

The New York Times.

April 19, 1912* page 1

HOW COL. ASTOR DIED TO LET WOMAN LIVE

**Gallantly Gave Up His Place in
Lifeboat, Say Titanic
Survivors.**

CALMLY LIT A CIGARETTE

**And Said to His Bride, "Good-Bye,
Dearie, I'll Join You Later"—
She Wanted to Stay, Too.**

That Col. John Jacob Astor went to his death nobly was attested by many survivors of the Titanic, one of whom is Miss Hilda Slater. When the ship struck the iceberg Miss Slater went on deck. She was ordered to go back to bed, which she did on being assured there was no danger. A half hour later she heard confusion on deck and heard some one cry: "Order every one to don life belts." Running on deck after dressing again Miss Slater was ordered to the boat deck aloft.

"When I got there," she said, "I found an indescribable scene. A number of the steerage men passengers had attempted to seize one of the boats, and there was a brisk revolver fire; many men fell under it. The prompt and drastic action of the officers restored order.

"There were many touching scenes as the boats put off. I saw Col. John Jacob Astor hand his young wife into a boat tenderly and then ask an officer whether he might also go. When permission was refused he stepped back and coolly took out his cigarette case.

"'Good bye, dearie,'" he called gaily, as he lighted a cigarette and leaned over the rail. 'I'll join you later.'

"Another man, a Frenchman I think, approached one of the boats about to be lowered. He had with him two beautiful little boys. An officer waved him back sternly. 'Bless you,' he said, 'I don't want to go, but for God's sake take the boys. Their mother is waiting for them in New York.' The boys were taken aboard."

Miss Slater dwelt at length on the large percentage of the crew saved. On the boat that carried her away from the sinking ship were nine other women and more than thirty firemen. But she paid a tribute to the orchestra, which played until the boat went down.

Miss Margaret Hays of 304 West Eighty-third Street is another survivor who praised Col. Astor's bravery.

Miss Hays said:

"When the Titanic struck I did not feel the shock very much. I made my way to the rail, where all was excitement, and was assisted into a lifeboat.

"Col. Astor with his wife came on deck at that time, and both got into another boat. Col. Astor had his arms about his wife and assisted her into the boat. At the time there were no women waiting to get into the boats and the ship's officers at that point invited Mr. Astor to get into the boat with his wife. The Colonel, after looking around and seeing no women, got into the boat, and his wife threw her arms about him.

"The boat in which were Col. Astor and his wife was about to be lowered, when women came running out on deck. Raising his hand, Col. Astor stopped the preparations to lower his boat, and, stepping out, assisted the women into the boat.

"Mrs. Astor cried out and wanted to get out of the boat with her husband, but the Colonel patted her on the back and said something I could not hear. As the boat in which I was sitting was being lowered, I heard Col. Astor say:

"The ladies will have to go first.'"
"Major Butt and John Jacob Astor died like heroes." Before she could tell more she was hurried away.

Mrs. Churchill Candee of Washington, D. C., who was taken from her room with both legs broken, gave an account of how some of the best-known people met their fate, before she was hurried away to a hospital.

"All the women were saved," she said, "except those who preferred to die with their husbands. Mrs. Straus was one of these. She could have gone into a boat, but she refused. I last saw her standing on the upper deck with her husband, watching the boats pull away."

"What about Col. Astor?"
"He was noble," she promptly replied. "He came forward with his wife to the lifeboat, but when he was told he must let her go alone he just stood to one side."

"How did the men behave?"
"They were noble, just noble," Mrs. Candee said with emphasis. "There was no confusion, and every one let the women get into the boats first."

Then Mrs. Candee spoke of the accident and how it came about. She said that the coxswain of her boat was the quartermaster who had been at the wheel when the iceberg was struck. She saw the great mass of ice next day, and it stood high over the water perhaps eighty feet high and had two pinnacles. But the quartermaster said they could not see it from the bridge.

"Were you going fast?"
"Yes, we were trying to make 570 miles that day, and we were steaming at top speed."

Then Mrs. Candee told how she had seen the last of the Titanic. It canted to one side and slowly settled in the water. The bow went first, and then the stern slowly came up.

There were a series of explosions, and the great hull settled down. The boats had rowed away as fast and as far as they could, and as the Titanic disappeared, Mrs. Candee said, there was no suction felt, but there was a most horrible noise.

The last she saw of the vessel was the sight of Mr. and Mrs. Straus standing on the upper deck, and until a few minutes before the end the band was playing.

