

There's this really haunting image; a photo of *Titanic* survivor, Charlotte Caroline Collyer, and her daughter, Marjorie Lottie, sitting together on a swinging bench in about June of 1912.

In the photo, 8-year-old Marjorie stares directly at the camera, her expression almost placid. Charlotte's gaze, on the other hand, is fixed on something or somewhere just to the left of the frame. Her loose hair tumbles down her shoulders. Her face wrought with anguish and worry. On her lap, a tartan "White Star Line" blanket rests slightly askew.

The Collyers were Second Class passengers aboard *Titanic*, originally from Hampshire. Friends of theirs had emigrated to Idaho and bought a fruit farm, which turned out to be a very lucrative business. For years these friends urged the Collyers to emigrate to America and make their fortune as American farmers, and for years the Collyers didn't take their ex-pat friends very seriously.

But then Charlotte began to cough. She began to have trouble breathing.

Tuberculosis deaths had seen a sharp decline since 1904, but in 1912 they were still one of the leading causes of death by illness. The United States Census Bureau annual report in 1912, listed tuberculosis of the lungs as killing around 130 in every 100,000 persons, and tuberculosis meningitis and other forms of tuberculosis killing nearly another 20 people per 100,000. That's around a whopping 10% of the population at the time.

Hoping that the climate in Idaho would improve her condition, Charlotte's husband, Harvey, withdrew the family savings. On Wednesday April 10, 1912 the Collyers boarded *Titanic* at Southampton, with every earthly possession they had, bound for a new life in the United States.

When the ship approached Queenstown the following day, Harvey wrote his parents:

"Titanic April 11th

My dear Mum and Dad

It don't seem possible we are out on the briny writing to you. Well dears so far we are having a delightful trip the weather is beautiful and the ship magnificent. We can't describe the tables it's like a floating town. I can tell you we do swank we shall miss it on the trains as we go third on them. You would not imagine you were on a ship. There is hardly any motion she is so large we have not felt sick yet we expect to get to Queenstown today so thought I would drop this with the mails. We had a fine send off from Southampton and Mrs S and the boys with others saw us off. We will post again at new York then when we get to Payette.

Lots of love don't worry about us. Ever your loving children
Harvey, Lot & Madge"

When the collision occurred, Charlotte was bed-ridden with nausea from the rich food of doing "swank" in the Second Class Dining Saloon. Harvey went to investigate why the engines had stopped and came back:

"What do you think? We've struck an iceberg - a big one - but there's no danger. An officer told me so!"

At first, Charlotte laid back down in her bunk. But before long, *Titanic's* crew began rousing her passengers. When Charlotte and Marjorie escaped, it was on Lifeboat 14, the boat helmed by Fifth Officer Harold Lowe, who'd fired warning shots into the sea to prevent the passengers from swarming it.

While it was being lowered, at shortly after 1:30 am, Lifeboat 14's block and tackle got tangled and she was cut loose, falling the remaining five feet to the water's surface. This caused a minor leak to spring in the boat, and the passengers aboard Lifeboat 14 spent some of the night up to their ankles in frigid water.

Eventually Fifth Officer Lowe would transfer the passengers to other lifeboats before returning to pick up people in the water. Lifeboat 14 would be the only lifeboat to return to the wreck site to pick up any victims: only three or four of which two survived.

When Charlotte and Marjorie made it to the decks of *Carpathia*, Harvey Collyer wasn't there. He'd perished in the disaster. If his body was ever recovered, it has never been positively identified.

Charlotte's anguish and guilt are palpable in the photo of her and Marjorie. The Collyers would never have been on the *Titanic* were it not for her ill health. In trying to save Charlotte, her husband had unknowingly doomed himself.

On April 21st, Charlotte wrote her mother:

"My dear Mother and all,

I don't know how to write to you or what to say, I feel I shall go mad sometimes but dear as much as my heart aches it aches for you too for he is your son and the best that ever lived. I had not given up hope till today that he might be found but I'm told all boats are accounted for. Oh mother how can I live without him. I wish I'd gone with him if they had not wrenched Madge from me I should have stayed and gone with him. But they threw her into the boat and pulled me in too but he was so calm and I know he would rather I lived for her little sake otherwise she would have been an orphan. The agony of that night can never be told... Sometimes I feel we lived too much for each other that is why I've lost him. But mother we shall meet him in heaven. When that band played 'Nearer My God to Thee' I know he thought of you and me for we both loved that hymn... Will you, dear mother, send me on a last photo of us, get it copied I will pay you later on... God Bless you dear mother and help and comfort you in this awful sorrow. Your loving child Lot."

