

**A TITANIC SURVIVOR'S STORY:**

**THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA**  
**CONNECTION**

Elsie Slyman Belman 1974 Washington D.C.



**A  
TITANIC  
SURVIVOR'S  
STORY**

**THE  
FREDERICKSBURG  
VIRGINIA  
CONNECTION**

**ELSIE SLYMAN  
BELMAN**

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## **PREFACE**

**MIKE NASSEF BALMAN**

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Today, July 20, 1997 my grandfather, Mike Nassef Balman died and this is my pledge to keep his story alive. How he was the reincarnation of the 12 year old boy who died on the Titanic April 14, 1912., the 12 year old boy who was born instantly to the man who tried so hard to save him. The man who tried to save him was my great grandfather, Nassef Cassem.

And now at this time in 2005 I am putting to words a strange and true incident in the life of man.

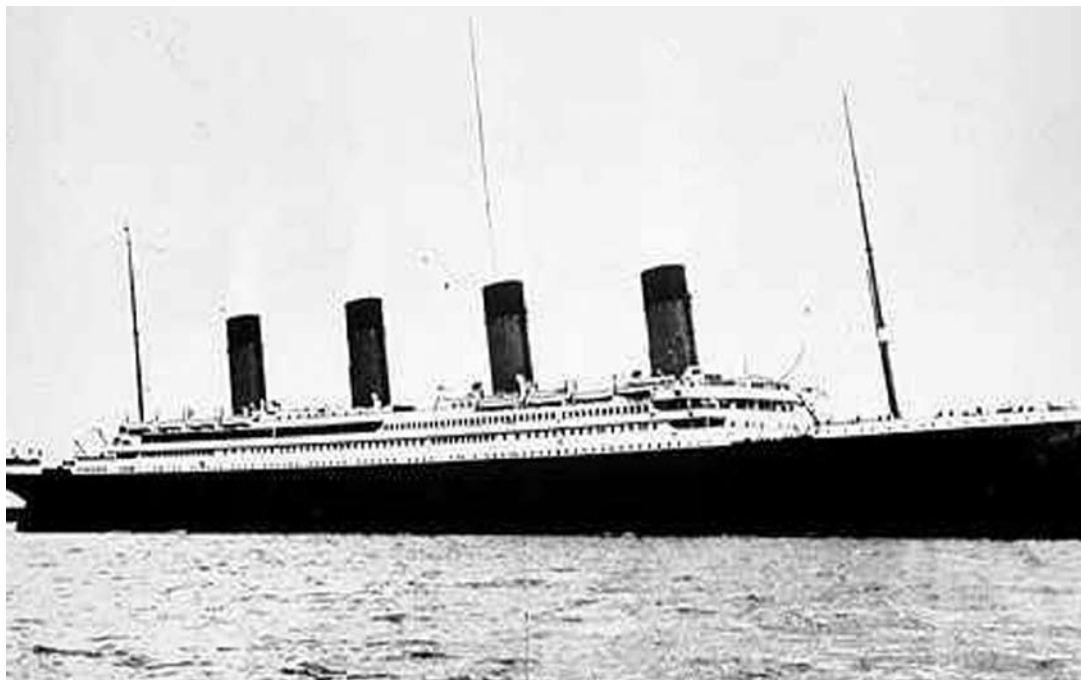
Reincarnation is a thing documented among my people. My peoples goes back to the wife of Moses and beyond. The wife of Moses was not Jewish, Christian or Moslem! We claim Abraham with whom the covenant was made, Our people received the circumcision on the night of the Passover. The proof is in Exodus Chapter 4 verse 25. our modern name is druze.

Our village in Lebanon is called Chaney, my great grandfather boarded the Titanic as a third class passenger on April 10, 1912, destination,

Fredericksburg Virginia, the name of the 12 year old boy was Houssein Mohamed Hassan Abilmona, who was coming to Fredericksburg to his father, who operated a grocery store. The boy was a cousin of Nassef Cassem.

The following is a word for word story handed down by Nassef Cassem Abilmona.

# A TITANIC SURVIVOR'S STORY





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**A TITANIC SURVIVOR'S STORY**

I have been asked so often to repeat the story of my rescue from the Titanic that I am at last acceding to the demand to write down my experience.

Prior to 1912 I had been in the United States for some time. I had a business which was fairly successful, and I felt that I should take a little vacation. I

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determined to visit my native country. Lebanon, in a small mountain village called Chanay, to see my parents whom I had left there long ago. I further realized that the years were passing fast and they were becoming aged and that seeing them would not only be a pleasure but a definite duty as well. Therefore I arranged my affairs, left others in charge of my business and took ship to Lebanon. My father, my mother, my cousins, my old time friends, all were so happy to see me that my stay became one round of entertainments given in my honor. It was so like my idea of heaven that I

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forgot all else for quite awhile.

