



The Untold Story of the Lebanese on the *Titanic*

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Titanic – April 15, 1912



How many Lebanese on Titanic?

- Al-Huda newspaper on 20 April 1912 – 120-130 on board/31 survived
- NYT on 25 April 1912 – 154 on board
- Canadian newspaper on 27 April 1912 – “over one hundred people from Mount Lebanon were on the boat and only a few were saved”
- Arabic newspapers and community – greater than 165
- Ray Hanania (1998) – 160 total/29 saved
- John G. Moses (2000) – 174 Lebanese, 43 survivors
- Leila Salloum Elias (2011) – 130 total/30 saved

Reasons for Confusion

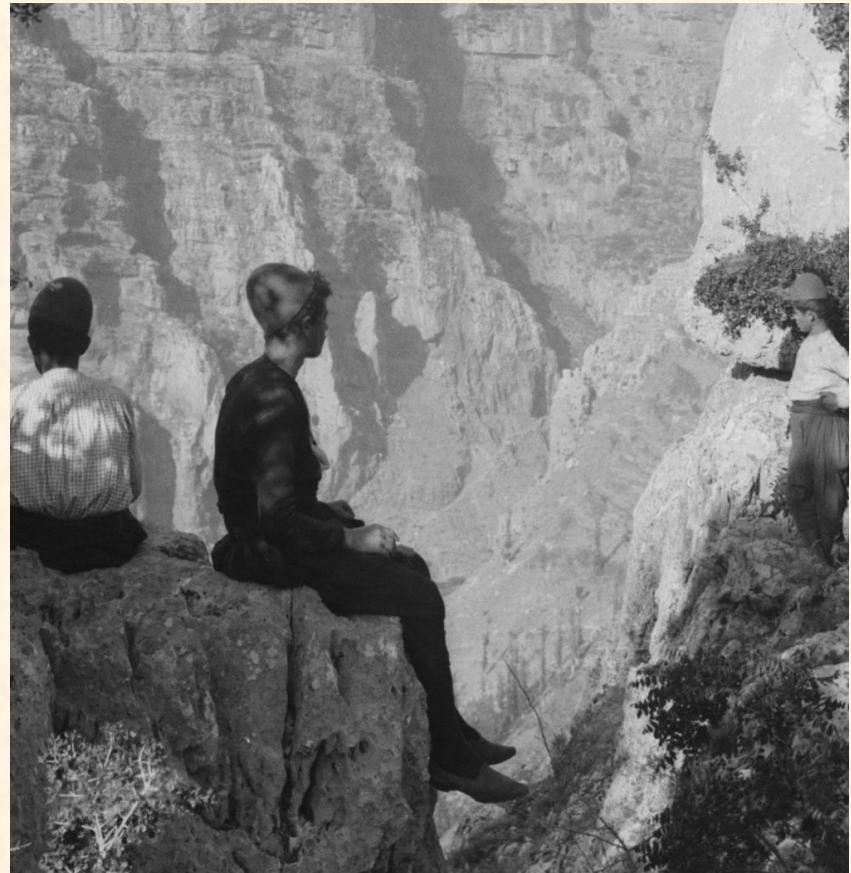
- Names were anglicized
 - *Hanna Tannus Mouawad* = John Thomas
- Names of steerage passengers not on initial English lists reaching New York
- Lebanese names misspelled or modified
 - *Mubarak Hanna Assi*
- Lebanese immigrants classified as Syrians, Turkish, Ottoman, Assyrian

Numbers of Lebanese on Titanic

- Total passengers and crew on Titanic = 2200
- 1500 perished (832 passengers)
- 700 survived
- Best estimate of total Lebanese = 154
- 125 Lebanese were lost, 29 survived
- Lebanese = 10% of passengers and 15% of passengers who perished

Lebanon 1912

- 400 years of Ottoman rule: 1516 - 1919
- Religious persecution & oppression
- Commercial stagnation
- Mount Lebanon: economically impoverished, ill-suited for agriculture, high birth rate, no industry
- Diseases

