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Elegance, Sobriety and Hypocrisy:
The Edwardian Era and the Sway of the Grand Saloon

presented by

Marie L. Woodard

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of the requirements for

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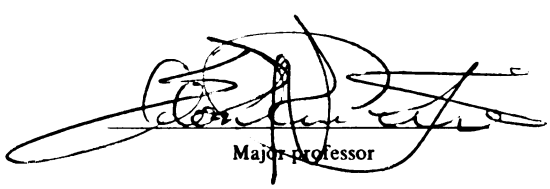

Major professor

Date 1/23/92

ELEGANCE, SOBRIETY AND HYPOCRISY: THE EDWARDIAN ERA AND THE SWAY OF THE GRAND SALOON

By

Marie L. Woodard

A THESIS
On Olympic-Class Vessels:
The Royal Mail Steamships Olympic, Titanic and Britannic

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

ELEGANCE, SOBRIETY AND HYPOCRISY:
THE EDWARDIAN ERA AND THE SWAY OF THE GRAND SALOON

By

Marie L. Woodard

This thesis examines the social fabric of the Edwardian era as reflected in the interiors of the *Royal Mail Steamships Olympic, Titanic* and *Britannic*. These ships, built between 1909 and 1915, were showplaces of British ingenuity. They reflected significant interior design and art historical value, while aspiring to a high standard of sea-going architecture. They were, further, the romantic products of an arrogant yet innocent society, in a declining economy, when the world stood poised on the brink of war. These liners were not only symbols of the industrial age culture from which they came but served as microcosms of British/American society at the turn-of-the-century.

Although none of these vessels survive today, they are remembered through countless books, articles, songs, poems, films and most recently several oceanographic explorations. Individual specifications are well documented, as are building records, cargo and passenger manifests and the vessels' histories of service.

DEDICATION

to:

MY FRIEND

REV. FATHER JOSEPH L. DeSTEFANO
(1924-1988)

Scholarly priest,
life-long inspiration,
kindred spirit--
who encouraged the beginning;

and also to:

MY FATHER

GILBERT E. LEE

who supported my college efforts through the years
even though I chose to be
an impoverished art historian instead of a rich lawyer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

By the time a graduate student reaches this point in his/her education it is very difficult to enumerate those who were of assistance in helping the student prepare and achieve, because there are so many people to be credited and it seems an injustice not to be able to thank them all individually. I risk overlooking some deserving soul but I should not like to forget to thank a few people beginning with chairman, Irving Taran, associate chair, Dr. Sadayoshi Omoto, and the staff of the Department of Art Main Office, at Michigan State University. Their doors where always open (except during lunchtime when I had to go badger them in the Faculty and Staff Lounge) to answer my many student inquiries.

My thanks also to my boss, Dr. Janice Simpson, of the Visual Resources Library at M.S.U., who for four years patiently tolerated not only schedule changes but family changes; found time to student-advise me, even when she had no time; and through her excellent example taught me the delicate diplomacy of being an effective slide librarian, curator and art history faculty member.

Thanks is also due to my good friend and fellow slide librarian, Mary Duff-Silverman, whose friendship was unfailingly: a push when I was stopped, a word when I was lonely, a guide when I was searching, a smile when I was sad, a song when I was glad.

I am exceedingly grateful to a dear college chum, Penny Tahvonen (and her charming family), who not only befriended me but housed me for a lengthy stay while I went looney preparing for my final exam and thesis defense. Also, a warm hug for Jim LaLone, who frequently broke me out of my self-imposed, solitary confinement-study pattern and took me out to all those yummy dinners and goofy movies.

Further appreciation is extended to correspondents affiliated with the Marine Museum, of Fall River, MA; the Mariners' Museum, of Newport News, VA; the Maritime Museum Archives of Philadelphia, PA; the Peabody Museum of Salem, MA: the Steamship Historical Society of America of Baltimore, MD; Harland and Wolff Technical Services, Ltd., of Queens Island, Belfast; Cunard Line, Ltd., of London; Dr. Robert Ballard, of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, MA: and most of all the staff and members of the Titanic Historical Society, of Indian Orchard, MA.

Last, but far from least, I should like to express my appreciation to my graduate committee: Dr. Sadayoshi Omoto, Mrs. Susan Reedy, and most of all Dr. Eldon Van Liere, whose interest gave me the courage to research new ground within the realm of art history and interior design.

May my future endeavors do credit to these many fine associates and friends.

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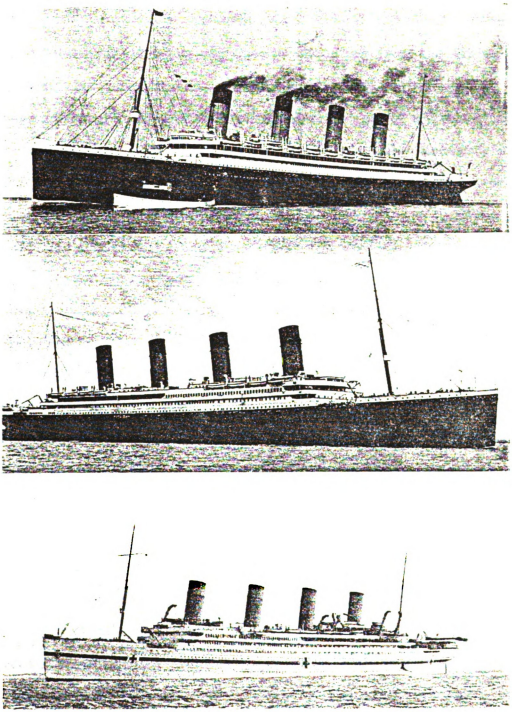
INTRODUCTION

Author's Note: It is important to mention that none of the artistic/architectural aspects of this thesis topic could possibly be properly addressed without an investigation and presentation of a measure of the facts surrounding the construction and service history of each liner and the age from which they evolved. Therefore, the reader will find, herein, a synthesis of three elements--sea, society and style--of which one would not really be complete without the presence of the other two.

This thesis will give an overview of interior design and artifacts of the White Star Olympic-Class vessels, *Royal Mail Steamships Olympic, Titanic* and *Britannic* (Fig. 1), and how they exemplified not just the characteristics of Victorian/Edwardian ocean travel but were reflections of the turn-of-the-century turn-of-mind. These three ships were the embodiment of not only British, but American, attitudes and their interiors were indicative of the society and culture of the time. Put simply, technology was driving early twentieth-century man into the future but he was dragging the past along with him. The turn-of the-century was a fearful time and the tragedies of the *Titanic* and the *Britannic*, and ultimately the heretofore unparalleled ravages of World War I, were to prove that fear well-founded. The past held a measure of security due to familiarity and--just as when the black death hit Europe in the fourteenth century and the advanced art of Giotto was eclipsed by old fashioned art which had proven reliable--sea travelers

Fig

Fig. 1 Top: *R.M.S. Olympic*
Center: *R.M.S. Titanic*
Bottom: *R.M.S. Britannic*



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felt compelled to embrace the security of familiar home comforts when at sea.

- THE SEA -

In October of 1970 a great open boat, dating from the Viking period, was discovered in the Graveney Marshes of Kent, England. It has been suggested that it may be the first example of a British cargo and passenger vessel. Whether or not this is true, the discovery is indicative that the English have long been at one with the great sea and began early their love affair with it.

English leadership and dominance in the area of sea travel were undoubtedly due, in part, to two simple facts: The first was that England, by virtue of its being an island, was surrounded by the sea and so had a world of possibilities open to it; and secondly, and more practically, water routes, unlike roads, did not need building, therefore, the sea was a readily available means of travel.

Open boat sailing was primitive and arduous, to say the least. One hesitated to sail out of sight of land for there was always the danger of a black wind rising and blowing one's craft across the "poison sea" until it slipped over the edge of this precarious world. Maps were few, and of dubious dependability, and certain seas were notorious for their over-abundance of ship-devouring sea dragons.

Water travel was, however, swifter than walking which was apparently a sufficiently sound enough reason for early man to overcome his fears of the great void and opt for the adventure and profit the worlds beyond the sea offered. From such a simple lure was to

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grow the far-reaching supremacy of what eventually became known as the British Empire.

An open boat was sea travel at its most rugged. Even into the nineteenth century, the intrepid traveler crossed the Atlantic under conditions not unlike those faced by the passengers of that 90-foot chamber pot known as the *Mayflower*. In 1620, aboard what was formerly a wine ship, 102 individuals shared, for eight weeks, less than 1800 square feet of hold space--which allowed them only enough room in which to lie down in.

In lieu of cargo, passengers were considered cargo much as "the cash equivalent of a hogshead of tobacco."[1] There were no cabins, no saloon (or salon, as the Americans say), no steerage, no furniture, no fittings, and needless to say, absolutely no interior decoration, for where a passenger slept on one trip two kegs of nails might rest on the next.

There was also no sanitation. Men, women and children traveled in close, indelicate, and squalid proximity of one another. One was usually afforded a place to lie down in and a community bucket into which to relieve oneself. A traveler brought what he needed in bedding, food, and cooking utensils--or did without.

Accommodations below decks were open areas sometimes divisioned, temporarily, by canvas hangings. Six by seven feet was considered good accommodation in the late eighteenth century. It was about this time that multiple bunks--triple-tiered, one and one-half feet wide, with

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[1]John Malcolm Brinnin, The Sway of the Grand Saloon - A Social History of the North Atlantic (New York: Delacorte Press, 1971), p. 15.

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two feet of headroom--came into being, allowing even more people to be packed in. In 1773 one vessel carried 450 passengers "of whom 25 were without even sleeping space until deaths created 23 vacancies."[2]

Not only were accommodations primitive at best, they were incredibly hazardous to one's health for these ships were, in actuality "coffin brigs", being little better than the slave ships leaving Africa for the American colonies. Needless to say, typhus (better known as 'ship fever') was most prevalent and contagious. So much so that authorities eventually ruled that as captains were responsible parties they would therefore have a fine of $10 levied upon them for each corpse delivered to the New World. An American immigration official of the time noted that "if crosses and tombs could be erected on water the whole route of the emigrant vessels from England to America would long since have assumed the appearance of a crowded cemetery."[3]

Wooden sailing ships continued as passenger carriers until the 1860s. Ships varied in size with the largest weighing about 2,000 tons. Those of less tonnage (200-300 tons being the norm) rode like corks, slipping little water, and in heavy weather were relatively safe. However, whatever her size a ship was in continual need of pumping, was always running at risk of fire, or possible wreck if errors occurred in navigation by masters and mates, or loss of masts and rigging due to neglect or bad judgment. Hulls were massive and built flat underneath

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[2]Basil Greenhill and Ann Giffard, Traveling by Sea in the Nineteenth Century - Interior Design in Victorian Passenger Ships (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1972), p. 9.

[3]Brinnin, Sway, p. 4.

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so that a ship sat upright on the mud of a harbor at low tide. This was due to there being no floating dock facilities at this time.[4]

As time progressed passengers, while they shared similar hazards and discomforts at sea, strangely enough adopted a reserved attitude towards their fellow travelers. Apparently class distinctions were as prevalent at sea as on land. Of these travelers there were generally two classes--cabin and steerage. Cabins with transom windows were placed at the stern and were about 12-foot square. While these stern cabins were light and airy they were a rough ride at the extreme end of the vessel with water forever coming in through the transom. During storms it was not unusual for the entire cabin to be awash. Steerage was still pretty much an open and communal area far below decks.

Noise was a problem. There was the awful creaking of every part of the vessel, the hollering of sailors on duty and the relentless pounding of the waves against the hull. Thunder was "no more than a dog's bark compared with the tremendous roar of the wind and sea."[5] There was also the racket created by the animals brought on board to be fresh food "on the hoof." One eighteenth-century passenger complained about the poultry kept in cages on the poop deck above his cabin for it was a trial to endure the "consequent pecking twice a day" at feeding time.[6]

Conditions were not entirely inhuman though. To go along with the farm animals some ships even had small fresh food gardens planted

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[4]Greenhill, p. 11.

[5]Greenhill, p. 19.

[6]Greenhill, p. 13.

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in boxes of earth and stored in the "jolly boats." This had the combined benefit of providing a source of both good nutrition and diverting activity for bored passengers on long voyages. When one had tired of reading, writing in one's journal, playing cards or looking at the seemingly never-ending sea stretched before them, one could always go pinch back the tomato plants. Other foods on board were salt meat, fish, cider, and sea biscuits made of "horse bean flour."

The concept of the ocean-going packet ship running to schedule--the precursor of the liner--was a product of early nineteenth century American thinking.[7] In 1818 the Black Ball Line began a New York to Liverpool run. This passage was novel for the ship was scheduled to depart on a fixed day and month, from a determined port, regardless of cargo loaded or number of passengers booked. While at first a laughing stock of the shipping business, the fast and dependable Black Ball Line soon proved its advantage and the race was on with rivals.

Sea travel had come of age but it didn't take long before rigged sailing vessels were under the threat of the steamer. The first ocean crossing by a steam-propelled vessel was about a year after the Black Ball Line began its scheduled runs. In 1819, the steamer *Savannah*, voyaged from Savannah, Georgia to Liverpool in 29 days, 11 hours. She was a full-rigged sailing ship fitted with engines and side paddlewheels; during the crossing the engines were in use for about 85 hours.

The first crossing under steam power alone was made in 1838 when two British steamship companies sent rival ships to New York

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[7]Greenhill, p. 21.

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within a few days of each other; the *Great Western*, customarily called the first Atlantic liner, made the trip in 15 days, arriving a few hours after the *Sirius*, which had left England four days before her.

In 1839 Samuel Cunard, a Nova Scotian from Halifax, went to England and presented to the admiralty a steamship plan that resulted in a contract to carry mail. The subsidy provided would make the Cunard vessels economically possible. Along with others Cunard formed the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. This was the beginning of the noted Cunard Line.

In 1849 the New York Collins Line became Cunard's chief competitor when it built the *Atlantic*. This ship acknowledged the passenger as "an important commercial asset to be cultivated and treated as such."[8]

By the late 1850s the screw propeller was conceded to be superior to paddlewheels, in whatever weather, no matter how much the vessel rolled. They were also less susceptible to damage as well as giving more thrust per unit of power applied. Thus steamships began to supplant the sailing ship but along the way a certain elegance and grace were lost with the abandonment of masts and yards.

A new shape for vessels was also developing and no longer was the stern considered the best accommodation. A growing tendency towards deck cabins and fittings amidship were favored. In the *Oceanic*, a 17,300 ton vessel built in 1870, we find the first of many ships to be called a "traveling palace." The palace pattern was one

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[8]Greenhill, p. 41.

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established by the White Star Line and builders Harland and Wolff. Staterooms were bigger and possessed of large portholes; electric bells were installed so one could call for the steward (no more need to be ungraciously yelling down the corridor of assistance); and lifeboats were now to be part of every sailing vessels' standard equipment.

In 1881 the *Servia*, a merchant steamer capable of crossing the Atlantic in seven days, was the first vessel to be constructed of steel. Seven years later the *Philadelphia* the first twin-screw steamship, was built at Glasgow. In the 1880s White Star built the *Teutonic*, a twin-screw which had staterooms decorated with grand walls, fabrics and brass bedsteads.

It was left to Sir Charles A. Parsons and C. G. P. de Laval to develop the steam turbine during this same time period. The 1897 *Turbinia* was the first vessel to be driven by a turbine and within ten years several turbine-driven liners were in the Atlantic service. After that the steam turbine virtually eliminated the older reciprocating steam engine on major vessels.

By this time Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, had aspirations of building a vast naval armada. From about 1900 until World War I, Germany held second place in the world in both navy and merchant marine. While the Kaiser professed that his naval expansion was not directed at England, but rather at Japan, "fears of competition from German manufacturing and the development of the German navy were fueled by the popular press and anti-German feeling ran high by the

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end of the period."[9] Thus, in part, an important cause of the war was England's dominance on the sea and Germany's challenge.

It was out of this turbulent point in time that the White Star Line, in fierce competition with Cunard's greyhounds *Lusitania* and *Mauretania*, conceived a royal mail ship plan of immense proportions. They proposed to provide the epitome of ocean travel which was to culminate in a massive building operation. This would ultimately result in the triple-screw ships which were collectively referred to as Olympic-Class vessels or The Big Three--*Olympic*, *Titanic* and *Britannic*.

- THE SOCIETY -

While the White Star luxury liner phenomenon was to occur during the twentieth-century reign of Edward VII we must also look to nineteenth-century England for propelling influences. The English frame of mind, and the state of affairs as they appeared during the Edwardian era, are closely linked to that of the previous Victorian era for, needless to say, one produced the other.

The Regency period ended when Queen Victoria (1819-1901) ascended the throne in 1837. While the 64 year period to which her name is lent corresponds with that of the Restoration, the Second Empire and Third Republic periods in France, it is not a direct offshoot.

Victoria's English dominion was vast and regarded as a time of peace and prosperity. However, England proper was a congested country. Cities were typified by a lack of said prosperity having low

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[9]Jane Beckett and Deborah Cherry, The Edwardian Era (London: Phaidon Press and Barbican Art Gallery, 1987), p. 7.

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grade employment and overcrowded housing. Foul water, lack of adequate light and clean air contributed to high infant mortality in all class levels. Frequent urban killers were measles, whooping cough, scarlet fever, and typhus. Typhoid especially knew no class distinctions and struck even the royal house carrying off Prince Albert. The gravest and most mysterious of these unseen killers was tuberculosis--or as it was then called, consumption. No wonder people, if they could afford it, went to the seaside health spas, which were growing in popularity--they did so, not so much to vacation, but to escape the filth and contagion.

England, in the exceedingly brief Edwardian Era (1901-1914), saw a time of great activity and rapidly advancing change, of which growing sea power was just one element. So much was transpiring so quickly that it could not help but result in confusion, turbulence and, ultimately, be a part in the coming explosion to be felt worldwide with the shots fired 4 August 1914 at Sarajevo. The time was "roaring" even more than it would in America ten years later--just before the Great Crash--and the English character stiffened itself, bracing its shoulders to support the burdens that the time presented.[10]

During this era England was struggling to adapt to modernity with the coming of such things as the aircraft, radio-telegraphy, psychoanalysis, Post-Impressionism, motion pictures, the turbine engine and the Labor Party. However, it was bogged down somewhat in the Victorian past which was still strong and presented what appeared to be

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[10]James Laver, Manners and Morals of the Age of Optimism - 1848-1914 (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 43.

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an "arthritic resistance" to change.[11] Not the least of which was the rigid and empty gestures of decorum "important not because they implied moral rightness but because they seemed to protect social stability, public morals, religion and the British Empire against the threat of change.[12]

Though characterized by strong labor movements, working class organizations, and suffragette movements, the age was one referred to as "golden"--a golden afternoon, a golden security, a golden garden party--a world whose gracious aspects would end rudely with a single shot fired in a faraway slavic city.

Though Edward VII was to reign only nine years, dying in 1910, his name is given to this period which was sandwiched between two awesome opposites--the long secure reign of his mother, Queen Victoria, and the devastation of the Great War. Still, while it was to be a brief stretch of history, it would be an age of drama, elegance, turbulence and social change--Edward's reign would truly embody the spirit of his time.[13]

King Edward and Queen Alexandra were a highly visible reflection of the time in general. Where the upper classes were concerned they were "symbols of the established order. . . rich, punctilious and unoccupied."[14] It was a time of formality, opulence, splendor, and a

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[11]Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 8.

[12]Hynes, p. 6.

[13]Hynes, p. 4.

[14]Hynes, p. 3.

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[15]Lave

[16]Jame
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[17]Beck

conspicuous display of wealth which bordered on ostentatious. It was a time of elegant, romantic dress but sober, righteous manners.[15]

King Edward had the easy extravagant habits of the Edwardian rich in general, and his moral views were those of his time and masculine company--public propriety and private indulgence. When he came to power the working classes out-numbered the middle and upper classes about four to one. Said middle and upper classes grew even more numerous and prosperous and came to be known as the servant-keeping class. Some of these were to work their way up from relatively humble positions to become the *nouveau riche.* The majority of these new-money millionaires had derived their wealth from business and finance while old-money millionaires sniffed at these upstarts and took comfort in the superiority of their inherited millions.[16]

Edwardian portrait painters often drew upon the works of eighteenth-century painters such a Reynolds and Gainsborough for inspiration. The eighteenth century view was a harkening back to a high point in British culture and "formed a distinctive part of international exhibitions, representing an imperialist history of white rule and power."[17] The nineteenth century paintings of Giovanni Boldini and John Singer Sargent provide a vibrant view of this bygone turn-of-mind. In many of Sargent's portraits, one sees women of the upper class structure represented in scenes of nature which signified not only

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[15]Laver, p. 43.

[16]James Walvin, Victorian Values (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), p. 17.

[17]Beckett, p. 7.

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the traditional base of aristocratic power in land ownership, but also "linked femininity to nature, in opposition to masculine culture and dominance of the state and government."[18]

For the upper-classes good manners required one to "pay calls" on friends and considered bad manners not to leave a "calling card" on a tiny silver tray if said friends were not at home. One always "dressed for dinner" and if one received a dinner invitation one was obliged to reciprocate in kind. After dinner ladies served tea to female guests in the "morning room" while gentlemen retired to the billiard room for cigars and brandy.

Men drove to the office, often in a new "motorcar," or visited the club to read and discuss the state of the economy or some murky issue published in the "London Times." There one could also count on finding a suitable chess partner, a fellow philatelist or someone with an interesting investment possibility.

While the man-of-the-house was so engaged, his lady was to be found in the home supervising servants in the care of the children and the up-keep of the home. Though considered master of the domain, man's place in the home was actually related to that of breadwinner and, on rare occasions, propagator of the species. He was not a helpful tinkerer or handyman about the house, in truth it was absurd to expect anything of the kind from him. His business at home was to make work of others, not to do it himself.[19]

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[18]Beckett, p. 7.

[19]John Gloag, Victorian Comfort - A Social History of Design from 1830-1900 (New York: MacMillan, 1961), p. 36.

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Nineteenth

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Children, raised by hired nurses and nannies, left home at about the tender age of six to attend "public" boarding schools. Girls learned, among minor scholastic endeavors, graceful manners, fancy stitchery, dancing, music and art appreciation, and the proper etiquette in how to attract the right young man when the time came for her coming out. While young ladies learned "the delicate social graces" boys were taught Latin, history and higher mathematics, good sportsmanship and a code of ethics of the elite. After all, a young man had to be properly prepared to take the "Grand Tour" and obtain a military commission when he finished his boyish studies.

For relaxation ladies read poetry and romance novels, wrote letters, collected picture postcards, did lace-work, occupied their children or played the piano and sang. On sunny days they might go to the seaside and, in voluminous bathing costumes, take chilly dips in the surf from the confines of "bathing machines." Or, once dry and strolling down the boardwalk, they might become busily engaged in operating a new portable camera which called for the new "roll film."

It is generally held that Queen Victoria was of the opinion that women were born for man's pleasure and amusement, for during her reign there appeared to be only two kinds of women—those who had fallen and those who had not.[20] Like the women of Dickensonian novels, the Victorian/Edwardian female is frequently regarded and depicted by the male not as a well-rounded personality but as a vapid heroine--sensitive, passive, frail, dependent as a clinging vine, patient

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[20]Eric M. Sigsworth, ed., In Search of Victorian Values - Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Thought and Society (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 133.

and easily lead, submissive but always pure. She being considered desirable only if she conformed to this stereotype.

While men were usually regarded as centers of male force and power, many women were tiring of these forms of morality without conviction which was the norm. Women did not have the vote, and contrary to what John Singer Sargent's delicate-natured paintings suggest, many women were involved with suffragette movements which were building and shaking the foundations of the masculine dominated culture. In the Edwardian society the hypocrisy of the proverbial double-standard and male prerogative were as strong as ever they had been in Victoria's time and were, by turns, both prudish and permissive.[21]

One must not forget that these were the days of medical revolutionaries such as Freud, Adler and Jung, writers such as Wells, Pound, Lawrence, Joyce, Woolf and Ibsen, sculptors such as Epstein and illustrators such as Beardsley. While Victorian prudery and moralizing could be extreme on some accounts the attempts to liberate sex from ignorance and repression can be seen.

Many writers are of the opinion that "men and women seemed more thoroughly alienated from each other than ever and one might argue that the relations between the sexes, like the relations between the rich and poor, employers and employees, English and Irish, Conservatives and Liberals had deteriorated."[22] While this is an interesting analogy there is a new school of thought in which one might be closer to the

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[21]Walvin, p. 135.

[22]Hynes, pp. 172-73.

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truth with the use of the work "reticent" rather than "prudery" for only in our society "influenced by the babble of sexuality does reticence seem odd." In the Victorian/Edwardian eras "silence may have been golden but it was not of necessity an indication of sexual ambivalence." Truly delicacy in behavior may well have stemmed from a problem with vocabulary.[23] Victorians had an affinity with semantics and exercised a refusal to call things by their proper names if there was even a suggestion of erotic significance. What many today call "prudery" Victorians and Edwardians considered "propriety.

- THE STYLE -

It is well-known that Queen Victoria's interest in art was negligible, so it is that history generally thanks Prince Albert for being a promoter of taste in the early years. Architecturally the Victorian period had a rather dormant spirit where originality was concerned--the order of the day was eclectic and based on revivals of older styles which grew out of the picturesque. The greatest of these being a romantic harkening back to Gothic architecture though it is noticeably more fussy then the original Gothic.

Many early Victorian country houses were remodeled or greatly expanded Georgian mansions.[24] In these homes of the wealthy, new rooms were developed such as smoking rooms, billiard rooms, conservatories and morning rooms. All were designed for specific purposes

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[23]Walvin, p. 122.

[24]Gloag, p. 31.

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and ornately decorated in the cluttered preferences of the day. They are excessive, overdone, or "over the top" as the British say, possessing a great deal of pattern and color from the pargework ceilings to the wall-to-wall carpet.

Conservatories served in many capacities. They were pleasant for sitting in during dances and they provided potted plants for the house, which kept summer going in winter--much later, Edwardians would especially like being photographed in comfortable and well-lit conditions in the depths of winter--and conservatories were romantic, rich and sweet-scented bowers of color and greenery that carried a touch of the jungle and the tropics into English suburbs and English winters.[25] Also, they were a sort of status symbol--a very important commodity for the day. Even if one did not have a conservatory one could indulge in a plethora of potted palms or at the very least in Wardian cases--the equivalent of today's terrariums.

With the abolition of window glass tax in 1851, large sheet glass windows became popular over smaller panes. As for the element of light, Mid-Victorians preferred to keep it out as it faded the dark fabrics, also gloom was considered romantic. Later Victorians, however, looked upon light as a symbol of progress and so they threw open the heavy draperies and let it in.[26] Within a short time lace curtains were

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[25]Susan Lasdun, Victorians at Home (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p. 16.

[26]Lasdun, pp. 15-16.

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soon in favor for they diffused the excess light and yet secured a measure of privacy.[27]

Furniture, for the most part like architecture, reflected the same uninspired mental stagnation and turned furniture producers to all periods of the past for inspiration. Furniture was thus a mixture of many styles such as Greek, Turkish, Gothic, Venetian, Florentine and Egyptian. There was some French Louis XV style influences but those pieces tended to be clumsy in proportion and possessed of fantastic gingerbread ornament.[28]

Wood furniture, in particular case pieces, are generally characterized as dark, heavy and deeply carved. Like architecture it saw a profusion of revivals but, strangely, very little furniture of the Gothic persuasion is found. One often finds a blend of several styles in one piece of furniture. The emphasis was predominately on the curvelinear line over that of the straight.

Mahogany was the favored wood but black walnut and ebony were used as well. Marble-topped rosewood tables were a standard feature in most every home. Inlays of mother-of-pearl and brass are found more frequently than marquetry. Motifs favored nosegays, fruit, flowers and leaves. Occasionally one sees furniture made of *papier mache* which was also used in ceiling ornamentation.

It is no exaggeration to say the "Victorians loved comfort without shame as the Georgians before them had loved pleasure without

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[27]Gloag, p. 35.

