator FLETCHER. What do you mean by saying she snapped in two?

Mr. BULEY. She parted in two.

Senator FLETCHER. How do you know that?

Mr. BULEY. Because we could see the afterpart afloat, and there was no

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forepart to it. I think she must have parted where the bunkers were. She parted at the last, because the afterpart of her settled out of the water horizontally after the other part went down. First of all you could see her propellers and everything. Her rudder was clear out of the water. You could hear the rush of the machinery, and she parted in two, and the afterpart settled down again, and we thought the afterpart would float altogether.

Senator FLETCHER. The afterpart kind of righted up horizontally?

Mr. BULEY. She uprighted herself for about five minutes, and then tipped over and disappeared.

Senator FLETCHER. Did it go on the side?

Mr. BULEY. No, sir; went down headforemost.

Senator FLETCHER. That makes you believe the boat went in two?

Mr. BULEY. Yes, sir. You could see she went in two, because we were quite near to her and could see her quite plainly.

Senator FLETCHER. You were near and could see her quite plainly?

Mr. BULEY. Yes, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. Notwithstanding the darkness you could see the outline of the ship?

Mr. BULEY. Yes, sir; we could see the outline of the ship.

Senator FLETCHER. How far were you when she went down?

Mr. BULEY. We were about 200 yards.

George Frederick Crowe, Steward in Lifeboat 14

Mr. Crowe saw the Titanic break in half.

Page 620:

Senator BOURNE. Did you see the ship sink?

Mr. CROWE. I did, sir.

Senator BOURNE. Would you explain in your own way how it appeared to you?

Mr. CROWE. After getting clear of the ship the lights were still burning very bright, but as we got away she seemed to go lower and lower, and she almost stood up perpendicular, and her lights went dim, and presently she broke clean in two, probably two-thirds of the length of the ship.

Senator BOURNE. That is, two-thirds out of the water or two-thirds in the water?

Mr. CROWE. Two-thirds in the water, one-third of the aft funnel sticking up.

Senator BOURNE. How long did that third stick up?

Mr. CROWE. After she floated back again.

Senator BOURNE. She floated back?

Mr. CROWE. She broke, and the after part floated back.

Senator BOURNE. And the bow part, two-thirds of the ship, sank.

Mr. CROWE. Yes, sir; then there was an explosion, and the aft part turned on end and sank.

C. E. Andrews, Steward in Lifeboat 16

Mr. Andrews was unsure whether the ship broke up.

Page 626:

Senator BOURNE. How far were you from the Titanic at the time?

Mr. ANDREWS. I should say about half a mile, sir.

Senator BOURNE. Did you see the Titanic sink?

Mr. ANDREWS. Well, sir, she must have been halfway sinking when I saw her.

Senator BOURNE. Did you hear any explosion or noise?

Mr. ANDREWS. I heard just a small sound, sir; it was not very loud, but just a small sound.

Senator BOURNE. Did you think that the ship broke in two?

Mr. ANDREWS. That I do not know, sir. When we got away in the boat at the last everything seemed to go to a black mist. All the lights seemed to go out and everything went black.

Senator BOURNE. Did the lights go out altogether on the whole ship, or go out in part, and then the remainder go out?

Mr. ANDREWS. They seemed to go out altogether, sir.

John Collins, Cook on Lifeboat B

Mr. Collins does not specifically say he saw the ship split apart, but his comments do seem to indicate he felt the ship was broken apart by the explosions. Collins had been thrown into the water from the Boat Deck going under.

Pages 630 and 631:

Senator BOURNE. When you were in the water, after you came up above the surface of the water, you saw the lights on the Titanic?

Mr. COLLINS. Just as I came up to the surface, sir. Her bow was in the water. She had not exploded then. Her bow was in the water, and I just looked around and saw the lights.

Senator BOURNE. Had she broken in two?

Mr. COLLINS. Her bow was in the water and her stern was up.

Senator BOURNE. But you did not see any break? You did not think she had parted, and broken in two?

Mr. COLLINS. Her bow was in the water. She exploded in the water. She exploded once in the water, and her stern end was up out of the water; and with the explosion out of the water it blew her stern up.

Senator BOURNE. You saw it while it was up?

Mr. COLLINS. Yes, sir; saw her stern up.

Senator BOURNE. How long?

Mr. COLLINS. I am sure it floated for at least a minute.

Senator BOURNE. The lights were still burning?

Mr. COLLINS. No, sir; the lights was out.

Senator BOURNE. How could you see it?

Mr. COLLINS. I was on the collapsible boat at the time.

Senator BOURNE. If it was dark, how could you see?

Mr. COLLINS. We were not too far off. I saw the white of the funnel. Then she turned over again, and down she went.

Frederick Clench, Seaman in Lifeboat 12

Mr. Clench did not know if the ship broke apart, though he did hear several explosions.

Page 638:

Senator BOURNE. Did you see the ship sink?

Mr. CLENCH. Yes, sir.

Senator BOURNE. About a quarter of a mile away?

Mr. CLENCH. About a quarter of a mile away.

Senator BOURNE. Did she sink bow down?

Mr. CLENCH. Bow down; yes, sir.

Senator BOURNE. Did she break in two?

Mr. CLENCH. That I could not say.

Ernest Archer, Seaman in Lifeboat 16

Seaman Brice stated he did not see the Titanic split.

Pages 646 and 647:

Senator BOURNE. Were you sufficiently near so that you could see the ship itself when you were about a quarter of mile away?

Mr. ARCHER. Yes, sir; quite distinguish it.

Senator BOURNE. Do you think the ship broke in two?

Mr. ARCHER. Well, I could not say that, sir.

Senator BOURNE. There was nothing that gave you such an impression?

Mr. ARCHER. No, sir.