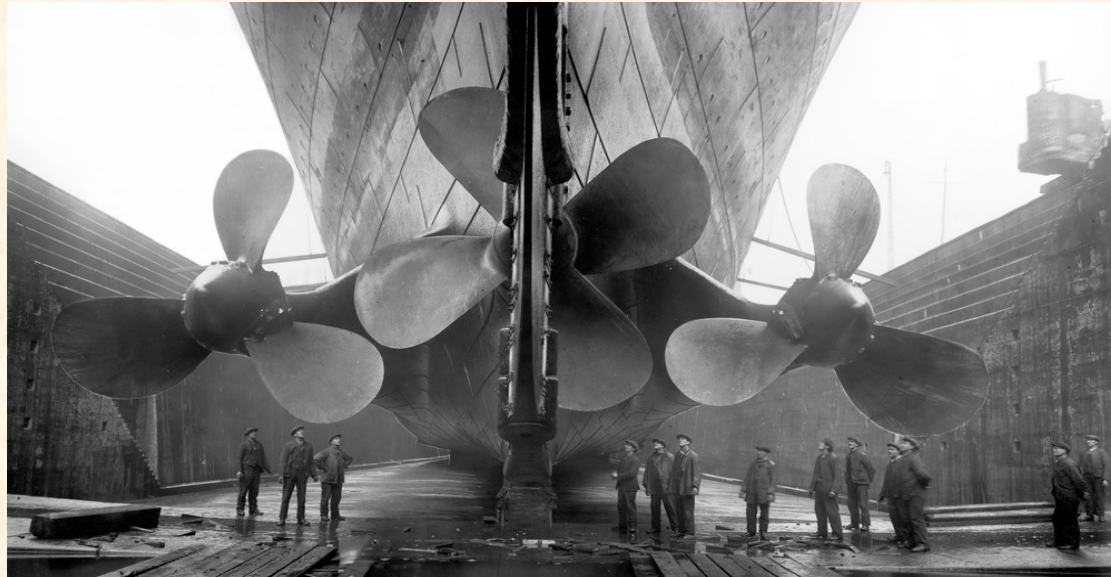


Reasons for Immigration to Amrika

- Peak in 1912-1913: 10,000 annually
- Ottoman oppression, economic stagnation, disease and hunger
- Better opportunities
- Success stories of returning immigrants
- American missionary activity



Why so many Lebanese on Titanic?



- Building of Titanic in Belfast, Ireland
 - *White Star Line*
- News about Titanic reached the Lebanese
- Part of second wave of Mt. Lebanon emigrants

Journey of Lebanese on Titanic

- Down the mountain to Beirut
- Port of Beirut to board a French liner making stops in Mediterranean
- Marseille -Train to Paris - to Cherbourg on “Train Transatlantique”
- Titanic picked up passengers from Cherbourg on evening of April 10, 1912
- Sets sail to Queenstown - Ireland



Lebanese on the Titanic

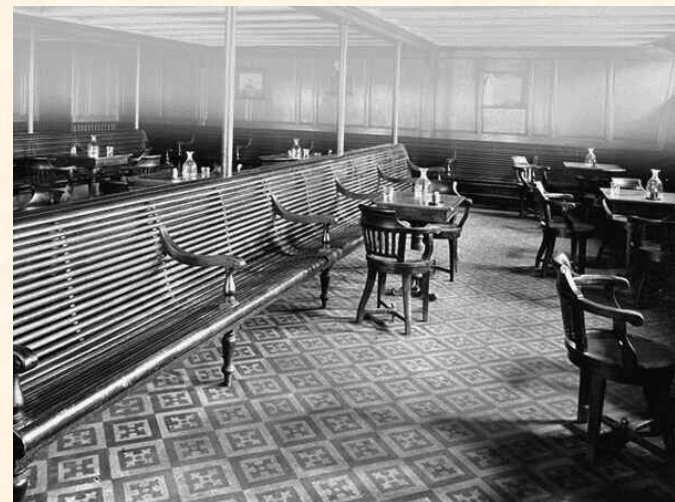


- All were in Third Class or Steerage
- Second Class: Nqoula and Adele Nasrallah
- Only 65 had country of origin listed
- Destinations: Ontario, Canada and Northeastern states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Connecticut