[28]Sherrill Whiton, Interior Design and Decoration, 4th ed. (New York: Lippincott, 1974), p. 222.

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apology."[29] Chairs with ottomans, and sofas, were designed for comfort having a tendency toward being overstuffed.[30] Seating pieces were frequently covered with shimmering silk or richly textured velvet fabrics and were deeply tufted. Dark crimson was a favored fabric color.

New furnishing materials came into being: cast iron ornament, tube metal for brass beds, bentwood, laminated wood and the coil spring, which provided the means for the above-mentioned deep tufting in upholstery. The best artistic development in interior design was in the production of chintzes. This glazed cotton fabric of bright colors, made an appeal to the English flower garden, brooksides and meadows and remains a general favorite to this day.[31]

There was in this time frame a great interest in ingenuity--for *tromp l'oeil*, the cute disguise, the surprising gadget. Furniture decorated with leather stamped to look like wood or made out of *gutta percha*. Painted imitation inlay and artificial wood graining were also popular as was marbled slate.

Furnishing choices of the Victorian home were rather haphazard with the chief unifying influence being the suite, but in addition there were so many supplementary articles that the suite was often lost

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[29]Gloag, p. xv.

[30]This desire for comfort was certainly at odds with the mode of dress of the day. Women were especially hampered in their movements with crinolines, bustles, and with long sweeping skirts, and later hobble skirts, not to mention the manner in which they subjected their bodies to the rigid confines of tightly laced corsets.

[31]Whiton, p. 223.

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amongst the clutter.[32] The collecting of knick-knacks, bric-a-brac, and what-have-you became a widespread mania and so it was that glass domes were used to house such dubious *objets des artes* which were commonly referred to as "art workmanship."

Due to the rise in industrialization, furniture was badly made and poorly styled, however, there were occasional pieces of great beauty produced. Charles Eastlake Jr. made a unsuccessful endeavor to break away from the pall of aesthetic stagnation about 1865. His interiors were based on Gothic detail with varnished oak, glazed tiles, and touches of black lacquer but with little thought to color harmony.[33] Eastlake was also an advocate of the natural handpolishing of wood and condemned "French" polishing, staining or varnishing.[34]

In most homes cabinets, sideboards, wardrobes or chimney pieces were elaborately designed to include brackets, niches, shelves and cupboards and were usually very architectural.[35] However, by the 1880s heavily carved ponderous furniture was being replaced by lighter designs often inlaid with marquetry. Flimsy bamboo furniture also became fashionable.[36]

Furniture was arranged in groups and disposed about the room in attractive conversational centers. However, during the 1890s fitted

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[32]Gloag, p. 36.

[33]Whiton, p. 222.

[34]Gloag, p. 36.

[35]Helena Hayward, ed., World Furniture - An Illustrated History (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 216.

[36]Gloag, p. 42.

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furniture increased in popularity and convenience. There was a resumption of an old-fashioned structural partnership between furniture and walls which was seen in the early sixteenth century before free-standing furniture came into fashion. In these built-ins, comfort was "married to" seclusion and from the union was born the cozy corner.[37]

Victoriana did not die with the queen in 1901 "it rumbled on with its copious vulgarities and expansive comfort, its formal clothes and precise manners until 1914."[38] In the interim between the 1850s and the turn-of-the-century, however, the clutter of interiors was replaced somewhat by a coziness--but as might be expected there was an over abundance of it.

While Edwardian rooms were largely light and airy, especially bedrooms, dining rooms were rather heavy rooms--these being used for the "serious business of eating."[39] Colors were usually darker than drawing rooms or parlors, having a great deal of wood paneling and solid furniture.

In other rooms furniture tended to be elegantly austere and frequently built-in. An ingle-nook around the fireplace--a continuation of the Victorian cozy-corner, was still evident but was less a hide-away and jumble of shelves and gingerbread. Rather they were simple in line and yet comfortable.

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[37]Gloag, p. 72.

[38]Gloag, p. xv.

[39]Alastair Service, Edwardian Interiors - Inside the Homes of the Poor, the Average, and the Wealthy (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1982), p. 36.

The increase in attention to comfort and cleanliness had a marked effect upon the standards of bedroom furnishings of this time.[40] This attention to comfort and good health was evident in the replacement of the canopied four-poster bed with a half-canopy which was later abolished altogether. Even though windows were still closed up tight at night there were at least, no more suffocating enclosures.[41]

Most every bedroom also had an ample washstand with a marble top and splash back, and a toilet set consisting of a basin ewer, a soap dish, a toothbrush stand and chamber pot, which was often highly decorated with floral and sometimes oriental motifs. Hip-baths, foot-baths, shower-baths, hot and cold baths were fixtures to be found in bathrooms with running water and were common before the close of the nineteenth century.[42]

In the Late-Victorian period (1870-1901) furniture manufacturers showed a concern with variety and novelty. Classical, Medieval and Renaissance prototypes were readily found, Jacobean was popular, and Empire was revived. The furniture of Thomas Hope was in demand, and Queen Anne became popular again as well as Chippendale, Adam, Sheraton and Hepplewhite.[43] The interiors of a large townhouse or country home might have a Jacobean dining room, a Queen Anne boudoir, and Adam drawing room, late Stuart, William and Mary or early Georgian

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[40]Gloag, p. 36.

[41]Gloag, p. 36.

[42]Gloag, p. 36.

[43]Hayward, p. 216.

bedrooms.[44] This trend continued into the Edwardian era. In the luxury steamship liners such as the White Star Olympic-Class vessels, this eclecticism was very prominent. Every major saloon and accommodation was decorated in such varied styles.

Edwardian England was at an odd pivotal position in the history of the western world, for while the time frame was securely in the first decade of the twentieth century, thinking and lifestyles were still nineteenth-century. Despite the twentieth century time placement, England was in the aftermath of the Victorian age, when the empire was at its greatest and England its most powerful, but stood precariously unready as a watershed of the modern age.

Hedonism ruled the ruling class with an unapologetic show of materialism that "gave a new dimension to the respectability and so produced the phenomenon soon to be termed Edwardianism." Chronologically the *Lusitania* and *Mauretania* would be identified with the reign of Edward, but the full expression of Edwardianism at sea would not come until after the king's death in 1910. Ironically, it would last four years longer at sea than on land.[45]

Aesthetically speaking, the "transatlantic style" was a composite of this historic period encompassing the nineteenth-century *beaux art* to twentieth-century high tech. It was rather like a barometer reflecting the variances in social privilege and the restrictions of the time when crossing the Atlantic was a week long indulgence in established custom

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[44]Gloag, p. 82.

[45]John Malcolm Brinnin, Grand Luxe - The Transatlantic Style (New York: Holt, 1988), p. 41.

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and protocol, which put ambience ahead of expedition, among "persons of one's own class and kind."[46]

Truly it was an eclectic time in more than just land-based and seagoing architecture and interior design. The thinking and motion of society was eclectic. By way of poetic license--the political and social climate was that of a borrowing and combining from the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Man was fascinated by the progress of the new but was endeavoring not to lose hold on the security and comfort of the old. It was an attempt to maintain something of stability and solidarity in contemporary conditions which were advancing with fearful speed.

In the area of sea travel ships were being built bigger, better, safer, faster, and more efficient. They were capable of taking, with relative security, the adventuresome intrepid spirit wherever he wanted to go on this globe. Yet in the midst of bigger, better, safer, faster, and more efficient he was choosing to go in the mode of his past, outfitted in the styles, comforts and diversity he found at home, which was extravagance and *foile de grandeur.* In truth, the greatest risk at hand was thought to be that of boredom.[47]

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[46]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 1.

[47]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 58.

PART I

WHITE STAR LINE

CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Ismay, Imrie & Company

The White Star Line was an outgrowth of a line of wooden sailing ships that plied the active Australian gold rush trade in the early 1850s.[1] After the American Civil War there was a rapid development in the Atlantic trade routes which were based on expanding commerce and on that massive emigration from Europe. It was upon this emigration that Thomas Henry Ismay (Fig. 2) was to make his fortune.[2]

In 1867 Ismay acquired control of a bankrupt company and the line was reorganized into the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company (O.S.N.C.) in 1869. In the following year, with partner William Imrie, Ismay formed the controlling firm of Ismay, Imrie & Company.[3] Their offices would be located at No. 10 Water Street in Liverpool (Fig. 3) for the next forty years.

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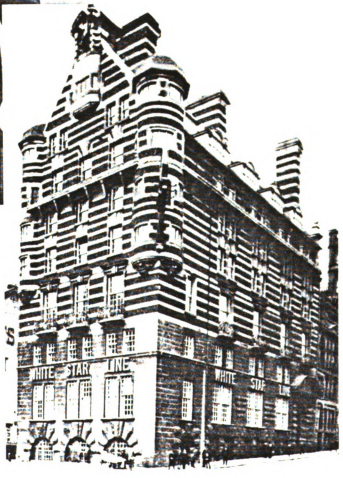
[1]Thomas E. Bonsall, Titanic - The Story of the Great White Star Line Trio: The Olympic, the Titanic and the Britannic (New York: W. H. Smith, 1987), p. 5.

[2]Michael Moss and John R. Hume, Shipbuilders to the World - 125 Years of Harland and Wolff, Belfast 1861-1986 (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1986), p. 29.

[3]Moss, p. 28.

Fig. 2 Thomas H. Ismay, White Star Line Founder.

Fig. 3 White Star Offices, Liverpool.



Harland and Wolff, Ltd.

Almost immediately, upon the new White Star Company being formed, Ismay and Imrie contracted with shipbuilders Harland and Wolff, of Belfast Ireland, to build a fleet of iron-hulled passenger steamships (Fig. 4) destined for passenger, mail and cargo runs from Liverpool to New York City. This was to become a long-standing and legendary partnership as Harland and Wolff would, for decades, build all White Star vessels.[4]

Harland and Wolff had been shipbuilders since 1840. They operated on a "cost plus" basis with White Star which meant that they built the finest ships possible, and then billed the line for the total cost, plus an agreed upon percentage for profit.[5] While such an arrangement is considered nightmarish in today's business world, it worked well enough for Harland and Wolff and the White Star Line so that they continued to do business together for well into the twentieth century when White Star ceased to exist.

The first of the Harland and Wolff ships to fly the new White Star house flag--a five-pointed white star on a scarlet, swallow-tailed pennant--was the *Oceanic*. She began a tradition in which all vessels constructed thereafter would be larger and more grand than the ones previous (Fig. 5).[6]

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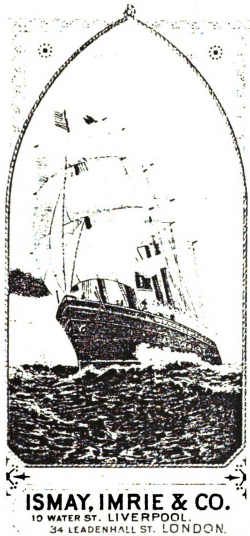
[4]Bonsall, p. 5.

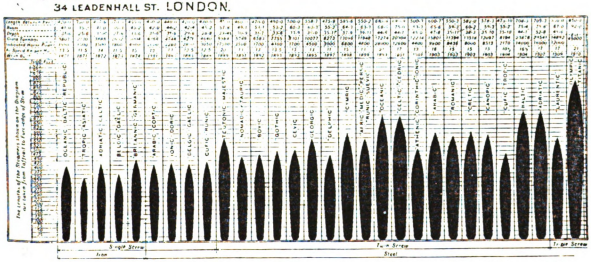
[5]Bonsall, p. 10.

[6]Bonsall, p. 5.

Fig. 4 Early White Star Steamships.

Fig. 5 Development in size of White Star liners.





It is interesting to note that *Oceanic* would also be the first to carry a name with the suffix "-ic." This became an identifying standard with White Star. All the ships built from scratch would be so designated--such as *Baltic, Republic* and *Celtic* through *Olympic, Titanic* and *Britannic*, and so on. It is further of interest that, with the beginning of World War I, anti-German sentiment was such that White Star elected to rename two of their vessels. Thus, *Germanic* and *Teutonic* became *Belgic* and *The Czar*, respectively. White Star's major competitor company, Cunard Line, of London, also used this name-with-a-designation form. Their suffix choice was "-ia" with two of their best-known vessels being *Lusitania* and *Mauretania*.[7]

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[7]Roy Anderson, White Star (Prescot, England: Stephenson, 1964), p. 100.

CHAPTER 2

J. PIERPONT MORGAN AND THE COMBINE

By 1902 James Bruce Ismay (Fig. 6) had succeeded his father, Thomas, as chairman of O.S.N.C. and owner of the White Star Line. Ismay was an ambitious, hardworking man and respected within the shipping business. Like his father, he continued to maintain good business relations with Harland and Wolff, which was then owned by Lord Pirrie (Fig. 7).

However, in that same year control of White Star passed out of British hands when, in a bid to absorb the world's major shipping lines, American financial wizard, J. Pierpont Morgan, paid $40,000,000 in cash and stock for the White Star Line. The company then amounted to eight liners, which were turning in even greater profits than their long-time competitor, Cunard Line.[1]

Entering the ranks of a huge American shipping empire known variously as the Morgan Combine, the American Shipping Trust and International Mercantile Marine Company (I.M.M.)--the parent holding company--White Star would yet remain a prestigious showpiece of the Combine.[2] Due to Morgan's other exploits, which included acquistion of other shipping lines, as well as the railway companies which provided

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[1]Anderson, p. 97.

[2]Anderson, p. 97.

Fig. 6 J. Bruce Ismay, White Star Chairman and Managing Director.

Fig. 7 The Right Hon. Lord Pirrie, Harland and Wolff Shipyards, Owner.

services to the Southampton and Cherbourg docks, the European press referred to the situation as the "Morganization" of the Atlantic (Fig. 8). Morgan ultimately acquired some one hundred vessels representing "almost one-fifth of all the tonnage then crossing between Europe and America, and a full one-third of the Atlantic passenger service."[3]

Cunard fought a Morgan takeover but was only able to resist by virtue of a $11,712,000 loan from Parliament.[4] The British government especially opposed the sale of Cunard, which was the last prestigious line available to the American monopoly. In 1903 a 23-year agreement was struck wherein Cunard would remain entirely British while the government would fund the aforementioned loan permitting Cunard to build two 31,000-ton liners. They were to be the biggest and fastest vessels afloat. These ships became the previously mentioned *Lusitania* and the *Mauretania*, and, ultimately, the reason behind White Star contracting to build their three Olympic-Class vessels.[5]

It should be mentioned that a major French line turned a deaf ear to "Morganization" and managed to go on without a takeover by the then infamous corporate raider. Also the German lines of Hamburg-American and North German Lloyd struck up a ten-year bargain of affiliation with Morgan wherein they agreed to do things the Morgan way ("joint policies to avoid undue competition") which also spared them

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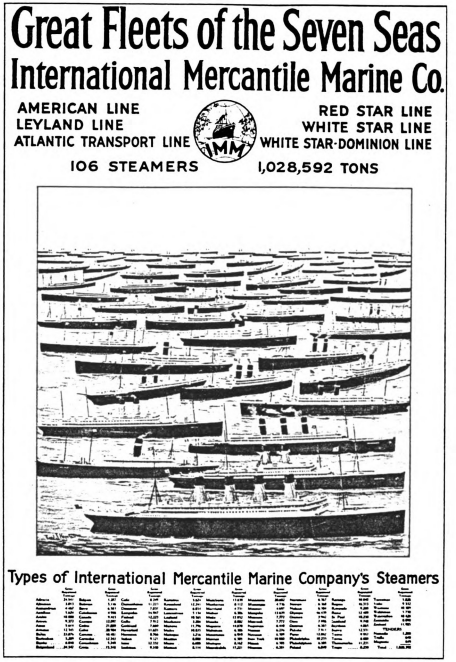
[3]Melvin Maddocks, The Great Liners (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life, 1978), p. 98.

[4]Maddocks, p. 99.

[5]Anderson, p. 98.

Fig. 8 Morganization.



from selling out altogether.[6]

With the end of the Boer War in 1902, however, scores of merchant ships were let loose for commercial service and freight rates suddenly plummeted. This inevitably caused a depression in world-wide shipping. Morgan's grand design, for a transatlantic monopoly was ill-timed and, very quickly, in trouble. As a consequence, Morgan's interest in I.M.M. began to decline and thereafter business suffered from inept management.[7]

I.M.M. fell into receivership in 1915 but was saved when the shipping demands of World War I presented a higher priority. I.M.M. stumbled through the 1920s and 1930s, by selling off foreign acquisitions, but holding on to domestic shipping interests. The corporation eventually became the United States Lines Company and regained a notable stature in the world of shipping. "Morgan's dream of monopoly had long since died. 'The ocean,' said the "Wall Street Journal", was too big for the old man.'"[8]

Tottering on the brink of financial ruin, due to mismanagement and fraud, the White Star Line ceased to exist in 1934 when the British government arranged a merger with arch-rival Cunard, and the resulting company thus became the Cunard-White Star Line. After 85 years, the White Star shipping company was no more--though it would not be completely dissolved until 1945.[9] It was a sad end to a fine, old

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[6]Maddocks, p. 99.

[7]Maddocks, p. 99.

[8]Maddocks, p. 99.

[9]Anderson, p. 172.

company, but before all this came to pass, after the Morgan takeover in 1902 White Star found itself rather in the position of the catbird seat--a state of affairs to which it would apply itself diligently over the next ten years.

CHAPTER 3

WHITE STAR ROYAL MAIL STEAMERS

By 1907 White Star was causing yet another stir in the public arena by announcing that its transatlantic express service would be withdrawn from Liverpool, and that all future sailings would be from the port at Southampton--calling at Cherbourg, France and Queenstown (Cobh), Ireland, on the westward passage and at Plymouth and Cherbourg on the return.[1] This change was due in part to the fact that travellers' preferences were changing. London, which had for so long been the magnet which had attracted travelers was fast giving way to the attraction of Paris. Traffic was slipping away and the Southampton/Cherbourg arrangement allowed White Star the best of both worlds--an English terminal closer to London and a foothold in the continental traffic.[2]

As a consequence of the Southampton arrangement, White Star moved its offices to Oceanic House, in the fashionable West End of London (Fig. 9). In so doing, it lost its Liverpool mail service. However, it was to maintain its traditional connections with Liverpool.[3] It was about this same time that White Star began making plans for the

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[1]Anderson, p. 99.

[2]Anderson, p. 100.

[3]Anderson, p. 100.

Fig. 9 White Star Offices, London.

construction of the Olympic-Class vessels.

Germany had already built a succession of what are now considered the first true luxury liners. These earlier German ships were designed by Johannes Poppe and were lavishly baroque--almost a "bordello baroque."[4] In response to Germany's luxurious, high-speed liners Cunard began building in 1906 the *Lusitania* and *Mauretania*. These 31,000-ton quadruple-screw, British express vessels were primarily built for speed and punctuality, cruising at up to 27 to 28 knots (a knot being one nautical mile or 6080 feet). In fact, the *Mauretania* would remain the fastest liner afloat until 1929--however, for all their speed, the Cunarders were not economical in their operation.[5]

Competition was fierce for the lucrative transatlantic passenger market. As a result White Star planned, early in 1907, to building two giant luxury liners, providing a weekly royal mail service from Southampton to New York.[6] These two ships would ultimately be joined by a third, and each would require the labor of some 3,000 to 4,000 workmen to build, and would collectively cost J. P. Morgan in excess of four and half million pounds.[7] Computed on the rate of exchange for the day this was roughly the equivalent of $22,500,000.

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[4]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 3.

[5]William H. Miller, The Fabulous Interiors of the Great Ocean Liners (New York: Dover, 1985), p. 12.

[6]Mark Brown and Roger Simmons, R.M.S. Titanic (London: Brampton, 1987), p. 1.

[7]Moss, p. 138.

It was agreed that Lord Pirrie, chairman of Harland and Wolff, would see to the design, his associate, Alexander Carlisle, would be responsible for the general construction, decoration and equipment, while Lord Pirrie's nephew and respected associate, Thomas Andrews (Fig. 10), would oversee the project as the company's managing director. Thus, on 1 July 1907, the order was placed for the building of *Olympic* and *Titanic*.[8]

Traditionally, the two most important factors of a ship's design were speed and passenger accommodation, with speed being the primary consideration.[9] However, it was White Star's intent to concentrate their efforts on building three new vessels for size, safety, economy of operation, comfort and unparalleled luxury. These ships, while meant to be a trio of ferry vessels, to be entered into service as competition for Cunard's greyhounds, *Lusitania* and *Mauretania*, were going to compete on a very different level. Initially the Olympic-Class vessels were to be designed and built half again as large as the Cunarders, and just as

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[8]Brown, p. 2.

[9]As a maximum of 21 knots speed was expected from Olympic-Class ships, this required the firing of 29 boilers and 159 furnaces which demanded the burning of 600 tons of coal per day. Machinery and boiler space took 520 feet of the ships' 882.5 foot length. Unlike Cunard, who was switching over to turbine engines to enhance speed, White Star, being more concerned with economy of operation, came up with the triple-screw design that used two, outboard, reciprocating engines with a low-pressure, non-reversible turbine in the center. When moving astern, only the reciprocating engines would be used. The jewel of the idea was that the center turbine would be run off the escaping steam produced by the reciprocating engines. This innovative method of propulsion eliminated vibration and was so efficient and satisfactory that it became a standard at Harland and Wolff for many years. (Wilton J. Oldham, The Ismay Line (Liverpool: Charles Birchall and Sons Ltd., 1961), p. 168.)

Fig. 10 Thomas Andrews, Harland and Wolff Managing Director and Chief Designer.

swift, as well as being filled with paintings, tapestries and other kinds of period art "as one might find in a nation's museum."[10] The intention, while admirable, did not materialize as originally intended, but the outcome was, nevertheless, remarkable and the legendary romantic charm of the grand saloon was about to commence.[11]

None of the Harland and Wolff slips--which in 1907 could hold up to nine ships in construction--were big enough to house the leviathans planned. They exceeded any other vessel by at least 13,000 tons and there were no building berths anywhere in the world that could accommodate them. As a consequence, Harland and Wolff had to reorganize their shipyard to cradle the giants.[12] Two enormous slipways were laid out, side-by-side, taking the place of three previous ones (Fig. 11).[13]

Furthermore, it was necessary that a special, enormous Arrol gantry had to be erected to hold *Olympic* and *Titanic*, as they would be constructed along side one another, almost simultaneously (Fig. 12).[14] This reorganization was not just limited to the Queens Island shipyards. In New York an army of engineers were hired to dredge a new channel in the New York harbor which would allow the future docking of

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[10]Brinnin, Sway, p. 362.

[11]The Cunarder *Aquitania* became the "art Laden" ship that "would cross the water like a wing of the British Museum." She was designed and decorated by Arthur Davis and contained amongst other attributes, a Gainsborough Suite, Robert Adams Library and Palladian Lounge. *Aquitania* took to the water 21 April 1913. (Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 55.)

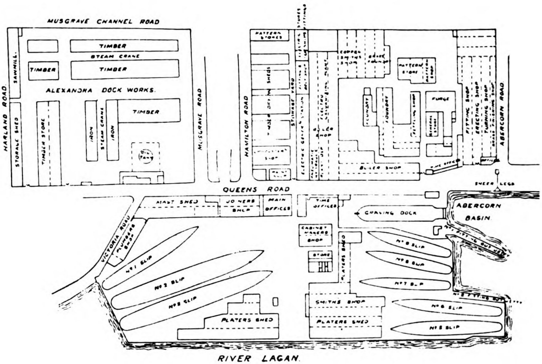
[12]Anderson, p. 106.

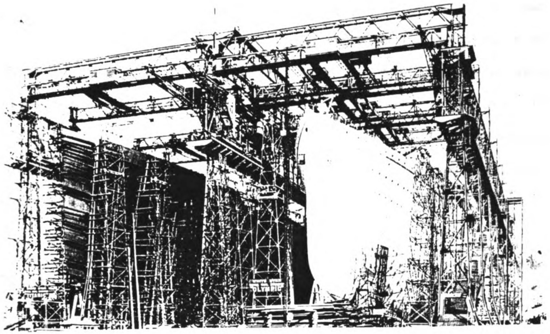
[13]Anderson, p. 107.

[14]Moss, p. 138.

Fig. 11 Harland and Wolff, Queens Island, Belfast shipyard plan.

Fig. 12 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, in the Arrol gantry.





Olympic and her sisters.[15]

As previously mentioned, White Star had originally been interested in the speed of passage, but by the 1890s they had shifted the emphasis to size, safety, economy of operation, comfort and luxury in every sense of the word. While their ships would, thereafter, be fast enough they would never again contend for the "Blue Ribband" speed trophy with other great lines.[16] However, as ships were customarily built for 25 to 30 years of use, speed did not seem as urgent a need as long-term durability and dependability.

The original design for *Olympic*, *Titanic* and *Britannic* was for the ships to have three funnels and three or four masts as well. Needless to say, this was substantially changed with a fourth funnel--a dummy--being added for compositional balance and effect, while the masts were limited to two, and placed fore and aft.[17]

Seven decks were planned--designed as A through G--with coal bunkers, boiler rooms, engine rooms and cargo holds on two lower decks below G-deck (Fig. 13). The upper decks would be for the primary use of first-class passengers. Third-class would be consigned to the lower decks, while second-class would be berthed somewhere in between. This was the given with *Olympic* and *Titanic*--they being constructed almost identically--however, *Britannic* would be somewhat different. The only significant differences between *Olympic* and *Titanic* were on B-deck

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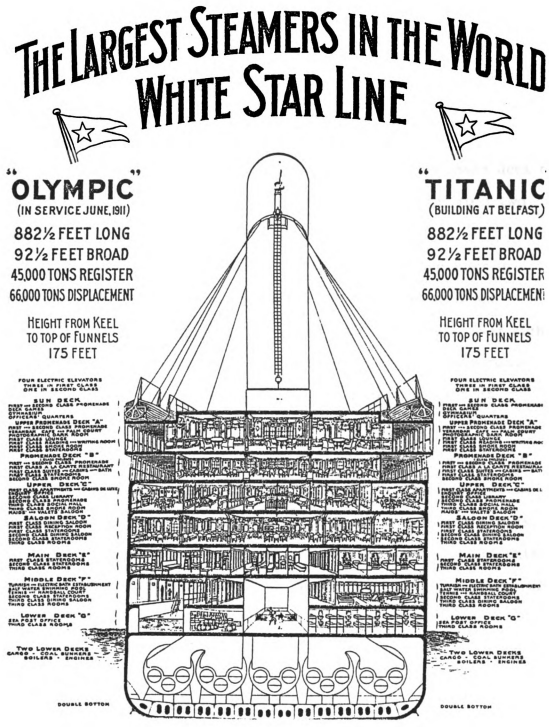
[15]John Maxtone-Graham, The Only Way to Cross (New York: MacMillan, 1972), p. 40.

[16]Bonsall, p. 6.

[17]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 57.

Fig. 13 Cutaway diagram of *Olympic* and *Titanic* decks.



of *Titanic* (see Appendix). It was there that the second-class promenade was reduced in favor of a larger *a la carte* restaurant and 28 new, first-class staterooms. Also, one month before *Titanic's* completion, she had an additional feature change made that was to noticeably distinguish her from the *Olympic.* The forward half of the first-class promenade on B-deck was plated and enclosed with windows to protect the passengers from sea spray.[18] This difference makes for ease in identifying photographs of *Olympic* and *Titanic* today, as the forward promenade deck on *Olympic* is open while that of *Titanic* is enclosed below the first two funnels.[19]

A collision of the White Star *Republic* and an Italian liner in January of 1909, saw the first use of the Marconi wireless in an emergency situation. Due to the availability of the wireless, over eight-hundred people were saved from that collision at sea.[20] The wireless was such a success that White Star immediately arranged for its installation aboard their three new vessels as well.

Another safety feature provided was that the hulls were to be subdivided into sixteen watertight compartments by means of fifteen watertight bulkheads. These bulkheads extended up through F-deck. Heavy watertight doors provided communication between compartments during normal operation of the ships. These doors could be closed in

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[18]Brown, p. 28.

[19]Brown, p. 73.