Lot and Madge would return to England, where Lot would be remarried to an innkeeper. After all, they'd lost everything they had and she was so very sick. A little over four years later, near

the end of 1916, Charlotte Collyer would finally succumb to tuberculosis. She was one of the first survivors of the *Titanic* disaster to perish.

I'm Amanda Hootman, and in this episode we're taking a look at some of the stories of those who didn't quite make it "After *Titanic*"...

So, one of the best resources I have for this podcast is the Encyclopedia Titanica, which is a crowdsourced encyclopedia - a wiki, so to speak - originally founded by titanophile Philip Hind. It's an incredible fount of knowledge. It's always best practice to cross-check some of the info from it because it is a wiki, but generally it seems pretty decent. The nerds contributing to this thing care about the quality of their research.

And there's this really useful People Database of *Titanic's* and *Carpathia's* passengers and crew and *Californian's* crew, with links to pages with biographies and birth and death dates. You can also toggle between lists for just passengers or just crew, specific crew professions, filter by those that survived, those that died; you can filter by class... it's a spreadsheet lover's dream.

An interesting, if tragic, list in this database is the "First survivors to die after the disaster". I feel like so many more people are interested in who the last living survivors were, but the list of the first survivors to die reveals so much - both about early 20th century society as a whole... and how this traumatic event changed the trajectory of the survivors' lives.

So, who was the first *Titanic* survivor to die?

That tragic honor goes to little Maryiam Nakid. Maryiam was a Lebanese Third Class passenger. She was only a year old when she boarded the *Titanic*, and she was rescued on one of the last lifeboats to leave the ship alongside her father and mother.

In July of 1912, shortly after settling in Connecticut, Maryiam contracted meningitis and died. She was buried in an unmarked grave.

The second survivor to die, Eugenie Baclini, was likewise a Lebanese child who survived with her whole family, only to contract meningitis and pass away about a month after Maryiam, in August of 1912.

Meningitis, a contagious disease resulting from the inflammation of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord, reached epidemic levels in the early 20th century. It's still a devastating illness today in many parts of Africa and meningococcal diseases have been seeing a sharp increase in cases in the United States since 2021. The disease today is *vaccine-preventable*... but untreated, bacterial meningitis is incredibly lethal and as far back as 1904, scientists began developing antimeningitis serums to address the waves of meningitis outbreaks. The same year the *Titanic* sank, there was a massive meningitis outbreak in Texas.

So, while it may seem a striking coincidence that these two immigrant children died so soon after the sinking of the same affliction, it was, sadly, not uncommon in the early 20th century.

Two other Lebanese children who survived the *Titanic*, Mary and Michael Yusef, actually contracted measles aboard *Carpathia*!

Mary and Michael survived their brush with measles but disease is a very common cause of death among the survivors. Maryiam's father, Sa'ïd, died of complications from tuberculosis almost exactly ten years after Charlotte Collyer. Looooo of tuberculosis on this list. So much tuberculosis in the 19th and 20th centuries. Very high death toll. Pneumonia also claimed a number of passengers and crew, including lookout Reginald Lee – only a year after the disaster.

I often wonder if those that succumbed to illness in the months and years after the tragedy would have, had they never boarded *Titanic*. Immune systems weakened from the hours upon the frigid Atlantic, or from the mental health issues that plagued survivors; substance abuse issues, nervous breakdowns, and ongoing depressions. For most of them, it is impossible to say.

But for one of *Titanic*'s first survivors to pass, there is very little doubt that the events of that evening had a direct causal impact on his decline.

Colonel Archibald Gracie suffered from diabetes. As difficult as diabetes can be to manage now, it was a far more difficult and deadly condition in the days before the extraction and therapeutic use of insulin. But manage it, Colonel Gracie did. At least, as well as he could in 1912, with a strict regimen of diet and exercise.