Life onboard Titanic for Lebanese passengers



- “Meen il Raiyis”?
- Accommodations
- Weddings (4)
- Sailing conditions

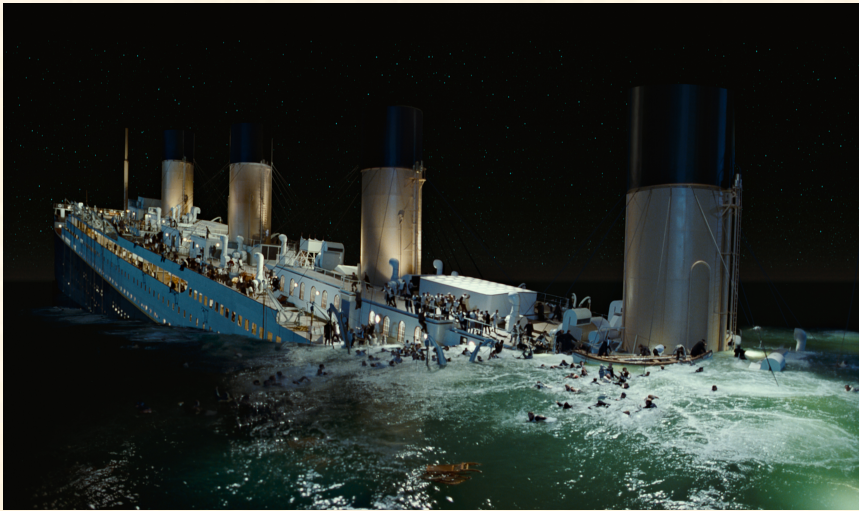


What happened to the Lebanese on that fateful night?

- **11:40pm – Titanic hits iceberg**
- 12am – Ship is “unsalvageable”
- 12:20am – Evacuation begins
- Women & children to the front, men to the rear
- Steerage passengers
 - Told “there was no danger”
 - Instructions in English
 - Remained below deck not knowing what happened
 - Shots fired
 - Iron gates and blocked doors



Titanic – The Last Minutes

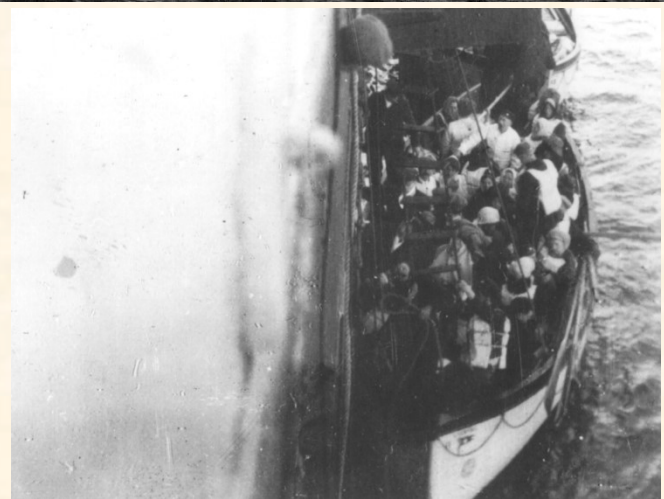
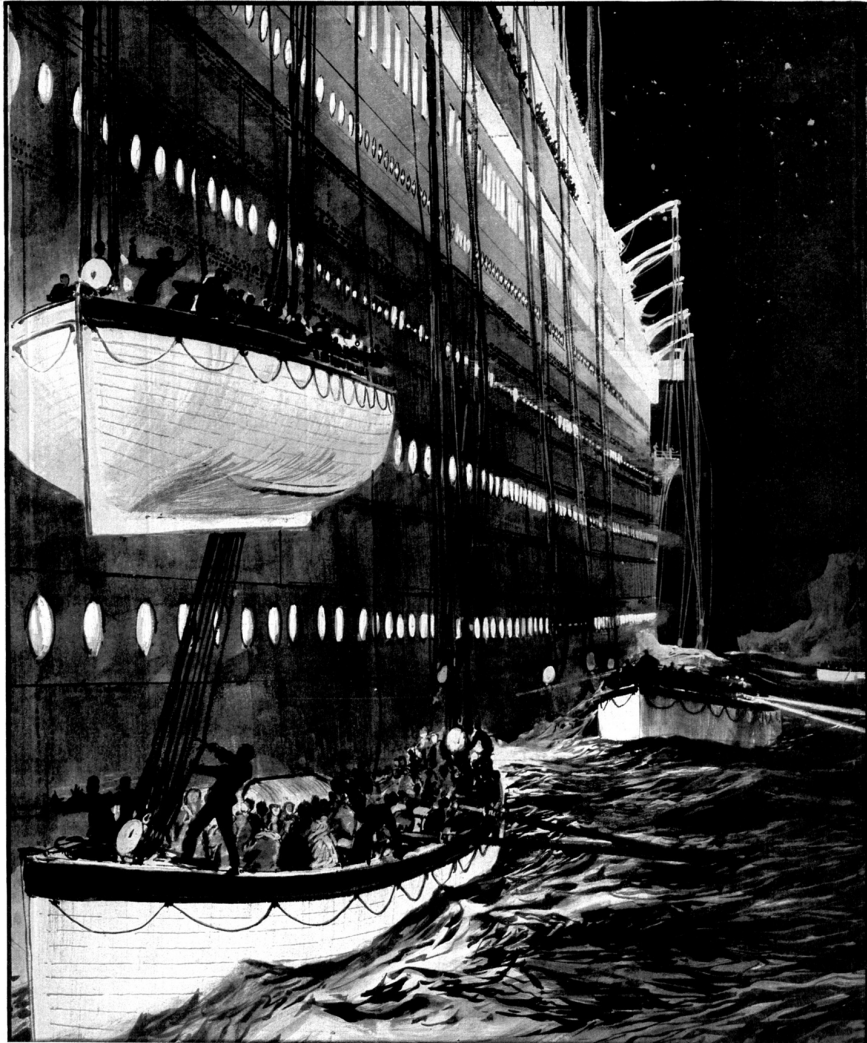