[20]Anderson, p. 2.

three ways: the captain could close them throughout the ship by means of an electric switch on the bridge; any individual door could be closed by tripping a lever at the door which operated a friction clutch; and, a floating mechanism located beneath the floor in each compartment was designed to rise with any incoming water and automatically trigger the doors in that compartment independent of any action by captain or crew.[21]

All three ships were designed to remain afloat with any two compartments flooded, making them capable of withstanding a broadside collision at any one of the bulkheads. (This was about the worst possible condition imaginable.) Because of this stay-afloat design, the prestigious shipping trade journal, The Shipbuilder referred to White Star's new vessels as being practically "unsinkable." To its credit White Star Line never made such a claim, but it was a description that would forever after haunt the company.

If there was a critical lapse in the safety construction of all three of these ships it was that the double-bottoms did not extend up the sides to a point above the waterline. This was not done as it would have cramped the working space needed for attending to the boilers.[22]

Everything about the Olympic-Class vessels would eventually be the largest known anywhere so that words like, "leviathan," "giant," "mammoth," "behemoth," and "titan" became synonymous with the building project and with the individual vessels. The size of these ships would rival many of the world's greatest buildings and monuments

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[21]Bonsall, p. 14.

[22]Bonsall, p. 10.

(Fig. 14)--a characteristic which would be amply equaled in the graciousness of interior appointments. When *Olympic* was launched in October of 1910, *Titanic* was only half completed.[23] Both ships would eventually be fitted out to the same magnificent standard but *Olympic* would receive the lion's share of publicity for she was, after all, the first.

For decorative details, many fine British residences and mansions, of distinctive periods, would be consulted for the interiors of the Olympic-Class vessels--which would typify the eclectic trends of the Victorian/Edwardian era. Besides the decorating influences of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Louis XVI, there would also be found therein, Empire, Jacobean, Adams, Italian Renaissance, Georgian, Queen Anne, and both Modern and a style referred to as Old Dutch (which resembled somewhat of a William and Mary/Charles II/baroque mix).[24]

The Olympic-Class vessels would, as a result, be the finest achievements of White Star and Harland and Wolff. While, in later years, other ships would be built that were larger, more grandly appointed and certainly impressive (e.g. the *Queen Mary*, at 81,237 tons), none would be nearly as graceful nor elegant as were White Star's three Olympic-Class sister ships.

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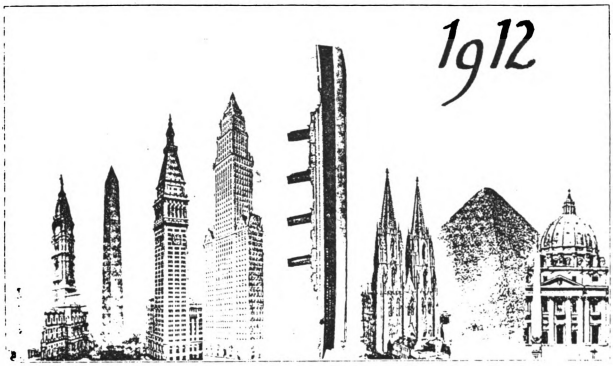
[23]Anderson, p. 106.

[24]Brinnin, Sway, p. 363.

Fig. 14 ***Olympic*** **and** ***Titanic*****, compared to world monuments.**



PART II

OLYMPIC-CLASS VESSELS

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF R.M.S. *Olympic*

R.M.S. Olympic (Figs. 1 & 15) was the *la grande dame* of the White Star Line. Being the first of the sister ships--hence the designation of the three as "Olympic-Class" vessels--she was, in her day, to acquire almost all of the fame and publicity prior to 15 April, 1912, when *Titanic* met with disaster. It should be noted that standing in *Olympic's* shadow as she did, *Titanic* went almost unnoticed until she had the distressing misfortune to sink.[1]

Among the many needless myths about *Titanic* was that she "far outstripped in grandeur and elegance any other ship afloat--even *Olympic*."[2] As previously noted, both vessels were built essentially the same throughout in their Edwardian design, construction materials and furnishings. Those few structural alterations that were made in *Titanic* were made to refine the design based on the few months experience with *Olympic*. The White Star Line, however, never made any distinction between them.

The two giants were always advertised as a pair. Photographs of exteriors and interiors in company publicity were invariably labelled, *Olympic* and *Titanic*, with a single photo or illustration serving

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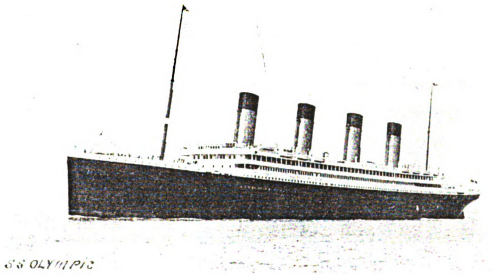
[1]Bonsall, p. 31.

[2]Bonsall, p. 24.

Fig. 15 *R.M.S. Olympic*



for both (Fig. 16).[3] As a consequence, drawings and photos known to definitely be of *Titanic* are extremely rare. Truth to tell, in many of the interior photos available it is impossible to tell if they are of *Olympic* or *Titanic*.

Olympic began as Harland and Wolff passenger ship #400. Her keel having been laid on 16 December 1908, she was in the stocks for two years before being launched for fitting out 20 October 1910. At such time J. P. Morgan was on hand and, no doubt, enjoyed seeing tickets being sold to spectators. Approximately 456 pounds was raised and, in a magnanimous gesture, donated to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast.[4]

Even though *Olympic* was to receive the bulk of White Star attention and publicity, the company did not over emphasize her launch. Signal flags spelled out the word "Success" across the bow, but there was not the customary bunting, nor speech, nor bottle of champagne.[5] Only one signal rocket and 27,000 tons of empty steel hull slid into the river Lagan to await the final fitting out.[6]

After seven months *Olympic* was properly completed and subsequently delivered to White Star on 31 May 1911, the same day that her sister, *Titanic*, was launched. *Olympic* measured in at 882.5 feet long

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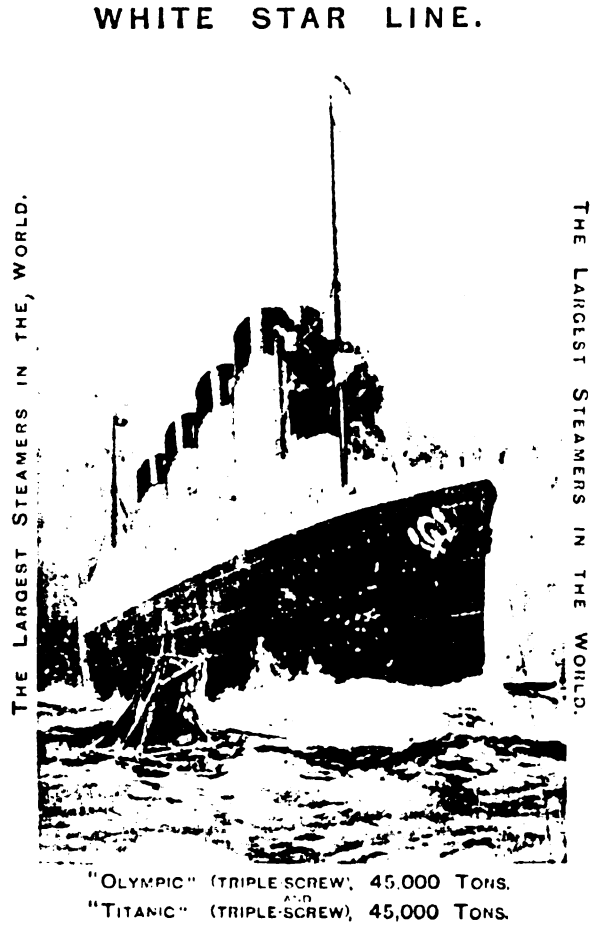
[3]Bonsall, p. 24.

[4]Anderson, p. 108.

[5]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 47.

[6]At her launch *Olympic's* slide-way required more than 20 tons of tallow, train oil and soft soap, making for a one-inch thick coating laid down to endure the three-ton-per-square-inch weight of the hull.

Fig. 16 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, joint advertising.



and 92.5 feet in breadth. The distance from the bottom of the keel to the top of the bridge was 105.5 feet. She was graced with four 70-foot funnels, each being 24.5 feet in diameter. Her gross registered tonnage (G.R.T.) was over 45,000 tons, while her displacement was 60,000 tons, which made her almost twice the size of the largest vessel then afloat.[7] She would, for a time, be the largest, most opulent ship the world had ever seen. *Olympic* was a combination of exceptional size, huge payload and relatively modest speed. She was truly representative of the fact that length, tonnage and displacement of such Atlantic passenger liners were to grow with staggering rapidity from that point onward.

Olympic was a lean, yacht-like racer, with a graceful hull, and was the first of Olympic-Class vessels to ever leave out of the Southampton port and the only one of the three sisters to dock in New York as planned by White Star. Her maiden voyage began on 14 June 1911 and lasted five days, 16 hours and 42 minutes. She averaged 21.17 knots though she was designed to do only 21. It is interesting to note that she was known to have accomplished upwards to 27.82 knots at various times during her long life.[8]

Said maiden voyage coincided with the ascension of George V to the throne of England. His reign would eventually terminate the "Anglo-Saxon *machismo*" perpetuated by his father, Edward VII.[9] But that was, undeniably, somewhat in the future.

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[7]Anderson, p. 108.

[8]Anderson, p. 108.

[9]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 54.

As noted before, Thomas Andrews oversaw the building of *Olympic* as he did with *Titanic*. In working closely with the builders Andrews achieved extravagant interiors and a spatial opulence never before achieved in an ocean-going vessel. *Olympic's* dominant character was one of apparently limitless space. Elbow-room was usually only the prerogative of first-class, but in *Olympic* this was an element to be found throughout the entire vessel. It is somewhat ironic though that second and third-class would eventually contain more people, but in decidedly less room than first-class. Undoubtedly, rank still had it's privileges, even if it didn't really need them.

In any event if one considers simplicity one of the epitomes of art, then *Olympic* had surely reached a high standard in the world of art. Though everything was on a very large capacity scale, it was yet accomplished with good judgment. According to a newly arrived *Olympic* medical doctor, she was "very roomy . . . in excellent order . . . with an absence of awkward spaces or corners and overcrowding. The interior woodwork, decoration and fittings . . . [were] very handsome and in excellent taste, with an absence of anything tawdry or loud."[10] This was indeed high praise, for the Edwardian era was still laboring under the Victorian penchant for the fussy, dusty and tawdriness of "over-the-top" decoration.

Olympic's first-class cabin accommodation extended over the upper decks, with access between the decks by two grand staircases and three electric lifts. The public rooms included a dining saloon, reception

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[10]Dr. J.C.H. Beaumont, "Dr. J.S. Beaumont, Senior Surgeon, R.M.S. Olympic." Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1989, p. 9.

room, *a la carte* restaurant, Cafe Parisien, lounge, reading and writing room, smoking room, and two verandah cafe/palm courts. Additionally there were the Turkish baths, the swimming bath, the squash racket court, and the gymnasium. Amidship could also be found a "main surgery, operating room and hospitals."[11] Accommodation consisted of 96 single berths, 106 double berths and 127 triple berth staterooms, plus four parlor suites with sitting rooms and baths, accommodating a total number of 735 first-class passengers. All the staterooms were very luxurious and designed in a variety of period styles.[12]

The reports that *Olympic* provided accommodation of "unrivalled extent and magnificence," apparently were not limited to just first-class.[13] The second-class accommodation extended over seven decks in the aft-end of the ship, with access between the decks by a grand staircase and one electric lift. The public rooms included a dining saloon, library and smoking room. There was also a "large dispensary after, where the second and third-class passengers could be attended by the Assistant Surgeon."[14] Further, there were 207 second-class bedrooms for 674 passengers.[15]

Third-class accommodation was of a very high standard even if third-class was relegated to the extreme lower levels of the ship. The

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[11]Beaumont, Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1989, p. 9

[12]Brown, p. 19.

[13]Anderson, p. 107.

[14]Beaumont, Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1989, p. 9.

[15]Brown, p. 20.

public rooms included a dining saloon, general room and smoking room. There were 222 bedrooms accommodating 862 passengers and open berths for 164 passengers.[16]

Thomas Andrews was not the only official passenger aboard *Olympic's* maiden voyage. J. Bruce Ismay was also in attendance and records indicate that he felt that the following list of corrective measures should be attended to upon return to England: "glass-enclosed screen on B-deck . . . [needed] so that passengers in the luxury suites on both *Olympic* and *Titanic* might have their own private promenade space . . . holders for cigars and cigarettes in the W.C. . . . beds were too comfortable . . . too springy; the whole ship vibrated throughout them and kept people awake. Lath bottoms should be fitted, to stiffen matters . . . potato peeler [needed] in crew's galley."[17]

During her lifetime *Olympic* was involved in four significant collisions at sea. This may sound like a great many accidents, but collisions at sea were, and are, rather commonplace--decidedly so. However, *Olympic* was fortunate in that her encounters spanned nearly a quarter of a century and none completely disabled her. The first of these events occurred only three months after her maiden voyage. After these accidents, and subsequent modifications, *Olympic* was considered the safest vessel afloat and, in time, a sort of chic developed about her, by virtue of her being the ill-fated *Titanic's* sister. Eventually she developed her own popularity for her own exceptional

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[16]Brown, p. 21.

[17]Brinnin, Sway, p. 363.

qualities but this was well after her war service. When she rejoined the White Star fleet in 1919, she was the last remaining Olympic-Class vessel afloat.

After the war *Olympic* was refitted for peacetime duties and converted from coal to oil-firing which thus reduced the work force from 350 hands to 50 hands in the stoke-hold. This alteration came at a cost of about $2,500,000. And this at a time when the passenger liner business was at a low ebb.[18]

When ready to recommence service, White Star representative, H. A. Sanderson--who had succeeded J. Bruce Ismay as president of I.M.M.--referred to *Olympic* as "the one ewe lamb of the White Star Line." Owing to world conditions Sanderson believed that he would not see such a large vessel being built for some time to come. Rather than being "the one ewe lamb," *Olympic* was more like a White Star "orphan." No sister ships were ever built for her after the destruction of *Titanic* and *Britannic.* However, two half-completed German ships were acquired as war reparations and finished by Harland and Wolff--but they would never equal the stature of the Olympic-Class vessels.

Olympic not only lasted longer than her two sisters, but longer than many liners. The usual life span of ocean vessels of the day was incomprehensibly short due to advancing technology and declining economics. Ships rapidly became obsolete in the fiercely competitive transatlantic market. Differences of just a few knots could affect the

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[18]Brinnin, Sway, p. 429.

speed and punctuality of crossings, as could outdated equipment, not to mention the quality of maintenance. Aging hazards were primarily due to the corrosiveness of the sea, but there were also fires from decrepit wiring and malfunctioning boilers which made for increasingly frequent trips to dry dock. As time progressed, costly conversions from coal to oil fuel, and conversions of steerage to tourist-class cabins, with bath facilities and other amenities, took it's toll upon many great ladies of the sea.[19]

A White Star Line brochure of the 1920s spoke of *Olympic* as being "chosen by travelers who respond to the appeal of real dignity and quiet elegance. These people board *Olympic* with that air of assurance which distinguishes people whose choice is unfailingly correct."[20] In later years *Olympic* ran Bank Holiday cruises out of Southampton at about $15 per passage. She also ran other short 3 1/2 day return trips between New York and Halifax.[21] White Star was, no doubt, hard-pressed to keep her in operation.

On 16 May 1934, *Olympic* was involved in her fourth and last collision--this time with the *Nantucket* lightship who she rammed and sank. The great *Olympic* soon after became a victim of the Depression and a merger with Cunard. At the advanced age of 24 years she was withdrawn from service in 1935.

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[19]Gordon Newell, Ocean Liners of the 20th Century (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1963), p. 24.

[20]Bonsall, p. 56.

[21]Anderson, p. 172.

At an auction held in Jarrow, England the dining room was bought and incorporated into a hotel bar in Northumberland. The warm wood paneling, of the Prince of Wales' favorite parlor suite, was purchased, removed and reused to line the best bedroom in a hotel he frequented.[22] A "canvas padded cell" went to the South Shields fun fair; the ice cream room was dismantled and reused, as was the mortuary--the latter being purchased by a Northumberland undertaker. And a butcher in Newcastle bought the great meat hooks from *Olympic's* kitchen, for his cold storage room. Removed to Tyneside, Scotland in 1937 *Olympic* was broken up and eventually scrapped. It was in this way that this gracious ship was thus removed from the British registry.[23]

But apparently this grand vessel was considered by Lord Pirrie as a special milestone in his lengthy shipbuilding career, for on his 1924 tombstone is a panel. Thereon is found a four-funnel steamer carved and inscribed "*R.M.S. Olympic*, 45,439 tons, for the White Star Line, built by Harland and Wolff, 1911."[24] A fine tribute to not only his lordship but to *Olympic* as well.

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[22]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 342.

[23]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 347.

[24]Oldham, p. 236.

CHAPTER 5

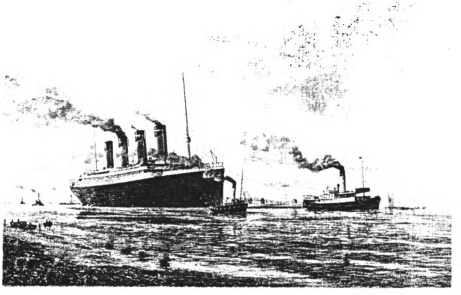
HISTORY OF R.M.S. TITANIC

Her name, like everything about her, gave promise of something mighty and splendid--yet it is not possible to speak of *R.M.S. Titanic* (Figs. 1 & 17) without recalling that her most notable feature was that she had a life span of less than thirteen days. Truly, there is perhaps no other ship so famous--with the possible exception of Noah's ark--for *Titanic* remains to this day, the worst maritime disaster in the history of the North Atlantic. Surprisingly, while *Titanic's* notorious maiden voyage has received ample coverage in books, articles, plays and films, it is scarcely mentioned in maritime history and perhaps not at all within the realms of sea-going architecture and art history.

With her sister ship *Olympic*, *Titanic* was the longest, the tallest, the most luxurious ship in all creation. She was unique--but not singly so--until she ceased to exist. With that event she achieved her fame and, in so doing, overshadowed her two sisters to the point that most of the world is not even aware that *Titanic* was but the second of three Olympic-Class vessels built at the turn of the century.

Titanic began as Harland and Wolff passenger ship #401 with her keel being laid on 31 March 1909. Her launch, on 31 May 1911, took just sixty-two seconds to complete and coincided with *Olympic's* delivery into

Fig. 17 *R.M.S. Titanic*



White Star's hands. When *Titanic* herself was delivered to White Star on 2 April 1912, her G.R.T., at 46,328 tons, was 1,000 tons more than *Olympic*, making *Titanic* the heaviest ship afloat, if not alone in being the largest. Her dimensions and displacement matched those of *Olympic*, making her monster big. Eight decks made *Titanic* tall as an eleven-story building and 29 boilers produced 50,000 total horsepower.

Titanic's delivery had been slightly delayed due to *Olympic* having been brought back into Belfast for various repairs and improvements. Some of those improvements required that a few of *Titanic's* appointments be cannibalized in order that *Olympic* might be made immediately sea worthy once again. As a result, *Titanic* was ten months being fitted out.

However, on the 10th of April 1912 she was ready. Her name was lettered in gold on her bows, to match the thin gold banding encircling her entire hull. At her mainmast flew the White Star house flag. At the fore yardarm, drifted the Blue Peter. The stars and stripes flew at the foremast, for the United States was her destination, while the British Union Jack was at the stern.

There had been a coal strike and wide-spread unemployment in the country since January of 1912 and this was finally settled on the 6th of April. The resulting shortage of ready coal required that *Titanic* be fueled by coal taken from five other company-owned ships that were docked at Southampton, plus a full load brought back from New York in

Olympic. However, this was but a minor inconvenience in comparison to subsequent events.[1]

In any event, at noon on 10 April *Titanic* steamed out of Southampton into the English Channel. That night she dropped anchor at Cherbourg, France, and the next morning again at Queenstown, Ireland, to receive additional cargo, mail consignments and passengers.[2] She then took to the open sea.

While designed to carry nearly 3,500 passengers and crew, there were aboard *Titanic* only a little more than 2,200 persons. Of these, some 1,300 were passengers with the remainder being crew. It is fairly common knowledge that there were many well-known and wealthy people

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[1] *Titanic* was immediately off on the wrong foot and many fatalists contend that she was "marked for disaster." While maneuvering out of the Southampton docks the 10,500-ton liner *New York* was torn from her moorings and dragged in the great suction created in *Titanic's* wake. A collision was only narrowly avoided when *Titanic* cut her engines, which allowed *New York* to drift free. (Anderson, p. 111)

Also, there was a coal fire smoldering in bunker #5--but spontaneous combustion fires were not an uncommon occurrence aboard coal burning vessels. (One simply did not presume to tell the passengers that the ship was on fire any more than one would suggest that lifeboats might ever be needed.) The fire aboard *Titanic* would be fought day and night during her entire voyage, and not extinguished until by incoming sea water, five days later in the middle of the North Atlantic.

Another misfortune was that the crew were all new, having been assigned only the previous Wednesday morning from *Oceanic* and *New York*. Coming from such vastly smaller ships the crew were frequently lost on board the Olympic-Class vessel and many of them did not know one another. (Oldham, p. 187) Nevertheless daily service would run relatively smoothly because there were more than 300 boilermen, firemen, trimmers and greasers to work the ship, 65 to navigate and over 400 crew members to care for the passengers. However, when the time came to abandon ship, few of the crew knew where to go which only added to the confusion. (Bonsall, p. 18)

[2] Anderson, p. 112.

of society on the first-class passenger manifest of *Titanic*. J. P. Morgan was one of several who had planned to travel to New York aboard the new Olympic-Class vessel, however he'd had to cancel his reservation--evidently he went to Aix-les-Bains, for "the cure." Other notables who booked and then canceled were Guglielmo Marconi, Henry Frick, Alfred Vanderbilt, and Lord Pirrie himself.[3] In any event there were many others who paid the more than $4,000 sumptuous first-class passage--this amount at a time when the average American family income for a year was well below $1,000.[4] In all "one hundred ninety families booked first-class on the *Titanic*. With them came a retinue of twenty-three lady's maids, eight valets, a large number of governesses, and an assortment of amanuenses not all of whom could easily be classified. In the case of Benjamin Guggenheim, these included a lady companion of duties unspecified, along with a male secretary and a chauffeur." Add to this a dragoman who accompanied the Henry Sleeper Harpers, of the Harper publishing house.[5]

One passenger aboard was not enjoying a leisurely relaxing trip. Thomas Andrews, of Belfast, was hard at work evaluating *Titanic*. Some of his recorded notes read: "Trouble with the restaurant galley. Wrong coloring for the dashing on the Promenade decks--too dark."[6] Other notes suggest: "Hot press in the restaurant galley was inefficient; . . .

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[3]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 57.

[4]Brinnin, Sway, p. 377.

[5]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, pp. 57 & 59.

[6]Maddocks, p. 126.

too many screws in the stateroom hat hooks; . . . too much dark wood in some of the public rooms; . . . wicker furniture in the veranda garden should be stained green."[7] More of his concerns had to do with the fact that the pebble dashing in the Parisien Cafe was also too dark.[8] There appears to have been no end to the attention to detail.

Titanic's consignment was vast. Amongst which were 1,500 bottles of wine; 20,000 bottles of beer and stout; 850 bottles of spirits; 250 5# jars of beluga caviar; 75,000# of fresh meat; 11,000# of fresh fish; 25,000# poultry and game; 40,000 fresh eggs; and 200 barrels of flour. There were also 1,500 souffle dishes; 1,500 champagne glasses; 1,200 pudding dishes; 3,000 beef tea dishes; 400 sugar basins; 1,500 mustard forks; 400 toast racks; 100 grape scissors and 1,000 finger bowls. In the ship's linen stores were 3,000 counterpanes; 800 Eiderdown quilts; 45,000 table napkins and 4,000 aprons.[9] Many of these items would be needed in not only serving dinner, but breakfast and luncheon as well (Fig. 18). Apparently everything about Olympic-Class vessels was olympian, if not in size, then in quantity.

The next few days proceeded without incident. *Titanic* achieved 24 knots with ease and thus exceeded the builder's expectation. However, out on the open sea she received six reports of icebergs and "growlers" on the wireless. Not considering the warnings of urgency,

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[7]Brinnin, Sway, p. 369.

[8]Oldham, p. 191.

[9]John P. Eaton & Charles A. Haas, Titanic - Destination Disaster - The Legends and the Reality (London: Norton, 1987), pp. 68-70.

Capt. Smith ordered *Titanic* full-speed ahead--even though at 20 knots it would have taken her one-half mile to come to a complete stop.[10]

On the evening of 14 April, *Titanic* was in the Labrador Current, approaching the Grand Banks off the coast of Cape Race, Newfoundland (Fig. 19). Four hundred miles from New York the weather was clear and the night sky was starlit. The North Atlantic, while a frigid 28 degrees, was calm and still as polished glass. Yet *Titanic* would hit a berg and before dawn all trace of her would vanish in water two miles deep.

As one writer said so well, "the wreckage of this greatest toy in the playground of the rich was morbidly fascinating. It became, almost at once, something to be reenacted for thrills on vaudeville stages; the subject of a painting by German Expressionist Max Beckman; the story of an anonymous ballad."[11] It also became the subject of overblown flowery poetry as is reflected in the first few lines of a Thomas Hardy poem. (It is typically Hardyesque in that it seems to have a preoccupation for the inscrutable--and the Edwardians did seem to avidly embrace such):

The Convergence of the Twain

In the Solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.[12]

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[10]Brown, p. 29.

[11]Brinnin, Sway, p. 378.

[12]Brinnin, Sway, p. 382.

Fig. 18 *Titanic* , first-class *a la carte* restaurant menu, 14 April 1912.

Fig. 19 *Titanic*, location upon colliding with iceberg.

R.M.S. "TITANIC"

APRIL 14, 1912.

LUNCHEON.

CONSOMMÉ FERMIER — COCKIE LEEKIE

FILLETS OF BRILL

EGG À L'ARGENTEUIL

CHICKEN À LA MARYLAND

CORNED BEEF, VEGETABLES, DUMPLINGS

FROM THE GRILL.

GRILLED MUTTON CHOPS

MASHED, FRIED & BAKED JACKET POTATOES

CUSTARD PUDDING

APPLE MERINGUE — PASTRY

BUFFET.

SALMON MAYONNAISE — POTTED SHRIMPS

NORWEGIAN ANCHOVIES — SOUSED HERRINGS

PLAIN & SMOKED SARDINES

ROAST BEEF

ROUND OF SPICED BEEF

VEAL & HAM PIE

VIRGINIA & CUMBERLAND HAM

BOLOGNA SAUSAGE — BRAWN

GALANTINE OF CHICKEN

CORNED OX TONGUE

LETTUCE — BEETROOT — TOMATOES

CHEESE.

CHESHIRE, STILTON, GORGONZOLA, EDAM,
CAMEMBERT, ROQUEFORT, ST. IVEL,
CHEDDAR

Iced draught Munich Lager Beer at 6d. & 1d. a Tankard

Just what is Hardy trying to say here? Like the Kennedy assassination fifty years later, truth was shrouded in the enigmatic and the fanciful and why? when the truth was perplexing enough in and of itself? "The *Titanic* disaster produced its own blend of fact, superstition and wishful thinking, imparting significance to even the most ordinary occurrences."[13]

Titanic author Walter Lord noted that through the years *Titanic* "cast a spell on all who built and sailed in her. So much so that, as the years go by, she grows even more fabulous."[14] No doubt the spell continues to be cast over anyone who learns of her story--and why not, it's rich with romanticism. Case in point--two years after *Titanic* foundered, the 15,000 tone *Empress of Ireland,* out of Quebec, collided with the Norwegian freighter *Storstand.* Within fifteen minutes she took more than 1000 passengers to their deaths.[15] Little note was made of it in the news--was it because the *Empress* was not the floating palace that *Titanic* was? and her passengers nothing more than common folk? A sad testament--but it may well be the truth.

