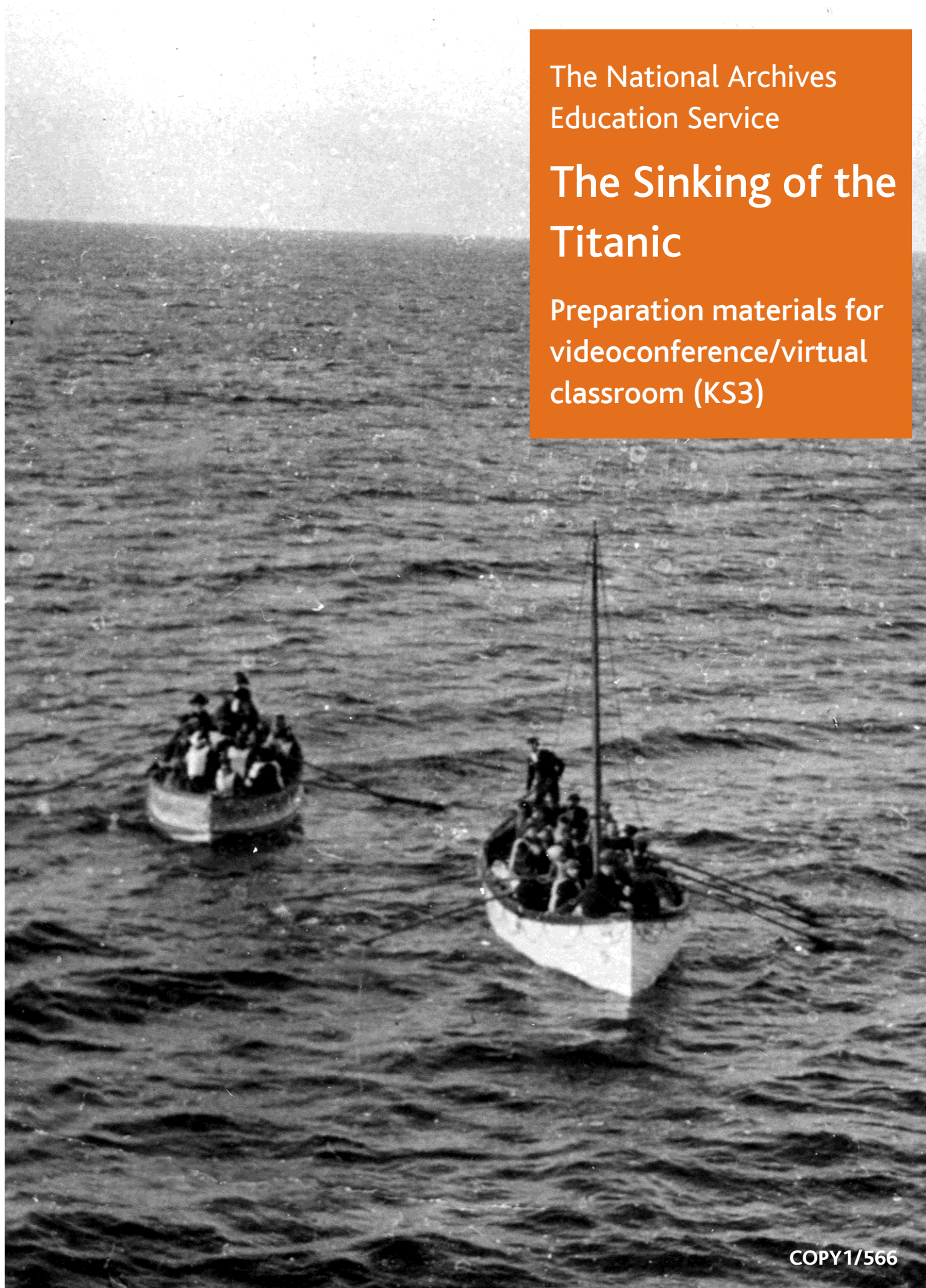


The National Archives
Education Service

The Sinking of the Titanic

Preparation materials for
videoconference/virtual
classroom (KS3)



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The statement of Claim and Verdict in the case of Ryan v. the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd

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Report of Survey of an Emigrant Ship, April 1912.

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Extract from Alfred Ormont's account of his escape from the Titanic

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RMS Titanic Lifeboat No. 6 approaches the rescue ship Carpathia.

Teacher's notes

This pack of documents and transcripts will allow you to prepare your students for the videoconference / virtual classroom session. It is vital that all students complete the preparatory work beforehand, so that they are fully prepared for the session.