Senator BOURNE. You were watching the ship all the time?

Mr. ARCHER. Watching it settle down all the time; yes, sir.

W. Brice, Seaman in Lifeboat 11

Seaman Brice said he did not know if the Titanic sank intact or not.

Page 653:

Senator BOURNE. Did you see her sink?

Mr. BRICE. I saw her sink.

Senator BOURNE. Did she go bow down first?

Mr. BRICE. Bow down first.

Senator BOURNE. Did her stern rise in the air?

Mr. BRICE. She went down almost perpendicular.

Senator BOURNE. Were the lights still in the stern as she sank?

Mr. BRICE. No, sir; she became a black mass before she made the final

plunge.

Senator BOURNE. You were about a quarter of a mile away?

Mr. BRICE. Yes, sir.

Senator BOURNE. Have you any idea whether she broke in two or not?

Mr. BRICE. That I could not say, sir.

Albert Haines, Boatswain's Mate in Lifeboat 9

Mate Haines was not asked and did not state whether the ship broke apart.

Page 659:

Senator SMITH. How far were you from the Titanic? How far off did you lay?

Mr. HAINES. I laid off close to her at first, sir.

Senator SMITH. How close?

Mr. HAINES. Within 100 yards at first, sir, until I saw her going down by the head.

Senator SMITH. You kept within a hundred yards of her?

Mr. HAINES. For a time; yes, sir.

Senator SMITH. Until you saw her going down by the head?

Mr. HAINES. Yes; until I saw she was gradually sinking farther and farther down.

Frank Oliver Evans, Seaman in Lifeboat 10

Seaman Evans said he saw the ship break up.

Page 753:

Senator FLETCHER. Did you see the Titanic after you rowed away from where she was?

Mr. EVANS. Yes, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. How far did you go away?

Mr. EVANS. About 200 yards.

Senator SMITH. Could you see the boat well after you pulled away from her?

Mr. EVANS. You could see her when the lights were clear, and then until she gave the final plunge.

Senator FLETCHER. Did the boat go to pieces or come in two?

Mr. EVANS. She parted between the third and fourth funnels.

Senator FLETCHER. What makes you say that?

Mr. EVANS. The foremost part was gone, and it seemed as if the engines were all gone out.

Senator FLETCHER. You did see the forepart was all gone and you could see the stern come up horizontally?

Mr. EVANS. Yes, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. After the forepart had disappeared the stern came up and was horizontal with the surface of the water?

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Mr. EVANS. Yes, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. And how much of the stern; up to what part of the ship; to the funnels?

Mr. EVANS. From the after funnel to the ensign mast.

Senator FLETCHER. About how much of the ship was afloat then, after the forepart had gone down?

Mr. EVANS. I should say about 200 feet was afloat; that is, of the stern part.

Senator FLETCHER. Could you see that clearly in the outline?

Mr. EVANS. You could see that in the outline. Then she made a sudden plunge, and the stern went right up.

Senator FLETCHER. Then she plunged forward and went right down?

Mr. EVANS. Plunged forward, perpendicular, sir.

Senator FLETCHER. How long was the stern afloat in that horizontal position?

Mr. EVANS. About four or five minutes, I should judge.

Andrew Cunningham, Steward in Lifeboat 4

Mr. Cunningham was not asked how the ship sank.

Page 794:

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: We saw the ship go down then. Then we struck out to look for a boat.

Senator SMITH. You swam around in the water until you saw the ship go down?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM: Until I saw the ship go down.

Frederick D. Ray, Steward in Lifeboat 13

Mr. Ray was also not asked how the ship sank.

Page 809:

Senator FLETCHER. Had you gotten as far as three-quarters of a mile before the lights went out on the Titanic?

Mr. RAY. Yes, sir; we were about a mile off when the lights went out.

Henry Samuel Etches, Steward in Lifeboat 5

Steward Etches did not give any details about sinking intact or not.

Pages 817 and 818:

Mr. ETCHES. We laid off about 100 yards and waited, and the ship started going down; seemed to be going down at the head, and Mr. Pitman gave us the order to head away from the ship, and we pulled off then, I should say, about a quarter of a mile, and laid on our oars.

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Senator SMITH. How long?

Mr. ETCHEs. We remained until the Titanic sank.

Senator SMITH. Did you see it go down?

Mr. ETCHEs. I saw it go down, sir.

Senator SMITH. You could not see who was on the decks from your distance?

Mr. ETCHEs. I saw, when the ship rose - her stern rose - a thick mass of people on the after end. I could not discern the faces, of course.

Senator SMITH. Did the boat go down by the head?

Mr. ETCHEs. She seemed to raise once as though she was going to take a violent dive, but sort of checked, as though she had scooped the water up and had leveled herself. She then seemed to settle very, very quiet, until the last, when she rose up, and she seemed to stand 20 seconds, stern in that position [indicating], and then she went down with an awful grating, like a small boat running off a shingley beach.

William Burke, Steward in Lifeboat 10

Though Steward Burke claimed to have watched the Titanic's final moments, he gave no details.

Page 823:

Mr. BURKE. The boat was lowered then into the water. One of the sailors took an oar, and I took an oar, and the only other member of the crew, a fireman, got an oar. The sailor steered the boat, and we rowed away from the ship. We got probably about a quarter of a mile away, and remained there. We saw pretty well the last of the ship - the Titanic.

Arthur John Bright, Quartermaster in Collapsible D

Mr. Bright saw the Titanic break apart.

Page 839:

Mr. BRIGHT. I was 50 to 100 yards away, I would say, when she went down. I could not be exact, but about that.

Senator FLETCHER. Did she break in two?

Mr. BRIGHT. She broke in two. All at once she seemed to go up on end, you know, and come down about half way, and then the afterpart righted, itself again and the forepart had disappeared. A few seconds the after part did the same thing and went down. I could distinctly see the propellers - everything - out of the water.