Titanic was vast, majestic, magnificent, luxurious and now is legendary beyond belief. She, like *Olympic* was a floating microcosm of Edwardian snobbery. As John Malcolm Brinnin stated so well, "another season on the Riviera . . . was over: London was catching its breath between the court season and a sunnier one calling for wardrobes

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[13]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 61.

[14]Walter Lord, A Night to Remember (Mattituck, NY: Amereon House, 1987), p. 169.

[15]Brinnin, Sway, p. 398.

appropriate to Ascot, Henley, Goodwood, and Cowes. Americans who'd made their annual pilgrimages to the gaming rooms of 'Monte,' the drawing rooms of Mayfair, and the Parisian shrines of Worth, Patous, and Carier were on their way back."[16]

The Olympic-Class vessels embodied every technical and technological advance then known. They were superbly built with no expense spared, and preserved for passengers and crew the rigid social class distinctions which reached their extremes in Britain just before the first World War.[17] *Titanic* struck more than a berg on that night, it struck a body blow to the fundamental beliefs of an entire generation and promoted not only a painful reassessment of man's delicate relationship with nature, but on the very meaning of progress itself."[18] As a result, *Titanic* became a "modern morality play. Man had reached too far, gotten to arrogant and had (inevitably, of course) been brought low. Therein lies its seemingly unending fascination."[19] After seventy-five years *Titanic* still possesses allure. No doubt, she always will.[20]

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[16]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 57.

[17]Patrick Stephens, Ltd. Olympic & Titanic - Ocean Liners of the Past (Letchworth, Hertfordshire, England: Adlard, 1988), p. i.

[18]Bonsall, p. 4.

[19]Bonsall, p. 5.

[20]In 1985, *Titanic* was rediscovered by Dr. Robert Ballard and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Team in a joint project with Jean-Louis Michel of the *Institut Francais de Recherches pour l'Exploitation des Mers.* Said discovery led to a controversy over salvage applications in international waters with the Americans opting to treat the vessel as a sacrosanct memorial. The French felt otherwise and in July of 1987 their expedition raised more than three-hundred artifacts from the wreck. (George E. Bass, Ships and Shipwrecks of the Americas - A History Based on Underwater Archaeology, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), pp. 253-254.)

CHAPTER 6

HISTORY OF R.M.S. BRITANNIC

R.M.S. Britannic (Figs. 1 & 20) was the youngest of the three Olympic-Class sister ships, collectively known as the Big Three, and constructed by Harland and Wolff for the White Star Line. In fact, *Britannic* was in the massive Arrol gantry (Fig. 21) at the very time that the *Titanic* foundered.

Initially *Britannic* was named *Gigantic.* However, as this was considered to be distastefully flamboyant, and flying in the face of chance, after *Titanic*--which was the most "gigantic" maritime disaster in history--White Star opted to rename her "*Britannic.*" The first of this name having been a 5,000-ton steamer with sails, built in 1874, had an honorable history and one with a patriotic ring to it, even if it was owned by an American company.[1] The Olympic-Class *Britannic* would ultimately be the second of three by the same name.

Britannic began as Harland and Wolff passenger ship #433. Her keel having been laid in November of 1911, she was not launched until 26 February 1914, and delivered only on 8 December 1915. She was the largest of the tree sisters with a G.R.T of 48,158, and measured over 903 feet in length and 94 feet in breadth. In basic design she followed that of the two previous Olympic-Class vessels in that she was also a

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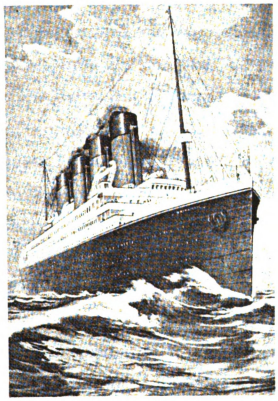
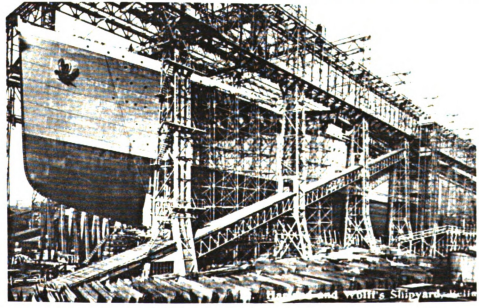
[1]Bonsall, p. 52.

Fig. 20 *R.M.S. Britannic*

Fig. 21 *Britannic*, in the Arrol gantry.





triple-screw, four-funnel ship.

Originally intended to join the *Olympic* and the *Titanic* in weekly express runs between Southampton, Cherbourg and New York, *Britannic* never entered White Star service. While still at Queen's Island, in October of 1915, she was requisitioned by the British Admiralty, and in May of 1916 her conversion over into a hospital ship for the duration of World War I was completed.[2]

In December of 1915 *Britannic* was painted white, with a five-foot green band around the hull, interspersed with red crosses indicated that she was a hospital ship (Fig. 1). Fitted out to accommodate wartime injured passengers it seemed appropriate that the wounded be carried high--near the lifeboats--in the event of an emergency. The A-deck public rooms were converted into wards, as were the children's play-room, gymnasium and the restaurant. The upper-deck had a fully enclosed promenade and so was hung with hammocks for the ease of the walking wounded. The B-deck and those below were left in their original condition and thus provided rather luxurious accommodations for the medical and nursing staffs.[3] The plan for another Edwardian floating palace was subverted by events and it would never embody what her older sisters had.

For nearly a year Capt. Charles Barlett sailed *Britannic* between Southampton and ports in the Mediterranean, making five voyages while

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[2]Moss, p. 177.

[3]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 30.

carrying wounded soldiers.[4] Then in mid-November 1916, enroute from Salonika to Mudros, in the Kea Channel, in a calm Aegean Sea, she hit a mine, or was torpedoed by a German U-Boat at 8:00 a.m. in the morning. It is assumed from her apparent damage that the mine or torpedo struck in her reserve coal locker and ignited the coal dust.[5]

Previous reports suggest that after experiencing an explosion under the main staircase, *Britannic* listed over to starboard, and then went down within one hour's time, passing from the British registry "like a lady," as reflected by stewardess Violet Jessop. It is interesting to note here that Miss Jessop (Fig. 22) was not only a member of the crew aboard *Britannic*, but was on *Olympic* when she was struck by the *Hawke* in 1911, and was likewise assigned to the *Titanic* when she went down in 1912. While the Olympic-Class vessels were not possessed of luck, Miss Jessop's person evidently was.[6]

Fortunately *Britannic* was without a full complement of passengers, for she was on her way to pick up wounded. So it was that she carried only crew members and hospital staff which numbered about 1,000. While loss of life is never negligible, in this case it was

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[4]Anderson, p. 124.

[5]French diver and explorer, Jacques Cousteau, and the crew of the *Calypso* made a successful dive on *Britannic* in 1976. According to their findings she rested 620 feet below the surface. Apparently the explosion damage occurred in roughly the same place as that sustained by the *Titanic* four and half years earlier. Needless to say, White Star's Olympic-Class vessels were not blessed with luck. (Bonsall, p. 54)

[6]Moss, p. 46.

Fig. 22 Violet Jessop, *Olympic, Titanic* and *Britannic* stewardess.

gratefully, less than 30 individuals with wounded numbering 45.[7] Regrettably, most of those lost where aboard a lifeboat which was sucked into the sinking still rotating propulsion system.[8]

After the war, when *Britannic's* fittings were auctioned off. Reports list, among other things, 120,000 square feet of wood paneling (70,000 feet of mahogany and 50,000 feet of oak) as part of the sale goods.[9] The pre-war furniture designed especially for *Britannic* was never installed, but sold at the auction in 1919. As someone so crassly put it, *Britannic* "had no image," consequently the sale of her fittings had no particular appeal.[10]

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[7]Bonsall, p. 54.

[8]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 132.

[9]Bonsall, p. 54.

[10]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 344.

PART III

OLYMPIC-CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS

CHAPTER 7

OLYMPIC AND TITANIC ACCOMMODATIONS

First-Class Accommodation

At some time between 1909 and 1910 Harland and Wolff secured access to the skilled interior decorating firm of Aldam Heaton, who would fit out *Olympic* and *Titanic.* This firm was taken over by the Ocean Transport Company and would, subsequently, handle the interior designing of the *Britannic* and many other ships.[1]

Eclecticism was the prevailing taste in interior designs during the Edwardian era, as it had been during the reign of Victoria, and the Olympic-Class vessels were definite reflections of this penchant for a mixture of many styles. On the whole land-based Edwardian architecture and interior designs were generally continuations of those established during the Victorian age. However, Edwardian eclecticism was more refined and gracious than Victorian, and is remembered for its opulence, splendor and conspicuous display of wealth. Even so it was a style calculated to insure warmth, comfort and an echo of traditions not associated with sea travel. To approach one of these ships was to come upon an immense wall of steel and even when on one of the decks one was in an environment of stark practicality--which would eventually

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[1]Moss, p. 144.

invade domestic designs of the 1920s and 30s--but at the beginning of the new century the new world that was embodied on the outside had to be assuaged or countered by the old on the inside.

Edwardian rooms generally came to be characterized by a lightening of the load, so to speak. There was a marked thinning of the knick-knacks and an absence of the over-crowding effect. Colors became clearer and lighter in shade, and white and creamy colors became highly favored.

The demise of clutter sprang, in part, from the Arts and Crafts Movement as well as a growing trend towards the use of the electric light over the former use of candles and "gaseliers." Due to the bright glare of electric lighting the formerly quaint clutter appeared dusty with the result that the tawdriness of objects lessened their appeal.[2]

The Arts and Crafts influence in rooms was seen in the clear spaciousness that flowed throughout a house--one room opening into another through wide arched apertures rather than doors. Floors were often polished planks covered with a few rugs.[3] There seems to have been a marked emphasis on entrance halls in this period. It was desirable that such halls be spacious, with complimentary seating and tables, and always a fireplace--a symbolic welcome for guests.[4]

The accommodation for first-class passengers aboard Olympic-Class vessels was very much a continuation of the elements found in the

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[2]Lasdun, p. 143.

[3]Service, pp. 52-53.

[4]Service, p. 50.

upper-class Edwardian home. This concept was to be a very popular one and would ultimately be continued for many years in the ship-building endeavors of many ocean liner companies. In the case of *Olympic* and *Titanic* first-class accommodation was placed amidships and extended over five decks which included the promenade (A), bridge (B), shelter (C), saloon (D), and upper (E) decks. Access from one deck to another was obtained by means of the two grand staircases, and several other small stairways, as well as by three electric lifts (elevators) adjacent to the forward staircase. Said lifts traveled from the upper deck to the promenade deck.

The first-class public rooms, while having to accommodate the fewest of passengers, was yet the most spacious. Said rooms included the dining saloon, reception room, *a la carte* restaurant, Cafe Parisien, lounge, reading and writing rooms, smoking room and the two verandah cafes and palm courts. Other novel features were the Turkish and electric baths, the swimming bath, the squash racket court, and the gymnasium.

There were many magnificent suites of rooms, and cabins of size and style sufficiently diverse to suit the likes of any passenger. There was also a large barber shop, a dark room for photographers, a clothes-pressing room, a special dining room for maids and valets, a lending library, a fifty-telephone system, a Marconi wireless telegraphy installation, a post office, a hospital with operating room, a children's play room and a miniature golf course on the Boat Deck.[5] Indeed

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[5]Geoffrey Marcus, The Maiden Voyage (New York: Viking Press, 1969), p. 24.

everything was done, with regard to the furniture and fittings, to make the first-class accommodation on board *Olympic* and *Titanic* more than equal to that provided in the finest hotels on shore.[6]

The Grand Entrances and Staircases:

The forward main stairs, known as the grand staircase (Fig. 23), was situated between the first and second funnels and extended from the middle to the boat deck, with large entrance halls at various levels. The style was early English, of the time of William and Mary--more or less.

This style was characterized by a greater comfort. French, Portuguese, and Flemish designs were a great influence. The use of walnut--in solids, veneers, marquetry, and lacquerwork was dominant in the William and Mary period. Typical furniture pieces were wing-back chairs, daybeds, round tables and highboys as well as bookcases, gaming tables, and tall case clocks. Popular motifs were trumpet-, spiral-, and bell-turned legs, the Spanish foot and Flemish scroll work. Stump embroidery and needlework were often used for upholstery as was velvet, brocade, crewel, and chintz. Oriental and delft pottery were favored.

The promenade (A-deck) rooms were less remarkable for their size than for the entrances to them. These vestibules were of grandiose pretensions. There was a lavish provision of space which, as has been previously explained, was a novelty aboard ocean-going vessels.[7]

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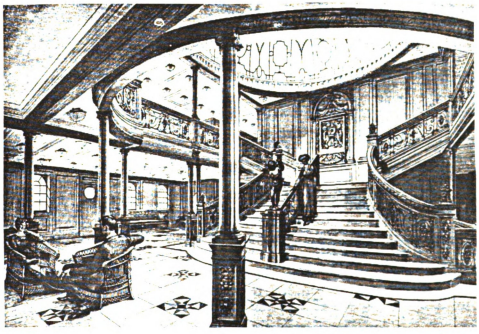
[6]Stephens, pp. 68-69.

[7]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 50.

Fig. 23 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class grand entrance and staircase on promenade deck.



Said entrance halls had low, beamed ceilings--hung with multiple crystal lamps (Fig. 24)--wood paneling lined the walls and linoleum of various patterns covered the floors--though large rugs, of rather oriental quality graced the floors of several of the upper levels (Fig. 25).

There were numerous free-standing columns--the upper portions being smooth, and plain pillars, but set upon four-sided pedestal bases, carved from white, quarter-cut English oak. All four sides displayed different patterns of fruits, nuts, berries and garlands (Fig. 26).[8] Narrow paneled, oak double doors, with arched molding and highly polished brass hardware led off to first-class staterooms (Fig. 27).[9]

Seating was limited, and varied, from English wicker chairs on the promenade level--which gave a casual sense of comfort--to rich and elaborate seating of upholstered sofas and wing-back chairs, with French elements, on the upper levels. These upper levels with lower ceilings and carpeted floors made those spaces warmer and traditional formal furniture seemed more appropriate. However, even though the two styles were a combination of designs and seemed a bit out of place together, the division of the levels seems to have allowed the two to coexist together fairly harmoniously. The open and airy feel on the lower level, with the stained glass dome two stories above gave a porch-like feel. Then to, the presence of wicker on board was rather an

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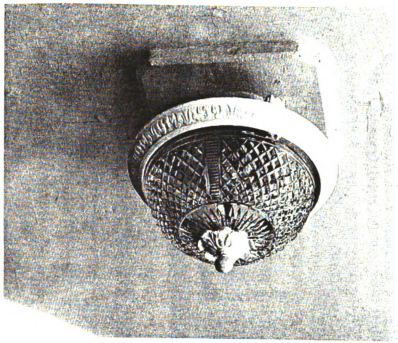
[8]Ken Marschall, "Olympic Revisited." Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 1989-90, p. 45.

[9]Marschall, Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1989-90, p. 54.

Fig. 24 *Olympic*, first-class entrance crystal lamp.

Fig. 25 *Olympic*, first class upper-level entrance hall floor coverings.



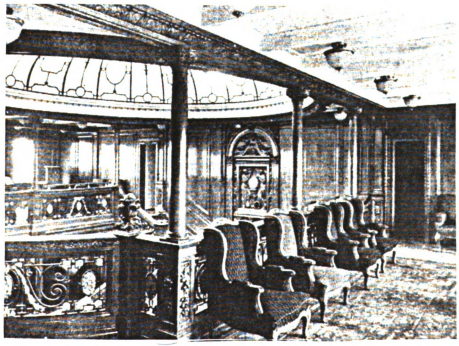
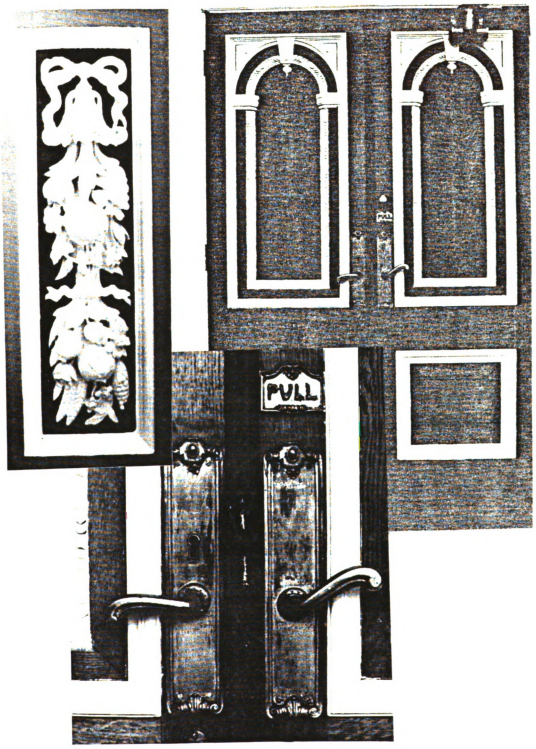


Fig. 26 *Olympic*, first-class staircase pillar base carvings.

Fig. 27 *Olympic*, first-class oak doors and brass hardware.



essential element of shipboard furnishings. Fanciful wickerwork, usually in settings enclosed by treillage, helped create the illusion for the passenger that "the view of the sea through elegantly arched windows showed a lily pond and not the tempestuous Atlantic."[10]

The fan-shaped staircases (Figs. 23 & 28) were over sixty feet in height and, the heavy wooden treads ascending and descending through four levels, were sixteen feet in width.[11] They were impressive and--typical of the Edwardian period--eclectic. But instead of the heavily carved balustrade usually found in that period, wrought iron scroll work had been adopted, somewhat after the French style of Louis XIV.[12]

The iron work was relieved by occasional touches of bronze in the form of flowers and foliage. The walls were covered with oak panelling, simple and dignified in character, but enriched, here and there, by exquisite carving and molding reminiscent of the days when Grinling Gibbons collaborated with his great contemporary, Christopher Wren.[13] From the landing the grand staircases were divided down the middle with a bannister which terminated in a decorated newel post of the same calibre as the free-standing columns previously mentioned. Atop the newel post was poised a sculptured bronze putti with arm up-raised and carrying aloft a flame-shaped lantern. In later years *Olympic's* newel posts would boast elaborate candelabra.

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[10]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 52.

[11]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 50.

[12]Stephens, p. 69.

[13]Stephens, p. 69.

Fig. 28 *Olympic*, first-class grand staircase.

The staircases were lighted by a large dome skylight of iron and glass, beneath which, on the uppermost landing, a large carved panel gave a tone of richness to the otherwise plain and massive construction of the wall. The panel of the grand staircase contained a bronze clock, on either side of which was a female figure, the whole symbolizing "Honor and Glory crowning Time."[14]

The stairs toward the aft of the ship were located between the last two funnels. They were slightly smaller, and somewhat plainer, but still very handsome, however, they only extended from the promenade to the shelter decks.

The Lifts/Elevators:

The three lifts (Fig. 29), were placed just forward of the grand staircase and were entered from the forward end. The entrance halls on each deck were extended in this direction to provide ample space for the many passengers entering and leaving and the lifts eclectically harmonized in design with their surroundings.[15]

The three lift entrances were designed in an elegant classical tradition. They were framed with heavily carved molding, being flanked with fluted pilasters, and possessed arched doorways with simple keystones. The two outer lifts were each topped with a peaked pediment while the center was given a curved bonnet. All of the entrances, with their classical elegance and wrought iron gates, suggest that

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[14]Marcus, p. 24.

[15]Stephens, p. 69.

Fig. 29 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class lifts.

something far more traditional than mechanical lifts were to be found behind such masks.

The individual cages were about 5.5 feet by 6 feet by 7 feet high, and were paneled in dark mahogany of a Georgian style. The Georgian style encompassed the reigns of George II and III--about the time of the American Revolutionary War.

Thomas Chippendale was a craftsman of this time period and had published a work entitled Gentleman and Cabinetmaker's Director. Chippendale's designs used elements which incorporated Chinese, French, Gothic and classic ornament with earlier Queen Anne and Georgian forms. This was the age of mahogany and the ascension of American cabinet-makers, who created regional styles in major cities. There were a multitude of chair designs. Typical furnishings of the time were book-cases, desks, chair-back sofas, commodes, secretary-bookcases, chest-on-chests, and candlestands. Motifs ranged from cabriole to straight legs; bracket, ball-and-claw, animal paw, and square feet. Broken pediments, fretwork, Gothic tracery and arches, ribbons, and Oriental bamboo were favored. This was also the time when England developed its porcelain and textile industries. There was also a coordination of silver work and furniture designs.

The lift service on board Olympic-Class vessels was provided by Messrs. R. Waygood & Co., of London, and was considered an innovative and convenient advancement of those in any previous vessel. The three first-class passenger elevators were arranged side by side in one trunkway. Each elevator could raise a load of 15 cwt. between the upper and promenade decks, to a height of 37.5 ft. and at a speed of

100 feet per minute. Each cage had a glass roof and ventilator, and was furnished with a portable upholstered seat and an electric lamp. The entrance was fitted with a collapsible gate--a brass grillwork of ornate design--which had to be closed and electrically locked before the lift could be operated. The winding gear was fitted directly overhead--out of sight--and was driven by a special slow-speed motor to ensure that it would be quiet in operation.[16] Like so many things on board Olympic-Class vessels, this provided a convenience while pretending it was not what it was.

These were just three of seven lifts on board the *Olympic* and *Titanic*. One other was for the use of second-class passengers while the remaining three were service elevators.

The Dining Saloon Reception Room:

The reception room (Figs. 30 & 31) adjoined the forward end of the dining saloon on the saloon deck (D-deck). Said reception area had a length of 54 feet and extended the full width of the ship. The style adopted for the saloon was Jacobean English (to be discussed shortly) but the reception furniture was decidedly different being of woven cane--a rather odd combination with the Jacobean room, but in keeping with the Edwardian penchant for eclecticism.

The white paneling had dignity and simplicity and was beautifully proportioned with delicate carvings in low relief. It was, no doubt, a fitting background to the brilliant scene created when the elegantly

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[16]Stephens, p. 107.

Fig. 30 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class reception room and dining saloon plan.

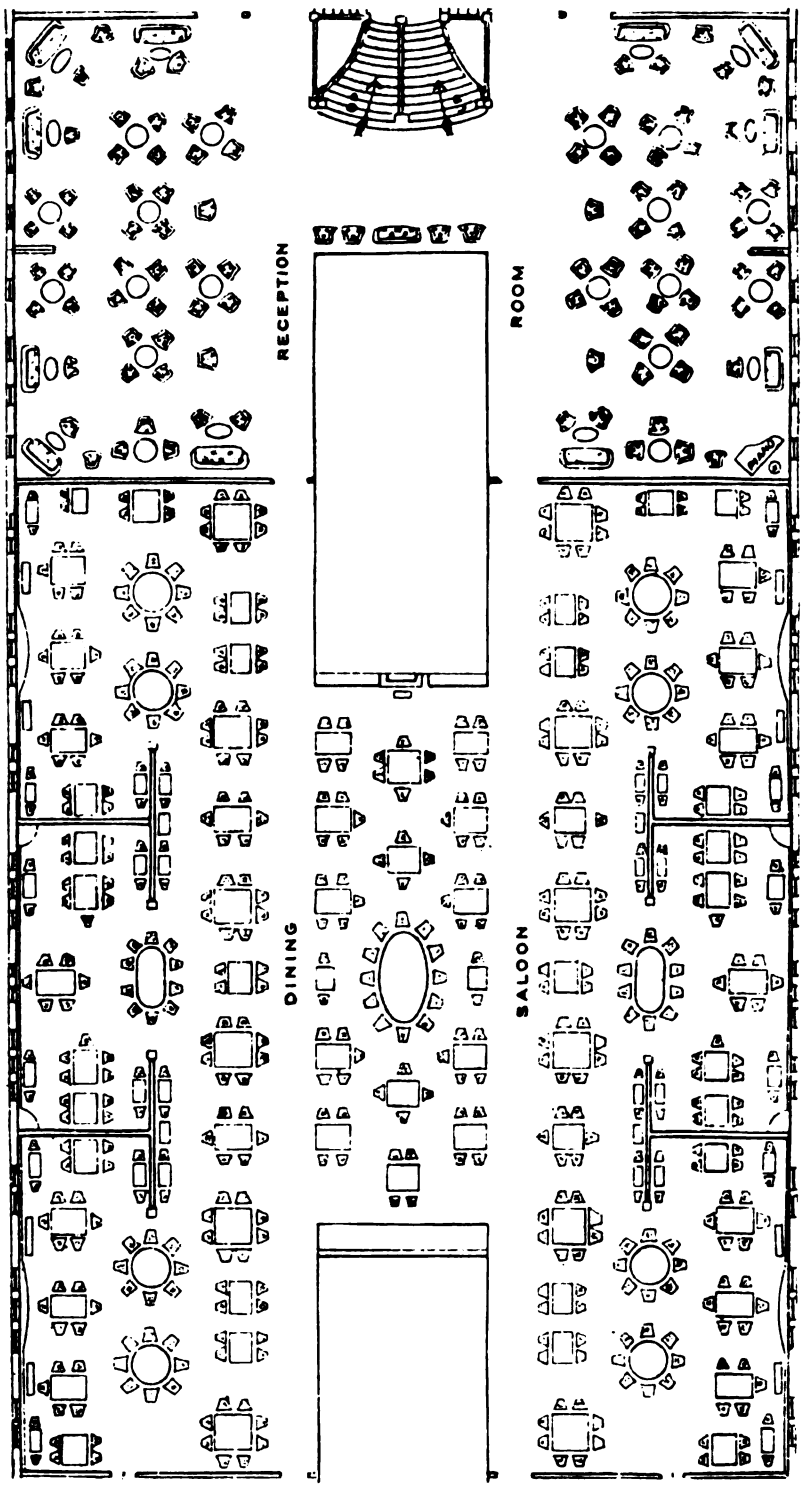

Fig. 31 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class reception room.

attired first-class passengers gathered before dining.

The main staircase rose directly from this apartment, which was reputed to have increased the palatial effect produced. Facing the staircase was a large and very beautiful panel of French tapestry (Fig. 31) adapted from one of a series entitled *Chasse de Guise* at the *Nationale Garde Meuble.* This tapestry had been specially woven on the looms at Aubusson.[17]

The floor was covered with a dark, richly colored Axminster carpet. Here and there could also be found large area rugs of complimentary patterns and colors.

The cane furniture mentioned earlier (Fig. 32), included capacious and comfortable Chesterfields, and grandfather chairs with upholstered cushions in a floral pattern of wool damask. Light cane tables were also distributed at intervals, and there was further a grand piano to be found in a far corner.[18] The popularity of cane furnishings was due to the British Raj in India and other East Indian colonies. Cane was an exotic touch, and to have it on an ocean going vessel implied the reach of the empire achieved by sea power which the mere existence of these vessels most assuredly confirmed. They were English dominated floating colonies, even if American owned.

The reception room, which was open until 11:00 p.m., was a most popular gathering place for evening coffee and dancing to such tunes as "Turn Off the Lights Mr. Moon Man." As a consequence, in a

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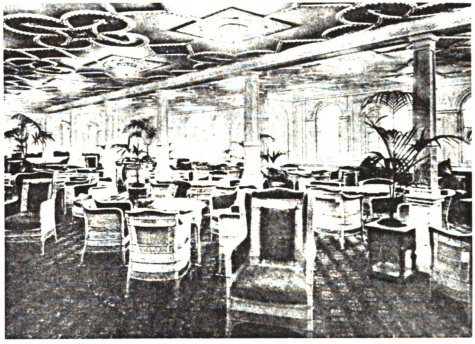
[17]Stephens, p. 71.

[18]Stephens, p. 71.