*“The sounds of people...
are something that I can not describe to
you...It’s the most dreadful sound and
there is a terrible silence that follows it”
– Titanic Survivor*

Lebanese Survivors & Victims

- Titanic sank at 2:20am on April 15, 1912
- Lebanese survivors = 29
 - Men 4
 - Women 20
 - Children 5
- Lebanese who perished = 125
- 25% of Lebanese passengers saved vs. 31% of Titanic passengers

Carpathia to the Rescue



Carpathia sails to New York

- Survivors traumatized, freezing and ill
- Taken to 3 NYC hospitals
- Lebanese newspapers
- Lebanese community rallied
- Funds by White Star Line and International Relief



Halifax

- First responder city – **700 miles** from disaster
- Biggest North American port with famed cable ships
- MacKay Bennett – 306 bodies
- Minia – 17 bodies
- Church services & burials May 3 – June 12



Halifax

Fairview Lawn Cemetery



Baron de Hirsh



Mount Olivet Catholic Cemetery



Hilanah Jabbour (16)
Gerios Youssef (44)
Mansour Hanna (23)

Abreen Daher Shedid Abou Shedid
Beirut Grace Labaki
Beirut Malake Attalah
Beirut Constantine Labaki
Beirut Youssef Hani Ibrahim Shawwa
Beirut Ibrahim Mansour Mashaalani
Bekassine Sleiman Abi Nader
Bint Jbeil Amine K Sabbagh
Hardeen Betros Khalil
Hardeen Zahie Badr Khalil
Hardeen Boulos Deeb Hanna
Hardeen Toufik Nakhleh
Hardeen Hanna Elias Samaan
Hardeen Elias Samaan
Hardeen Youssef Samaan
Hardeen Boutros Semaan
Hardeen Bachir Raad Tannous
Hardeen John Tannous
Hardeen Antoine Moussa Yazbeck
Hardeen Gerios Youssef Semaan
Hardeen Hanna Sleiman
Hardeen Sleiman
Hardeen Tanios Hourani
Hasbaya Fares Chehab
Kfarmishky Sleiman Khalil Attalah
Kfarmishky Catherine David Barbar

Kfarmishky Saiide Barbar
Kfarmishky Youssef Hanna Karam
Kfarmishky Maria Elias Karam
Kfarmishky Joseph Jr. Elias
Kfarmishky Tannous Ibrahim Nasrallah Elias
Kfarmishky Assaf Tanios Tohmeh
Kfarmishky Hanna Mansour El Hajj
Kfarmishky Youssef Chahine Elias
Kfarmishky Mansour Nofal
Kfarmishky Assad Hanna Rizk
Sir'Il Saado Hanna Nasr Rizk
Sir'Il Raffoule Bakhous Boulos
Sir'Il Sultana Boulos
Sir'Il Nourelain Boulos
Sir'Il Akar Boulos
Thoum Gerios Youssef Abi Saab
Thoum Tannous Gerios Daher
Thoum Hanna Tannous Moawad
Thoum Tannous Hanna Moawad
Tibnine Mustafa Nasr Almi
Tibnine Rachid El Haq Abdul Hussein Bazzi
Tibnine Amineh Hussein Saad
Tibnine Khalil Hussein Saad
Tibnine Hassan Saad
Tibnine Yousif Ahmed Wazna
Tibnine Toufic Nakhle El Khoury
Tibnine Assad Hassan Torfa
Tripoli Mohamed Badr
Zahle Nicolas Khalil Nasrallah
Zghorta Hanna Mikhael El Aam
Zghorta Boutros Tannous Kaadi
Zghorta Ghantous Boutros Kaadi
Zghorta Sarkis Lahoud Ishaq Moawad