Page 841:

Senator BOURNE. The ship went down by her bow first and you could see the stern, and see the keel on the stern, could you?

Mr. BRIGHT. Yes, sir. Then that righted itself again, got on an even keel again after that.

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Senator BOURNE. That is, the stern?

Mr. BRIGHT. It settled down in the water on an even keel

Senator BOURNE. But the bow had disappeared?

Mr. BRIGHT. Yes, sir.

Senator BOURNE. Hence, you assumed that she broke in two.

Senator FLETCHER. Where did she break? Tell us about where she broke in two.

Mr. BRIGHT. Well, it was as near the middle as anything, I should say; but it was dark.

:

Hugh Woolner, 1st Class passenger in Collapsible D

Hugh Woolner thought the Titanic sank in one piece.

Pages 889 and 895:

Mr. WOOLNER. We got out three oars first, and shoved off from the side of the ship. Then we got her head more or less straightaway, and then we pulled as hard as we could, until, I should think, we were 150 yards away, when the Titanic went down.

Senator SMITH. Did you see her go down?

Mr. WOOLNER. Yes.

Senator SMITH. Were you looking at the Titanic when she went down?

Mr. WOOLNER. Yes.

Senator SMITH. As you were looking at her when she went down, do you think she broke in two?

Mr. WOOLNER. I did not think so.

C. E. Henry Stengel, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 1

page 979-980:

Senator FLETCHER. How far were you from the Titanic when she went down?

Mr. STENGEL. I could not say the distance. I saw all the movements. I saw her first row of port lights go under the water; I saw the next port lights go under the water; and finally the bow was all dark. When the last lights on the bow went under, I said, "There is danger here; we had better row away from here. This is a light boat, and there may be suction when the ship goes down. Let us pull away." The other passengers agreed, and we pulled away from the Titanic, and after that we stopped rowing for awhile, and she was going down by the bow most all the time, and all of a sudden there were four sharp explosions about that far apart, just like this (the witness indicating by snapping his fingers four times), and then she dipped and the stern stood up in the air, and then the cries began for help. I should think that the people who were left on the boat began to jump over. There was an awful wail like.

Senator FLETCHER. Could you see the people?

Mr. STENGEL. No, sir; I could not see any of the people, but I could

hear them.

Senator FLETCHER. What was the character of these explosions?

Mr. STENGEL. I do not know, but I should judge it would be a battery of boilers going.

Senator FLETCHER. Might it have been bulkheads giving way?

Mr. STENGEL. I do not know. I have never been familiar with bulkheads giving way; but they were quite hard explosions. She dipped, then, forward, and all you could see was the stern sticking up. When I heard the cries I turned my back. I said, "I can not look any longer."

Archibald Gracie, 1st Class passenger on Collapsible B

At the US Inquiry, Col. Gracie does not give any details as to whether the Titanic broke apart or not.

Pages 994 and 995:

Mr. GRACIE. I was on the raft, which I will speak of, all night. There was a sort of gulp, as if something had occurred, behind me, and I suppose that was where the water was closing up, where the ship had gone down; but the surface of the water was perfectly still, and there were, I say, this wreckage, and these bodies, and there were the horrible sounds of drowning people and people gasping for breath.

Mrs. J. Stuart White, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 8

Although asked by Senator Smith, Mrs. White gives no specific details, though she thought it broke in two.

Page 1008:

Mrs. WHITE. We sat there for a long time, and we saw the ship go down, distinctly.

Senator SMITH. What was your impression of it as it went down?

Mrs. WHITE. It was something dreadful. Nobody ever thought the ship was going down. I do not think there was a person that night, I do not think there was a man on the boat who thought the ship was going down. In my opinion the ship when it went down was broken in two. I think very probably it broke in two.

Daniel Buckley, 3rd Class passenger possibly in Lifeboat 13

Mr. Buckley did not say whether the Titanic sank intact or not.

Page 1022:

Senator SMITH. Were you where you could see the ship when she went down?

Mr. BUCKLEY. Yes; I saw the lights just going out as she went down. It

made a terrible noise, like thunder.

George A. Harder, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 5

Mr. Harder gave no details of the sinking itself.

Pages 1031 and 1032:

Mr. HARDER. Then we waited out there until the ship went down. We were out there until the ship went down.

Berk Pickard, 3rd Class passenger possibly in Lifeboat 9

Mr. Pickard does not say if the ship broke apart.

Page 1055:

Mr. PICKARD. In regard to the ship, I saw the ship very quickly started sinking, and one rail went under and then another, until in a half an hour, from my point of view, the ship sank altogether.

A. H. Weikman, Barber in Collapsible A

Mr. Weikman did not mention the ship sinking intact or not.

Page 1099:

Senator SMITH. Did you see the ship go down? I mean the Titanic.

Mr. WEIKMAN. Yes; I was afloat on chairs about 100 feet away, looking toward the ship. I seen her sink.

Mahala D. Douglas, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 2

Mrs. Douglas did not say how the ship sank

Page 1101:

In an incredibly short space of time, it seemed to me, the boat sank. I heard an explosion. I watched the boat go down, and the last picture to my mind is the immense mass of black against the starlit sky, and then nothingness.

Emily Bosie Ryerson, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 4

Mrs. Ryerson saw the ship break apart.

Page 1108:

Then suddenly, when we still seemed very near, we saw the ship was sinking rapidly. I was in the bow of the boat with my daughter and turned to see the great ship take a plunge toward the bow, the two forward funnels seemed to lean and then she seemed to break in half as if cut with a knife, and as the bow went under the lights went out; the stern stood up for several minutes, black against the stars, and then that, too, plunged down, and there was no sound for what seemed like hours

Catherine E. Crosby, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 5

Mrs. Crosby gave no details on the ship itself sinking.