Fig. 32 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class reception room cane furniture.



communique to White Star, J. Bruce Ismay, who was aboard *Olympic* during her maiden voyage, made a note that fifty additional cane chairs and ten more tables should be added to this room in both *Olympic* and *Titanic*.[19]

The Dining Saloon:

On board British passenger vessels a uniformed cabin boy, with trumpet in hand, would announce dinner with all the fanfare and finesse of a cavalry charge. In answer to which, elegantly dressed first-class passengers would respond by trooping down to the white-jacketed service of the dining saloon.

Ladies, with Gibson Girl hairdos, dressed in hobble skirts or tea gowns which covered them in a froth of lace, and the palest of mauve silks, with satin roses adorning tightly cinched waist. Some favored feathered boas, ropes of pearls, jewel headbands with plumes and over the elbow evening gloves. Hats were necessary attire even when walking from one's stateroom to the saloon, and were usually large-brimmed, with veils and airy feather plumes.

Gentlemen frequently wore pinstriped trousers, frock coats, buttonhole flowers and often carried walking sticks on deck, but not usually when dining. Silk top hats, bowlers and homburgs were frequently seen, but this depended upon the event. Most of the aforementioned formal attire was adhered to even during informal occasions aboard ship but for the dinner hour black patent leather shoes, with grosgrain bows on the toes were part of the formal look for gentlemen.

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[19]Oldham, pp. 172-73.

The first-class dining saloon (Figs. 30 & 33) of the Olympic-Class vessels provided seating for 394 people. The saloon was situated upon the saloon deck (D-deck), amidship, and was an immense room, being the largest then afloat--measuring 114 feet long and extending the full 92 feet width of the ship.[20] The saloon was arranged on the popular restaurant principle with small table groupings. Along the sides of the room tables, which could accommodate from two to twelve guests, were situated in recessed bays, which formed, in effect a number of separate private dining rooms, where family or friends could dine together practically alone, out of high traffic areas and away from the busy hum of surrounding conversation.[21] For the first time in Atlantic crossing history, passengers could dine *à deux* if they so desired.[22]

The style adopted for the saloon was Jacobean English of the early seventeenth-century. The Jacobean period spanned the reigns of James I, Charles I, and Cromwellian Protectorate. Furniture was heavily constructed and massive, mostly of oak, and designed for strength rather than comfort. Typical Jacobean pieces were cupboards, chests, desk-boxes, settles, stools, benches; Brewster, wainscot and Carver chairs. Motifs favored were linenfold paneling, strapwork carving, turned or bulbous legs and supports, and bun feet. Wooden, pewter, and heavy earthenware tableware was in use.

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[20]Anderson, p. 107.

[21]Stephens, p. 71.

[22]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 51.

Fig. 33 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class dining saloon.

The details for the shipboard dining saloon were inspired by those found in the splendid decorations at Hatfield, Haddon Hall, and other great English houses of that period. However, instead of the heavy and somber oak, which the sixteenth and seventeenth century builders would have adopted, the paneled walls and ceiling were painted white. The ceiling in particular was richly molded in a manner characteristic of the plasterer's art of Jacobean times. The superb effect achieved could, no doubt, only be properly appreciated by one's presence on the ship when dinner was in progress. The floor in *Olympic* was similarly lavishly covered but with linoleum tiles of a unique pattern. However, in *Titanic* the floor was warmed with broadloom carpet.[23]

The sidelight/windows in the shell of the vessel were in groups of six and four lights alternately, each light being of large diameter. In front of these lights, inside the saloon, were large, leaded glass windows (Fig. 34) having been arranged to give the effect of bay windows in a large mansion.[24]

The furniture was of heavy oak--chairs were luxurious and handsomely upholstered in green leather--and designed to harmonize with the surroundings. (Gone were the old time swivel chairs which were customarily bolted to the deck.)[25] The overall intent was to avoid

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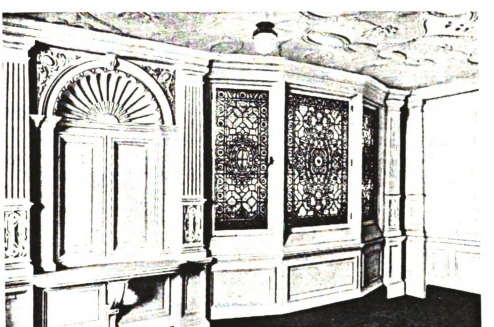
[23]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 58.

[24]Stephen, pp. 69-71.

[25]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 51.

Fig. 34 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class dining saloon bay window.



the austere disregard for comfort which evidently proved no hindrance to the enjoyment of a meal in Jacobean times. The sideboards were particularly handsome and in keeping with the general character of the room, as was the piano design.[26]

An important factor in connection with the dining of such a large number of passengers was the service. This was a point which had to be carefully borne in mind. At the after end of the saloon, were two large pantries so placed as to ensure the fine traditions of the White Star Line for quick and efficient service. The culinary department was a very important concern to both the company and travelers alike. On board the Olympic-Class vessels this department enjoyed the greatest of improvements over past endeavors. The difficulty in many ships was to find room for all the modern conveniences in the limited space allotted. No such disadvantages existed in *Olympic* and *Titanic* and the culinary departments in these ships were among the most complete.[27]

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[26]Stephens, p. 71.

[27]The first-class kitchens, serving rooms, pantries, bakeries, sculleries, etc., which were situated on the saloon deck between the first and second-class dining saloons, extended the width of the ship and for a length of nearly 160 feet. In the kitchen there were two huge ranges measuring 96 feet wide. These ranges contained 19 ovens and were the largest ever made. There were also four silver grills, two large roasters, steam ovens, steam stockpots, hot closets, *bain-maries*, and electrical triturating, slicing, potato-peeling, mincing, whisking, and freezing machines. A vegetable-preparing room, scullery, coal bunker, and larder, were provided with all the latest labor-saving appliances, and were conveniently located on the starboard side of the kitchen. The bakery was placed just aft of the kitchen on the port side. It contained an electrical dough-maker and other machines, besides "water-tube ovens" for turning out the very highest quality of Vienna table bread. The confectionery department, adjoined the bakery, and was fitted with every conceivable appliances for the modern practice of the "confectioner's art." A new arrangement had been made for the flues. These were all taken below the deck, the object being to minimize heat build up. (Stephens, p. 102)

The behind the scenes arrangements were elaborate and included pantries and service rooms situated in close proximity to the dining saloon which they serviced. Said arrangement was with a view to obtaining perfect service of hot and cold food. There was nothing so annoying as a semi-cold dinner or luncheon, or the long waits frequently experienced when dining in public places--this was definitely not the fast-food era.[28]

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[28]Kitchen fittings further included "*entree* presses, silver coffee apparatus, automatic egg-boilers, milk scalders, electric hot plates, and carving tables of the latest design, all carefully arranged to prevent crowding or confusion among the waiters." The cold pantries or stillrooms were also "arranged in the most suitable positions to make the service complete."

All of the cooking equipment had been supplied by Messrs. Henry Wilson & Co., Limited, of Liverpool, of whom it was said "no firm has had greater experience in this class of work." The service of plate, which comprised in all about 10,000 pieces, was supplied by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd., of London, a firm who had great experience with the supply of plate to large hotels. In the case of the *Olympic* and *Titanic* various novel features were introduced.

One of the largest pieces in the service was a massive duck press. There was also a "meat portable spirit lamp," with a quick-heating flame, for keeping sauces warm and for making Turkish coffee. Further novelties were the fruit tymbal and caviar dishes, in which the contents were kept cool "by an ice bath when taken from the cold storage and placed before the passenger."

On the waiting tables were electrically heated "*Rechaud* stands," also supplied by the Goldsmith Company. "One of the advantages of this . . . [was] that any degree of heat, when once obtained . . . [could] be retained by a very small consumption of electricity." Another point which should be mentioned was that all handles, covers, parts, and fittings were interchangeable, "an arrangement which greatly facilitates cleaning and general utility." The cutlery and dishes were supplied by Messrs. Elkington & Co., of Birmingham.

This all reaffirms and supports the position that the desire to insure Edwardian style and comfort was of paramount consideration. (Stephens, pp. 104-105)

The Restaurant:

In addition to the regular dining saloon there was a large and relatively modern *a la carte* restaurant (Figs. 35 & 36). The restaurant was situated on the bridge deck (B-deck), and was considered by many, who thought themselves competent judges, to be the most enticing apartment in both of the vessels.

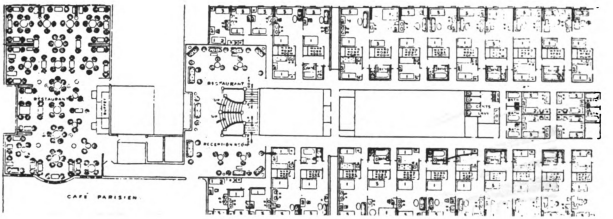
Both the restaurant and the Cafe Parisien (to be addressed following) were entered by way of a reception room (Fig. 37) which possessed subtle French elements. This reception room was forward of the dining area and was a tailored and elegant room from which another beautiful fan-shaped staircase rose.

As the name suggested, the cost was extra, but the restaurant was cozy and intimate and had its own galley. It was a novel feature in the North Atlantic for it was the first time that a passenger could dine alone if he preferred. (As it happened, on *Titanic*, Capt. Smith dined in the *a la carte* restaurant as a guest of the Wideners, the evening of the fateful collision.) The restaurant measured 50 feet long by 45 feet wide and the style of decoration was that of Louis XVI period.

During the rule of Louis XVI the buried ruins of the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were discovered. This discovery created an interest in ancient Greek and Roman art. A more simple, balanced style replaced the flowery rococo. Semicircular or elliptical arches were used in chair backs, mirrors, and panels of woodwork. There was a return to straight lines and symmetry. Slenderness of proportion was emphasized

Fig. 35 *Titanic*, first-class restaurant, reception room and Cafe Parisien plan.

Fig. 36 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class restaurant.



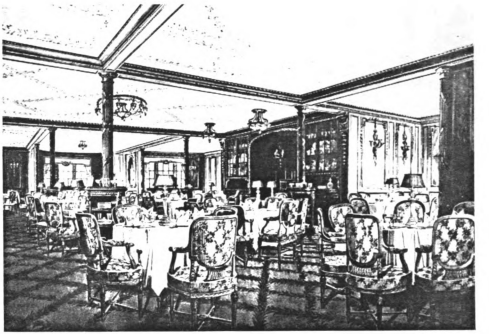
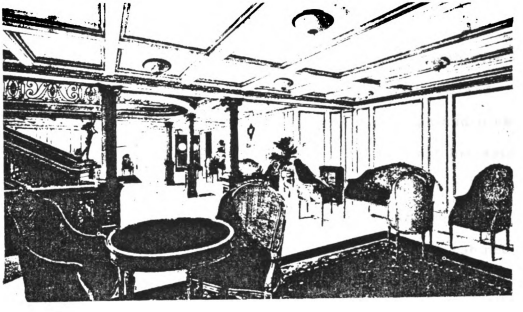


Fig. 37 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class restaurant reception room.



in furniture. Details included slender fluted legs, convex moldings, and rosette, leaf, and flower motifs in the carved frames which were often painted white and touched with gilt. Upholstery and hangings used varied fabrics. Colors were light in tone; ornamentation delicate and low relief embossed, or painted. The Revolution abolished the guilds, which had maintained high standards of craftsmanship, and weakened the practice, instituted under Louis XIV, of cooperation between artists and masters of the various crafts in producing fine furniture and decorative accessories.

Louis XVI influences in the first-class restaurant began with the panelling. It extended from floor to ceiling in beautifully marked French walnut of a delicate light fawn color with moldings and ornaments being richly carved and gilded. Large electric light brackets, finely cast in brass, and gilt, and holding candle lamps, were fixed in the center of the large wall panels. On the right of the entrance was a buffet with a marble top of *fleur de peche*, supported by a cabinet of panelling and plaster recalling the design of the wall panels.[29]

The room was further lit by, not only portholes, but large bay windows--as previously mentioned, large windows were a distinctive and novel feature which continued to create the impression of spaciousness found aboard Olympic-Class vessels. The restaurant windows were divided into squares by ornamental metal bars, and were draped with plain fawn silk curtains which had flowered borders and richly embroidered *pelmets*. Every small detail, including the fasteners and

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[29]Stephens, p. 72.

hinges, had been carried out with due regard to the purity of style. The ceiling (Fig. 38) was of plaster, in which delicately modelled flowers, in low relief, combined to form a simple design of trellising in the center and garlands in the bays. At various selected points clusters of lights ornamented with gilt cast metal and crystals could be found.[30]

The floor was covered with an elegant pile carpet of Axminster construction, and had a subtle design of the Louis XVI period. The color was a delicate *vieux rose*--the shade known at the time as *Rose du Barri*--and was in perfect harmony with the surroundings.[31]

Comfort was the overall consideration in the arrangement of the furniture. Small tables were provided to accommodate from two to eight persons, and crystal lamps with rose-colored shades illuminated each table. The chairs were made in a similar light French walnut as were the walls. The woodwork was carved and finished with a waxed surface. The upholstery covering was Aubusson tapestry in quiet tones, representing a treillage of roses.[32]

For convenience of service there were several dumb-waiters encircling the columns and forming part of the decorating scheme. A bandstand, partly recessed and raised on a platform, was provided at the aft-end of the room and on either side of the bandstand was a carved buffet. The lower portion of these buffets were used for cutlery

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[30]Stephens, p. 71.

[31]Stephens, p. 72.

[32]Stephens, p. 71.

Fig. 38 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class restaurant plaster ceiling molding.

and the upper portion for the silver service. These items completed the niceties and necessities of a well-appointed restaurant which could satisfy every Edwardian requirement.[33]

Passengers wishing to use the restaurant applied on board to the manager for the reservation of seats. If the passage was taken entirely without meals in the regular dining saloon, a monetary allowance was allowed. However, the reduction in fare could only be granted when passengers announced their intention to book without meals, and this matter had to be arranged at the time of purchasing their ticket, or no rebate or reduction could be made--after all White Star was trying to run a business despite every indication that cost was not in any way an issue. Making money was one thing--talking about it was quite another.

The Cafe Parisien:

On *Titanic*, the *a la carte* restaurant was enlarged and the Cafe Parisien (Figs. 35 & 39) added. This was a French sidewalk cafe, in

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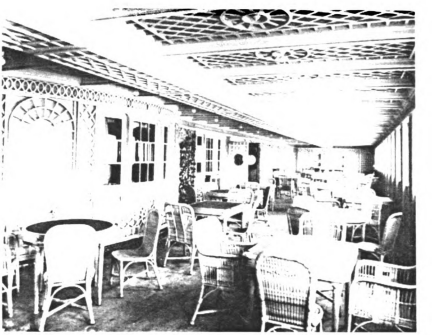
[33]A separate kitchen with its own pantry and scullery, was provided for the restaurant, and adjoined it on the bridge deck. Access to and from the lower dining saloon kitchen was obtained by means of a spiral staircase extending from the bridge deck, on B-deck, to the saloon deck, on D-deck. The restaurant kitchen, though not so large as the main saloon kitchen, was yet well equipped. (Special Note: There were also separate and convenient pantries attached to the smoking room, buffet areas, the lounge, and the parlor suites.)

Meals in the restaurant were served anytime between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. daily, at fixed charges, which was shown on the bill of fare issued daily. On board *Titanic* the restaurant was under the management of White Star, who appointed Mr. L. Gatti, who was late of Oddeninio's Imperial Restaurant, London, as manager. It strikes one as odd that this so notably ultra-French establishment should be placed in the charge of someone so evidently Italian. (Stephens, pp. 72, 77 and 104)

Fig. 39 *Titanic*, first-class Cafe Parisien.



every sense of the word, complete with French waiters, and evidently a gay and popular gathering place--while the voyage lasted.[34] Walls and ceiling were covered with slated trellising covered with climbing ivy. The floor was of wood decking upon which stood both round and square luncheon tables and woven willow chairs--with and without arms. However, *Titanic's* Cafe Parisien was considered to have little of the panache that *Olympic's* verandah cafes/palm courts.[35]

The Lounge:

The first-class lounge (Figs. 40, 41 & 42) was situated on the promenade deck (A-deck), and was decorated in a very noble Edwardian-type of Louis XV style--many details being taken from the Palace of Versailles. The rococo style of Louis XV's time had a feminine feeling compared with the masculine baroque of Louis XIV's reign.

The rococo details were natural flowers, festoons, baskets and ribbon-and-lace effects. There was barely a plain surface to be found. The Louis XV style was further characterized by free curves and the use of rococo ornament and *chinoiserie*. Rooms were smaller, specialized and arranged for convenient use. Colors were delicate. Tinted wood, veneer, lacquer panels, marquetry, mounts by Caffieri and Pierre Gouthiere, and porcelain plaques of Sevres Ware distinguish the designs. The style in its later phase was more restrained and presaged the strong reaction of the Louis XVI period, during which simplicity

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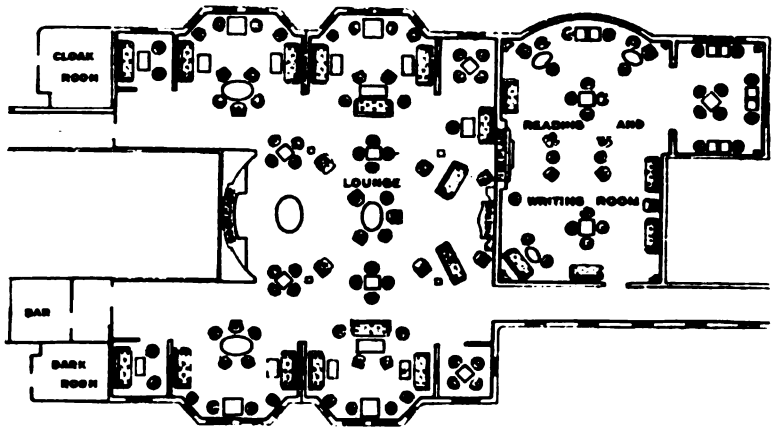
[34]Bonsall, p. 26.

[35]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 58.

Fig. 40 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class lounge, reading and writing room, and darkroom plan.

Fig. 41 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class lounge plan.



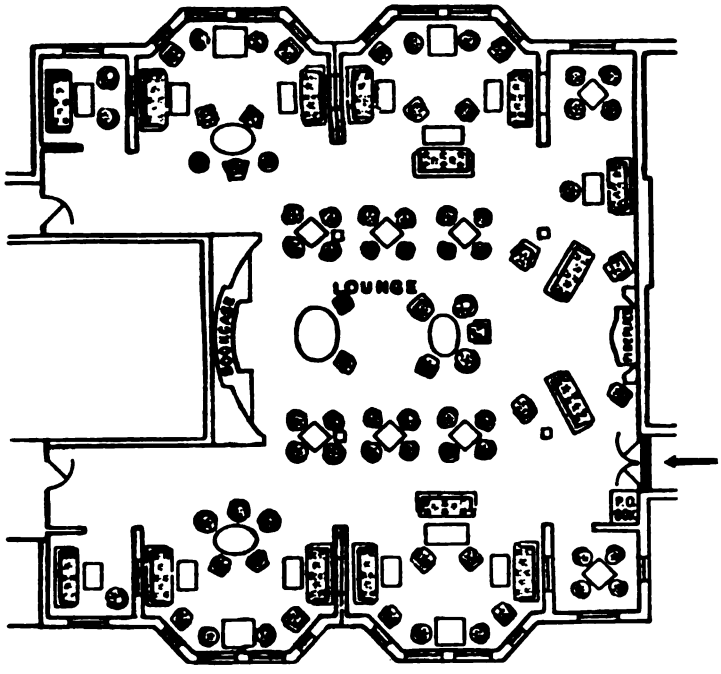


Fig. 42 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class lounge.

replaced excess and the Classic Revival influenced decorative motifs and brought a return of straight lines and symmetry.

On the first two Olympic-Class vessels the elegantly furnished lounges were upholstered as heavily as opera house boxes.[36] Each was 59 feet long, had a breadth of 63 feet and a height of more than 12 feet. The walls were covered with finely carved *boiseries* (wood panelling) in which, "without interfering with the symmetry of the whole picture, the fancy of the carver had shown itself in every detail."[37] This was especially true over the forward double-door entrance where there was an arched oak panel (Figs. 43, 44) depicting a musical motif in the center of a foliage framing device. Groupings scattered throughout both *Olympic* and *Titanic* lounges were composed of different combinations of antique instruments included "tambourines, shawms, flageolets and sistrums--all bound up with ribbons." Flanking this motif was s simple form of diapering and rosettes.[38] One can see a similarity in the design of the fabric used for the chairs and the design of the carvings on the walls and posts. It was intended that every detail should add to the total effect.

At the forward end of the lounge was a large fireplace, and at the aft, a bookcase from which books could be borrowed.[39] Books were of

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[36]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 3.

[37]Stephens, p. 77.

[38]Eric Sauder and Ken Marschall, "The Halifax Wood: A Search for Its Origin." Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 4, Winter 1989-90, p. 6.

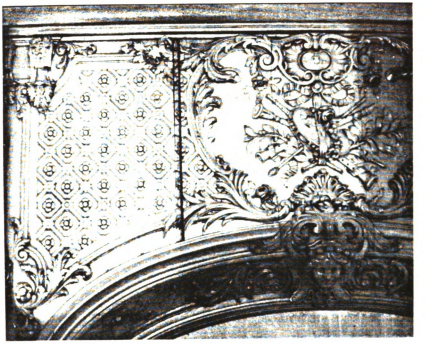
[39]The lounge, like the reception room, was intended for the use of both ladies and gentlemen. Here passengers could read, conversate, play cards, enjoy after dinner tea or coffee, as well as other social intercourse.

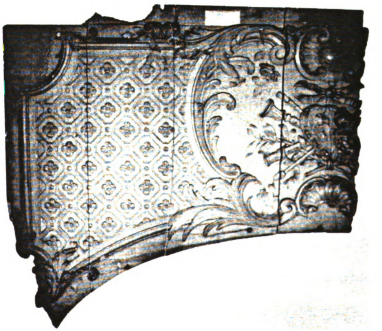
Fig. 43

Fig. 44

Fig. 43 *Olympic*, first-class lounge, arched oak panel carving of musical motif.

Fig. 44 *Titanic*, first-class lounge, arched oak panel carving of musical motif.





the light, shipboard reading caliber--Old Dominion, by Mary Johnston, Hopalong Cassidy, Stover at Yale, etc.[40] However, special arrangement was later made with the Times Book Club, and a supply of popular works was placed on aboard each voyage as a supplement to the permanent collection of standard works. Such reading material was obtained on application to the steward in charge.[41]

The Reading and Writing Room:

The reading and writing room (Figs. 40 & 45) was adjacent to the lounge and styled in the Georgian period of 1770-80. The room was 41 feet long, 41 feet wide and, like the lounge, had a 12 foot ceiling. The panelling was finished in white, as was the ceiling. These white walls, and the light and elegant furniture, made this essentially a ladies room.

Upon entering the room one was confronted with a great bow window from which an uninterrupted view of the horizon could be seen. On the left was a working fireplace. At the forward end of the reading and writing room was a large recessed area, slightly raised above the general level (Fig. 46). This interior variation produced a most pleasing, homey effect in the appearance of the overall room. It was a cozy nook in which a lady might retreat with a small volume of Dickenson poems or Barrett-Browning sonnets.[42]

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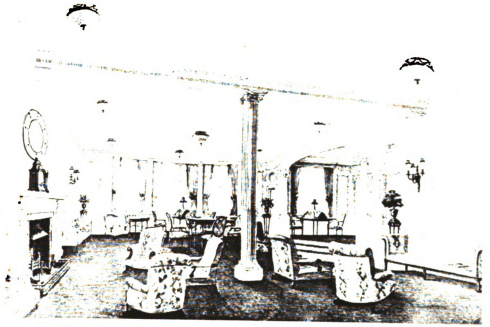
[40]Archibald Gracie, The Truth About the Titanic 2nd ed. (Riverside, CT: 7C's Press, 1973), p. 9.

[41]A post office box was also located in the lounge which was open all day but closed at 11:30 p.m. (Stephens, p. 77)

[42]Stephen, p. 77.

Fig. 45 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class reading and writing room.

Fig. 46 *Titanic*, first-class reading and writing room annex.



The Smoking Room:

The first-class smoking room (Figs. 47 & 48) was situated towards the aft-end of the promenade deck (A-deck), and was entered from the after main entrance. It was, without a doubt, the finest apartment of its kind then afloat. A great deal of effort and expense had been lavished upon it, unstintingly.

The smoking room was, as usual for some forty years, the domain of men only. Though it was classified as a public room, ladies were not permitted through its brass-studded leather doors, and there was no excuse for a breach of etiquette. Should some misdirected, or misguided female step through the portal of this masculine sanctuary, she was immediately deemed to be not a lady. Ladies were amply provided for in the reading and writing room (forward) and the two verandah and palm courts (aft). It would appear that Edward VII gave more than his name to his reign. Even after his death in 1910 one could still see the stifling perfection of male dominance which he perpetuated during his life.

After dinner relief from female chatter was eagerly sought by men, much as it was ashore. Apparently there was a gentlemen's agreement between the builder and choice clients who paid the bills, that a provision be made for this masculine haven.[43] Ladies were to absent themselves from the company of fathers, husbands and sweethearts after dinner so that the men could discuss "weighty gentlemanly topics" over

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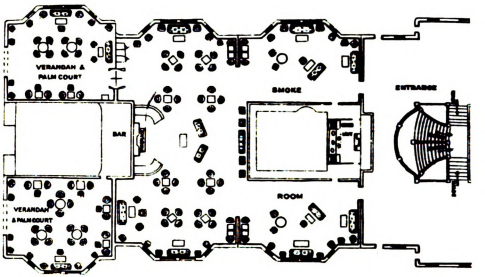
[43]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 51.

Fig. 47 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class smoking room, verandah cafes/palm courts plan.

Fig. 48 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class smoking room.



Havana cigars and snifters of Napoleon brandy. It was in the smoking room of *Titanic* that Col. Archibald Gracie recalled hearing Clarence Moore, of Washington, D.C., discuss his trip through the mountains of West Virginia with a reporter who obtained an interview with outlaw Capt. Anse Hatfield--artist Francis Millet made reference to his upcoming journey west--and Maj. Archibald Butt conversed ceaselessly on the topic of American polities.[44]

Communal rooms for both men and women were small in comparison to the smoking and reading rooms. Socialization between the sexes was discouraged between the hours of dining and retiring. Within a few years, however, *Olympic* would be hosting trousered, smoking and voting females in the hallowed sanctum of the previously all-male smoking room, much to the masculine chagrin, no doubt.[45]

The smoking room had a length of 65 feet, breadth of 63 feet and a height of more than 12 feet. The style was a free adaptation of early Georgian, of circa 1720, and was based upon the decorations pertaining to various old English houses of that period. In general smoking rooms took their decorative cues from men's clubs like "London's Boodle's or White's and their counterparts on New York's upper Fifth Avenue."[46] In any event the smoking room had the comfortable feeling of an English gentleman's club to it. The walls were panelled with a fine mahogany, but the characteristic carving of the Georgian style was

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[44]Gracie, p. 12.

[45]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, pp. 51 & 54.

[46]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 53.

largely replaced by inlaid work of mother-of-pearl. The ceiling was light colored with curved molding and was graced with relatively simple, clustered lighting fixtures but with highly decorative ceiling vent grates (Fig. 49). The floor was covered with broadloom carpeting in a geometric pattern.

Furnishings were stuffed chairs, upholstered in green leather, set in groupings of four to six about small pedestal game tables. Two long, curved, plush sofas flanked a large open fireplace. Said fireplace was situated at the after end of the room, over which hung a large painting, the work of Mr. Norman Wilkinson. On *Olympic*, this painting was New York Harbor--sometimes referred to as The Approach to the New World. On *Titanic*, the painting over the fireplace was similar, but entitled Plymouth Harbor.[47] These paintings were indicative of most all art on board Olympic-Class vessels. Subjects were of vessels at sea, with the works rendered by current day artists. They were pleasing compositions but nothing of exceptional noteworthiness.

