

**Guide to the Mary Lines Letter, 1912 April 16  
MS0435**

**The Mariners' Museum Library**

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Processed by Johanna Quinn, 2009

## DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

**Repository:** The Mariners' Museum Library

**Title:** Mary Lines Letter

**Inclusive Dates:** 1912

**Catalog number:** MS0435

**Physical Characteristics:** 1 letter (correspondence), 1 envelope

**Languages:** French, English

**Creator:** Lines, Mary Conover, 1895-1975

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Conover Lines was born July 27, 1895 in Mt. Vernon, New York, the daughter of Dr Ernest H. Lines and Elizabeth Lindsey James. Her mother was born in 1861, in Burlington, New Jersey, the daughter of Benjamin L. James and Anne Langstrom. Her father was President of the New York Life Insurance Company. The Lines family had lived for many years in Paris, France, and Mary was educated in both Paris and Italy.

In April 1912, Mary and her mother were traveling to the United States to attend her brother's graduation from Dartmouth College. Dr. Lines was to accompany the women but was prevented by business at the last moment. Mary and her mother boarded RMS *Titanic* at Southampton as first class passengers and occupied cabin D-28. *Titanic* was a British ocean liner of the White Star Line that was, at over 46,000 tons and 850 feet long, the largest vessel in the world at the time. It began its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York on April 10, 1912, stopping at Cherbourg and Cobh (formerly Queenstown), Ireland for passengers. On the night of April 14, it hit an iceberg in the north Atlantic and sank in the early morning of April 15, killing 1,495 of the 2,207 people on board. During the sinking, an officer tied lifebelts on Mrs. Lines and her daughter, saying: "We are sending you out as a matter of precaution. We hope you will be back for breakfast." The two women were rescued later that morning by the eastbound passenger liner *Carpathia* from lifeboat 9.

In 1919, Mary married to Sergeant Holbrook Wellman. They settled in Topsfield, Massachusetts and had a daughter and two sons. Mary Lines Wellman died November 23, 1975, at her home in Topsfield.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of a six page letter written in French by Mary Lines to her friend and schoolmate, Helen M. Iselin, at Cours Fénelon, a girl's school in Paris. Dated April 16, 1912, the letter was written aboard the RMS *Carpathia* and recounts the experiences of Mary Lines and her mother Elizabeth James Lines during the sinking of the *Titanic*. Also included is the envelope addressed to Miss Iselin in Paris, France, postmarked April 18, 1912 from New York.

The collection is organized into 1 folder.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Accession Number

n/a

### Accession Date

2004

### Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

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### Note to Users

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

## RELATED MATERIALS

The Library holds other collections directly relating to *Titanic*, to her sinking, and to the survivors of the disaster. Principal among them are the Frank and Leah Aks Collection (MS0140), the Helen R. Ostby Letter (MS0475), and a deck plan of the vessel (MP01188). The Steamship Ephemera Collection (MS0015) and the Sheet Music Collection (MS0093) also contain individual pieces related to *Titanic*.

A translation in Microsoft Word format of the letter is available for consultation in the Library. The translation may be converted to a portable document file at patron request.

## FILE GUIDE

### BOX 1

**Folder 1**      Correspondence  
                    Contains 1 6-page letter and 1 envelope.

## SOURCES CONSULTED

Beavis, Debbie. *Who Sailed on Titanic? The Definitive Passenger Lists*.

Ian Allen Publishing: Surrey, 2002

Hoyt, Henry, M. "Background notes regarding Helen Iselin and Mary Lines". 2003

Lengyel, Dr. Árpád. "Titanic and Carpathia" *Titanic Communicator*,  
vol. 25, no. 155, p146-151

*Encyclopedia Titanica*, s.v. "Lines, Miss Mary Conover," <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/titanic-survivor/mary-conover-lines.html>

**SUBJECTS**

Carpathia (Steamship : 1903)

Iselin, Helen, 1895-1974

Titanic (Steamship : 1912)

Shipwreck survival

Lines, Mary Conover, 1895-1975

James, Elizabeth Lindsey, 1861-1942

Shipwreck victims