

Maria Lidiard PARKHOUSE

Date of Birth (<i>Baptism</i>)	20/08/1837
Place of Birth (<i>From</i>)	Poole / London
Role on Ship	Second Cabin Passenger
Journey Outcome	Lost

Notes:

Maria Lidiard Parkhouse was born around 1837 in Ratcliffe, London. She was the daughter of Robert Parkhouse, a native of Poole and a former Preventive Officer for the East India Company's Civil Service in Calcutta. At the time of her baptism at Saint Dunstan, Stepney on August 20, 1837, her father was recorded as a mariner. By the age of 19, Maria was employed as a governess and had arranged passage to Auckland, New Zealand, to visit relatives.

On the night of February 3, 1856, Maria was aboard the ship *Josephine Willis*, as a Second Cabin Passenger, off the coast of Folkestone when the vessel was involved in the fatal collision with the steamer *Mangerton*.

Feeling very sick, she chose not to retire to her bed but remained in the cabin conversing with a fellow passenger, Mr. R., almost certainly William Henry Ripley, who survived the disaster and provided the harrowing account of Maria's final moments. When the ship was struck, Mr. Ripley rushed to the deck and saw the crew preparing lifeboats. Though he had a clear opportunity to escape, he heroically returned to the cabin to fetch Maria, only to find the area half full of water and Maria missing.

Upon returning to the deck, Mr. Ripley heard Maria's voice crying out from the rigging: "Oh! Mr. R. oh! come and save me." Despite his efforts, the chaos of the sinking vessel made it impossible for him to reach her, and he could only entreat her to hold firm to the ropes. Shortly after, the ship fell onto its beam ends, and a massive wave swept Maria and eight or nine others into the sea. A single "wild scream" was heard before the ocean went silent. Mr. Ripley, though severely injured in one leg, managed to cling to a part of the mast until he was rescued at eleven o'clock that night. His inability to save the young governess and her "piteous appeals" were reported to have deeply affected him long after the tragedy. While some contemporary reports suggested Maria's body was washed ashore at Walmer, the *Dorset Herald* (21st Feb, 1856) stated that her remains had not been found at the time of their report.