Page 1145:

We continued a safe distance away from the steamer, probably a quarter of a mile at least, and finally saw the steamer go down very distinctly; we did not see nor hear about any trouble on the steamer that is reported to have taken place afterwards; we got away first, and got away a safe distance, so that we could not see nor hear what took place, until the steamer went down, which was about 2.20 a. m. on the morning of the 15th.

Imanita Shelley, 2nd Class passenger in Lifeboat 12

Mrs. Shelly gave no details.

Page 1148:

That on reaching a distance of about 100 yards from the Titanic a loud explosion or noise was heard, followed closely by another, and the sinking of the big vessel began.

Eloise Hughes Smith, 1st Class passenger in Lifeboat 6

Mrs. Smith also gave no details.

Page 1150:

We were some distance away when the Titanic went down.

Conclusions for the American Inquiry Accounts:

It is clear that very few people stated that the ship sank intact. It is also very obvious that the Senators really did not make that much of an effort to find this out, in many survivors accounts.

In the table below, the category below for those who did not state whether the ship broke apart or not, includes both those who did not say, and those who were unsure what really did happen to the Titanic in the final moments.

<i>American Inquiry Totals</i>		
Those who said the ship broke apart	Those who did not state or know whether the ship broke apart or not	Those who said the ship sank intact
Total 8	Total 36	Total 3
Olliver	Ismay	Crawford
Osman	Bride	Boxhall
Moore	Fleet	Peuchen
Buley	Lowe	Hichens
Crowe	Rowe	Wheelton
Evans	Taylor	Jones
Bright	Symons	Hogg
White	Perkis	Hardy
	Ward	Widgery
	Andrews	Collins
	Clench	Archer
	Brice	Haines
	Hemmings	Cunningham
	Ray	Etches
	Burke	Stengel
	Gracie	Bishop
	Bishop	Buckley
	Harder	Abelseth
	Chambers	Pickard

The British Inquiry Accounts:

The following witnesses at the British Inquiry made no statement at all about the ship sinking.

George Cavell, Trimmer in Lifeboat 15
Frank Herbert Morris, Steward in Lifeboat 14
John Edward Hart, Steward in Lifeboat 15
Joseph Thomas Wheat, Steward in Lifeboat 11
James Taylor, Fireman in Lifeboat 1
Lady Duff-Gordon, First-class Passenger in Lifeboat 1
Frederick Sheath, Trimmer in Lifeboat 1
Elizabeth Leather, Stewardess in Lifeboat 16
Annie Robinson, Stewardess in Lifeboat 11
Walter Wynn, Quartermaster in Lifeboat 9
Frederick Fleet, Look-Out in Lifeboat 6
George Alfred Hogg, Look-Out in Lifeboat 7
Samuel Hemming, Lamp-Trimmer in Lifeboat 4
Wilfred Seward, Pantry Steward in Lifeboat 3
Alfred Crawford, Steward in Lifeboat 8
Edward John Buley, Able-bodied Seaman in Lifeboat 10
Ernest Archer, Able-bodied Seaman in Lifeboat 16
Joseph Bruce Ismay, First-class Passenger in Collapsible C
Paul Mauge, Chef's Assistant in Lifeboat 13

Archie Jewell, Look-Out in Lifeboat 7

Mr. Jewell did not say whether the ship sank intact or not.

175. Just tell us shortly what you yourself saw then. What did you see that happened to the "Titanic" before she went down and as she went down? - We stopped there and watched her gradually sink away. We could see the people about on the deck before the lights went out. As she went away by the head so the lights went out, and we heard some explosions as she was going down. But all the lights went out and we could only see a black object in front of us.

176. Was it light enough to see if her stern was up in the air? - Yes. I saw the stern straight up in the air.

177. At that time were the lights still burning or had they gone out? - No. As the stern stood up in the air so all the lights went out.

Joseph Scarrott, Able-Bodied Seaman in Lifeboat 14

Mr. Scarrott also did not say how the Titanic sank.

426. (The Commissioner.) How soon after you saw the bridge level with the water did the ship disappear? - Well, I cannot say as regards the time, but when it got there the ship went with a rush, and you could hear the breaking up of things in the ship, and then followed four explosions.

George William Beauchamp, Fireman in Lifeboat 13

Fireman Beauchamp did not say.

757a. (Mr. Raymond Asquith.) When she sank were you near enough to see what happened; did you see how she sank? - Yes, she went down bows first; I could see the stern and then the stern went.

758. Did you hear any explosion? - I could hear a roaring just like thunder.

Robert Hichens, Quartermaster in Lifeboat 6

Robert Hichens claimed he did not see the Titanic go down.

1209. Did you see the "Titanic" go down? - No, Sir.

1210. Did you see her lights? - The last time I looked I saw her lights.

1211. Was your back to her then? - Yes. I was steering away from her then.

1212. You were steering? - Yes.

1213. The last time you looked you saw the lights, and then you did not see them any more? - No, Sir.

William Lucas, Able-Bodied Seaman in Collapsible D, transferred to #12

Mr. Lucas was asked if he saw the ship sink, but gave no details.

1561. Did you see the "Titanic" sink? - Yes.

1562. How far off were you when she sank? - I suppose about 150 yards.

1563. Then it was not very long after you left her that she did sink? - No.

1564. Had you been rowing all the time? - I was not rowing long before she went down.

Frederick Barrett, Leading Fireman in Lifeboat 13

Mr. Barrett was not asked, but just offered that he did see the ship go down.

2199. I gather, Barrett, really, that you felt the cold so much that you do not remember very much? - No, I remember the ship went down.