But all things must end, and one day I recalled that I had other responsibilities and that I must return to my adopted country and my business.

Upon telling my parents of my intention to return to America soon, their happiness was turned to sorrow, it was again a round of gatherings; but this time they were gatherings of sorrow, for I was to leave them soon and probably never see them again. My wife Salha was pregnant and could not, nor would

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not travel. She would rather remain in Chanay in her big comfortable house with fig trees, grapes and lush gardens.

I sailed from Beirut to Marsellies in the anticipation of the greetings I would receive in America. In Marsellies I inquired at the different steamship agencies for the speediest ship to New York, since I was already on my way I was anxious to arrive.

I learned that in three days there would be a liner leaving for New York which was the largest and fastest ship

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afloat and that this would be her maiden trip. Feeling that I could do no better, I booked passage on this ship, the Titanic.

I left Marseilles by train that evening and stopped over for a day in Paris. I stayed one day and left the following morning to await the Titanic.

It was about 9:30PM; when I, with others boarded her.

Surprise of surprises! Wonder of wonders' Were we in New York already?

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The ship was more like Broadway than Broadway itself. It was all decorated with colored lights, music playing, people dancing and singing, and what seemed like a wide street running down the whole length of the ship. It was truly an inspiring sight.

But we did not have much time to admire the beauty of the scene, for the ship's porters came immediately and carried our baggage and took each to the stateroom assigned to him as per the ticket. My stateroom was on the top deck and going in I found an 18 year old

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1954 - 55 -

**MIKE NASSEF WITH GRAND  
DAUGHTERS  
ELSIE AND LIBBY**

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friend from my hometown of Chanay and a boy of 12 who was going to meet his father in Fredericksburg, Virginia. (when in a few days he would be re-incarnated into my son, Mike, who was born on the day of the sinking, when Mike was young and started speaking of another life, naming names and places, my wife took him to the former family where he recognized where the 12 year old had kept his bicycle, where the rice was kept, the lentils and their staples. He showed his family where he put his hunting gun. As he grew older we encouraged him to forget his past life and concentrate on



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this life. As the mind grows, it swallows up the memory of the past life.

But now, back to the Titanic, on each of the berths was laid out a suit of cork-to be used in case of emergency or necessity. (how far off that necessity seemed just then you can well imagine.)

The ship was alive with happy people, all intent on the pleasures of the hour, all enjoying the fact that they were on the great ship afloat, that it was on its maiden trip, that on board were some of the most illustrious people in the world.

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Who would be justified in seeing doom in a setting such as this. Who could? And yet did we but realize that those life belts on the berths were a warning--I do not know, though, to this day I doubt any would have been deterred from making that trip, even with the full knowledge of the impending tragedy.

We retired late that night, sleeping the sleep of the happy and just. We were awakened the following morning by the sound of the breakfast bell.

We arose happy and hungry, bathed,

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dressed, and went to the dining salon, and there were more surprised by seeing the large number of people on board.

After breakfast we went on deck and all that we could see in any direction was sea and sky. We had traveled so far during the night that there was no land in sight, and we might as well have been a million miles from shore. The ship was doing 22 knots, cutting through the water so beautifully, leaving a wake of foam behind her that was just too glorious to see. People were already dancing and enjoying themselves even at this early hour,

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and we were carried away into imagining that we were at some seaside resort rather than in the middle of the ocean.

The next few days passed so happily that we were on the verge of regretting the shortness of the trip.

On Sunday, the stewards and ship's people outdid themselves in their solicitous attitude towards the passengers, giving us fruits and drinks throughout the day. Toward evening of that Sunday another ship passed us. It was a lovely sight to see two ships in such an expanse

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of water-the signal flags sliding up and down the masts-the salutes between the two. It seemed as though we were on the only living things in the world.

Word went around that an ex-navel man, a passenger, had been able to read the signals and the passing ship had informed the Titanic, that there were icebergs ahead, and warned her to advance with caution. That made us anticipate the beautiful sight of a flock of icebergs, and we hoped that we might enjoy the sight of them. We had all seen pictures of icebergs and the reality would have

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been marvelous to tell of later.

Later in the evening, after the usual merrymaking we turned in and slept.

We had been asleep a few hours when—  
CRASH—WE WERE AWAKENED BY A  
TERRIFIC JOLT.