Colonel Gracie came from a wealthy New York family. One of their estates, Gracie Mansion, is currently used as the official residence for the mayor of New York. Shout out to Zohran Mamdani.

Colonel Gracie's father, Archibald Gracie III - Colonel Gracie was Number 4 - was schooled in Heidelberg, Germany. That's the first red flag. After returning home he went to work for a cotton-brokerage firm in Mobile, Alabama. In the 1850s. That's the second red flag. When Civil War broke out, Archibald Gracie III broke with his staunchly Unionist father, Archibald Gracie II, to go fight for the Confederacy

Our Colonel Gracie was only a very small child while his father was quickly being promoted to Brigadier General. On December 1, 1864, General Gracie's own 32nd birthday, his wife, Josephine, gave birth to their daughter, Adeline Gracie. General Gracie was meant to take leave to meet his daughter on December 3rd, but was killed by Union artillery fire on December 2nd.

Colonel Gracie was five when his father died, so when, in 1911, he published a history of the Civil War Battle of Chickamauga that was, perhaps, a little too sympathetic to the Southerners...

I do like to keep in mind that he did so as a son who grew up without a father. However complicated a man that father may have been.

In 1912, to celebrate the publication of *The Truth About Chickamauga* (a book that took him about seven years to research and write) then 53-year-old Colonel Gracie decided to take a trip to Europe. His return journey was booked aboard White Star Line's newest ship, the RMS *Titanic*.

Because Gracie managed his diabetes with diet and exercise, he was one of the First Class passengers to take daily advantage of *Titanic's* heated pool and gym. On *Titanic's* last morning, he'd even arranged a game of squash with the ship's racquet attendant.

After retiring early that evening, he was awoken by the sound of the collision around 11:40. He assisted the officers with the entirety of the evacuation, even lending them his pen knife as they attempted to saw through the ropes lashing the collapsible boats to the roof of the officers quarters.

Colonel Gracie was still trying to free Collapsibles A and B when *Titanic* made her final plunge. He ended up making a dive as a huge wave washed over the boat deck and found his way to Collapsible B, which was floating upside down.

The story of Collapsible B is a whole podcast series in itself. About 30 people spent the night balancing on the overturned boat, while Officer Lightoller ordered them to lean this way or that way, with someone dying of exposure and being pushed overboard every few minutes. In all, around 22 confirmed survivors lasted the night on Collapsible B, including Charles Lightoller, Harold Bride, and Colonel Gracie.

But Colonel Gracie never recovered from the hours submerged in the freezing Atlantic, or the injuries he'd sustained that night. His health, already so precarious, took a sudden decline following the sinking. Perhaps knowing how little time he had left, he set to work writing one of the first published accounts of that night: *The Truth About The Titanic*. It would ultimately be published posthumously, and he never finished proofing his manuscript, as he slipped into a diabetic coma shortly after Thanksgiving 1912 and died on the 4th of December. He was the third survivor and first adult survivor to pass away.

Something about looking at this list can make you feel like the *Final Destination* movie curse is real.

Mary Yusef, the little girl who survived *Titanic*, only to contract measles aboard *Carpathia* and survive that illness, ended up nonetheless dying in a freak crib fire two years later.

The Yusef family were from Detroit. Mary, with her brother, Michael, and mother, Katrin, had returned to their mother's home country of Syria (modern day Lebanon) to visit family and were on the *Titanic* returning back home to America.

After surviving the disaster, and a brief period of hospitalization in New York, the Yusefs returned to their home above a grocers in Detroit, Michigan. For whatever reason, on Sunday, March 22, 1914, the family left little Mary asleep in her crib when they went to church that morning.

Not long after the grocer, Michael Tonie, heard Mary's screams. He rushed upstairs to the Yusefs' apartment and forced his way inside, to find Mary standing helplessly in the middle of the room, completely alight. Tonie beat the flames off of Mary and carried her downstairs where he called for an ambulance. She died two days later in St. Mary's Hospital from her injuries.

On the exact same day, March 22, 1914, surviving *Titanic* fireman William Henry Taylor was involved in a freak accident on Southampton's docks. He was dismantling a dockside holding pen for animals when he was suddenly crushed by a post weighing about a ton and killed.

Another survivor, Eliza Hocking, got into a car accident on the evening of April 14, 1914, and died of her injuries early the next morning - on the second anniversary of the disaster.