2200. You remember the ship going down? - Yes; then I must have fallen asleep.

Reginald Lee, Look-Out in Lifeboat 13

Reginald Lee did not see the ship in her last moments.

2553. Did you lay off for some time in the boats. I mean, lay off the "Titanic"? - We were about a quarter to half a mile away from the ship, laying off until she disappeared.

2554. So that you could see what was happening? - Yes.

2555. Then did you see her settling by the head? - She went down by the head.

2560. Did you see her stern? - No. I cannot say that I did from where I was in the boat. I was standing in the bottom of the boat, and I did not actually see the last part of her go. I saw her just before that, but when people said, "She's gone; that's the last of her," I did not actually see it. I cannot say.

2561. Did you see her stern in the air at all during any of the time? - Well, I did not see her just before her final disappearance. I did not see that, I cannot say that I did.

John Poingdestre, Able-Bodied Seaman in Lifeboat 12

Mr. Poingdestre did see the ship break apart.

You said you saw the "Titanic" sink? - Yes.

3107. How far away were you when she sank? - About 150 yards.

3108. Now will you describe to us what you saw happen when she sank? - Well, I thought when I looked that the ship broke at the foremost funnel.

3109. What led you to that conclusion? - Because I had seen that part disappear.

3110. If she sank by the head you would see that part disappear, would you not? - Yes.

3111. What was there about the disappearance that led you to think she broke? - Because she was short; the afterpart righted itself after the foremost part had disappeared.

3112. (The Commissioner.) Do you mean to say that the fore part of the vessel went down to the bottom, and that then the remainder came on an even keel? - Yes.

James Johnson, Steward in Lifeboat 2

James Johnson was not asked and did not say if the ship broke up.

3509. Now, Mr. Johnson, you told us you rowed away and came back again. Did you see the "Titanic" sink? - I saw her go down.

3510. How far off were you from her then in your boat? - It might have been three-quarters of a mile, or it might have been a little bit less.

Thomas Patrick Dillon, Trimmer in Lifeboat 4

Mr. Dillion wasn't in the best place to see a breakup, as he ended up in the water during that time.

3858. (Mr. Raymond Asquith.) Before the ship actually went down did you see her make any movements? - Yes, she took one final plunge and righted herself again.

3859. She gave a plunge and righted herself again? - Yes.

3860. Did you notice anything about the funnel? - Not then.

3861. Did you afterwards notice something about the funnel? - Yes.

3862. What? - When she went down.

3863. Was that after you had left the ship? - Before I left the ship.

3864. What did you notice? - Well, the funnel seemed to cant up towards me.

3865. It seemed to fall aft? - Yes; it seemed to fall up this way.

3866. Was that the aftermost funnel? - Yes.

3867. Did you get the idea that the ship was breaking in two? - No.

3868. Did the funnel seem to fall towards you? - Yes.

3869. (The Commissioner.) That is the after funnel? - Yes, my Lord.

3882. (Mr. Raymond Asquith.) When you came up again, after you were sucked down - you told us you were sucked down and came up again - was the ship still floating then? - No.

3883. She had sunk when you came up again? - Well, I saw what I thought would be the afterpart of her coming up and going down again, final.

3884. Then she had not sunk? - She came up and went down again.

3885. You saw what you thought was the afterpart coming up again? - I thought it was the ship coming up again. She came up and went down again - finish.

Thomas Ranger, Greaser in Lifeboat 4

Mr. Ranger did describe the Titanic seeming to break off.

4090. (The Attorney-General.) Did you see the vessel go down? - Yes.

4094. Just tell us what you saw of the ship going down; describe it to the Court? - The forward end of the ship went underneath and seemed to break off, and the afterpart came back on a level keel.

4095. Then, when she came back on a level keel, what happened to the afterpart of her, then? - It turned up and went down steadily.

4096. Turned up that way, stern up. (Showing.) - Yes.

4097. Did she remain like that at any time? - No.

4098. Will you just describe to us what you mean? - She just slowly turned up and went down. You could see the three propellers in the air.

4099. The foremost part of the afterpart of the vessel began to go down into the water? - Yes.

4100. And the stern went up? - Yes.

4112. You saw the vessel dive down? - Yes.

4113. The fore part of her? - Yes.

Alfred Shiers, Fireman in Lifeboat 5

Alfred Shiers was asked what he saw, but gave no details whatsoever.

4661. Did you see the vessel sink? - Yes.

Charles Hendrickson, Leading Fireman in Lifeboat 1

Fireman Hendrickson's made the same statement as Shiers, with no detail.

5016. Did you see the ship sink? - Yes.

Frederick Scott, Greaser in Lifeboat 4

Mr. Scott did see the ship break in half.

5673. We pulled away from the ship's side and we had not been away long before the ship started breaking up, and her stern went up in the air, and you could see her three propellers nearly the same as you can see them on the model.

5674. You got away? - Yes; we had just got at the stern of her when she started breaking up.

5675. You say she started breaking up? - Yes; she broke off at the after-funnel, and when she broke off her stern end came up in the air and came down on a level keel and disappeared.

5676. It went up in the air and came back on a level keel? - Yes.

5677. Then did she go up again before she disappeared? - No.

5678. Simply sank? - She simply sank.

5679. (The Commissioner.) Where did she break? - The after-funnel.

5680. (The Attorney-General.) Do you mean between the third and fourth funnels? - No, the after-funnel. From the after-funnel to the stern of her.

5681. Do you mean the break was aft of her last funnel? - Yes, just aft of the last funnel.

5682. (The Commissioner.) Aft of the ventilating funnel? - Yes, that is right.

The Commissioner: Does this agree with the other evidence?

The Attorney-General: No.

5684. You could not see how far forward she parted? - No.

Charles Joughin, Cook in Collapsible B

Unlike other witnesses, Baker Joughin described hearing some of the early signs of the breakup, while he was in the deck pantry on A deck.

