

George ANDREW

Date of Birth (<i>Baptism</i>)	08/07/1834
Place of Birth (<i>From</i>)	St Austell
Role on Ship	Chief Cabin Passenger
Journey Outcome	Saved

Notes:

Born the son of a farmer he was baptised at St Austell's, Cornwall in 1834, to George and Mary ANDREW (his surname often erroneously recorded as ANDREWS). His mother dies in 1846 and his father remarries Philippa BISHOP in 1847 only for him to die thereafter in 1849. George junior appears to have left the 183 acre family farm, "Trenance", by 1851 as he is seen living with his uncle at the time of the census.

Presumably the farm passes to his step-mother, and then presumably it would pass to her son, Thomas, George's much younger half-brother. On that basis it appears a New Zealand land grant would have seemed a decent prospect to a young man starting out in life having to make his own way. He did though travel as a Chief Cabin Passenger so must have had sufficient money to travel in relative comfort albeit one newspaper article recounts that he was travelling "with all he possessed in the world".

On the night of the disaster, George was below deck in the saloon reading. Feeling slightly unwell, he rose to return to his cabin just as the collision occurred. He rushed to the deck with his friend, Frederick Golding, to find the ship rapidly taking on water. Though he initially entered a quarter-boat, he was ordered out of it by Captain Canney, a decision that likely saved his life, as the boat was stove shortly after being lowered.

As the ship began to heel over, George took charge of eighteen-year-old Emma Logan, who had fled her cabin in only her nightdress. In an act of selflessness, he took off his own greatcoat to wrap around her against the "exceedingly cold" night. He held her by the waist as they clung to the mizen rigging for over an hour, watching as Captain Canney was swept overboard.

Realizing the ship was foundering, George proposed to Frederick that they crawl along the mizen mast, which was then resting on the water, hoping the vessel would right itself as it sank. The journey was a desperate struggle; he was "several times nearly overcome himself" while carrying the exhausted Miss Logan. Upon reaching the cross-trees, a heavy sea struck them, washing the girl from his arms. Though he believed she had already expired from the cold, the force of the wave nearly cost him his own life, and he only regained his grip through a "desperate effort".

From his precarious position at the mizen-mast head, he witnessed the final plunge of the hull and the loss of his friend Frederick. He spent the remaining hours of the night clinging to the rigging alongside a young boy named Sutton and the ship's chief steward, their legs submerged in the rising tide, until they were finally rescued by a Deal lugger.

He later settled in Edgbaston, Warwickshire, marrying Ellen BLADON and had at least three children, two of which are known to have had families of their own. It can be seen by his career changes that he was initially in much reduced circumstances after surviving the wreck of the Josephine Willis but his situation did improve with time; from working as a coachman, he is later recorded in censuses as an Inspector of Nuisances or Sanitary inspector for the local corporation. He is believed to have died in 1904, aged 70.