Villages of Lebanese on the Titanic

NORTH

- Ayn al-Rahib - Akkar
- Btarram - Koura
- Choueir
- Ebrine
- Hakur
- Hardin – Batroun
- Kfaraabida – Batroun
- Shana
- Sereel
- Thoum – Batroun
- Tripoli
- Zghorta

BEKAA

- Kfarmishki
- Zahleh

SOUTH

- Tebnine
- Bint Jbeil

BEIRUT

- Al-Hadath
- Beirut

“They shared the pain but not the glory”

Ebrine



Ebrine

Story of Daher Abi Chedid (22 years old)

- In love with a girl from same village.
- Escapes arrest by Ottomans
- Takes boat in port of Selaata-Cyprus-Cherbourg-Titanic
- Froze to death during Titanic sinking

Nakad basement – tragedy occurs



Ebrine – Daher Abi Chedid

- Body recovered by the Mackay Bennett
- Sent to Halifax, Nova Scotia first
- Laid to rest on May 4th 1912 in Mount Carmel, PA

NO. 9. - MALE. - ESTIMATED AGE, 22. -
SCAR UNDER RIGHT SIDE OF CHIN HAIR, DARK.

CLOTHING - Grey mixture suit;
handkerchief with blue border.

NO MARKS

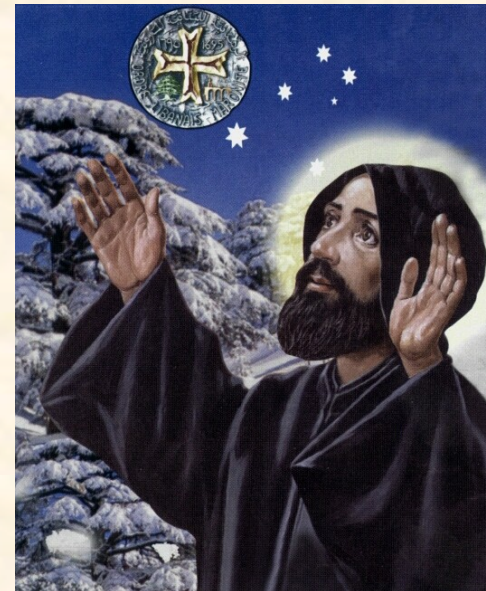
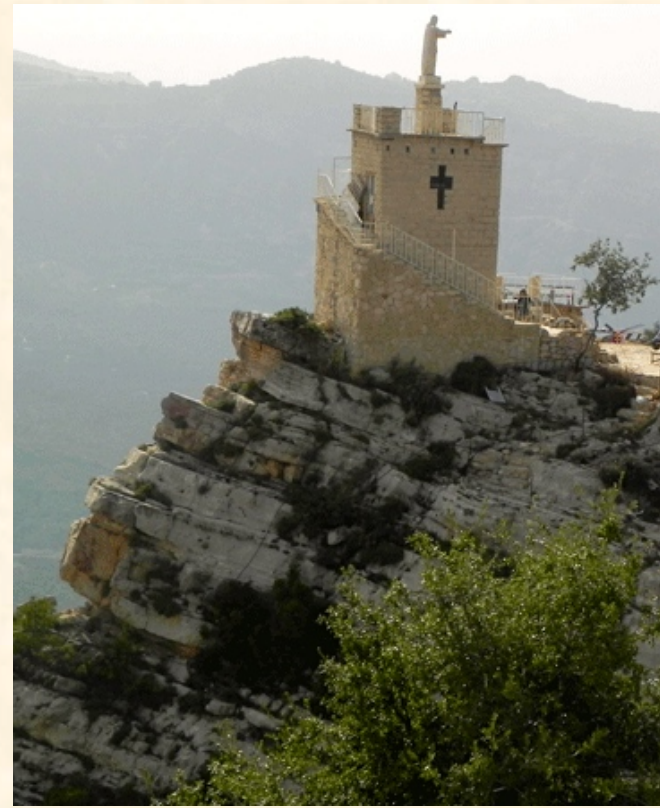
EFFECTS - Moustache brush; pocket mirror
and pencil; purse with French, Turkish,
and Austrian money.

THIRD CLASS: PROBABLY S. FRENCH OR
ITALIAN.

NAME - NAHIL SCHEDID (on health certif.)