It was 12:30am April 14, 1912. the Titanic had been going at a speed of 22 knots and had collided full force with the iceberg. The force of the impact was such that the ship stopped dead where she was, hanging on the iceberg which

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had stove in her side and was penetrating her innards. And as the engines continued running, the vibration shook the ship loose from the iceberg and the waters rushed into the gaping hole and poured into the hold of the Titanic.

The force of the impact was such that it no doubt awoke everyone who was sleeping, and they came pouring out of their staterooms on the deck, yelling and shouting.

It was Babel, more languages were being spoken than I had ever known to

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exist; yet, unlike Babel we seemed to understand each other, for it seemed God had given us a sixth sense to make us understand the unintelligible

At that moment we all thought that another ship had collided with the Titanic. We did not realize in the first moments that it was an iceberg.

The sea was sooth and peaceful, the stars shining so beautifully that there was not even the thought of danger.

We were told that the mechanics were



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repairing the damage, and that we would soon be underway again, racing to make the record crossing that the Captain had hoped for.

All this while witnessing another beautiful sight. The ship's men were firing rockets into the air, shooting pistols, lighting signal flares. It looked more like a fourth of July celebration or the doings at an Italian feast day, than like a dreadful disaster.

Finally word went around that everyone should put on their lifebelts, so as

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to be prepared for any emergency that may come. The mechanics were unable to repair the ship, and we might have to take to the lifeboats.

It then began to dawn on us that ours was indeed a tragic situation. It was then that the full force of the tragedy began to make itself felt.

It was terrible....it was AWFUL.

The babel became a clamor; some prayed, others cursed, some bid farewell to their loved ones, others were hysteri-

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cally jubilant; every imaginable emotion was portrayed there for those who might have the hardihood or the inclination to witness it. Really, you did not see these things-you just imbibed them and they came back to you as recollections later.

The Captain, realizing the inevitable, sent men around the ship, into every stateroom, to search every berth and to see that every living soul was on deck, dressed in lifebelt and ready for what was in store.

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The signal lights, which had seemed so pretty a moment before, took on new significance; they had not brought help! There were no ships close enough to see them. The wireless had brought no response yet.

The crush became great-the moans, the shrieks, unbearable. My roommate, the 18 year old friend had drifted from me with the crowd;

the 12 year old boy was still beside me; I took him up on my shoulders and carried him so that I should not lose him,

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determining that if my life was saved, his should be saved too. As I raised him, he asked me; "oh Uncle, have we arrived in New York? Are my parents there waiting for me? It was heartbreaking; I could not answer.

The crush was now terrific; everybody moved towards the boat deck; we passed the first class cabins section, these were lit up so it looked like day. Approaching the lifeboats we heard the captain and his officers shouting that only women and children would be put into them. The sailors were helping the women and

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children into the boats. As I got near a sailor took the boy from my shoulders before I could bid him goodbye and to reassure him. The sailor passed the boy to another sailor who passed him to another and he to another until the boy was settled in a boat, crying for me to come to him. The boats were lowered, I remained on deck, walking here and there, not knowing what to do.

It was now 3:00 a.m. the water had been rising inside the ship and had finally reached the machinery and boilers. There was a terrific explosion and all

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the lights went out. It became so dark that you could not see the person next to you. Terrible is a mild word for it.

The Titanic was sinking lower and lower. The captain went from one group to another, trying to pacify them and allay their fears, saying: "we have contacted a ship by wireless; she is quite close. Have no fears, she will arrive in time to save you all. I am going to my duties. I bid you goodbye, and pray God that he be kind and merciful to you all. I shall remain with my ship. God bless you all and protect you." And with that he went

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to the bridge and did not return.

The people then realized the full extent of their predicament. They began shouting their prayers to their different Gods, or to the one God in their different ways. Some knelt, some stood, some bowed, some swayed, some stood erect, but all were praying as they had never prayed before. Each trying to have God hear his particular prayer by shouting it louder than the one next to him. I also prayed sincerely and loudly.

A man close to me got up on the rail



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and jumped into the sea. I saw a woman holding three children in her arms, all crying. I saw a rope. I tied the rope around her and pushed her over the rail and let her down into the water, I then slid down the rope into the water, and when I reached it I let go of the rope and struck out in any direction, where did not matter. My lifebelt buoyed me. A lifeboat passed close to me, when I put my hands on the boat, someone beat them away so I swam on. A second lifeboat passed close to me and pulled me into it. It was lifeboat number 15. It was full of women and children and

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three men. The men were rowing, as was also a woman, but she did not know how to row, so I took the oar from her and rowed in her stead. There were two men on each side rowing, and we rowed with desperation. We wanted to see if there were others in the water who could be saved, but it was so dark that we could see nothing. We pulled and pulled at the oars, and as God directed, we were pulling away from the ship, for we realized that the cries of those on board were becoming more distant. The passengers of our lifeboard were crying and shouting.