He did not describe seeing the ship break up, however.

6040. Tell us what happened? - I went to the deck pantry, and while I was in there I thought I would take a drink of water, and while I was getting the drink of water I heard a kind of a crash as if something had buckled, as if part of the ship had buckled, and then I heard a rush overhead.

6049. You say that you heard this sound of buckling or crackling. Was it loud; could anybody in the ship hear it? - You could have heard it, but you did not really know what it was. It was not an explosion or anything like that. It was like as if the iron was parting.

6050. Like the breaking of metal? - Yes.

Samuel James Rule, Steward in Lifeboat 15

Steward Rule did not see the ship go down at the last. His statements make it unclear as to whether he saw any breakup minutes earlier.

6609. Did you see her go down? - Well, yes, I saw her.

6610. Were her electric lights burning to the end - to the last? - Very near to the last.

6611. Did you see her actually founder? - I did not see her actually go down at the last.

Albert Victor Pearcey, Pantryman in Collapsible C

Mr. Pearcey does not say one way or the other whether the ship intact or not.

10452. Did you see the vessel go down? - Yes.

10453. Were you facing her when she went down? - Yes.

10454. Were her lights burning? - Yes, the lights were burning.

10455. Up to the last? - Yes.

10463. Will you tell the Court what you saw? Explain to the Court what you saw when the vessel sank? - Of course, when she sank she went down. She went down this way (showing). I could not exactly say. I am only rough myself, and I cannot describe it.

10464. Let us see if we can help you. Did she appear to be plunging down by the head or the stern? - She was plunging forward.

10465. Did you see her stern out of the water at all? - Yes, Sir.

10466. Was the stern upstanding? - Yes.

10467. So that the stern was up in the water like that (showing)? - Yes.

Edward Brown, Steward in Collapsible A

Although Mr. Brown seems a bit unsure of what he saw, he does describe the bow breaking off.

10551. Did you hear any noise from the ship as she went down under you - any explosions? - What I took to be an explosion, Sir - a great noise, a great report.

10553. Could you help me with regard to this; if you did not notice say so: Did you notice whether the bow broke off? - With the first report of that explosion I saw the afterpart of the ship giving a tremble like this (showing), and I thought by the afterpart going up like this (showing), and giving a bit of a tremble that the bow had fallen off. I might be wrong.

10554. But that was your conclusion from it? - Yes.

Charles Donald MacKay, Steward in Lifeboat 11

Mr. MacKay was not asked for, and did not state any details about the state of the ship during the sinking.

10800. How far away? - To the best of my ability a quarter of a mile.

10801. Were you within sight when the ship went down? - We watched all proceedings.

10849. Did you see the ship sink? - Yes.

George Symons, Look-out in Lifeboat 1

Look-out Symons described the ship breaking in half

11510. Then when you saw her like that, what was the next thing that happened? - I pulled a little further away to escape, if there was any suction. I stood and watched it till I heard two sharp explosions in the ship. What they were I could not say. Then she suddenly took a top cant, her stern came well out of the water then.

11511. A top cant? - You know what I mean to say, she took a heavy cant and her bow went down clear.

11512. Head downwards? - Head down, and that is the time when I saw her lights go out, all her lights. The next thing I saw was her poop. As she went down like that so her poop righted itself and I thought to myself, "The poop is going to float." It could not have been more than two or three minutes after that that her poop went up as straight as anything; there was a sound like steady thunder as you hear on an ordinary night at a distance, and soon she disappeared from view.

11513. Let us see if we quite understand what you are saying about it. Suppose that is the stem and that is the stern. (Describing.) You saw her first of all with her stem downward? - Yes.

11514. I understand you to say you saw her stem downwards? - Yes.

11515. Did you see her head going well down? - Her head was going well down.

11516. And you saw her stern out of the water like that? (Describing.) - Yes, her stern was well out of the water.

11517. I understand you to say that at one period you saw her stern

right itself? - It righted itself without the bow; in my estimation she must have broken in half.

11518. Can you form any idea from what part of the vessel it was that she appeared to right herself? - I should think myself it was abaft the after expansion plate.

11722. "And after we had put off from No. 1 boat I saw this light still bearing in much the same direction and at about the same distance away. I saw no red or green lights at all at this time. At this time the forecastle-head of the "Titanic" was all awash; and when we were about a quarter of a mile off I heard two sharp explosions following each other rapidly. The "Titanic" seemed to me to split in two, the head disappearing completely, and the poop coming up and seeming to right itself for a moment, the lights all went suddenly out, and she seemed to take an upturn plunge, standing up on end, and with a roar she disappeared.

Albert Edward James Horswill, Fireman in Lifeboat 1

Mr. Horswill did not see the ship in it's final dive.

12336. Did you see the "Titanic" go down? - No.

12337. Was your back to it? - No, I never saw it go down at all.

Sir Cosmo Duff-Gordon, First-class Passenger in Lifeboat 1

Although Sir Duff-Gordon claimed to be watching the ship, he gave no details of what he saw.

12543. You do not know where? - I had been watching the "Titanic," of course, to the last moment, and after that, of course, one did not know where it had been.

Samuel Collins, Fireman in Lifeboat 1

Mr. Collins also gave no details.

12988. After a time did you see her go down? - I saw her go down.

Robert William Pusey, Fireman in Lifeboat 1

Again, no details were given by Mr. Pusey.

13100. Did you see the ship go down from that point? - Yes, but not very clearly.

Charles Herbert Lightoller, Second Officer in Collapsible B

Mr. Lightoller's description of the Titanic's end, disagrees with many of the other witnesses, in that he is very specific that the afterpart did *not* settle back to the water. He is convinced the ship sank intact.