Again, if you're feeling in a superstitious way it can make you believe the *Final Destination* curse is real...

Other shipwrecks and accidents at sea are the cause of death for some of these first *Titanic* survivors to die, which really, truly sucks... but honestly isn't that surprising. If your career is on the sea, you're probably gonna get injured or killed on the sea.

Titanic greaser Frederick William Scott was working as a crewmember aboard the SS *La Marguerite* en route from Dover to Southampton when her boiler exploded. According to contemporary reports, three men were killed instantly from the scalding water and shock, while a fourth survived, scalded from head to toe, for about five hours before dying. Scott was one of the four men killed, it's unclear which.

Archie Jewell was a lookout aboard *Titanic*, although not on duty at the time of the collision with the iceberg, and survived the sinking of her sister ship HMHS *Britannic*. Ultimately his luck would run out when working as an able seaman aboard SS *Donegal* during World War I. It was torpedoed by a German submarine off the coast of France. Jewell's body was never recovered.

Mental illness is a tragic and common theme in some of the early deaths of survivors. Suicides and other deaths of despair can never be attributed to a single cause and in almost every case there seems to be some other things going on in the background.

Nonetheless... it always bothers me that in tallying the victims of an event like this we stop short of including the people who lived through the night in question but whose lives were inarguably cut short by what they experienced. The Survivors Who Didn't. In the first episode of this podcast, I compared *Titanic*'s cultural impact to 9/11. The impact on the victims is similar, as

well. We count the 3000 who died on September 11, 2001 as the victims, but not those that died by suicide because of their extreme PTSD or grief after the event or even those that died from cancer after inhaling air poisoned with particles of disintegrated buildings and human remains. It doesn't sit right with me.

We count the 1500 who died on the night of April 14th to April 15th, 1912 as the victims of the *Titanic* disaster, but not Annie Robinson, who was so disturbed by her experience surviving the sinking that when another ship she was on, the *Devonian*, entered a thick fog in October of 1914, she became panicked and leapt from the deck to her death.

Not Frederick Fleet, the lookout who'd spotted the iceberg and telephoned the infamous words "iceberg right ahead!"

Fleet carried an enormous weight with him his entire life. He was haunted by memories of the slow advance of that "black thing", the iceberg, for many years. He struggled to sleep at night, eventually seeking out the help of a doctor.

He was questioned extensively at both the American and British Inquiries into the sinking and, while he was not directly blamed by either inquiry, he shouldered a terrible personal public burden. Had he only spotted that iceberg a fraction of a second earlier...

He left White Star Line in August of 1912. The surviving officers and crew of *Titanic* were a source of some embarrassment for The White Star Line and the company was pretty crummy to the *Titanic* survivors that continued working for them.

For the next two and a half decades, Fleet sailed with Union-Castle Line, before returning ashore to work as a shipbuilder for Harland and Wolff, the same shipbuilding company that built *Titanic*. He served in both World Wars, and also worked for a time as a newspaperman in semi-retirement.

In the final years of his life, Fleet experienced financial difficulties, and in 1964, Fleet's wife passed away and his brother-in-law evicted him from his home. Again, these things can never be attributed to a single cause.

His body was discovered hanging in the garden and buried in a pauper's grave.

In 1993, the Titanic Historical Society paid for a headstone to be erected for Frederick Fleet.

Okay, I recognize that this is all very sad but this is a *Titanic* podcast, after all. So, one more sad story from one of the first survivors to die...

Master Robert Douglas Spedden, six years old, boarded in Cherbourg with his mother, Margaretta "Daisy" Spedden, father, Frederic Spedden, and his private nurse, Elizabeth "Muddie Boons" Burns.

If the names and the nurse didn't already clue you in, these were First Class passengers, returning to New York from their holiday in Europe.

When *Titanic* collided with the iceberg, Muddie roused Douglas from his bed and told him she was taking him on a "trip to see the stars" before bundling him up and carrying him out on deck.

During the evacuation in the early hours of April 15th, Daisy and Muddie boarded Lifeboat 3 cradling a sleeping Douglas. Luckily for Frederic, Lifeboat 3 was being loaded by Officer Murdoch, who interpreted Captain Smith's order to "load the women and children into the boats" as "women and children first" not, as Officer Lightoller did, "women and children only". So, when all the nearby women and children were safely loaded, Frederic was permitted to board Lifeboat 3 and the entire Spedden clan was saved.