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Suddenly the sound of those on board became very loud-and then a large gurgling sound, then silence.

The Titanic had gone down.

A moment later our boat felt a swell and lurched and then righted itself. We were so frightened and cold that for a long time we did not utter a sound. God was kind to us, the sea was calm and smooth, no waves shook the boat, else we would have capsized, for we were full to overflowing. Yet we despaired of our

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chances of life, for the least action of the water would upset us.

Shortly after we saw the morning star shining so peacefully and hopefully over us that we knew the day was near. The women and children became hysterical upon seeing the dawn and what with their moans and shrieks and the fear of capsizing we were thankful God had brought us out of the night.

Then in the first glow of dawn-we saw a ship in the distance, steaming towards us, coming to our aid. Is it a mirage?

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Are our eyes playing tricks on us? Or is it a reality? Then we saw the other life-boats in the distance-all had seen the ship and were waving and shouting and endangering themselves by their actions. Then we realized it was not a mirage. Relief-happiness-joy.

The ship stopped. We saw the iceberg in the distance-the ship would come no closer-it did not want to suffer the fate of the Titanic.

The boats rowed towards the saviour, which by now we could see was the

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Carpathia. As we approached they cast anchor and let down their ladders and helped us aboard.

We were all closer to death than life. They gave us hot water to drink to thaw us out and wrapped warm woolen blankets around us to bring back a little warmth to our bodies, for after that night on the open seas with very little on any of us were practically frozen. They tried to make us comfortable as possible and to keep us from the natural effects of our experience.

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As soon as I thawed out a little, I walked around looking for the boy whom I had taken it upon myself to care for. I could not find him. I looked again at every group of survivors, but to no avail. Then I inquired whether all the boats had been picked up for I felt a fear that probably his boat was yet on the open sea. I was then informed that as the Titanic went down, two of the lifeboats were quite close to her and were drawn into the whirlpool she made, and that both the lifeboats and their occupants, among them whom the boy was, were lost. It seems it was God's will that this

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boy should not reach his parents. Too, I learned that my other roommate, the friend from my hometown had also perished. It would be just a few years later that I would learn that divine providence had returned the boy's soul to my son Mike, who was born when the Titanic sank.

I thanked God for having directed our strokes away from the Titanic when we started rowing the lifeboat.

After the Carpathia had picked up all that she could see on the water, we



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## Family's forefather lived through Titanic sinking

By MICHAEL ZITZ  
The Free Lance-Star

While everyone in America seems to be flocking to see the blockbuster movie "Titanic"—No. 1 at the box office for six weeks running—a Stafford County family has had mixed feelings about going.

Libya, Abilimona, who lives in one of several family homes clustered on White Oak Road, said she decided not to see the film because, "It would have been too upsetting, knowing someone in the family lived through that."

Her great-grandfather, Fredericksburg resident Nassef Cassem Abilimona, was a Titanic survivor who never was able to forget the horror of the experience.

Libya, 47, had planned to see the film. "My husband and I were going to go, and the night before, I had a nightmare," she said. "I dreamed we were on it, and the boat went down, and I couldn't find my oldest daughter."

"I woke up sick, and I was nervous all

day. I will not go and see that. When something touches everybody in your family, you realize what can happen. Most people don't know."

Libya's mother—Nassef's granddaughter—did see the movie. She was raised by her grandfather, who told her about the experience in great detail—and for her, this was much more than a romantic tale causing her to dab her eyes with a tissue.

"When the movie started, I was shaking. I was crying, and I wanted to run out of the theater. I was so scared," Fathalee Belman, 66, said. "I wouldn't go again."

\* \* \*

The late Nassef Abilimona came to America in 1903 and settled in Fredericksburg, where he opened a successful dry goods store and restaurant.

In 1912, he went back to Lebanon (then part of Syria) to visit his wife and family. Upon his return voyage to New York, Nassef was asked to bring a 12-year-old family friend to visit his parents in



Stafford county resident Libya Abilimona, great-granddaughter of Nassef Abilimona.



WILLIAM HEEDON JR. / The Free Lance-Star  
Fathalee Belman is Nassef Abilimona's granddaughter.

than Broadway itself. It was all decorated with colored lights, music playing, people dancing and singing and what seemed like a wide street running down the whole length of the ship. It was truly an inspiring sight!

"The ship was all intent on the pleasure of enjoying the fact that the greatest ship afloat

Pla

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headed for New York.