Hardin

- Caza of Batroun – mountainous region famous for St. Hardini
- 19 people from Hardin on Titanic - only 7 survived



Hardin

Story of Sileneh Dagher (Age 16) and Antoun Yasbeck

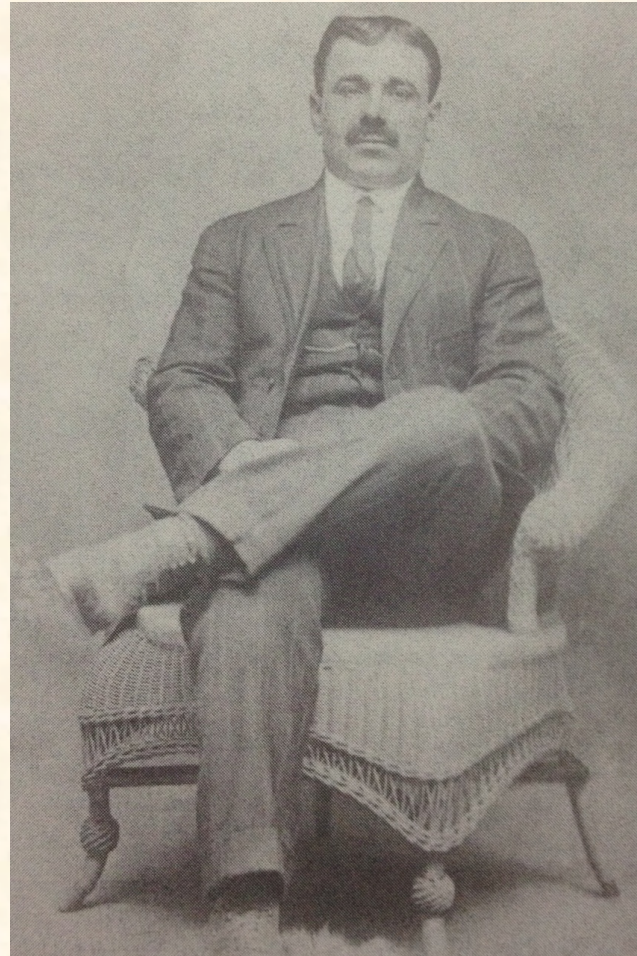
- Antoun was forced off lifeboat
- Sileneh remarried, had 9 children
- Told story of what Hardin men did
- Died at age 69 in Norfolk, Virginia



Hardin

Story of Moubarak Assi (24 years old)

- Farm worker, strong, known for his beautiful voice
- Deacon of Patriach Elias Howayek
- Story he told about Hardin men
- “Dabke Ya Chabeb”
- Business in Michigan



Hardin Zajal

*Cry and weep, Hardin for your
men who drowned
You lost 11 young men, aged 25
7 of them are single, the rest are
married
None of them have gray hair, all
were 25*

ابكي ونوحى يا حردين.....عالشباب الغرقانين
غرق منك حد عشر شاب..... بسن الخمسة وعشرين
منهم سبعة عزابي.....والبقية مزوجين
ما فيهم واحد شايب..... كلن بالخمس وعشرين



Kfarmishki - Bekaa



Kfarmishki

Highest death toll – 13 out of 14

Only 1 body recovered by Mackay-Bennett:
Mansour Hanna

NO. 188. - MALE. - ESTIMATED AGE,
23. BLACK - HAIR, VERY DARK.
CLOTHING - Grey flannel drawers
and singlet.
EFFECTS - Pocket knife; amber
beads; purse.
THIRD CLASS.
NAME - MERCIA HAUSEA.

Kfarmishki

Story of survivor Zad Assaf (Mariana Assaf) – 45yo

- On Titanic to go back to her husband in Ontario
- Interview by Ottawa Citizen - April 24th 1912
 - Elias Tannous Nasrallah
 - Pushed into one of last lifeboat
- Admitted to hospital for observation
- Joined her husband in Ontario