Light entering the room was tempered and softened due to large "painted" windows of remarkable size and splendid color (Figs. 50, 51 & 52), upon which were depicted figures, landscapes, ancient ships and other subjects.[48] The figures depicted therein suggest an exotic shipping motif. The central rondels contained a sloop and a ship with lateen sails of a rather Middle Eastern type. Flanking these were windows reflecting female figures of the Art Nouveau/Pre-Raphaelite

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[47]Thomas Andrews was last seen standing alone, staring thoughtfully at this painting, just before *Titanic* took her final plunge. (Bonsall, p. 24.)

[48]Stephens, p. 77.

Fig. 49 *Olympic*, first-class smoking room ceiling grate.

Fig. 50 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class smoking room windows.

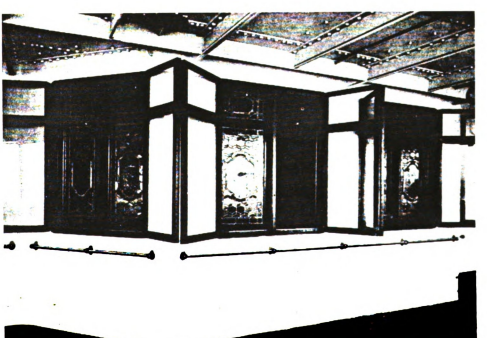
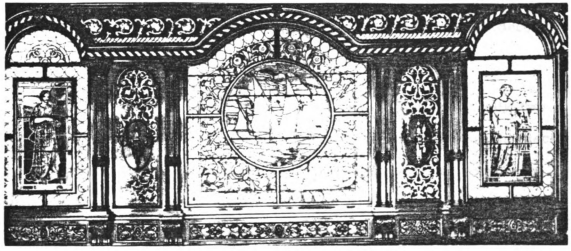
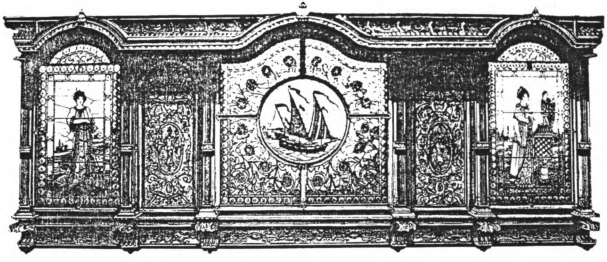


Fig. 51 *Olympic*, first-class smoking room windows.

Fig. 52 *Titanic*, first-class smoking room windows.





style. In one, a Pre-Raphaelite Burne-Jones-like lady in long robes stands in a landscape looking vaguely medieval or early Renaissance, while another lady is intended as Japanese. How typically predicable of this all male sanctuary--the smoking room was not a place for ladies to be found but their romantic presence was still evident in the decor.[49]

The Verandah Cafes/Palm Courts:

The verandah cafe/palm court (Figs. 47 & 53) was actually two rooms, with a double name, and was situated on each side of the deck house (A-deck) immediately aft of the first-class smoking room. An entrance from the smoking room, on the port side only, was gained by a revolving draught-proof door. These cafes were each 30 feet long by 25 feet wide. They were light, airy rooms, done in a style that made one recall the Mediterranean. The colors were bright and gay, the atmosphere was informal, and ladies were welcome here.[50] Being completely enclosed on all sides as they were, with the exception of the openings provided in the after end for access from the promenade area, the cafes were less susceptible to draughts and the effects of inclement weather as was the case with wide open-ended cafes found on other vessels. Large, arched windows helped to create the impression of

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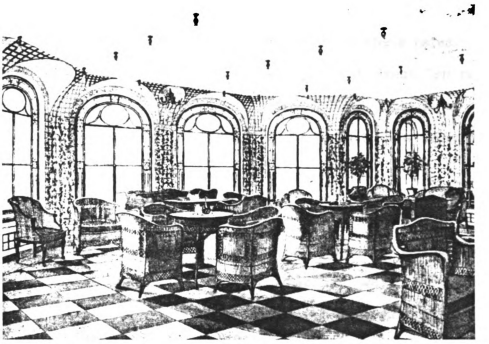
[49]Today many of *Olympic's* fittings can be found gracing the interiors of The Crown Paints factory of Haltwhistle, in Northumberland. Said fittings have been reassembled so as to create a near museum effort. (Marschall, Titanic Commutator, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1989-90, p. 38)

[50]Bonsall, p. 27.

Fig. 53 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class verandah cafe/palm court.



sitting in the open. The style of these dual rooms was formally called "treillage of Louis XVI period."[51] A rather perplexing description.

To created the illusion that the verandah cafes were on the shore, ivy and climbing plants were trained up the green trellis-work panels that lined the walls--rather like that found in the Cafe Parisien. The furnishings consisted of numerous little tables. There was also an assortment of cane/wicker settees, and armchairs of comfortable and elegant design (Fig. 54).

Coffee and light refreshments were served in these cafes. Col. Gracie noted that the band, as a rule, played in full dress "*en regle*."[52] The rooms were so small, one wonders where a band could have gathered. However, Col. Gracie did not indicate as to how many members comprised the band.

The Turkish Baths:

The Turkish bath "establishment" was situated on the middle F-deck, conveniently adjoining the main companion-way. The baths included the usual steam, hot, temperate, shampooing, and cooling rooms.[53] The cooling room (Fig. 55) was half again as large as the third-class galley and, in many respects, was one of the most interesting and striking rooms on the ship. It was appropriately decorated in the Arabian style of the seventeenth century. The portholes were

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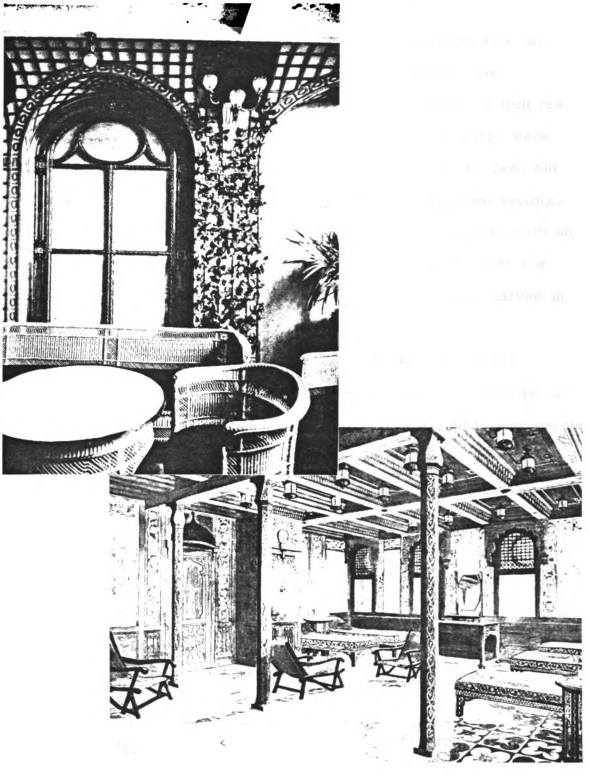
[51]Stephens, p. 81.

[52]Gracie, p. 11.

[53]There were also modern electric baths--a description of which will be discussed later.

Fig. 54 *Olympic*, first-class verandah cafe/palm court furnishings.

Fig. 55 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class Turkish bath cooling room.



concealed by an elaborately carved "Cairo curtain," through which the light fitfully revealed "something of the grandeur of the mysterious East."[54] The walls, from the teak dado to the cornice, were tiled in large panels of the blue and green which were surmounted and surrounded by a broad bank of tiles in a bolder and deeper hue.

The ceiling cornice and beams were gilt, with panels of dull red laid between the beams. From these panels bronze Arab lamps were suspended. A warm colored teak was used not only for the dado but for the doors, and panelling as well, and made for a pleasant setting. "The stanchions, also cased in teak . . . [were] carved all over with an intricate Moorish pattern, surmounted by a carved cap."[55] Over the doors were small gilt, semi-circular domes, with their soffits carved in low-relief geometrical patterns.

Low couches were placed around the walls with an "inlaid Damascus table" between each. Upon these tables coffee, cigarettes or books might be placed. On one side of the room was a handsome marble drinking fountain of "chromatic marble," set in a frame of tiles.[56] A teak dressing table and mirror, with all necessary accessories, and a locker for valuables was also provided, while placed around the room were a number of canvas lounge chairs.[57]

Among the uncommon facilities aboard the Olympic-Class vessels were the electric baths. The two electric baths were arranged adjacent

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[54]Stephens, p. 81.

[55]Stephens, p. 84.

[56]Brinnin, Sway, p. 365.

[57]Stephens, p. 84.

to the Turkish baths. These items were styled rather like an iron maiden whose spikes had been replaced by light bulbs. Whatever the benefits of this contraption were, was not advertised at great length.

Apparently the term "electric bath" was a euphemism and considered a more sufficiently delicate term than "sweatbox." As suggested earlier, the Edwardians, like the Victorians before them, had an affinity for semantics and exercised a refusal to call things by their proper names if there was even a suggestion of erotic significance. What many today call "prudery," Victorians and Edwardians called "propriety." One never spoke of a "woman," for such was always regarded as a "lady;" mention of "ankles" or "legs" was taboo, so one spoke of "limbs," even when referring to furniture. A "breast" was a "bosom," even on a roast chicken, and a "rump roast" was a "seat fixing." One never, ever "went to bed," but rather, one "retired to rest."[58]

The Turkish baths were presided over by Mrs. Maud Slocombe--perhaps the world's first seagoing masseuse. The electric baths, and a swimming bath were under the supervision of experience attendants. All baths, except the swimming bath, were available to the ladies from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and for gentlemen from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tickets were obtained at the Enquiry Office at a charge of about $1.00 each.

The Swimming Bath:

The swimming bath (Fig. 56) was situated on the starboard side of F-deck, immediately forward of the Turkish baths. The pool was 30 feet

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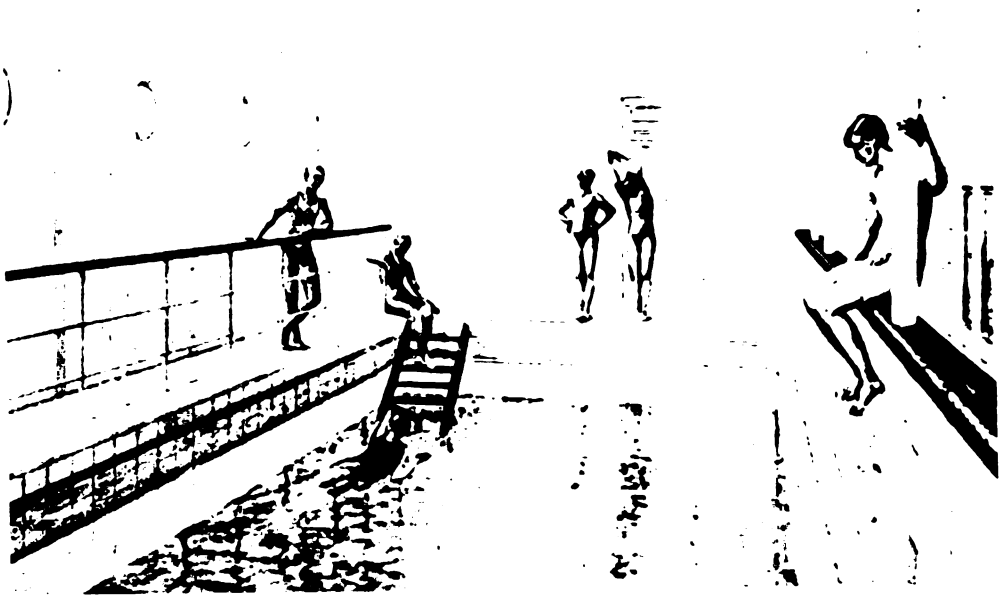
[58]Laver, p. 40.

Fig. 56 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class swimming bath.



long by 14 feet wide and six feet deep. Said pool was fitted out exactlyas would have been an up-to-date swimming bath on shore. Aboard ship, however, the pool was filled with salt water—and, according to Col. Gracie, "heated to a refreshing temperature."[59]

The Olympic was the first liner to have a swimming pool, which was in actuality called, in the vernacular of the day, a "plunge bath." This pool was located deep within the ship "tucked above the number five boiler casing" and was far from being "olympic-size." It was cramped, being only slightly smaller than the room which contained it. The pool was flanked by a ship's railing and a narrow walkway. On the port side were crowded a row of "changing cubicles." This pool facility lacked many of the rudimentary comforts that we expect today. There was room to swim a few strokes, and change one's clothes, and that was about it. On a vessel renown for the lavish provision of space, the pool area was noticeably devoid of it.[60] The reason for this was due more to contemporary attitudes about swimming and bathing in general rather than a shortage of space on F-deck.

Swimming was considered mainly a man's prerogative. It was not looked upon as a sport but rather as a character builder more than being refreshing good exercise. It was not regarded as a method of relaxation. As a consequence, a pool, whether ashore or afloat had no need of embellishment.[61]

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[59]Gracie, p. 5.

[60]Maxtone-Graham, Liners to the Sun (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1985), p. 209.

[61]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, pp. 209 and 211.

The Edwardian ethic regarding "plunge baths" was that of an upper-class symbol of male social acceptability--an abrupt immersion in icy water was presumed bracing for the spirit as well as for the body, and was somehow uplifting--this was the state of swimming-bath mentality ashore when the White Star Line elected to install their pool on board the Olympic.[62]

Passengers today look upon swimming much as did the ancients of Rome. As John Maxtone-Graham noted so well in his book entitled The Only Way to Cross, today's ocean travelers, if not quite as decadent, are more greatly concerned with pleasure as opposed to the Edwardian concern for prowess.

The Edwardians, as the Victorians before them, rejected the pleasures associated with the ancient Roman prototype. Antiquity's only surviving contribution to the municipal bath was the Spartan ethic of the frigid natatorium. Lolling about was far from favored or fashionable. And water temperatures--contrary to Col. Gracie's suggestion that it was a "refreshing temperature"--were kept ruthlessly low. One cannot help but wonder if this may have been a socially acceptable way of delivering what we refer today as the proverbial "cold shower" for the male of the species. It seems a reasonable conclusion when one considers the rigidity in conduct rather evident in the sexually repressed society, despite Edward VII's renown as a libertine. When dawn broke over the United Kingdom, the "right stuff" plunged into cold baths--those effeminate few who groped for the hot tap were, clearly, the "wrong stuff."

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[62]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 213.

Other shipping companies soon followed suit, regarding shipboard pools. But with the exception of "Mewes's Pompeiian Baths on board the Imperator-class vessels," most adhered to the *Olympic* and *Titanic* molds, which were essentially confining and bleak. It wasn't until years later, when pools were resituated in the open air, above decks, that the original Roman concept of taking pleasure in the bath and in swimming, was resurrected.[63]

The Squash Racket Court:

The squash racket court (Fig. 57) was another innovation which proved popular with those disposed to athletic exercise. The court was situated on a lower deck (F-deck), just forward of the foremost boiler room, and extended two decks in height, for a length of 30 feet and a width of 20 feet. A gallery for spectators was placed at the aft end of the court at the middle deck level.[64]

The court was attended by a professional, as were all specialized ships' facilities. Tickets for the use of the court were obtained at the Enquiry Office at a cost of fifty cents per half hour, and included the services of the professional, if required. Balls were purchased from the same professional, who was also authorized to sell and "hire" (rent) racquets. The court could be reserved in advance by application to the professional in charge, but could not be occupied for longer than one hour at a time by the same players, if others were waiting.

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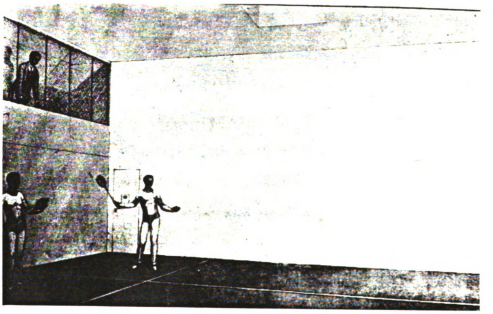
[63]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 213.

[64]Stephens, p. 84.

Fig. 57 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class squash racquet court.



As might be guessed--while this was considered a public room, ladies were not permitted usage of this facility.

Gymnasium:

The gymnasium (Fig. 58) was situated on the clean swept, upper boat deck, immediately aft and starboard of the forward grand entrance, and was provided with all the latest "appliances."[65] The gym was 44 feet long, by 18 feet wide, with a ceiling of more than 9 feet.[66] Despite the dark Georgian mahogany wainscoting, the paneling above the dado was light and made the gym a bright and exhilarating room, which was also due to the ample light admitted by eight windows of exceptional size and detail (Figs. 59 & 60). Said windows were of arched design, flanked by grooved pilasters, and made of dappled glass--which admitted light but did not allow for viewing through.[67] The floor appears to have been of parquet and laid in a herringbone pattern (Fig. 61). In the gymnasium first-class passengers could indulge in mechanical horse-riding, cycling, boat-rowing, etc., which was considered not only beneficial exercise but an endless source of amusement as well. Besides the electric horses, there were electric camels and vibrators.[68]

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[65]It was here, while Titanic was being evacuated, that John Jacob Astor sliced open a "spare" lifebelt to show Mrs. Astor what was inside that made it float.

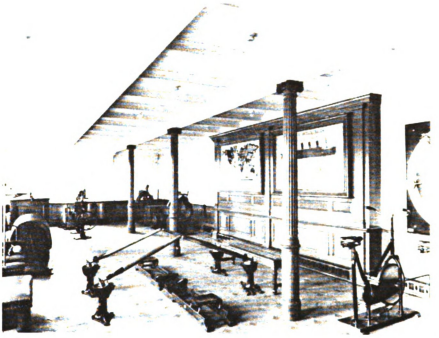
[66]Stephens, p. 90.

[67]Many windows and some of the paneling from *Olympic* are amongst those items presently adorning the Crown Paints factory.

[68]Said gymnastic appliances were supplied by Messrs. Rossel, Schwarz and Co. of Wiesbaden. No doubt, a company of quality. (Stephens, pp. 50, 90)

Fig. 58 *Titanic*, first-class gymnasium.

Fig. 59 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class gymnasium windows, exterior.



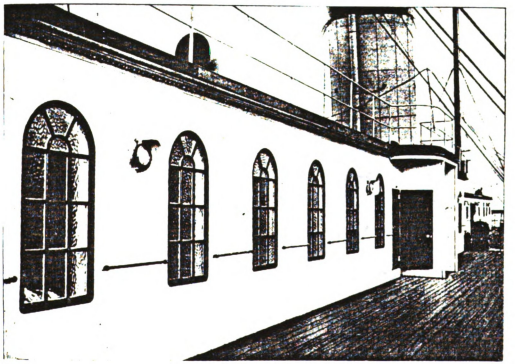
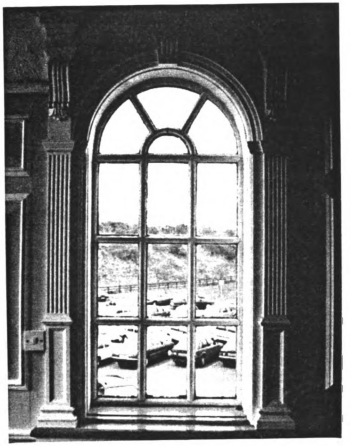
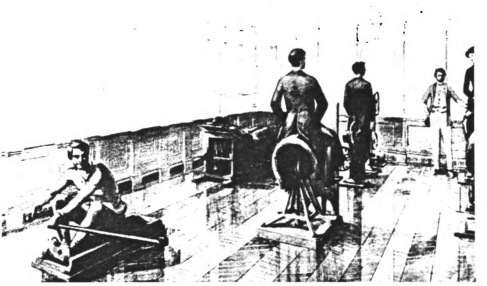


Fig. 60 *Olympic*, first-class gymnasium windows, interior.

Fig. 61 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class gymnasium flooring.





With the motorized exercisers, the gym also contained stationary bicycles, Indian clubs, foils, dumbbells, counterweight pulley "devices" and punching bags.[69] All these items were open for the independent use of ladies and gentlemen, during the same hours as the baths. There was no charge made for the use of the machines. The gymnasium was available for children from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. only. Wicker chairs were provided for the rare resting of the ever-watchful nannies attending the young ones.[70]

The Promenades:

The first-class promenade spaces, on the three uppermost decks of the Olympic-Class vessels, were exceptionally fine. The bridge deck (B-deck) promenade was almost entirely enclosed. It was, in general, magnificent with regard to spaciousness--being 400 feet long by 13 feet at its minimum width, and this space was allotted on each side of the ship. As one did not feel crowded, as on other liners, it was eventually decided to eliminate the bridge deck promenade on *Titanic* in favor of increased stateroom capacity.[71]

The bridge deck was provided with a solid side screen fitted with large, square windows which was one of the most popular features of the Olympic-Class vessels. These windows could be raised or lowered and passengers could enjoy the conditions they preferred--having an

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[69]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 50.

[70]Maddocks, p. 130.

[71]Bonsall, p. 24.

uninterrupted view of the horizon--with or without protection from the elements.

The main promenade was situated on A-deck, which was entirely devoted to first-class passengers. This promenade was over 500 feet long on each side of the deck and in parts exceeded 30 feet in width. It was covered over by the boat deck above, but was open at the sides above the bulwark rail.

On *Titanic* this promenade was partially enclosed. On *Olympic* the promenade deck remained open to the elements along its sides. Eventually part of this deck was given over to a cafe. The original teak wood flooring was, in the transition, replaced with *gutta-percha* tiling.[72]

On the uppermost deck--the boat deck (Fig. 62)--a space 200 feet long, and extending the full width of the ship, was also given over to first-class promenading and deck-chair lounging (Fig. 63).[73] In after years promenades--so necessary to the diligent Edwardian constitution--became less walkways and more interior spaces dedicated to being porches, galleries and even conservatories.[74]

The Staterooms:

The parlor suites and special staterooms were situated on B-deck (Fig. 64) and C-deck (Fig. 65), amidships between the two grand staircases. These staterooms were fitted out with unparalleled luxury and

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[72]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 195.

[73]Stephens, p. 102.

[74]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 195.

Fig. 62 *Titanic*, first-class boat deck promenade.

Fig. 63 *Titanic*, first-class boat deck chair.

Fig. 64 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class B-deck stateroom plans.

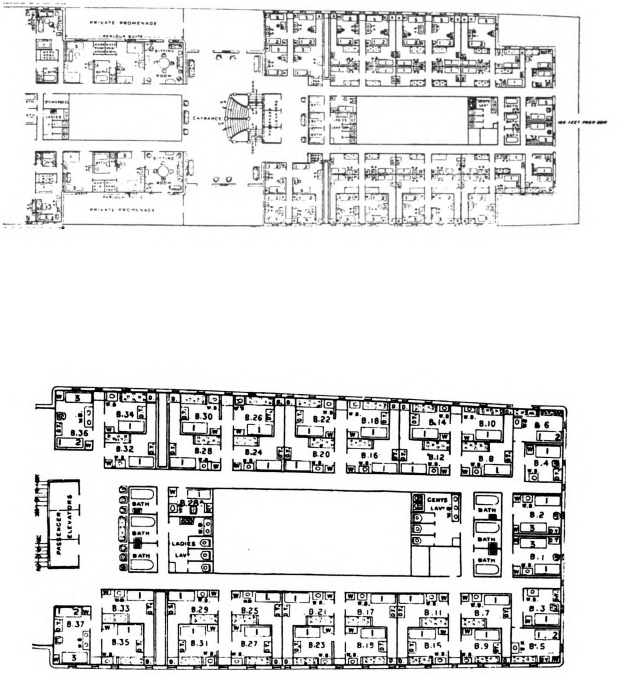
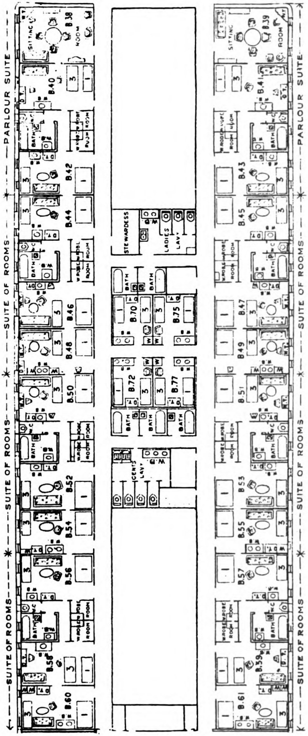


Fig. 64 (Cont'd)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B.75
B.77
BATH
W.C
W.ROBE ROOM
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GENTS LAV

Fig. 65

Fig. 65 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class C-deck stateroom plans.

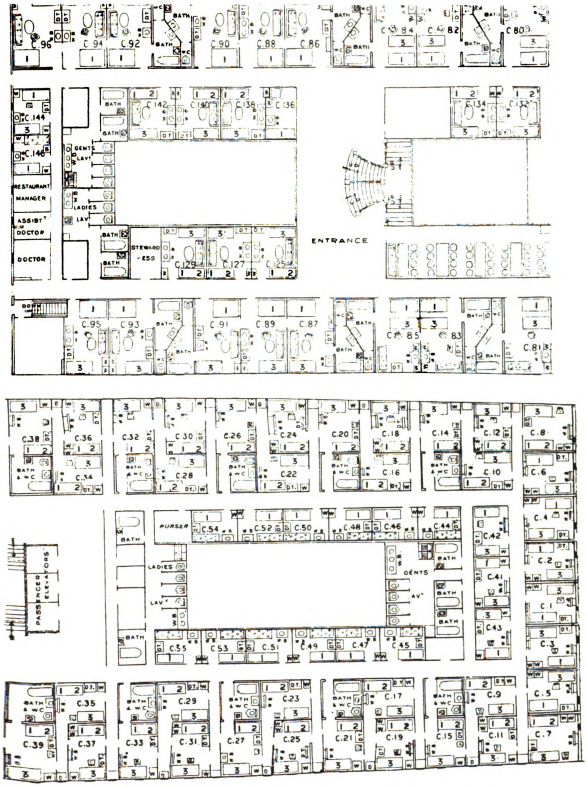
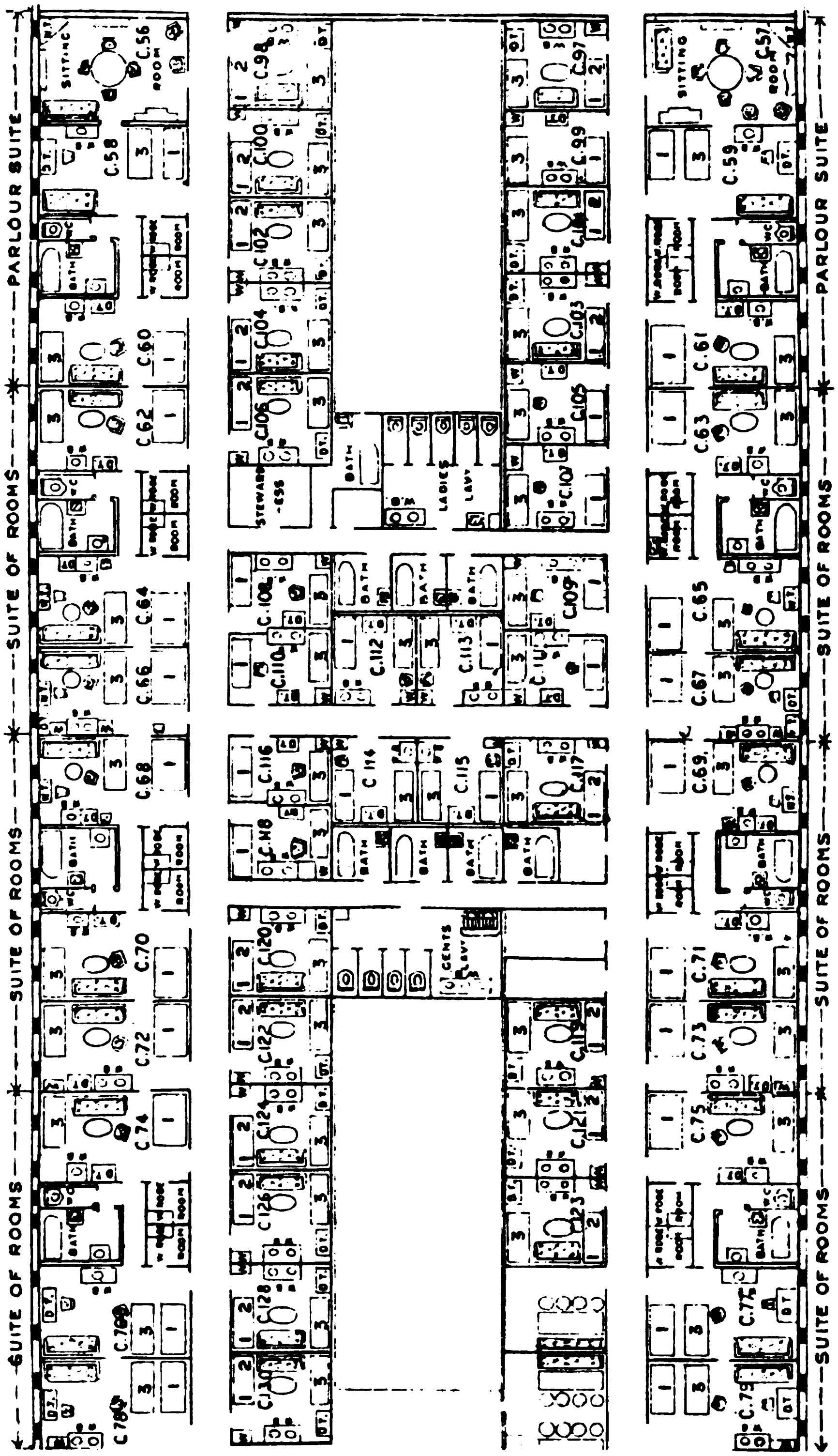


Fig. 65 (Cont'd)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different revival styles and periods were used--Louis XIV (Fig. 66), Louis XV (Fig. 67), and Louis XVI (Fig. 68), Empire (Fig. 69), Jacobean (Fig. 70), Adams (Fig. 71), Italian Renaissance (Fig. 72), Georgian (Fig. 73), Regence, Queen Anne, and the so-called "Dutch" (Fig. 74).[75]

The most expensive accommodations were the parlor suites, of which there were four, adjoining the forward grand entrance, one on each side of the ship, on B and C-decks, respectively. Each parlor suite consisted of one sitting room, two bedrooms (often one being for the use of accompanying servant), two wardrobe rooms, a private bath (Fig. 75) and lavatory and a private promenade (Fig. 76) off the parlor suites on B-deck.[76]

Aft of the parlor suites, on B and C-decks, were twelve other suites, which numbered six on each deck. Each suite consisted of three combined bed and sitting rooms with interconnecting doors, two wardrobe rooms, and a private bath and lavatory. These rooms could be let separately, if the occasion arose for doing so. In addition to the suite rooms there were, on the same decks, sixteen staterooms of equal size and lovely appointments, each with a private bathroom and lavatory, and nine such rooms without special bathrooms unless let in conjunction with an adjoining room.[77]

There were a variety of other first-class staterooms. A great many were single-berth rooms (Fig. 77), of which there were no less than 96. These were mainly situated on A and B-decks forward of the

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[75]Bonsall, p. 24.

