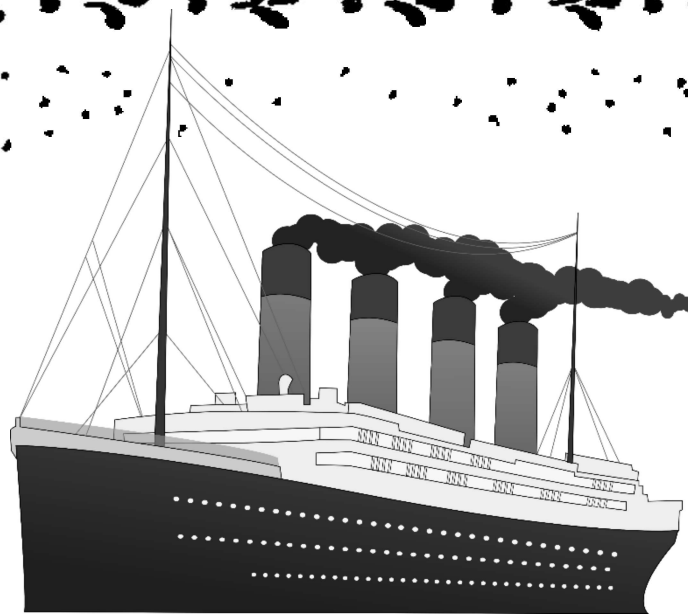




Can You Solve the Mystery?

Many mysteries surround the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, but there's another mystery that came with the eye-witnesses accounts of the Titanic's sinking.

Some witnesses say the Titanic broke into two pieces, others say that the Titanic sank intact, and others don't say if the ship broke or not... but which accounts are right?

You're the historian!

Use the primary sources to determine for yourself what happened on that terrible night.

J. Bruce Ismay

Managing Director of
the White Star Line

Page 13 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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 the Titanic

Page 69 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



Herbert John Pitman

3rd Officer of the Titanic

Page 280 and 281 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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 forecastle 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.



Frederick Fleet

Lookout from the Titanic

Page 327 and 328 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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

Ist Class Passenger on the Titanic

Page 338 and 339 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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 of the Titanic

Page 410 and 411 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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°.



Frank Osman

Seaman

Page 541 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



George Thomas Rowe

Quartermaster of the Titanic

Page 525 and 526 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



Alfred Olliver

Quartermaster of the Titanic

Page 530 and 531 of the American Inquiry Accounts



Senator BURTON: Did you see the boat sink?

Mr. OLLIVER: I cannot 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 after part 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.

George Moore

Seaman

Page 563 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



Walter John Perkins

Quartermaster of the Titanic

Page 582 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



William Ward

Seaman

Page 599 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.



C.E. Andrews

Steward

Page 626 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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 the Titanic

Page 630 and 631 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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

Page 638 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.

Hugh Woolner

Ist Class Passenger

Page 889 and 895 of the American Inquiry Accounts

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.

Imanita Shelley

2nd Class Passenger

Page II48 of the American Inquiry Accounts

MRS. SHELLEY: 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.

Emily Bosie Ryerson

Ist Class Passenger

Page II08 of the American Inquiry Accounts



MRS. RYERSON: 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.

Henry Etches

Steward

Page 8I7 and 8I8 of the American Inquiry Accounts



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.

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.

G. A. Hogg

Lookout on the Titanic

Page 580 of the American Inquiry Accounts



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.

John Hardy

Steward

Page 59I of the American Inquiry Accounts

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?

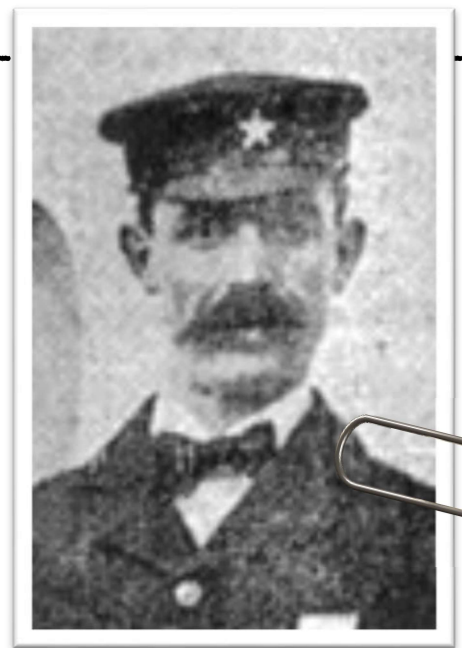
Mr. HARDY. Yes, sir.

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.



George Frederick Crowe

Steward

Page 620 of the American
Inquiry Accounts



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.

Gather the Data

After reading the eye-witness statements, sort the information below. You can use the person's last name in the chart below.

**These men and women said
the Titanic split in two.**

**These men and women didn't say
anything about the Titanic splitting
or staying intact.**

**These men and women said
the Titanic stayed intact.**

Even if the people who were onboard the Titanic can't agree on whether the Titanic split into two, or not, what are some things that seem to be in most of their accounts of that night?

QUICK QUESTIONS

After reading the eye-witness accounts and sorting the data, answer the following questions and then make your final decision about what happened that night.

- ① **INFER: Why do you think some of the passengers and workers don't mention that the Titanic broke into two?**

Use the primary sources to make a good inference.

- ② **Find a piece of textual evidence in the primary sources that proves that your inference *could* be correct.**

You take textual evidence word-for-word from the text.

IT'S YOUR TURN TO DECIDE

Can you solve the mystery of what happened during the Titanic's sinking? This answer will be a **secondary source** because you researched it to create it.

Based on the primary sources, what do you think happened on the night that the Titanic sank? Do you think the Titanic broke in half, or do you think the Titanic sank intact?

Support your answer with one piece of textual evidence from the primary sources.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small red object, which appears to be a binder clip or a piece of tape, partially visible. The background behind the paper is dark.