This session will investigate why so many lives were lost in the sinking of Titanic. Through close analysis of documents held at The National Archives, students will identify and link different causes of loss of life, reaching a conclusion about which factors were most significant.

Preparation activity

In preparation for this session, students will need to read through Document 1 (J 54/1548) and answer the following questions:

1. What type of document is it, and when was it produced?
2. Who is Thomas Ryan, and why has he taken 'The Oceanic Steam Navigation Company' to court?
3. Patrick Ryan was a passenger on Titanic. Under 'Particulars of negligence', it lists causes of his death. Find as many different causes as you can.

Background information

Over two-thirds of passengers and crew lost their lives in the freezing North Atlantic water when the world's largest and most luxurious passenger liner struck an iceberg just before midnight on 14th April 1912. In response to widespread shock and public outcry, the British Government ordered an inquiry to investigate how the 'unsinkable' ship could have foundered on her maiden voyage. Evidence submitted included testimonies from passengers and crew, ship building plans, accounts from experts, photographs and emergency telegrams. The Court concluded that the disaster was caused by 'excessive speed'; however over 100 years later, debate and controversy still continues to surround Titanic. Others have looked to the insufficient lifeboat capacity, the flawed ship design, lack of organisation, poor visibility, even the missing binoculars, to explain one of the greatest maritime disasters in history.

Useful links

The National Archives' Titanic online exhibition, displaying passenger and crew lists, videos, podcasts and a timeline:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/titanic/

Online Titanic lesson:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/life-aboard-titanic/>

'Women and Children First' podcast:

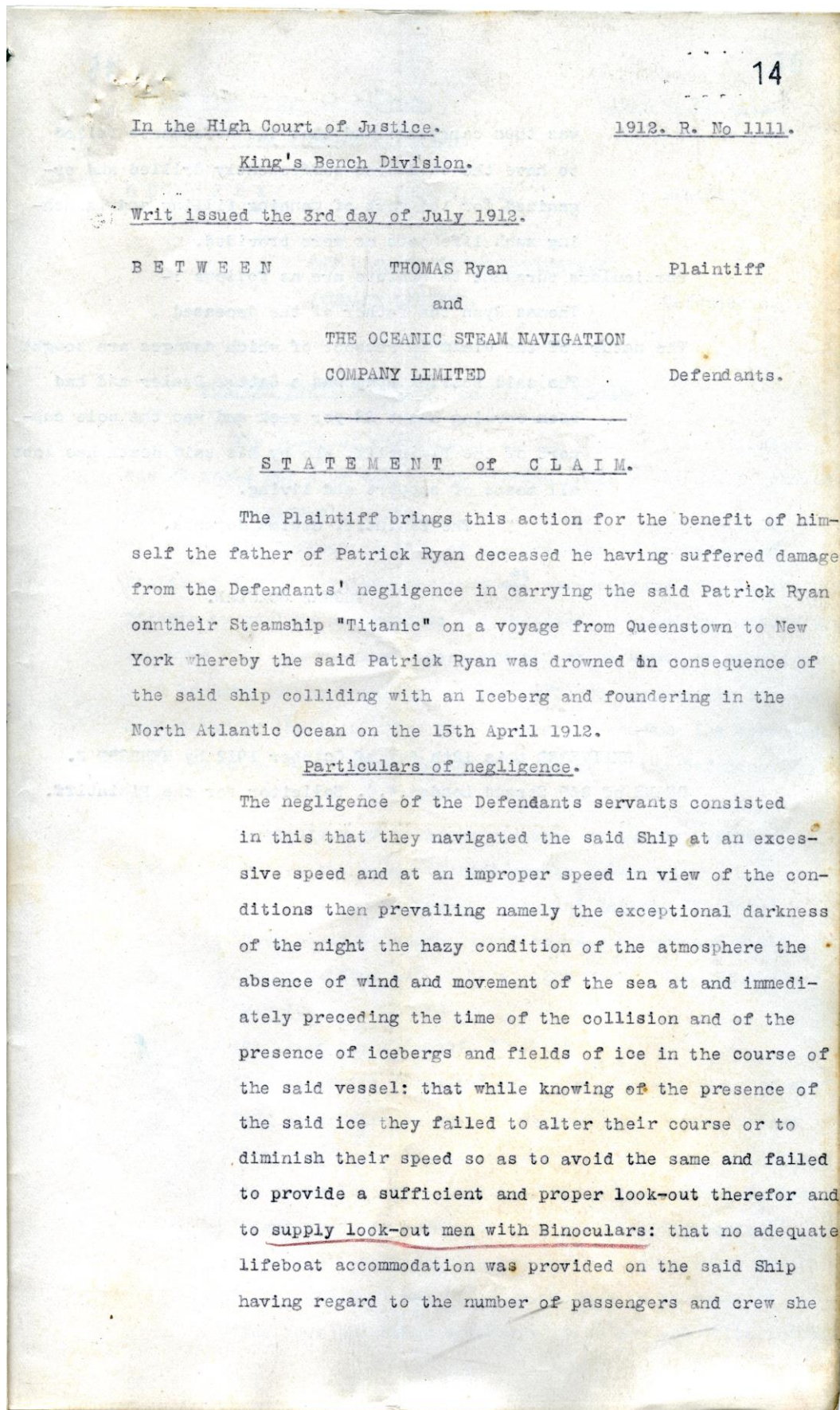
www.media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/women-and-children-first/