[76]Stephens, p. 90.

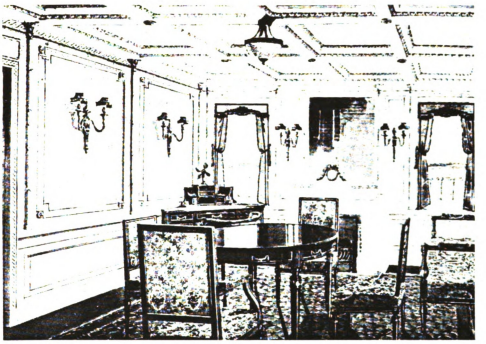
[77]Stephens, p. 90.

Fig. 66 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class C-deck parlor suite sitting room, Louis XIV style.

Fig. 67 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class B-deck special stateroom, Louis XV style.

Fig. 68 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class B-deck parlor suite sitting room, Louis XVI style.

Fig. 69 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class B-deck parlor suite bedroom, Empire style.



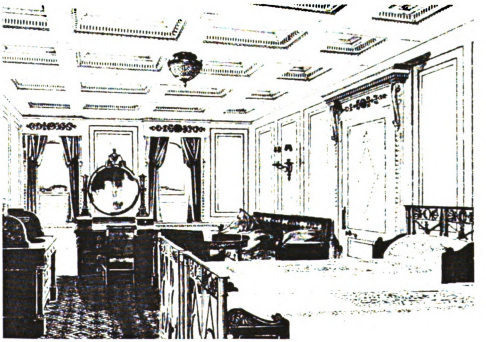
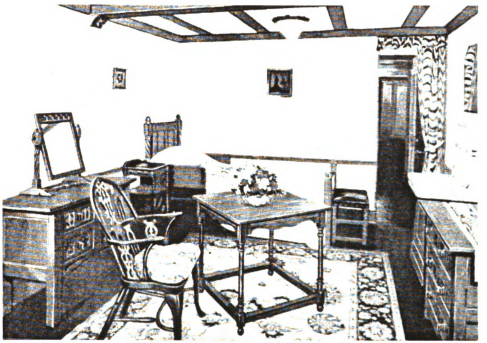
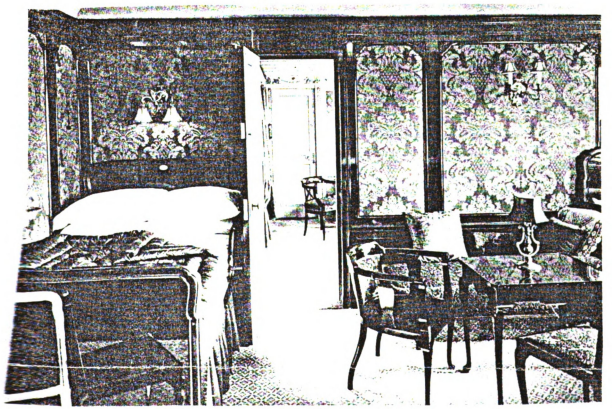


Fig. 70 *Olympic*, first-class stateroom, Jacobean style.

Fig. 71 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class parlor suite, adjoining bedrooms, Adams style.





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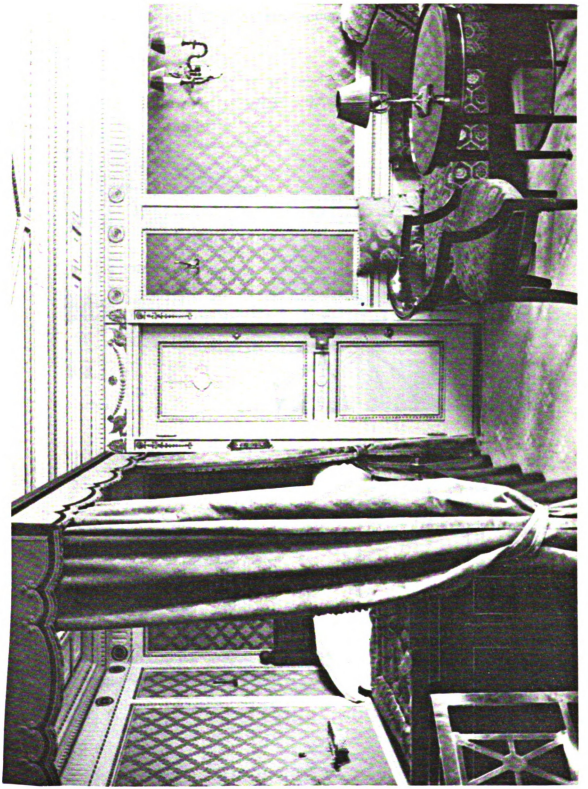


Fig. 72

Fig. 73

Fig. 72 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class C-deck parlor suite bedroom, Italian Renaissance style.

Fig. 73 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class B-deck parlor suite bedroom, Georgian style.

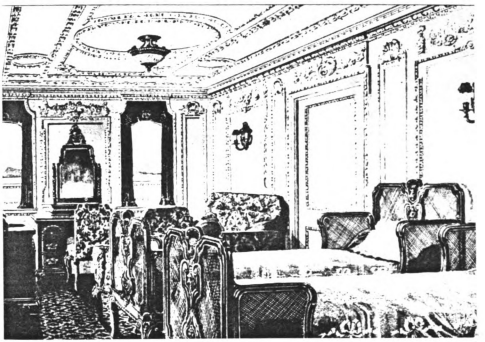


Fig. 74

Fig. 74 *Titanic*, first-class parlor suite bedroom, Old Dutch style.

Fig. 75 *Titanic*, first-class bathroom.

Fig. 76 *Titanic*, first-class parlor suite private promenade.

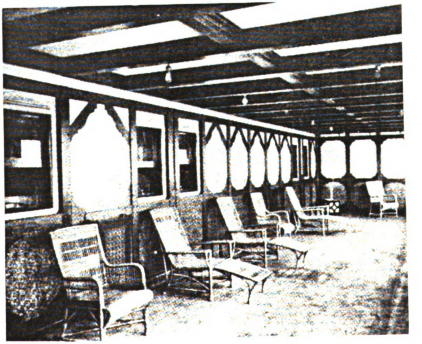
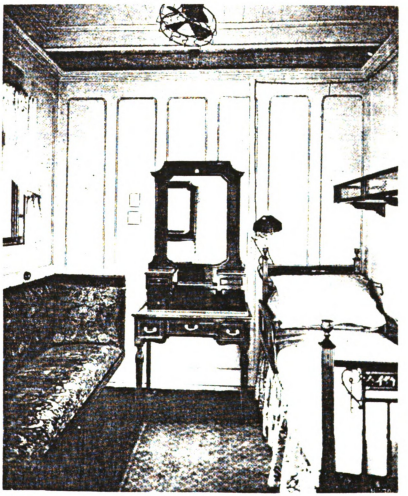


Fig. 77 *Titanic*, first-class A-deck single-berth stateroom.



grand entrance. In all the single-berth rooms, bedsteads were provided instead of the usual fixed berths, and there was also a large sofa, wardrobe, dressing table and wash basin. The remaining staterooms were mostly arranged for three passengers. These were provided with two bedsteads and a hinged Pullman upper berth (Fig. 78). In no case were more than three passengers accommodated in one room. Ten of the three-berth rooms of the forward C-deck had their own private bathrooms, and interconnecting doors were provided so that two rooms might be let together, if so needed.[78]

The parlor suites and special staterooms were about 11 feet long by 18 feet wide, and were limited to two occupants and servant. Walls were usually wood-paneled, but frequently covered with silk. Electrical outlets (Fig. 74) were traditionally placed high on the paneling to keep them dry in case of flooding. This was a holdover from the days when high winds often drove seawater into the cabins and set them awash due to ships being old and leaky, or transoms or portholes being broken during the course of a strong wind or storm. This would not be a problem on Olympic-Class vessels, but tradition held and the electrical outlets were placed almost at eye-level. Confidence ran so high in these leviathans, and the sea seemed so far removed from the passengers that, as with many rooms on board, floors were covered with broadloom carpeting and furnishing were upholstered in rich, heavy cut velvet.[79]

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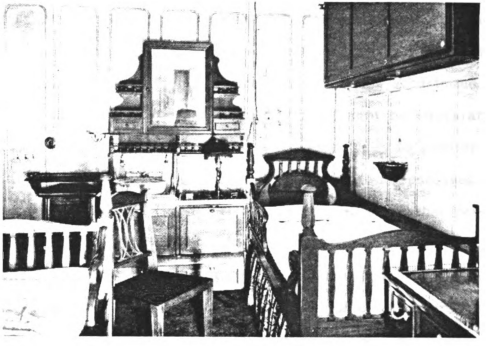
[78]Stephens, 91.

[79]Miller, p. 12.

Fig. 78 *Titanic*, first-class C-deck three-berth stateroom.



Drawings and photographs indicate that parlor suite sitting rooms possessed fireplaces (Fig. 79). It is unlikely that these were working fireplaces, but rather these spaces were used to house the room heater (Fig. 80). Ventilation and heating constituted two of the most difficult problems in the arrangement of a large passenger vessel, but were comfortably resolved by Harland and Wolff. The ventilation and heating systems of these vessels were more elaborate, and probably more accommodating than those found on board other ships. In the case of first-class accommodation, special treatment was used as the demands of the passengers were so varied. For example, an American travelling from the southern states frequently required, and was accustomed to, an amount of heat which to a cold-climate Britisher might be unbearable. With a view to meeting all requirements, it was decided to provide a moderate and agreeable temperature to public rooms and passages. Each first-class room was also fitted with an electric heater so that passengers requiring additional warmth could have it.[80]

The system of ventilation adoped by Harland and Wolff in the building of Olympic-Class vessels, negated the use of the enormous cowls which encumbered the decks of so many liners. In the case of the *Olympic* and *Titanic* said cowls were--to use a Irishism--"conspicuous by their absence." By the same token, the space usually sacrificed for the time-honored domes over the public apartments was utilized in these vessels for other and more advantageous purposes.[81]

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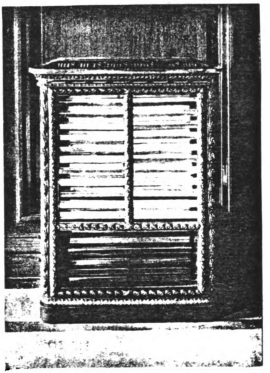
[80]Stephens, p. 105.

[81]Stephens, p. 106.

Fig. 79 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class parlor suite sitting room fireplace.

Fig. 80 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class stateroom heating unit.



Staterooms on B, C, D and E-decks were arranged on the tandem principle, wherein the inner tier of cabins received natural light from windows or sidelights in the side of the deckhouse or ship respectively. The staterooms on A-deck were, however, lighted from above.

Natural ventilation and the admission of day light to the interior of the various rooms had been carefully studied. The eventual outcome was that there were about 2,000 windows and sidelights aboard each ship. Indeed the numerous sidelights and windows formed one of the most striking features of the new vessels.[82] Portholes were still in evidence, but true windows were the going trend.

Staterooms were graced with oval lights 22 inches by 17 inches, and sliding windows on the enclosed promenade. A "special glass," supplied by the Maximum Light Window Glass Company, of London, was used for the inner windows of the dining and reception rooms--"by means of the combination of lenses and prisms introduced in this glass, the light from the portholes is dispersed over a greater area than would be the case if ordinary glass had been adopted"--however, The Shipbuilder did not elaborate on just what this "special glass . . . combination" was. All the public rooms situated on the bridge, promenade, and boat decks had windows of exceptionally large size. Among the largest were those found in the gymnasium.[83]

Suite furnishings usually consisted of two bedsteads, a dressing table, wash basin, sofa, table, easy chair, a wardrobe (in those cases

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[82]Stephens, p. 106.

[83]Stephens, p 106.

where no separate wardrobe room was provided) and in some cases a writing table and additional chair. Parlor suite sitting rooms had a centrally located table and four side chairs. Bedsteads were about four-feet in width, and this was of sufficient enough significance that rooms were advertised as possessing such ample sleeping accommodation.

In regular staterooms, the lower berths consisted of cot beds in brass, mahogany or oak. The brass cot beds had been supplied by Messrs. Hoskins and Sewell, Limited, of Birmingham, for both *Olympic* and *Titanic*. Said brass bedsteads were lacquered by the firm's "Varnoid process, which [gave] a lustre and finish to the brass work unequalled by any other lacquer, and [was] guaranteed to stand the action of the sea air and sea water." The same firm fitted their "Tapex" spring mattresses to all berths throughout the first-class accommodation.[84]

Another benefit was that no longer was it necessary, as it had been in bygone days, to yell in an undignified manner down the corridor for the assist of a steward. There were no fewer than 1500 electric "bell pushes" on each ship. In the first-class staterooms the bell pushes are mounted on the same plates with the electric light switches, such a plate being placed within convenient reach of each berth, naturally.[85]

Also one now had the benefit of "Messrs. Alfred Graham and Co.'s patent loud-speaking navy phones." The switchboard (Fig. 81), gave a

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[84]Stephens, pp. 100 & 102.

[85]Stephens, p. 112.

"lamp signal" upon a call being made, and on connection, so that "rapidity of operation" was assured. The telephone sets were to be found in each cabin and were of "Graham's intermediate loud-speaking type (Fig. 82). They were "comprised of a hand set with a circular metal push and terminal box. At the majority of the positions the fittings are silver-plated, and at others of polished and lacquered brass."[86]

Parlor suites had a price tag of several thousand dollars per person for the six-day voyage. Other staterooms were less in cost, but not much. It was in these staterooms that Thomas Andrews determined that there were too many screws in the hat hooks of *Titanic* while J. Bruce Ismay thought the beds too soft and bouncy on board *Olympic*. In both cases, the interior decorator could not keep White Star Line from installing the customary mesh net, on at least one wall, for the use of ocean travelers to store odds and ends at night.

It is an interesting side note that cabins, while always locked today, were not so secured by Edwardians. Passengers were not even issued keys to their rooms. Stewards locked and unlocked cabin doors, while the ship was in port. Once at sea, however, cabins remained unlocked.[87] There were other niceties of the age--if a gentleman found his shoes to be in a scuffed condition, he had only to leave said shoes outside his cabin door at night. Come the morning he could be assured that he would find that the steward had seen to it that the shoes had been diligently polished while "his lordship" slept. Furthermore, there

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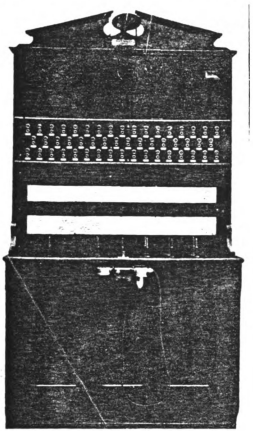
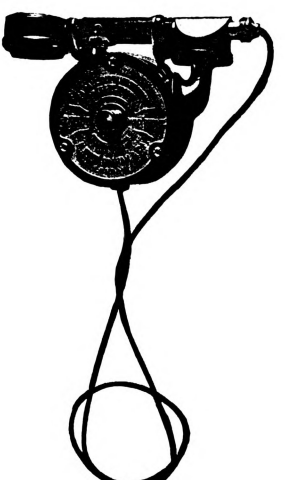
[86]Stephens, pp. 118-119.

[87]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 247.

Fig. 81 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class telephone exchange switchboard.

Fig. 82 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, first-class cabin telephone.





were attendants to see to clothes pressing, cleaning, repairs and alterations, for both ladies and gentlemen. However, for this service a fixed charge applied and one had to ask the steward for such assistance. These services were available to all of first-class--whether one was traveling with a valet or not.

In any event, first-class aboard Olympic-Class vessels was--what would be called in modern times "the Ritz." Is it any wonder then that indulged, first-class passengers were reluctant to rise from their Hoskins and Sewell "Tapex" spring mattresses, in the middle of a cold, April night, bundle warmly and go up on deck dressed in lifebelts when the call came on *Titanic*?

Second-Class Accommodation

In prior years one would not have found such sumptuous apartments as were provided second-class passengers aboard *Olympic* and *Titanic*. On other ships second-class was afforded small quarters aft. The cabins were modestly furnished, possessing bunks rather than beds, and occupants shared communal bathrooms.[88] On Olympic-Class vessels, the second-class accommodation was mainly placed aft, but extended over no less than seven decks.[89] Access from one deck to another was obtained by means of a grand staircase and also by an electric lift, which was an innovation. The public rooms included a large dining saloon, smoking room and library. Indeed, as in the case

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[88]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 53.

[89]Anderson, p. 108.

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with first-class, everything was done to make the accommodation superior to anything previously seen afloat.[90] While pre-World War I photographs of second-class accommodations are generally harder to come by than those of first-class, there are, gratefully a few available on the interiors of *Olympic* and *Titanic*.

The Grand Entrances and Staircases:

The second-class forward grand entrances and staircase (Figs. 83 & 84) were handsomely panelled in Georgian style oak. The entrances were one of the special features of second-class,, and the stairs extended through seven decks and had an adjoining electric lift (Fig. 85) which served six decks. The after stairs, with their entrance halls were also panelled in oak and extended through five decks. While considered some what spare in comparison to first-class, the wood and detail touches made it seem no less rich.

On *Olympic* the second-class stairs were graced with finely carved banister, newel post and railing details. The lift doors were solid wood but decorated with a small wrought iron grill in the upper panel (Figs. 85 & 86). The floor was covered with broadloom carpeting of geometric pattern. Furnishings were limited to a few armchairs and sofas of cane, with upholstered cushions.

The Dining Saloon:

The second-class dining saloon (Fig. 87) was situated on the saloon deck just aft of the kitchens. It was 71 feet long and extended

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[90]Stephens, pp. 91 & 95.

Fig. 83 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, second-class entrance and staircase.

Fig. 84 *Olympic*, second-class staircase seen from upper-level.

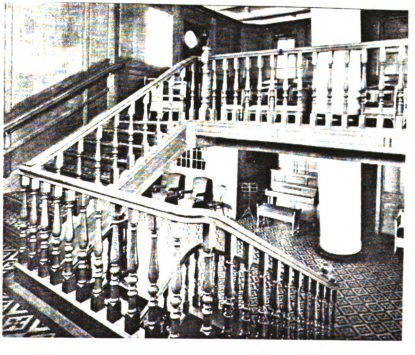

Fig. 85

Fig. 86

Fig. 85 *Olympic*, second-class C-deck banister, newel post, railing and lift doors.

Fig. 86 *Olympic*, second-class C-deck wrought iron lift grill.

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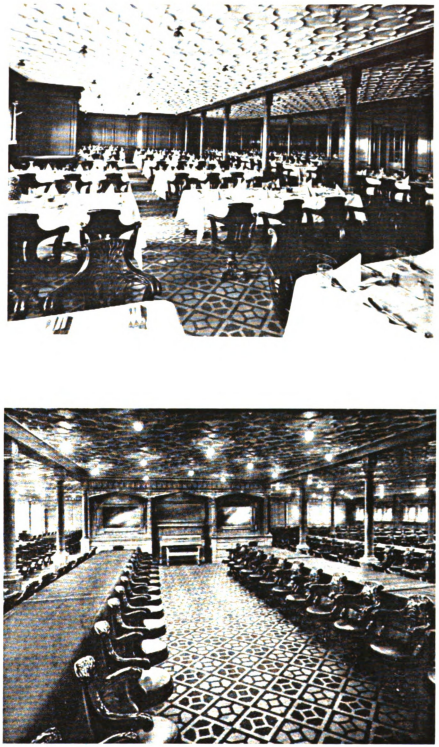
Fig. 87 *Olympic*, second-class dining saloon.



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the full width of the ship.[91] The style of decoration used was rather "early English." The ceiling surface was covered with of decorated plaster. The panelling was oak and quietly tasteful in design.[92] Windows (Fig. 88) were simple portholes, but beautifully framed by columns and richly carved molding. Entry doors (Fig. 89) were likewise framed. The floor was carpet in a simple geometric pattern. The furniture consisted of long tables flanked by revolving, heavily carved oak chairs which were bolted to the deck. Seating accommodation provided for 394 diners.

As in the case of the first-class saloon, efficient service of food was ensured by the proximity of the saloon to the kitchens, and the large serving pantry which adjoined the forward end.[93] The *Titanic's* second-class dinner menu of 14 April 1912 (Fig. 90) reflects a meal plan the equal of most first-class accommodations.

As with the first-class arrangement, the second-class kitchens, serving rooms, pantries, bakeries, sculleries, etc., were situated on the saloon deck between the first and second-class dining saloons, and extend the full width of the ship for a length of nearly 160 feet. Cooking utensils had, of course, been supplied by Messrs. Henry Wilson & Co., Limited, of Liverpool, the service of plate, by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Co., Ltd., of London, the cutlery by Messrs. Elkington & Co., of Birmingham.

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[91]Stephens, p. 95.

[92]Stephens, p. 95.

[93]Stephens, pp. 95 & 98.

Fig. 88 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, second-class dining saloon portholes and paneling.

Fig. 89 *Olympic*, second-class dining saloon entry doors.

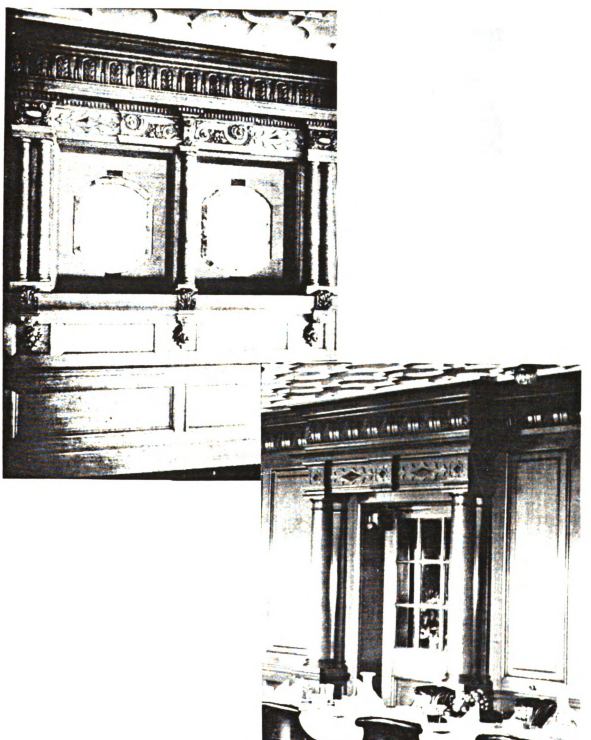
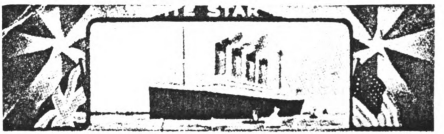


Fig. 90 *Titanic*, second-class dining saloon menu, 14 April 1912.



TRIPLE SCREW STEAMER "TITANIC."

2ND CLASS

APRIL 14, 1912.

DINNER.

CONSOMME TAPIOCA

BAKED HADDOCK, SHARP SAUCE

CURRIED CHICKEN & RICE

SPRING LAMB, MINT SAUCE

ROAST TURKEY, CRANBERRY SAUCE

GREEN PEAS PUREE TURNIPS

BOILED RICE

BOILED & ROAST POTATOES

PLUM PUDDING

WINE JELLY COCOANUT SANDWICH

AMERICAN ICE CREAM

NUTS ASSORTED

FRESH FRUIT

CHEESE BISCUITS

COFFEE

Though this was only second-class, the dining saloon, like all second-class accommodations, was yet very elegant and a romantic reflection. As a result, the sway of the grand saloon was, no doubt, a hypnotic lure.

The Library:

The second-class library (Fig. 91) was another splendid apartment, the style in this case was Colonial Adams. Adams style was characterized by great formality of design. Typical furnishing pieces were sideboards, side tables, settees, cabinets and bookcases. Motifs varied in lovely patterns of Grecian honeysuckle and fret, fluted frieze or apron, the patera and rosette, the husk and stately urns. The Olympic-Class library of *Olympic* and *Titanic* was 40 feet long by 58 feet wide, and was situated on the shelter deck aft, between the two second-class stairways. The panelling--both the beamed ceiling and the walls--was in sycamore, the dado in mahogany and "handsomely relieved with carvings." The side windows (Fig. 92) were of good size, arranged in pairs, and draped with silk curtains. A handsome Wilton carpet completed the fine effect produced. Furniture was of delicate design, upholstered with tapestry and, like the dado, of mahogany wood. A large bookcase, from which books could be borrowed, was provided at the forward end.[94]

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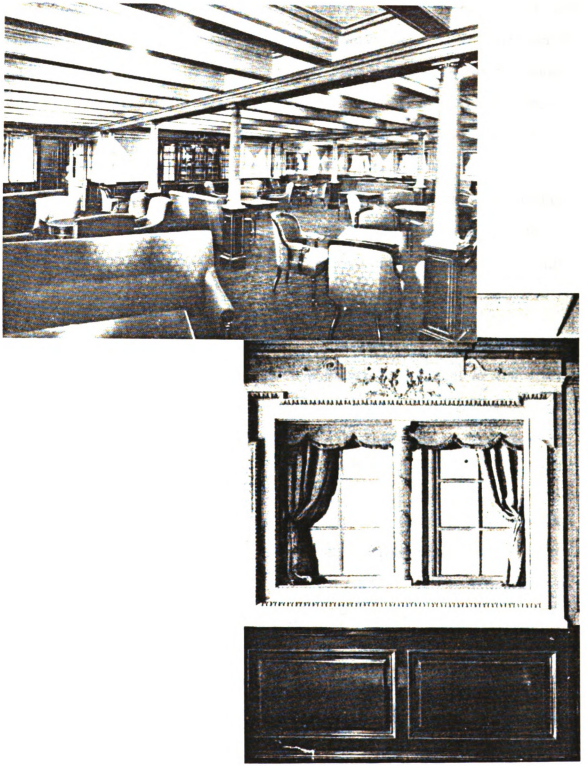
[94]Stephens, 98.