Upon our arrival there, we were greeted by great numbers of people and were given clothes and taken to the hospital by automobile, where they cared for us for a week. I learned some 1,700 passengers had gone down with the Titanic and that only about 600 survived.

After leaving the hospital we each went our way, I to my relatives in the Belman family in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where I remained for six months, unable, as a result of the experience, to

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even attend to my business.

I cabled my parents in Lebanon immediately upon my arrival, informing them of my safety, and they were extremely happy to hear it.

This is my experience. I would not want to ever forget it. Nor do I want to ever repeat it.

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| <i>Name</i>  | <i>Age</i> | <i>Class</i> | <i>Lost/Saved</i> |
|--|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Carlsson, Mr. Carl Robert                              | 24         | 3rd          | Lost              |
| Carlsson, Mr. Frans Olof                               | 33         | 1st          | Lost              |
| Carr, Miss Helen                                       | 16         | 3rd          | Saved             |
| Carr, Miss Jeannie                                     | 37         | 3rd          | Lost              |
| Carrau, Mr. Francisco                                  |            | 1st          | Lost              |
| Carrau, Mr. Jose Pedro                                 |            | 1st          | Lost              |
| Carter, Mr. William Ernest                             | 36         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Carter, Mrs. William Ernest (Lucile Polk)              | 36         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Carter, Miss Lucile Polk                               | 14         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Carter, Master William Thorton II                      | 11         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Carter, Mrs. Ernest Courtenay (Lilian Hughes)          | 44         | 2nd          | Lost              |
| Carter, Rev Ernest Courtenay                           | 54         | 2nd          | Lost              |
| Carver, Mr. Alfred John                                | 28         | 3rd          | Lost              |
| Case, Mr. Howard Brown                                 | 49         | 1st          | Lost              |
| Cassebeer, Mrs. Henry Arthur, Jr. (Genevieve Fosdick)  |            | 1st          | Saved             |
| <b>Cassem, Mr. Nassef Belmenly</b>                     |            | 3rd          | Saved             |
| Cavendish, Mr. Tyrell William                          | 36         | 1st          | Lost              |
| Cavendish, Mrs. Tyrell William (Julia Florence Siegel) |            | 1st          | Saved             |
| Celotti, Mr. Francesco                                 | 24         | 3rd          | Lost              |
| Chaffee, Mr. Herbert Fuller                            | 46         | 1st          | Lost              |
| Chaffee, Mrs. Herbert Fuller (Carrie Toogood)          | 47         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Chambers, Mr. Norman Campbell                          | 27         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Chambers, Mr. Norman Campbell (Bertha Griggs)          | 31         | 1st          | Saved             |
| Chapman, Mrs. John Henry (Elizabeth Lawry)             | 28         | 2nd          | Lost              |
| Chapman, Mr. Charles H.                                | 52         | 2nd          | Lost              |
| Chapman, Mr. John Henry                                | 30         | 2nd          | Lost              |
| Chartens, Mr. David                                    | 21         | 3rd          | Lost              |
| Chebab, Mr. Emir Farres                                |            | 3rd          | Lost              |

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The family name of Abi El Mona literally means "father of the wish"

The passenger survival list is a prime example of how our family

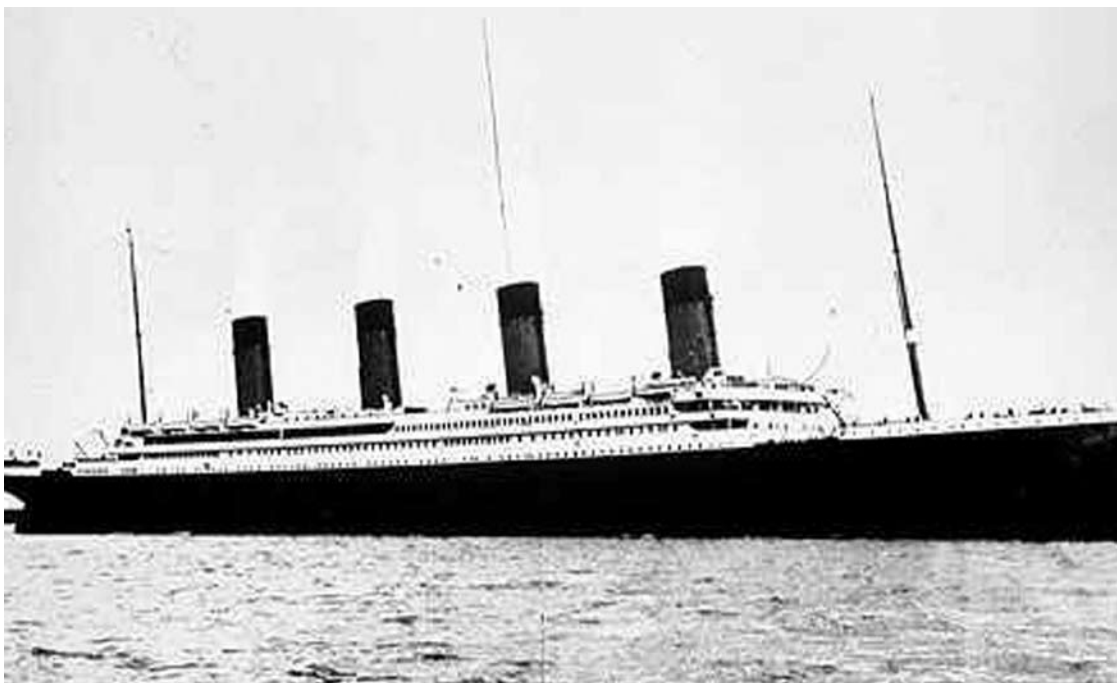
name (Abi EL Mona) was lost in the translation.