'The Official Titanic Story' podcast:

www.media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/titanic-the-official-story/

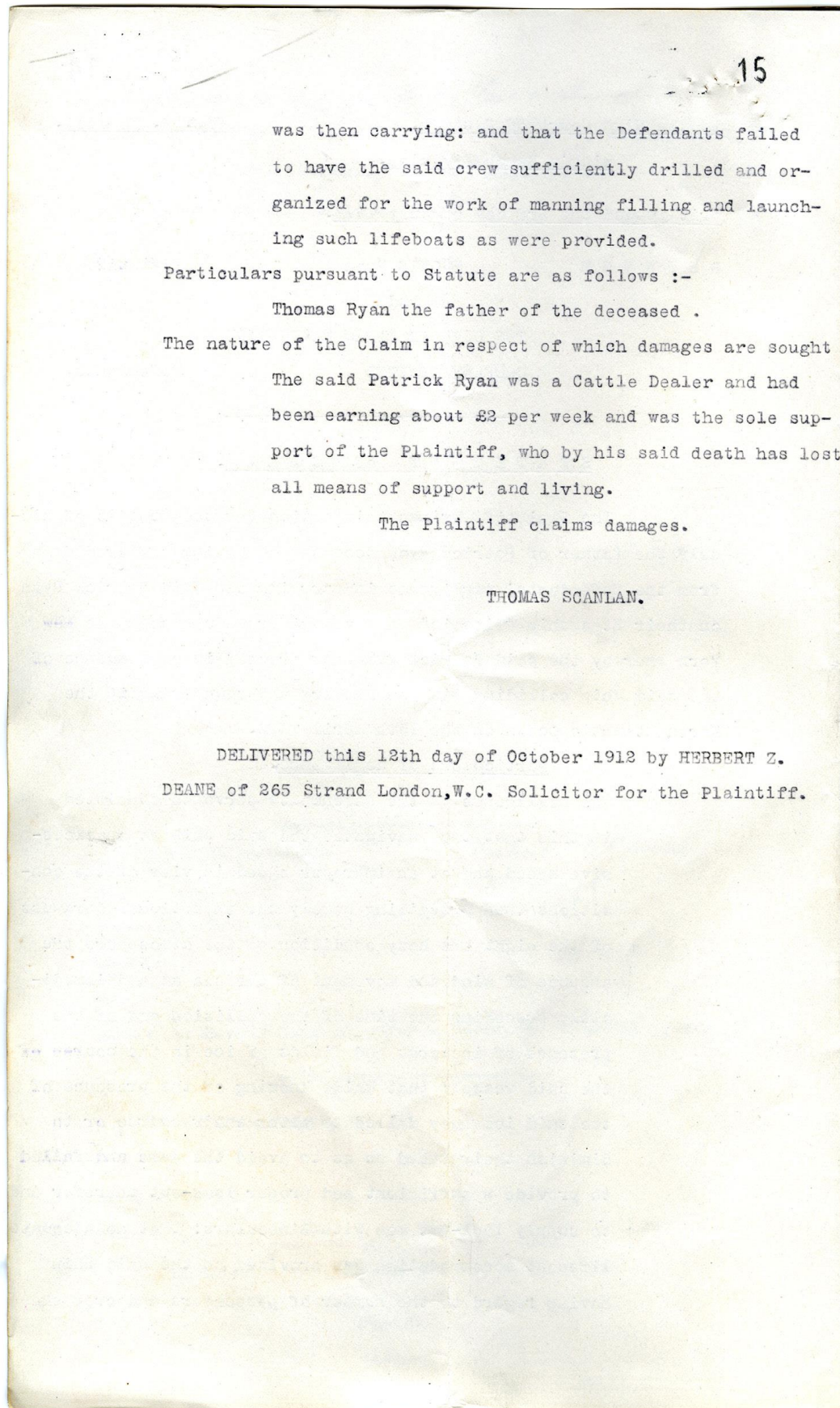
Document 1: J 54/1548

Suing the owners; the statement of Claim and Verdict in the case of Ryan v. the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd, 30 June 1912.