Douglas somehow managed to sleep through the entire sinking - the ship breaking, the boiler explosions, the screams of the dying in the water - in the way that only a six year old can. But as dawn broke over those beautiful, vicious icebergs, he suddenly woke and exclaimed "Oh, Muddie, look at the beautiful North Pole with no Santa Claus on it!"

In 1913, Daisy wrote and illustrated a book of their experiences traveling Europe, then surviving the sinking of the *Titanic*, as told through the perspective of a teddy bear. She gave this book, then titled "My Story" to Douglas for Christmas that year.

Tragically, in August of 1915, Douglas was struck by a car and killed near a summer camp in Maine. He was only nine.

Daisy stopped writing and placed "My Story" away in a trunk in an attic, where it would remain for about 80 years.

Some four decades after her death in 1950 at the age of 77, one of Daisy's relatives Leighton H. Coleman III would discover the manuscript in the trunk in the attic. After sending a copy to the Titanic Historical Society, he had a fully illustrated version of it published under the title "Polar The Titanic Bear". You can buy a copy, yourself. It's about \$7 USD.

This episode may have been about the *Titanic* disaster survivors whose lives were ultimately cut short by the sinking, but there were a couple survivors who, cat-like, endured many more disasters and atrocities and came out nearly unscathed. Stick around after the credits to hear a bit about them.

"After *Titanic*" is a podcast by Bash Back Productions. Written, recorded, and edited by Amanda Hootman. Music by Neilly Farrell. Artwork by Paul Scott Canavan. Voice acting in this episode provided by Felix O'Connor and Amanda Hootman. Full cast list, transcripts and sources are available on aftertitanic.com. "After *Titanic*" is supported by our generous Indiegogo backers and patrons. Help support the podcast by heading to Patreon.com/AfterTitanic where you'll get

exclusive access to our Discord server, and join an entire community of fellow Titanophiles to hang out with between episodes. I've been your host, Amanda Hootman. Thanks for listening.

Stewardess Violet Jessop was aboard *Titanic's* elder sister, *Olympic* when it collided with HMS *Hawke* in 1911. Luckily, the collision with the *Hawke* resulted in no fatalities. However, Jessop went on to work as a stewardess on *Titanic* and as a nurse aboard the youngest of the *Olympic* class liners, HMHS *Britannic*.

During the evacuation from *Titanic*, as she was being loaded into Lifeboat 16, one of the ship's officers handed Jessop a baby to take care of. Once they were rescued by *Carpathia*, a woman - presumably the baby's mother - snatched the baby from her without even saying thank you.

During the First World War, Jessop served as a nurse with the British Red Cross aboard *Britannic* when she struck a mine and sunk in the Aegean Sea and Jessop sustained a serious head injury when she literally had to leap to safety into the water and was sucked below the ship's keel.

Jessop lived to the ripe old age of 83 and retired to live alone in a 16th century thatched cottage where she lived out her latter years tending her garden and her chickens, which is kind of the dream if I'm being honest.

Fireman Arthur John Priest also survived the *Olympic* collision as well as the sinking of *Titanic* and *Britannic* as well as the sinking of three more vessels, HMHS *Asturias*, SS *Donegal* and RMS *Alcantara*.

As a fireman, Priest, who went by "Jack", would have worked deep within the bowels of the ships he was posted to. Only about half of *Titanic's* firemen and stokers survived, with many of them remaining below, keeping the lights and power of the ship running until the bitter end.

After making it through service on the three *Olympic* class liners, Priest continued working as a stoker on steam powered ships in the service throughout World War I. He was working *Alcantara* when she entered into a battle with SMS *Greif* in February of 1916, an action that resulted in over 300 casualties and ultimately capsized and sank both ships; he was on *Asturias* when a German U-Boat torpedoed her in March of 1917, and he was on *Donegal* with Archie Jewell the following month when she was taken down by yet another German U-Boat.

Jack Priest's incredible luck earned him the nickname "the unsinkable stoker". But perhaps luck wasn't quite the way he saw it. When he eventually retired from the sea, he claimed that it was only because "no one wished to sail with him."

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