Fig. 91 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, second-class library.

Fig. 92 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, second-class library windows.



The Smoking Room:

The second-class smoking room (Fig. 93) was situated on the promenade deck (B-deck), immediately above the library, and was 36 feet long by 62 feet wide. The decoration was advertised as a "variation of Louis XVI period." The ceiling and wall panelling, as well as the dado were of splendid oak, which was relieved with refined carving. The floor, however, was laid with linoleum titles of a rather wild design which seemed inappropriate to the overall effect of the room. The furniture was likewise of oak, and upholstered with a plain, yet richly grained dark green morocco leather.[95] Green leather seems to have been a given when it came to Edwardian smoking rooms on board ship.

The Promenades:

The spaces assigned for second-class promenades (Fig. 94) were also unusually spacious, and included a length of 145 feet at the after end of the boat deck, as well as a covered space of 84 feet long, with sliding windows, on the shelter deck next to the second-class library.[96]

The Staterooms:

The second-class staterooms (Fig. 95) were situated aft, on decks D, F and G. On E-deck, however, the cabins extended well towards amidships on the starboard side. Said cabins were far from inferior to the ordinary first-class staterooms in their appointments. The most noticeable difference was that second-class cabins could accommodate up to four passengers per room instead of three. The firms of Messrs.

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[95]Stephens, p. 98.

[96]Stephens, p. 102.

Fig. 93 *Olympic*, second-class smoking room.

Fig. 94 *Titanic*, second-class boat deck promenade.

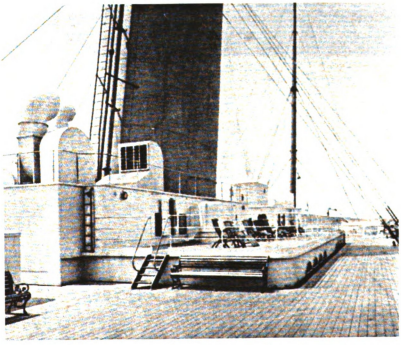

Fig. 95 *Titanic*, second-class three-berth stateroom.

Hoskins and Sewell, Limited, of Birmingham had, of course, provided comfortable sleeping accommodations.

As in first-class, most of the cabins were arranged on the tandem principle, which ensured natural light to each cabin. The rooms were finished in stark, sanitary white enamel, the floor covered in serviceable linoleum tiles. Furnishings were of mahogany and covered with moquette--an upholstery fabric having a velvety pile.[97]

Third-Class Accommodation

As previously mentioned it was in a shipping company's best financial interest to accommodate passengers of every background--if they did not, they could not hope to compete in the ferry market. Immigration fueled the era of ocean travel and steerage was jammed with people fleeing the poverty and deprivation of the Old World for the hope offered by the New.[98] As a consequence of this upsurge in emigrant traffic, by 1910 one sees the improvements for steerage travelers which eventually became known as third-class. Accommodations which had been previously unavailable now became the norm.[99]

In bygone days steerage passengers, who paid an exorbitant amount for sea passage, were relegated to berths found in a loathsome dungeon "'tween decks" which was not lit nor ventilated. Buckets for

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[97]Stephens, p. 100.

[98]Maddocks, P. 6.

[99]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 54.

sanitation were occasionally screened and sometimes fitted with seats. There was no place to wash, however, for water was rationed. Drinking water taken on board soon turned foul, but was still drunk once it was boiled and had peppermint added. A special note should be made here that as terrible as conditions were for steerage passengers, conditions at home on land were not that much different and perhaps that explains, in part, why people would brave the perils and discomforts of the open sea.

Before the advent of the steamship passages crossing the North Atlantic took about six weeks. It was a long time made even longer by the stench created by the unwashed, seasick humanity as well as human and animal excrement. Add to this the rot of perishable cargo in the hold, and foul water--from the bottom of the ship, below the level of the pumps--which added to the perpetual rotting of the vessel itself, and one can imagine the offensiveness of it. In the tropics this must have been almost unbearable. One passenger wrote in a journal that the heat, added to the closeness of the accommodations, made them dreadfully oppressive. Up on deck she found that "the foul air came up the hatchway in the form of smoke, and the captain even sent some one down to see whether the ship was not on fire."[100]

All voyages, long or short, shared common circumstances in that there were no laws. It wasn't until 1803 that the first of the Passenger Acts were to result in the governing of the terms of passage contracts. This was, in part, due to the pressure exerted by the uproar made by Irish priests. So many young Irish lasses, enroute to America, "had

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[100]Greenhill, p. 14.

embarked as virgins and disembarked as outcasts that the priests of Galway were moved to public protest against lack of adequate shipboard chaperonage." When taxpayers tired of supporting illegitimate children, they finally lay their case before Congress. The resulting action taken was to provide that if any American crew seduced a passenger "under promise of marriage, or by threats or by the exercise of his authority, or by solicitation, or making of gifts" . . . he would either marry the girl or take a choice of $1000 fine or one-year in jail.[101]

It would take almost one-hundred years for a real revolution in sea travel to take place. No doubt it was so long in coming due to the fact that a ship at sea had always been rather a law unto itself. If a dissenter made loud objections or created a problem on board ship he soon found himself eating sand for supper at the bottom of the big deep.

However, change finally did arrive and when it did steerage passengers benefitted immensely. In the case of Olympic-Class vessels the accommodation for third-class passengers was of an exceptionally high standard, if not luxurious. The public rooms included a dining saloon, general room, and a smoking room. These were large, airy apartments, suitable furnished, and the same could be said with regard to the third-class staterooms and berths.

It can be easily seen that third-class passengers aboard Olympic-Class vessels had greater comforts provide than had first-class passengers before the great modern developments in passenger-carrying,

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[101]Brinnin, Sway, pp. 18-19.

for which White Star Line was largely responsible.[102] On the *Olympic* one could travel within the relative comfort of "galvanized iron rather than vermin-prone wood."[103] Passage to New York still did not come cheaply to the emigrant traveler, as can be imagined. Yet the voyage was not outrageously expensive either, for a one-way ticket cost about $35.00.

The Dining Saloon:

The third-class dining saloon (Fig. 96) was situated amidships on the middle of F-deck. It consisted of two compartments extending the entire width of the ship for a length of 100 feet with seating accommodation for 473 passengers. The room was very utilitarian. There was no wood paneling with carving, just riveted metal beamed ceilings and flat walls, finished in white enamel which were, however, relieved here and there with framed pictures of sailing vessels. The dining saloon was well lit by portholes but, undoubtedly needed the white walls to further illuminate an otherwise dark, lower interior. The floor was covered with linoleum. Furnishings consisted of long, trestle-like tables. Chairs were of simple design but, unlike second-class, not bolted to the deck. As there were no staff here to take ones wrap, coat hooks lined the walls.

The galley and pantries adjoined the dining saloon at the aft end. As previously mentioned, the first-class Turkish Bath cooling room was

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[102]Stephens, p. 100.

[103]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 56.

Fig. 96 *Olympic*, third-class dining saloon.

half again as large as the third-class galley. Therein food for, perhaps a thousand diners, was prepared in a space "less commodious than the Byzantine grandeur allotted for the use of a dozen first-class passengers."[104] However, the galley was fitted out in a manner which would have been envied by a first-class chef some years before. Also, third-class was allotted its own large bakery--truly a luxury.

The General Room:

The third-class general room (Fig. 97), sometimes referred to as the lounge, was situated aft, inside the poop deck on the starboard side, and had a length of 36 feet and a width of 38 feet. The general room, as well as the smoking room were accessed by way of a stairway/vestibule (Fig. 98). Third-class was not allotted a "grand staircase" nor a lift.

While the ceiling of the general room was metal beamed, the walls were panelled and framed in pine. However, the pine was not finished naturally but rather finished in painted white enamel. The furniture was of teak, and included a number of settees, chairs and tables.[105] Seating was predominately benches, which gave the area a waiting room-like character. The floor beneath was probably a serviceable linoleum.

The Smoking Room:

The third-class smoking room (Fig. 99) occupied a corresponding position to the general room on the port side of the ship, being exactly the same size and, as previously mentioned, accessed by way of the

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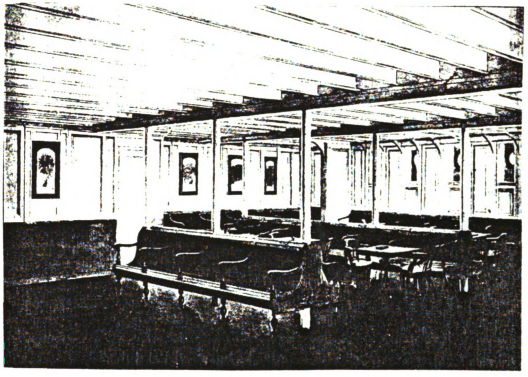
[104]Maxtone-Graham, Only Way, p. 56.

[105]Stephens, p. 100.

Fig. 97 *Olympic* and *Titanic*, third-class general room.

Fig. 98 *Olympic*, third-class stairway to general room (left) and smoking room (right).



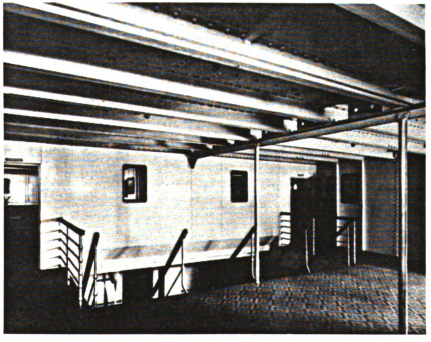
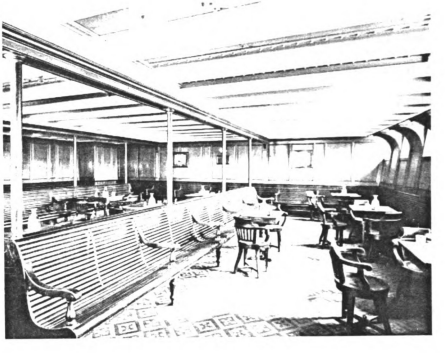


Fig. 99 *Olympic*, third-class smoking room.



stairway/vestibule. This room was panelled and framed in oak which was naturally finished. This little touch gave the smoking room a more comfortable air. The furniture was of teak and similar to that in the general room being slatted settees, turned spindle chairs and little tables.[106] The floor was linoleum covered and of a pattern which provided a little whimsy to an otherwise plain, if comfortable, room.

The Promenades:

The third-class promenade space was on the shelter deck on the "after well." Further large, covered space was allotted on D-deck forward. This area was fitted with tables and seats, and could be used in all weather.[107]

The Staterooms:

The third-class staterooms were placed on E, F, and G-decks forward, and on D, E, F, and G-decks aft. They were mostly arranged for two and four passengers; but in some rooms six, eight or ten people could be accommodated. The provision of such a large number of two-berth rooms was an innovation and was considered as being very popular with third-class passengers--no doubt due to the fact that many of them came from homes where families slept six to a bed. In addition to the staterooms, accommodation was provided for 164 people in open berths on G-deck forward.[108] As has been previously

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[106]Stephens, p. 100.

[107]Stephens, p. 102.

[108]Stephens, p. 100.

pointed out, White Star was concerned with providing accommodation to fit every purse.

Similar to first and second-class staterooms, all beds were supplied by Messrs. Hoskins and Sewell. Said company had fitted third-class quarters with their "Orex" spring and chain mattresses. They had also supplied the galvanized metallic berths for the open steerage and the portable cabins for the temporary third-class.[109]

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[109]Stephens, pp. 100 & 102.

CHAPTER 8

BRITANNIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Always the Bridesmaid

It is with sincere regret that investigation into the grand design of *R.M.S. Britannic* proved to be of extremely limited benefit. History has short changed her grievously and to the point that her existence is known by relatively few and, apparently, those few care even less.

So much attention was lavished upon the achievements of her older sisters that *Britannic* has been relegated to the unenviable position of being rather the "poor relation" in that she was involved in grand schemes, was regally readied and rehearsed, and yet was never to have the opportunity to actually participate--rather like the virgin who is always the bridesmaid and yet never destined to be a bride.

Truly, of the three *Olympic*-Class vessels, *Britannic* was, without a doubt the most promising of the Big Three. This was obviously due to the experiences obtained from the building and operation of *Olympic* and *Titanic*. From such endeavors, and failed endeavors, *Britannic* benefitted so that, had she eventually been placed into royal mail service she would, no doubt have shown as brightly as did the long-lived *Olympic*.

"In the new *Britannic* we see, both in design and construction, as perfect a specimen of man's creative power as it is possible to

conceive." So read a portion of *Britannic's* launch booklet.[1] Said booklet went into great detail on the mechanical aspects of the new ship, but said almost nothing regarding interior features or decor.

Regrettably, there also appear to be no interior photographs available of *Britannic*. In the course of researching her the only illustration found was that of an artist's rendering of the first-class grand staircase seen from above (Fig. 100).

Though designed, like *Olympic* and *Titanic*, for the most luxurious of interiors possessing "expansive proportions and the sobriety of dark, carefully crafted woodwork, along with a studied eclecticism in detail, [reflecting] the formality of the late Edwardian opulence," *Britannic* was never properly fitted out in such.[2] However, like *Olympic* she subsequently benefitted from the grievous hard-learned lessons taught by the loss of *Titanic*. Many safety features were incorporated into this younger sister. She was given a double bottom similar to that found in the *Great Eastern* sixty years earlier. She was also provided with a system of watertight bulkheads and a conspicuous number of lifeboats in cantilevered davits.[3] White Star was obsessed with safety. The *Titanic* had been designed to remain afloat with any two compartments flooded. The *Britannic* was designed to survive flooding in any six."[4]

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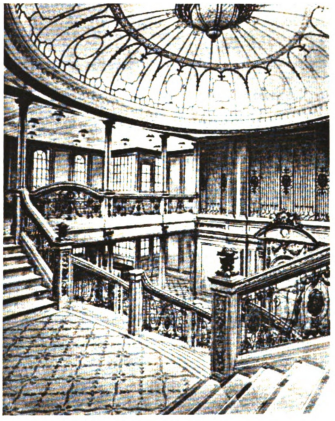
[1]Bonsall, p. 52.

[2]Brinnin, Grand Luxe, p. 53.

[3]Brinnin, Sway, pp. 384-385.

[4]Bonsall, pp. 53-54.

Fig. 100 *Britannic*, first-class grand staircase.



Accommodations were projected for 2500 passengers and 950 crew. Facilities were improved upon, particularly in first-class with more private baths and the addition of a fourth elevator. The above-referenced artist's rendering of the proposed interior suggests *Britannic* was to have been a bit more ornate than her sisters. The promenade deck, which was entirely open on the *Olympic*, was enclosed for about one-third of its length as it had been on *Titanic*. In addition, the well deck was also enclosed.[5]

Britannic held the spotlight for only a brief span of time though "neither thought nor money . . . [had] been spared," pursuant to Henry Concannon, joint manager at White Star.[6] During her World War I conversion the A-deck public rooms were converted into wards, as were the areas originally intended to be the children's playroom, gymnasium and the restaurant.

Though the post-war auction of her fittings and furnishings commanded no great attention or high price due to her lack of image, *Britannic* was, as stewardess Violet Jessop suggested, a graceful maiden lady.

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[5]Bonsall, p. 54.

[6]Anderson, p. 110.

CONCLUSION

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In the decades between the Edwardian era, and the thunder of the jet age, "Britannia Ruled the Waves" of the North Atlantic shipping lanes with a large fleet of palatial ferries. "Never before in history had man fashioned such awesome machines. They were the largest objects that ever moved, and the most complex--the ultimate expression of the Industrial Revolution."[1]

Prior to this time, going to sea was rather like going to prison with the chance of being drowned. Well into the nineteenth century it was considered the norm if only one in six sailing vessels ever reached its destination. Ships were small, cramped, uncomfortable, and definitely inhospitable, even for the first-class passenger. Early ocean travel was looked upon with considerable concern, trepidation and foreboding. There were no cheery *bon voyage* parties, in fact, family and friends seeing an individual off had all the bearing of those attending a funeral.

Therefore, when primitive wooden-hulled sailors, were ultimately replaced by swifter iron-hulled paddlewheelers and, in turn, supplanted by commodious steel-hulled, screw-propelled steamers, they were considered remarkable achievements in not only industrial progress but commercial passenger activity. Sea travel moved from being a necessary

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[1]Maddocks, p. 6.

evil to actually being more glamorous and exciting, thus providing an increase in sea traffic and ultimately a very profitable passenger trade.

Needless to say, the shipping companies endeavored to downplay the hazards and out of their endeavors came the state-of-the-art, floating hotels that rivaled many mansions and palaces in sumptuous appointments. "Indeed, the shipping architects sought in every imaginable way to conceal the fact that one was even on board a ship."[2]

When sea travel ceased to be uncomfortable, unsanitary, hazardous and boring, the concept was redesigned to be reasonably safe, predictable in duration and quite pleasantly luxurious. Passengers also gradually became less aware of the sea, as superstructures grew in height. With this boon, it was unlikely that the sea would sweep a vessel's main deck, flood compartments and drench its occupants. As a consequence of passengers being kept farther from the sea, it thus became less important to them. Soon the pattern developed of assisting and encouraging them to forget it altogether--and this was, no doubt, of great benefit to those who suffered grievously from *mal de mer*--seasickness.

Passage on a great liner became a "week-long gala in a palatial grand hotel. A passenger might now have the 'privilege of seeing nothing at all that has to do with the ship, not even the sea," as one brochure advertised. The British shipping company of Cunard even went so far as to assert that "going Cunard was a state of grace."[3]

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[2]Bonsall, p. 23.

[3]Maddocks, p. 6.

Apparently conditions were so improved that passengers waxed poetic in noting how "time flew on silken wings."[4]

"Hotelism was the catchword of the liners." Saloons came to resemble ballrooms, and every liner of any pretension eventually boasted a swimming pool--modeled, naturally, on the baths of Caracalla, or Pompeii. Indeed, to be at sea was not to be at sea at all. The French Line, with magnificent arrogance, reinforced this concept by calling its flagship *Il de France* "the Boulevard of the Atlantic."[5]

As for the separation of classes, the British refined the condition so that it became a system resting not just on Edwardian snobbishness, but on sound business practice. This arose out of an appreciation by ship-owners that they should provide berths for every purse. It was good business for companies to accommodate passengers of every background. If they did not they could not possibly compete in the passenger ferry business for while advertising was mainly directed at the first-class passenger, it was really the second and third-class passengers who made up the bulk of the company's paying customers.[6]

Since early steamer days passengers had been separated and identified by the type of accommodation they booked--they were either cabin passengers or steerage. Immigrants had been crowded into communal dormitories aft near the steering mechanism--hence, in the "steerage." Steerage berthing eventually became anything that was

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[4]Brinnin, Sway, p. 22.

[5]Maddocks, p. 21.

[6]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 53.

anywhere in the hull, fore and aft, while more stable and quiet accommodations amidship were reserved for cabin passengers. Second-class passengers, when eventually so designated, were afforded small quarters aft. The cabins were modestly furnished, possessing bunks rather than beds; and occupants shared communal bathrooms.[7]

First-class naturally had its perks--lavish and expensive staterooms provided fresh air and sunlight. Also there was the use of the public rooms, which were found on the upper decks near the staterooms--except for the saloon. Ironically, in the beginning of steam ship sailing, the elegant occupants often suffered badly in rough weather. Being so much higher up in the air then their fellows, their accommodations tilted drunkenly as the ship moved along in seas which were often less than calm.[8]

Separation of classes was rigorously maintained by company and client alike. First-class might "go slumming" in steerage, but NEVER in second-class. It was just not done. Perhaps it was not vicarious enough.[9]

Emigrant traffic by the 1900s triggered improvements for steerage travelers and thus became known as third-class. Available accommodations were private rooms, public rooms (saloon, lounge or general room, and smoking room), however, dining tables had oilcloth coverings, unlike the first-class which had linen, and while there were no menus, as in the upper-classes, there was yet a vast improvement in conditions

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[7]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 53.

[8]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 53.

[9]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 54.

and amenities. Class improvements of all kinds were curtailed, though, with the advent of World War I. After the war, third-class became "tourist cabin" which, in essence, abolished the stigma associated the former title of steerage.[10]

While many travelers thought that a certain elegance and grace had been lost with the abandonment of masts and yards, the Olympic-Class liners were strikingly beautiful and graceful. This was due to the builders "carrying the traditional yacht-inspired ocean liner architecture to the outer limits of physical possibility." Their design was based on utter simplicity--as are, it is generally agreed, the greatest designs in any art form.[11]

White Star's efforts to secure pre-eminence in the passenger shipping business was a policy of enterprise and ingenuity. It showed great foresight and was worthily maintained for many years. Their Olympic-Class vessels, became "symbols of Britain's dominating position at the centre of world commerce and prosperity." Further, they represented for many the "zenith of British shipbuilding achievement . . . embodying every technical and technological advance then known, [being] superbly built with no expense spared."[12] Constructed in an era in which "material progress had assumed an almost religious status," they inspired man to arrogantly dream that, at long last, he reigned supreme over nature.[13]

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[10]Maxtone-Graham, Liners, p. 54.

[11]Bonsall, p. 12.

[12]Stephens, p. i.

[13]Bonsall, p. 4.

In the midst of *Titanic's* notoriety, *Olympic* and *Britannic* are almost forgotten by many--and totally unknown to exist by most. It is important to point out that *Titanic* was originally conceived to be one member of a trio-ferry-team--three being very necessary to the White Star North Atlantic trade. Every line needed to have regularly scheduled weekly service between their home port and New York City. Therefore, a line required a fixed number of fast, dependable ships, of compatible size and speed. For White Star, in the first decade of 1900, the intention was to construct three such five-day ships.

The sinking of *Titanic* was a serious blow to not only the future plans of the White Star Line, but to their immediate finances. When *Britannic* was likewise sunk, four years later, it was the *coup de grace* for the fine old company. The loss of two of White Star's expensive ferries was a loss from which the line never really recovered. "Thereafter, White Star was in an increasingly fragile financial condition."[14] But, before all these things came to pass, the White Star Line Olympic-Class vessels were the epitome of gracious ocean travel. They were vast structures--majestic and magnificent. Their accommodations were unrivaled. Such care and detail was lavished upon the interiors that no vessel before, or since, has known such fame and attention.

Olympic-Class vessels are of exceptional interest for they were very much floating microcosms of the Edwardian British social system--said vessels being constructed with a maze of tangible barriers erected to keep first-class from having to lower themselves to socialize with

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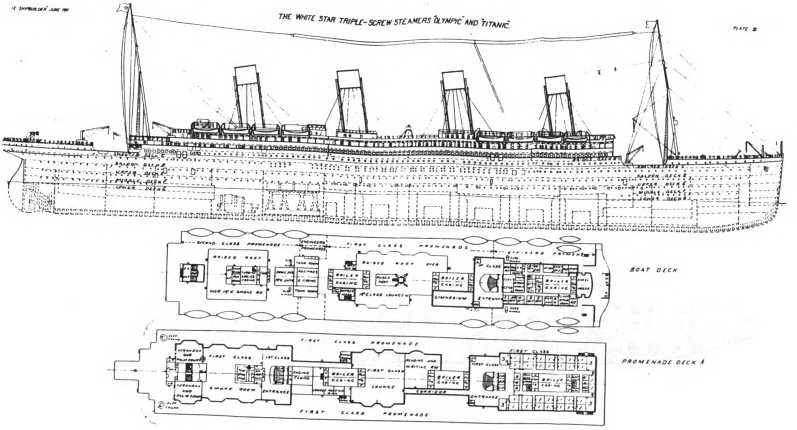
[14]Bonsall, p. 7.

inferiors, and to keep second and third-class from presuming to look too high above their station in life. However, it was not really just a social issue but also one of economics. After all, any *nouveau riche* could get his pick of first-class accommodation, while any nobleman, short of funds might find himself traveling in the company of the unwashed. So, in a sense the Big Three, and others like them, were constructed on the American principal of equal opportunity--based on the ability to pay.

The aim of this thesis was to give an overview of interior design and artifacts of the White Star Olympic-Class vessels as they exemplified not just the characteristics of Victorian/Edwardian ocean travel (being, except for the Cunarder *Aquitania,* the last liners of their genre) but were reflections of the turn-of-the-century turn-of-mind. These three ships were the embodiment of not only British, but American, attitudes and their interiors were indicative of the society and culture of the time.

APPENDIX



"THE SHIPBUILDER" JUNE 1911

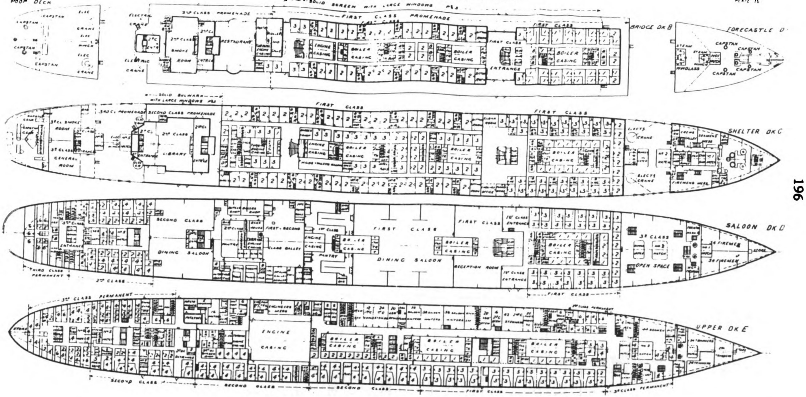
THE WHITE STAR TRIPLE-SCREW STEAMERS "OLYMPIC" AND "TITANIC".

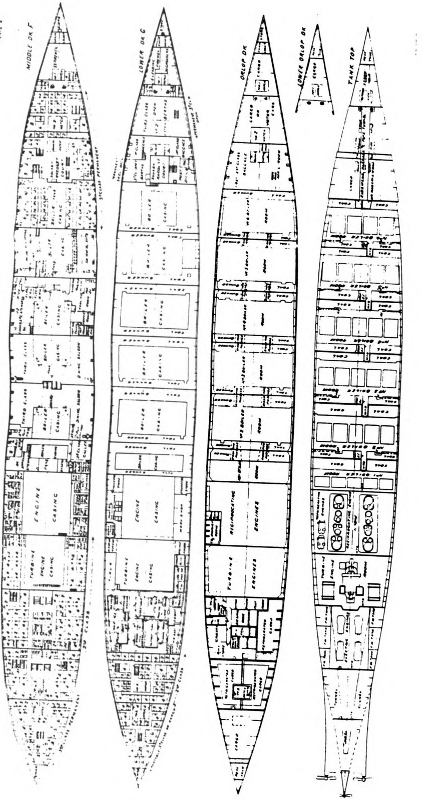
PLATE III

THE SHIPBUILDER JUNE 1911

THE WHITE STAR TRIPLE-SCREW STEAMERS 'OLYMPIC' AND 'TITANIC'.

PLATE 15





THE WHITE STAR TRIPLE-SCREW STEAMERS 'OLYMPIC' AND 'TITANIC'.

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