Document 1: J 54/1548 continued

Suing the owners; the statement of Claim and Verdict in the case of Ryan v. the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd, 30 June 1912.



Transcript 1: J 54/1548

Suing the owners; the statement of Claim and Verdict in the case of Ryan v. the Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd, 30 June 1912.

In the High Court of Justice
No. 1111.

1912. R.

King's Bench Division.

Writ issued the 3rd day of July 1912.

BETWEEN

THOMAS Ryan

Plaintiff

and

THE OCEANIC STEAM NAVIGATION
COMPANY LIMITED

Defendants

STATEMENT OF CLAIM.

The Plaintiff brings this action for the benefit of himself the father of Patrick Ryan deceased he having suffered damage from the Defendants' negligence in carrying the said Patrick Ryan on their Steamship "Titanic" on a voyage from Queenstown to New York hereby the said Patrick Ryan was drowned in consequence of the said ship colliding with an Iceberg and foundering in the North Atlantic Ocean on the 15th April 1912.

Particulars of negligence.

The negligence of the Defendants servants consisted in this that they navigated the said Ship at an excessive speed and at an improper speed in view of the conditions then prevailing namely the exceptional darkness of the night the hazy condition of the atmosphere the absence of wind and movement of the sea at and immediately preceding the time of the collision and of the presence of icebergs and fields of ice in the course of the said vessel: that while knowing of the presence of the said ice they failed to alter their course or to diminish their speed so as to avoid the same and failed to provide a sufficient and proper look-out therefor and to supply look-out men with Binoculars: that no adequate lifeboat accommodation was provided on the said Ship having regard to the number of passengers and crew she was then carrying: and that the Defendants failed to have the said crew sufficiently drilled and organized for the work of manning filling and launching such lifeboats as were provided.

Transcript 1: J 54/1548 continued

Particulars pursuant to Statute are as follows : –

Thomas Ryan the father of the deceased.

The nature of the Claim in respect of which damages are sought

The said Patrick Ryan was a Cattle Dealer and had been earning about £2 per week and was the sole support of the Plaintiff, who by his said death has lost all means of support and living.

The Plaintiff claims damages.

THOMAS SCANLAN.

DELIVERED this 12th day of October 1912 by HERBERT Z. DEANE of 265 Strand London, W.C. Solicitor for the Plaintiff.

Document 2: MT 9/920 F

Report of Survey of an Emigrant Ship, April 1912

Surveys 27.

REPORT OF SURVEY

OF
AN EMIGRANT SHIP.

Note—Cancel the portions of this form that do not apply.

BOARDS OF TRADE, SURVEYORS' OFFICE
RECEIVED
11 APR 1912
MARINE SHIP.

QUEEN'S BOMBAY
No 403
11 APR 1912

Name and official number.	Port of registry.	Tonnage. Gross. Net.	Single, twin, triple or quadruple screw. Registered horse-power.	Where and when built.	When last surveyed in dry-dock.
"Titanic" 131428	Liverpool	46328 ⁵¹ 104 21831 ³⁴ 160	Triple screw	Belfast 1912	Belfast 6-3-12
Date of expiration of passenger certificate.	Mean draught of water and freeboard.	Name and address of owner or agent.	Intended voyage.		
2-4-13	34' 0" 31' 4"	Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. 20 James Street Liverpool	Foreign		

MASTER AND OFFICERS.

Rank.	Name in full.	Number of certificate.	Grade.
Master ...	Edward John Smith	14102	Ex. Master
First Mate ...	Wm. McMaster Murdoch	025480	Ex. Master
Second Mate ...	Chas. Herbert Lightoller	024371	Ex. Master
First Engineer...	Joseph Bell	19224	1st class
Second Engineer ...	Wm. Edward Fitzgerald	12823	1st class

LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES.