Many names have surfaced from the original name, the passengers' survival accounting lists Nassef Cassem Belman as Mr. Nassef Belmenly Cassem. Yet his son born April 14, 1912 is named Mike Nassef Balman.

Great grandfather Nassef says the Titanic struck the iceberg on April 12th 12:30 AM and his son was born April 12th, yet proof of my grandfathers' birthday is on the immigration papers that was granted to all the survivors immediately without delay. Plus history says it happened on April 14th.

In the old country birth certificates were almost unheard of at that time in the mountains of Lebanon.

# A TITANIC SURVIVOR'S STORY



ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

**THE FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA  
CONNECTION**



**MARY WASHINGTON, LIKE ELSIE, WAS  
KNOWN AS BEING ABLE TO RIDE “THE  
MOST SPIRITED COLT IN THE COUNTY OF  
STAFFORD.”**

**OF MARY WASHINGTON, GEORGE  
WASHINGTON SAID: “ALL THAT I AM, I  
OWE TO MY MOTHER.”**

## A TITANIC SURVIVOR'S STORY

Nassef was coming to Fredericksburg to stay with my father. They were third cousins. You see Nassef was born in 1885 and my father was born 1889. my mother 1931 ! I was born on the third floor of Mary Washington hospital in 1953. Fredericksburg was America's most historic city and America's battlefield city even then.

Just 50 miles south of Washington D.C. the nation's capital and 50 miles north of Richmond, the former Confederate capital lies Fredericksburg, Vir-



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ginia, named after Frederick, prince of Wales, father of King George III.

George Washington's hometown is rich in American history like the tree George Washington planted still lives. Its marked by the daughters of the American revolution, Toccoa chapter, one of the first drug stores opened in America is still on display with its original artifacts (silver plated pills, gold labeled bottles). The Rising

Sun

Tavern owned by George Washington's brother, where we would plot the over-

# Children of a survivor



# Roxboro man was there when the Titanic sank



Nassif Cassan

Twenty-four years ago today, on the evening of Sunday, April 15, 1912, the White Star liner Titanic sailed on her final voyage across the North Atlantic, with 2,207 people on board, near Cape Race and sank with a loss of about 1,500 persons. One of the 220 passengers was a 27-year-old Roxboro man named Nassif Cassan, who was traveling to New York City on the ship. He was the only passenger from Roxboro to survive the sinking. He was the only passenger from Roxboro to survive the sinking.

It is hard to recall the exact details of the sinking, but Nassif Cassan has a unique perspective on the event. He was on the ship when it struck the iceberg and he was one of the few survivors.

The ship was struck by the iceberg at approximately 11:40 p.m. on April 15, 1912. The ship sank in less than two hours.

... began to drift...  
It was terrible... IT WAS AWFUL.  
The water became a slush, some drifted, others  
swam, some had jumped to their heads, others  
were practically motionless, every language was  
being spoken, some for those who could hear, the  
others for those who could not. Finally, you'd  
hear the sound of the ship's bell, the only sound  
that could be heard in the darkness.

The captain, looking at the clock, saw the  
time was 12:00. He saw the ship was sinking  
and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall. He looked at the clock and saw  
the time was 12:00.

The ship, which had been sinking for  
hours, had now reached the bottom. The  
water was dark and the ship was in a  
downfall. The captain saw the ship was  
sinking and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall.

The captain, looking at the clock, saw the  
time was 12:00. He saw the ship was sinking  
and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall. He looked at the clock and saw  
the time was 12:00.

The ship was sinking and the captain saw  
the time was 12:00. He saw the ship was  
sinking and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall. He looked at the clock and saw  
the time was 12:00.

