

## **“Mrs. Emma Bucknell survives Titanic despite disregarding instincts”**

*By Walter Watkins*

“Trust your own instinct. Your mistakes might as well be your own, instead of someone else's.”

Mrs. Emma Bucknell, the wife of William Bucknell, was just one of 2228 passengers on the Titanic's maiden voyage. However unlike her fellow passengers, Mrs. Bucknell seems to have had an inclination of the ship's upcoming disaster.

Ever since 1900, Mrs. Bucknell had been traveling to see her daughter Countess Margaret Pecorini in Florence, Italy annually. During the winter of 1911, Mrs. Bucknell's son, Howard, asked his mother to either cancel or change the date of her upcoming visit to Italy. Howard was set to graduate from Medical School in Georgia in late April 1912 and wished for his mother to be present. Mrs. Bucknell opted to move up her trip to see Margaret and planned to return in Mid April on the Titanic.

Mrs. Bucknell set off for Florence in early March 1912. Before reaching her daughter, Mrs. Bucknell ran into her friend, Margaret “Molly” Brown. “The Unsinkable Molly Brown” and Mrs. Bucknell became close acquaintances owing to the pair's persistent trans-Atlantic travels. The two discussed their travel plans in Europe and the two planned to meet again before sailing for home on the Titanic.

Mrs. Bucknell continued her annual expedition to see her daughter and reached Florence, Italy in early March 1912. As her time with her daughter in Florence began to wind down, Mrs. Bucknell began to have ominous premonitions about her upcoming trip on the Titanic.

Mrs. Bucknell decided to tell her daughter about her anxiety saying, “Margaret, the closer I get to going home, the more frightened I become... it isn't as though I haven't been traveling by sea for years and really enjoying doing so, but this time I awaken in the middle of the night or first thing in the morning with such a foreboding and it doesn't make sense. The ship we're taking is brand new, touted as the safest ship ever built; you have heard all the hype about it.” Margaret asked her mother to change her travel arrangements if she felt in danger, but Mrs. Bucknell was determined to fulfill the promise she had made to her son Howard. To make the graduation, Mrs. Bucknell had to travel on the Titanic. Justifying her decision, Mrs. Bucknell told Margaret, “That's all they are, instincts, a sorry excuse for being late.”

Prior to boarding the Titanic, Mrs. Bucknell also voiced her concerns with her confidant, Mrs. Margaret Brown. Mrs. Brown recalled shortly after the sinking, “She (Mrs. Bucknell) said she feared boarding the ship; she had an evil forebodings that something might happen. We laughed at her premonitions and shortly afterwards sought our quarters.”

However, the laughter between the two would soon turn to tragedy. Five days after boarding, the Titanic foundered in the North Atlantic Ocean. Luckily, both Mrs. Bucknell and “the unsinkable” Margaret “Molly” Brown managed to survive the Titanic’s fate. Mrs. Bucknell’s tale should serve as a reminder to us that that sometimes it IS better to trust one’s instincts.

(The Union County Historical Society will be presenting a symposium on the Titanic at the Campus Theatre on Sunday, September 16 at 1 PM. The community is encouraged to attend. Tickets may be purchased at the Union County Historical Society Office.)