Description of boats and rafts.	No.	Cubic contents in feet.	No. of persons they will accommodate.	Materials.	Number under davits.	Are they so placed as to be readily got into the water?	Are they provided with the equipments required by the rules?
Boats, Section A.	14	9172	910	Wood	14	Yes	Yes
Boats, " B.	✓						
Boats, " C.	✓						
Boats, " D.	2	648	80	Wood	2	Yes	Yes
Boats, " E. (Caythorpe) (Kleppell)	4	✓	188	Wood with canvas interiors.	✓	Yes	Yes
Life Rafts ...	✓						
Number of life belts.	Number of life buoys.	Is the ship supplied with all the life-saving appliances required by the rules?					
3560	48	Yes					

(322s) (61352) Wt.27577/G.143. 1000 11-10 W B & L

Transcript 2: MT 9/920 F

M23780

Surveys 27.

REPORT OF SURVEY OF AN EMIGRANT SHIP.

NOTE – Cancel the portions of this form that do not apply.

SHIP.

Name and official number.	Port of registry.	Tonnage.		Single, twin, triple or quadruple screw. Registered horse-power.	Where and when built.	Where and when last seen in dry-dock.
		Gross	Net			
'Titanic' 131.428	Liverpool	46328.57	21831.34	Triple Screw	Belfast 1912	Belfast 6-3-12
Date of expiration of passenger certificate.		Mean draught of water and freeboard.		Name and address of owner or agent.		Intended voyage.
2-4-13		34.0 31.4		Oceanic Steam Navigation Co. Ltd. 30 James Street, Liverpool		Foreign

MASTER AND OFFICERS.

Rank.	Name in full.	Number of certificate.	Grade.
Master	Edward John Smith	14102	Ex master
First mate	[arrow to second mate] Wm. McMaster Murdoch	028780	Ex master
Second mate	[arrow to first mate] Henry Tingle Wilde Char. Herbert Lightoller	027371 029706	Ex master Ex master
First engineer	Joseph Bell	19224	1st class
Second engineer	Wm. Edward Farquahson	32883	1st class

Transcript 2: MT 9/920 F continued

LIFE-SAVING APPLIANCES

Description of boats and rafts	No.	Cubic contents in feet	No. of persons they will accommodate	Materials	No. under davits	Are they so placed as to be readily got into the water?	Are they provided with the equipments required by the rules?
Boats, Section A.	14	9172	910	Wood	14	Yes	Yes
Boats, „ B.	-						
Boats, „ C.	-						
Boats, „ D.	2	648	80	Wood	2	Yes	Yes
Boats, „ E.	4	-	188	Wood	-	Yes	Yes
[Englehart collapsible]							
Life rafts	-						
Number of life belts.			Number of life buoys.		Is the ship supplied with all the life-saving appliances required by the rules?		
3560			48		Yes		

(322s) (61352) Wt.27577/G.143. 1000 11-10 W B & L

Document 3: MT 9/920 D

Extract from Alfred Ormont's account of his escape from the Titanic – statement of evidence to the British Commission of Enquiry, 1912.

One of the look-out men was in our boat. He told us that he had seen the iceberg about three minutes before the shock. I am no sailor, but if he did so, we must take into consideration that the ship was going 20 miles an hour at least, i.e. he saw the iceberg 1760 yards (and advised it) before meeting it.

I consider as a passenger, that two people knew that the icebergs were around us – these two are the head of the company and the Captain – I ask, how is it that neither of those two said a word for the safety of the passengers? We passengers always consider that we have to deliver our safety to the captain, and therefore have a right to know if our life is properly looked after, and if in case of records for speed we have to risk it, for the benefit of companies.

Transcript 3: MT 9/920 D

Extract from Alfred Ormont's account of his escape from the Titanic – statement of evidence to the British Commission of Enquiry, 1912.

One of the lookout men was in our [life] boat. He told me that he had seen the iceberg about 3 minutes before the shock [accident]. I am no sailor, but if he did so, we must take into consideration that the ship was going 20 miles an hour at least, i.e. he saw the iceberg 1760 yards (and advised it) before meeting it.

I consider as a passenger that two people knew that icebergs were around us – these two are the head of the company and the Captain – I ask, how is it that neither of those two said a word for the safety of the passengers? We passengers always consider that we have to deliver our own safety to the captain, and therefore have a right to know if our life is properly looked after, and if in case of records for speed we have to risk it, for the benefit of companies.

Document 4: COPY 1/556

RMS Titanic Lifeboat No. 6 approaches the rescue ship Carpathia