14074. (The Solicitor-General.) I do not know whether you can help us at all in describing what happened to the ship. You were engaged and had other things to think about; but what did happen to the ship? Can you tell us at all? - Are you referring to the reports of the ship breaking in two?

14075. Yes? - It is utterly untrue. The ship did not and could not have broken in two.

14076. (The Commissioner.) If you saw it - if you saw what happened, tell us what it was? - After the funnel fell there was some little time elapsed. I do not know exactly what came or went, but the next thing I remember I was alongside this collapsible boat again, and there were about half a dozen standing on it. I climbed on it, and then turned my attention to the ship. The third if not the second funnel was still visible, certainly the third funnel was still visible. The stern was then clear of the water.

14077. Which do you call the second and third? - Numbering them from forward, my Lord.

14078. The second was visible? - The third was visible - I am not sure if the second was visible, but I am certain the third was visible, and she was gradually raising her stern out of the water. Even at that time I think the propellers were clear of the water. That I will not be certain of.

14079. Had the funnel broken away? - Only the forward one.

14080. But you are not sure about the second one? - I am not sure whether that was below water or not, that I cannot say.

14081. That is what I mean. I want to know from you. Was it below water in the sense that the ship had sunk so as to immerse it in the water, or had it broken adrift? - No, the second funnel was immersed.

14082. It appears to me, looking at that model, that if that was so the stern must have been very well up in the air? - Well, I daresay it was, my Lord; it would be.

14083. And the propellers all visible? - Yes, clear of the water. That is my impression.

14084. (The Solicitor-General.) When you say the third funnel was visible I understand you to mean part of it? - Yes, some part of the funnel. As a matter of fact, I am rather under the impression that the whole of the third funnel was visible.

14084a. (The Commissioner.) It seems to me the ship would be almost perpendicular? - She did eventually attain the absolutely perpendicular.

The Solicitor-General: Perhaps this profile will help you. (Handing the same to the Witness.)

14092. (The Solicitor-General.) Did you continue watching the afterpart sufficiently to be able to tell us whether the afterpart settled on the water at all? - It did not settle on the water.

14093. You are confident it did not? - Perfectly certain.

The Solicitor-General: Your Lordship knows a lot of witnesses have said

their impression was the afterpart settled on the water.

14094. (The Commissioner.) I have heard that over and over again. (To the Witness.) That you say is not true? - That is not true, my Lord. I was watching her keenly the whole time.

The Commissioner: I had a difficulty in realizing how it could possibly be that the afterpart of the ship righted itself for a moment.

14095. (The Solicitor-General.) Your evidence is that the ship remained stiff? - Yes.

14096. Now just carry it on, did you continue watching her until she disappeared? - I did.

14097. Just tell us what happened, as you saw it? - After she reached an angle of 50 or 60 degrees, or something about that, there was this rumbling sound, which I attributed to the boilers leaving their beds and crushing down on or through the bulkheads. The ship at that time was becoming more perpendicular, until finally she attained the absolute perpendicular - somewhere about that position (describing), and then went slowly down. She went down very slowly until the end, and then, after she got so far (describing), the afterpart of the second cabin deck, she, of course, went down much quicker.

Herbert John Pitman, Third Officer in Lifeboat 5

Like Mr. Lightoller, Mr. Pitman also claimed the stern did not settle back on the water. He also stated the ship sank intact.

15071. Well, that exhausts it. Now you saw the vessel go down? - Yes.

15072. What did she do when she went down; you were an officer, perhaps you can tell us. Inquires have been made of others. How did she sink? She sank by the head, we know that? - Yes.

15073. Describe it in your own way. - That is the position I saw her in when we left. She gradually disappeared like that; she went right on end like that and went down that way (demonstrating).

15074. Did her afterpart ever right itself? - I should not think so; I did not see it.

15075. Before she finally disappeared? - No.

15076. Could you have seen it if it had happened? - I think so; I was only barely 100 yards away.

15077. Were you keeping your eyes upon her? - I was.

15078. You know this is suggested - supposing that is the head of the ship and going down in this way with the afterpart coming up in that way; a number of witnesses have said that before she finally foundered, plunged into the sea, the afterpart righted itself like that and then she went down. The question is whether you think that is true that she broke in two in that way bringing her afterpart level with the water again and then went down in that way. Did she crack in the middle? - I do not think so. If the afterpart had broken off it would have remained afloat.

15079. Not broken off, but cracked in that way? - No.

15080. At all events, the point is this: Did you see the afterend of the

ship - you saw it up in the air - right itself and come flush with the water again? - It did not.

15081. And you say you looked, and if it had happened you would have seen it? - Certainly.

Joseph Groves Boxhall, Fourth Officer in Lifeboat 2

Mr. Boxhall said he did not see the ship at the last.

15467. How far were you from the ship when she did sink? - Approximately, half-a-mile.

15468. That means that you could not see what happened? - No, I could not.

Harold Godfrey Lowe, Fifth Officer in Lifeboat 14

Mr. Lowe agreed with both of Lightoller and Pitman, that the stern end of the Titanic did not settle back. However, he said nothing about the ship sinking intact.

16015. Did you see the "Titanic" sink? - I did.

16016. Can you tell me anything about this righting of the afterend of the vessel; did you see that? - No, I did not see her right at all - you mean to say that she evened up on her keel?

16017. Yes, the afterpart of her? - No, my Lord, I did not.

16018. Did you see her actually go down? - I did.

16019. If she had righted herself in that way would you have seen it? - Yes, because I was within 150 yards of her. (Q.) And you did not see that? - (A.) I did not.

George Thomas Rowe, Quartermaster in Collapsible C

Mr. Rowe stated he was not in a position to see if the stern righted, and was not asked if she sank intact or not.