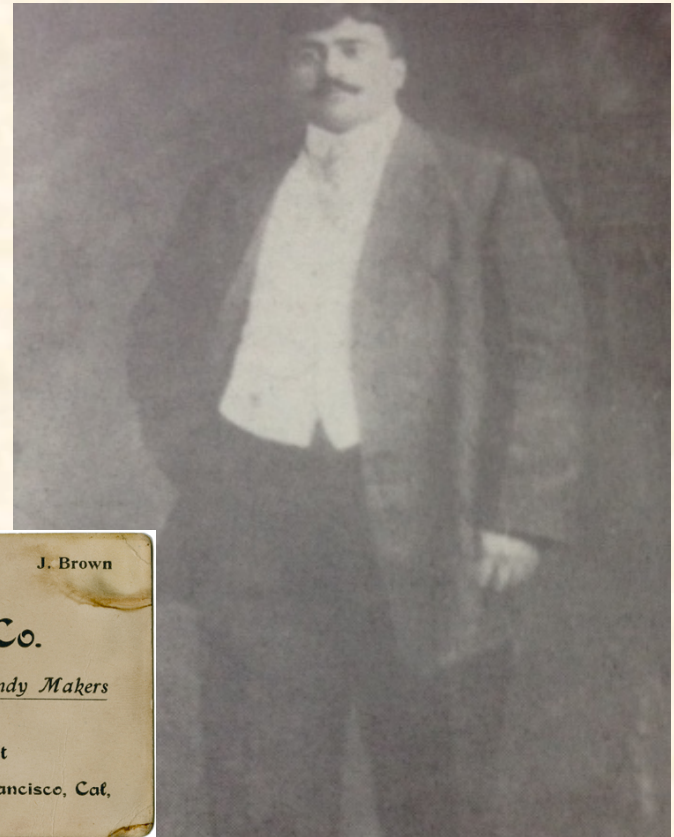
Zahleh - Bekaa



Zahleh

Story of Nqoula Nasrallah (28) and his wife Adele Hakim (14)

- Second class passengers
- Nqoula got Adele on lifeboat No.14
- Helped kids get onto lifeboats
- His body #43 found by Mackay-Bennett
- Laid to rest in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Maspeth, NY



Al-Hadath – Suburb of Beirut



Al-Hadath

Story of Emir Fares Chehab (20 years old)

- Going to NY to study his passion: music
- Helped his Lebanese countrymen by translating instructions
- Playing his Oud until the very end
- A true hero!



Tibnine - Sour



Tebnine

Story of Fatima Mousselmani (22 years old)

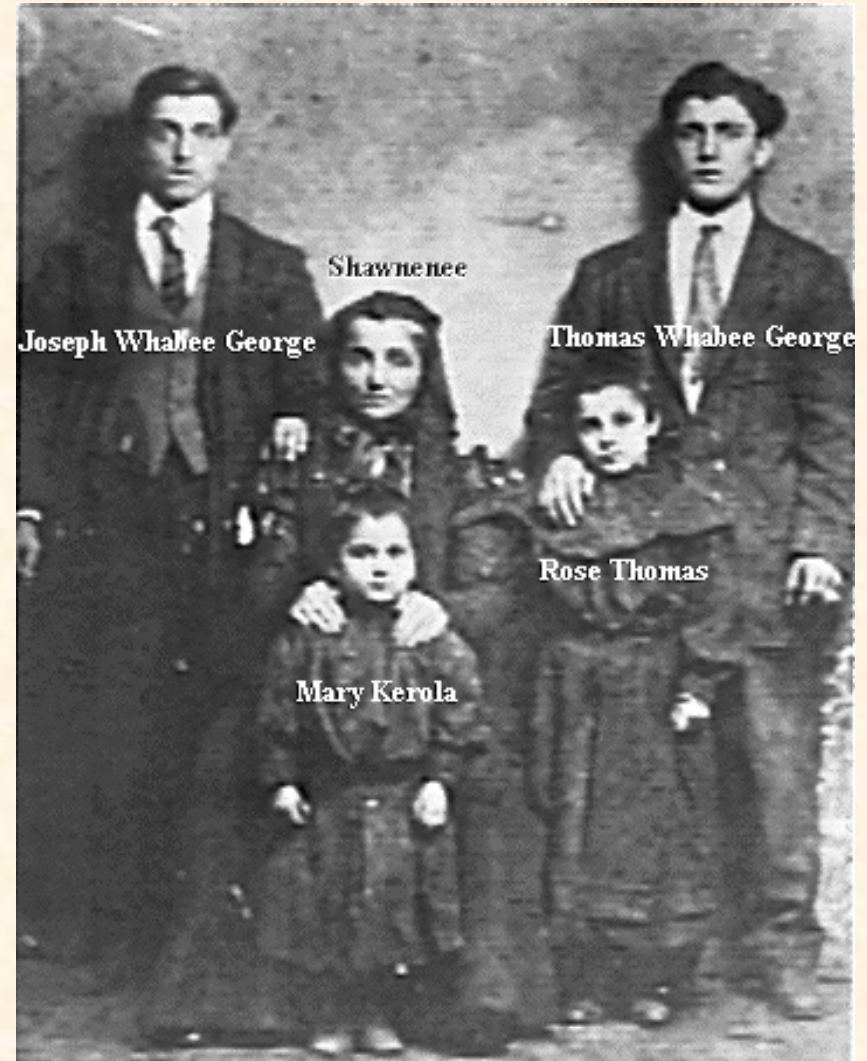
- Traveled with two cousins
- To Michigan City, Indiana
- Saved a 4 year-old child
- Lost her cousins
- Moved to Dearborn, MI
- Married and divorced
- Died at age 81