I was not alone with many people. All were  
in a state of confusion. I saw the ship was  
sinking and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall.

The ship was sinking and the captain saw  
the time was 12:00. He saw the ship was  
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the time was 12:00. He saw the ship was  
sinking and he saw that every thing was in a  
downfall. He looked at the clock and saw  
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## THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

throw of the British! The home of the mother of Washington, Kenmore, the home of Betty Washington, George's sister, and yes the ghost of her husband is still there. A seance was held and the psychic said the spirit "of a colonial gentleman, tired and weary of life, dwells within Kenmore"

This story is in the Ghosts Of Virginia book, found in any library. My favorite involves George Washington, at Chatham mansion, (where Robert E. Lee dated his wife) during the revolution, this young lady came to Fredericksburg with her father, who intended

## ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

to get her away from a beau he did not like. But the young man followed her from England and was going to elope, the boat was moored on the river below and the ladder was placed under the window. But George Washington found out about the elopement plan and on the fateful night had the young man arrested. Then George waited under the window for the young woman to come down it says in the ghosts of Virginia book, “ but instead of climbing down into the arms of her beloved, the young woman found herself ENVELOPED BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

## THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

Enveloped means he held her in his arms and probably kissed her. She was taken back to England to marry somebody else but on her deathbed she vowed to return to her favorite trail on the anniversary of her death. She died June 21, 1790 and has been seen at Chatham mansion once every seven years since her death. Read about it in the ghosts of Virginia book.

Fredericksburg has James Monroe's law office and the original Louis XVI desk that the White House has copies of. The ferry farm plantation where George Washington chopped down the cherry

## ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

tree and the river below where he threw the "silver dollar across" it was not a silver dollar like the legend implies, but a silver coin and George Washington threw it across on a dare. This author knows exactly what happened to George Washington and the cherry tree incident because the same incident happened to me. When he said to his mother "I cannot tell a lie, I chopped down the cherry tree." This is what I think happened." My home is about two miles from the ferry farm plantation and like Washington., we had cherry trees also. I had always wondered how George could chop

## THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

down a cherry tree and then brag about it! One summer, ( I was about 12 years old) I had a favorite cherry tree that was full of cherries, we had a big wind storm the night before, I walked out the next morning and there was my best cherry tree snapped in half, I had no alternative but to find my father's hatchet and chop it down. It was then I realized what had happened to George Washington, so I ran to get the hatchet and re-enacted the chopping of the cherry tree. Afterwards I dragged the broken tree down the hill to my mother and said "I cannot tell I lie, I chopped down the cherry tree"



ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

just as she started to chase me, I quickly explained why I had chopped it down. Somehow, I feel that Mary Washington did the same thing to George!

The only home in America that Commodore John Paul Jones lived, is still standing, as well as 350 buildings in downtown Fredericksburg built before 1870. One district George Washington would recognize today, as it was a rental district, James Monroe had a house there (still standing) that he brought his bride and his two children were born, as well as the house of Matthew Fontaine

## THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

Murray (first director of Naval Observatory) across from Mary Washington's doctors house (Dr. Charles Mortimer), The Sentry Box, another house that was owned by two revolutionary war generals ( General Hugh Mercer and General George Weedon) they married sisters. Fredericksburg contributed five generals to the Revolution: Generals Weedon, Posey, Mercer, Clark and Washington.

The grave of the mother of Washington, is a miniature of the Washington Monument in the District of Columbia. In life, Mary would come to meditation

## ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

rock to pray during the dark days of the revolution, it was her wish to be buried there and it was granted.

The slave block and the holding pen where the slaves were kept are still standing, the slaughter pen where the Union soldiers were killed, Robert E. Lee won his most one sided victory of the war in Fredericksburg, the corner that stone-wall Jackson planned the battle of Fredericksburg still is marked by the United Daughters of the Confederacy., the bivouac of Lee and Jackson, where they planned and executed the most "daringly conceived military maneuver in the his-

THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

tory of warfare” They split their army and General Jackson marched his troops in view of the Union army, but the federals thought he was retreating because the road led away from their position, but further down the road it cut back and around the Union army which made it the most spectacular surprise attack not ever to be repeated in any war then, before or after!! Fredericksburg, Va. Has hundreds of miles of battlefield drives and much more, to numerous to list like the new Slavery Museum being built !

My great-grandfather’s written account of the Titanic disaster has Fred-

ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

ericksburg mentioned numerous times.

He was coming here to us, his relatives.