17700. (The Commissioner.) Did you see the "Titanic" go down? - Yes.

17701. You know how the foundering has been described to us by some witnesses; that is to say that she was down by the head. Supposing this is the head (indicating), that she was down by the head in that way and then before she went down her afterpart righted itself and lay on an even keel, as far as the keel went, on the surface of the water. Is that so? - I could not say that. I was looking at her practically stem on - what we call stem on.

Conclusions for the British Inquiry Accounts:

Similar to the American Inquiry, very few people said they saw the ship sink intact. Reading thru account after account, it actually feels as if the Assessors were *avoiding* the subject of whether the ship broke apart.

Many witnesses were asked if they saw the ship sink, and then the Assessor abruptly changed the subject to something else! Toward the end of Lightoller's evidence above, the Commissioner (Lord Mersey) even states he does not understand how the stern could right itself. Had he already made up his mind, that the ship had sank intact?

As in the American table, the category below for those who did not state whether the ship broke apart or not, includes both those who did not say, and those who were unsure what really did happen to the Titanic in the final moments.

British Inquiry Totals

Those who said the ship broke apart		Those who did not state or know whether the ship broke apart or not		Those who said the ship sank intact	
Total	5	Total	40	Total	3
Poingdestre		Jewell		Dillon	
Ranger		Scarrott		Lightoller	
Scott		Beauchamp		Pitman	
Brown		Hichens			
Symons		Lucas			
		Barrett			
		Lee			
		Johnson			
		Cavell	Shiers		
		Hendrickson	Morris		
		Joughin	Rule		
		Hart			
		Pearcey			
		MacKay	Wheat		
		Taylor			
		Horswill			
		Sir Duff-Gordon			
		Lady Duff Gordon			
		Collins			
		Sheath			
		Pusey			
		Leather			
		Robinson	Wynn		
		Boxhall	Lowe		
		Fleet	Hogg		
		Rowe			
		Hemming	Seward		
		Crawford	Buley		
		Archer			
		Ismay	Mauge		

Final Totals and Conclusions

Combined Inquiry Totals					
Those who said the ship broke apart		Those who did not state or know whether the ship broke apart or not		Those who said the ship sank intact	
Total	13	Total	65	Total	4
Poingdestre		Jewell	Scarrott	Dillon	
Ranger		Beauchamp	Hichens	Lightoller	
Scott		Lucas	Barrett	Pitman	
Brown		Lee	Johnson	Woolner	
Symons (no comment in Amer.)		Cavell	Shiers		
Olliver		Hendrickson	Morris		
Osman		Joughin	Rule		
Moore		Hart	Pearcey		
Buley (no comment on British)		MacKay	Wheat		
Crowe		Taylor	Horswill		
Evans		Sir Duff-Gordon	Lady Duff		
Bright		Gordon			
White		Collins	Sheath		
		Pusey	Leather		
		Robinson	Wynn		
		Boxhall	Fleet		
		Hogg	Rowe		
		Hemming	Seward		
		Crawford	Buley (removed)		
		Archer	Ismay		
		Mauge	Bride		
		Peuchen	Wheelton		
		Jones	Symons		
		(removed)			
		Perkis	Hardy		
		Ward	Widgery		
		Andrews	Collins		
		Clench	Brice		
		Haines	Cunningham		
		Ray	Etches		
		Burke	Stengel		
		Gracie	Bishop		
		Mrs. Bishop	Buckley		
		Harder	Abelseth		
		Chambers	Pickard		
		Lowe			

The combined table above merges the American and British data. In the few cases indicated, witnesses moved from one category to another, based on more detailed testimony at the other Inquiry.

I very much think that the Assessors in both Inquiries, whether intentional or not, did not really try that hard to find out whether the Titanic sank intact or not. So very many witnesses were just not asked about it. And as mentioned above, the British Assessors almost appeared to be avoiding the question, by asking if the witness saw the ship sink, and then changed the subject to something else. Still, 3 times the number of people who said it sank intact, described the ship breaking apart - and many of them, described the same break up area - between or at the third and fourth funnels.

Of the four witnesses who claimed the ship sank intact, two of them were officers in the White Star Line. It must be asked, how would the White Star Line itself view their testimony, if they said the ship had broken apart? Could/would White Star have ended their career, both at White Star and the other shipping lines? There is really no way of knowing, but I am sure that the surviving officers of the Titanic were well aware of the issue of their continued employment by White Star, and elsewhere.

It is known that the above numbers can be altered a bit by other first person resources. Lawrence Beesley, in his book "The Loss of the SS Titanic" states in Chapter 4 he did not think the ship broke in two.

Colonel Gracie, in "The Truth About the Titanic" says in Chapter 3 that he did not think Titanic broke apart, in fact he devotes a number of paragraphs to it. However, it must be admitted that during the supposed time of the break-up, Gracie was either under water, fighting for his life from the suction, or trying to climb onto Collapsible B with many other people in the water.

Newspaper accounts of the sinking would raise considerably the number of witnesses who said it broke apart, I suspect. However, since an account of this type could have been altered by a newspaperman himself, and we have no way of ascertaining whether the survivor actually said what the paper printed, most of these accounts are of unknown reliability. A newspaperman, looking to dramatize a hot story, could easily print a more sensationalized story - and saying the Titanic broke in half fits that scenario perfectly!

It is obvious now, that even though the general public, and most of us too, believed that the Titanic sank in one piece; until Ballard discovered the wreck in 1985 it was a skewed belief, based on the American and British Inquiry Assessors choosing to believe the statements from a very small number of people, which include two officers of the White Star Line, the company that stood to lose the most if it was believed their ships weren't soundly built. Those witnesses who described a break-up, a situation we now know to be a fact, were ignored.

All extracted accounts courtesy of The Titanic Inquiry Project, at <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/>

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