Thoum - Batroun

Story of Shaanineh Abi Saab (38 years old)

- Lived in Fghal
- Married with five children
- Left in 1906 with her 2 youngest – Youngstown, Ohio
- Hard-working: Peddled goods
- Husband became depressed and died of asthma in 1907
- 17 yo son developed pneumonia in Lebanon



Shaanineh Abi Saab on Titanic

- Boarded with 4 of her cousins: Hanna Tannous, his son, Gerios Youssef and Tannous Daher
- Banoura Ayoub (14yo) from Kfaraabida
- Cousin Gerios pushed her and Banoura into Collapsible C



“We watched the lights of the big boat with our hearts in our throats. Then we saw it sink” – Sharon Herald, April 14, 1937

Shaanineh Abi Saab in New York



Hebrew Sheltering & Immigrant Aid Society
New York

Shaanineh Abi Saab after Titanic – Jennie George



Died in Sharon, PA on April 20, 1947



1.5 billion ice cream cones/year!

Thoum – Batroun



Story of Gerios Youssef (45 years old)

- Second trip to America
- Singer sewing machine
- Left wife and 6 kids
- Steel Mills of Youngstown, Ohio



View of Beirut at Time



Gerios Youssef on Titanic

- Traveled to Cherbourg with 4 relatives
- Saved his cousin Shaanineh and young girl Banoura
- Refused to disguise and get on the lifeboat



"I would rather die with my countrymen...I am no different from anyone else"



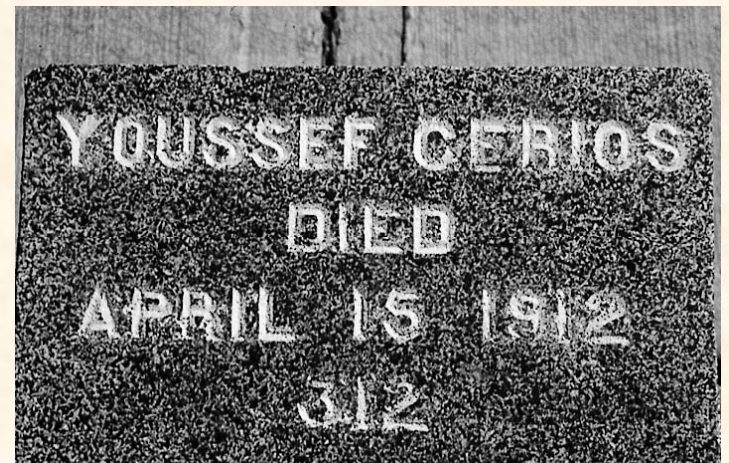
"يسواني ما يسوا الكل"

Gerios Youssef - Thoum



Body #312 found by *Minia* on April 26, 1912

Buried in Mount Olivet
Cemetery in Halifax on
May 10th, 1912



Gerios Youssef Abi Saab

Mount Olivet Cemetery, Halifax



Youssif Gerios

Originally from Lebanon, Gerios Youssef (as his name should appear) was immigrating to the United States to work in the steel mills in Ohio. He boarded the *Titanic* in Cherbourg, France. He was travelling with four cousins, two of whom were women. Both women survived.

An underwater scene with sunlight filtering through the water, creating a blue and white glow at the top of the frame. The water is dark blue and the light rays are visible as bright, shimmering patterns.

This presentation is dedicated to the memory of

Gerios Youssef Abi Saab
and all the Lebanese who died
on the *Titanic*

Thank you!

References

- Leila Salloum – *The Dream and then the Nightmare*
- Elie Fares – *A Separate State of Mind Blog*
- John Moses – *From Mt Lebanon to the Sea of Darkness*
- Ray Hanania
- Nabil Youssef - *Thoum*
- Encyclopedia-titanica.org

Acknowledgments

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- International Lebanese Titanic Committee

Blog – <http://abisaab.wordpress.com>