Let the Titanic connection bring you

here for the history. Many of the places

I mentioned are OPEN TO THE

PUBLIC, SEE FOR YOURSELF WHY

WE ARE AMERICA'S MOST HISTOR-

IC CITY AND AMERICA'S BATTLE-

FIELD CITY.

# THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

NASSEF CASSEM ABILMONA'S LEBANESE PASSPORT



الاسم الكامل  
 Talla  
 Yeux  
 Cheveux  
 Signaux  
 Nez  
 Visage  
 Barbe, Moustache  
 Signes particuliers

SIGNALE

الاسم واللقب  
 اسم الاب  
 اسم الام وتحتها  
 التاريخ ومكان الولادة  
 للذهب  
 الصنعة  
 تعليم او اي  
 تعلم او اي  
 محل الاقامة  
 رقم المحل  
 ان الحكومة اللبنانية قد  
 ان اعطيت قواما او احوال  
 واقدم ان ذلك اعطيت لي كالمذكور  
 في ٥٥/١٢/١٩٢٥

Nom et prénoms  
 Prénoms du père  
 Nom du père de la mère  
 Date et lieu de naissance  
 Sexe  
 Profession  
 Lettré ou ill.  
 Éducation  
 Domicile  
 District  
 N° de registre  
 Le Gouvernement Libanais  
 Ca. No. 111  
 Et il a été constaté par le présent que le titulaire  
 de ce passeport est en possession de son identité  
 le 15/12/1925



Mar M. 1

NASSEF'S VILLAGE OF CHANAY,  
LEBANON



ELSIE'S HOME IN FREDERICKSBURG, VA.  
MT. LEBANON BUILT 1941







NASSEF'S HOME IN CHANAY



# THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

No. 25710

To be given to the person Naturalized.

**THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**OFFICE OF NATURALIZATION**

Position, Volume 1 page 4 Sub. Volume 1000 page 10

Description of holder Age 28 years; height 5 feet 8 inches; color W. complexion C.  
 Sex M. color of eyes Blue color of hair Black visible distinguishing marks Small mole on face

Name, age and place of residence of wife at present married with a wife  
 Name, age and place of residence of minor children at present no children  
 How born at Frederick, Baltimore

**ORIGINAL**

State of Virginia County of Frederick SS: Harry Cassin Bowman  
 (Signature of holder)

Be it remembered that on the 28th day of October in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twelve at Frederick Maryland at present residing at number 305 3d street City of Frederick State Territory of Virginia having applied to be admitted  
a citizen of the United States of America pursuant to law and the court having found that the petitioner had resided con-  
tinuously within the limits of said State for at least five years and in this Territory for one year immediately preceding the date of  
the hearing of his petition and that said petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States, had in all respects  
complied with the law in relation thereto and that he was entitled to be admitted, it was thereupon ordered by  
the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

Attest my hand in testimony whereof the seal of said court is hereunto affixed on the 28th day of October  
in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twelve and of our Independence the  
one hundred and thirty seventh of B. V. G. L. C. L.  
Richard B. L. Dept.  
 (Official number of naturalization)

Oct 28, 1912

# ELSIE SLYMAN BELMAN

## THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION

No. 25710

Position Volume 1, page 4 Hub, Volume 15704, page 10  
Description of holder. Age 25; height, 5 feet, 8 inches; color, white; complexion, dark; color of eyes, light brown; color of hair, black; visible distinguishing marks, small pox marks on face December 13'th, 1911.  
Name, age and place of residence of wife married Salha Ismile March 19, 1910.  
Names, ages and places of residence of minor children April 14, 1912, son  
born Mohammed Balman.

State of Virginia

City of Fredericksburg

(signature of holder)

Be it remembered that at a March term of the confirmation court of the City of Fredericksburg held at the courthouse on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ten Nassef Cassem Balman,

Who previous to his naturalization was a subject of Mohammed V, Sultan of Turkey, at present residing at number 303 - 3 d - street, City of Fredericksburg, State of Virginia, having applied to be admitted a citizen of the United States of America, pursuant to law, and the court having found that the petitioner had resided continuously within the United States for at least five years and in this state for one year immediately preceding the date of the hearing of his petition, and that said petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States, had in all respects complied with the law in relation thereto, and that he was entitled to be admitted, it was therefore ordered by the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

In testimony thereof the seal of said court is hereinto affixed on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of October in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and Twelve and your Independence the one hundred and twenty seventh

No Tax.

A. B. Yates, Clerk

Johnson D. Berry, Deputy

Deputy

Oct. 28, 1912

A. B. Yates, Clerk

Johnson D. Berry,

# THE FREDERICKSBURG, VA CONNECTION

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Fredericksburg, Virginia

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