

Rust, Weathering and other considerations

by Art Braunschweiger, TRMA

Although *Titanic* was a new ship, she was not in pristine condition. By the time she reached Southampton she had already accumulated a fair amount of dirt in certain areas from the coal smoke in the Belfast air as well as the ship's own funnels. The process of coaling the ship was also a dirty job that put coal dust in the air and required all the decks to be cleaned afterward. On top of that, much of her paintwork was barely finished in time and was still being touched up just before sailing day.

Most modelers prefer a "builder's model", which shows a ship with a perfect appearance. Some modelers prefer a more realistic model that replicates the appearance of the ship as she actually appeared in service. If a realistic model is your preference, the following should be added, but only if experienced with or having practiced the techniques noted and then not to excess.

1. Rust

If you're tending toward realism rather than a builder's model, you'll need to add some rust. The ship did have some visible light rust running down the side of the hull a few feet from the expansion joints, the bollards and anchors. This was visible on the *starboard side only* – the port side (facing the pier) was touched up just before sailing day at Southampton. Applying rust calls for a technique called drybrushing, not covered here. The photograph at right shows what rust looks like bleeding through fresh paint, although the rust in question on *Titanic* resulted from water running down from the rusty areas rather than the rust bleeding through. For good illustrations of the rust, see Ken Marschall's paintings in [The Art of *Titanic*](#).)

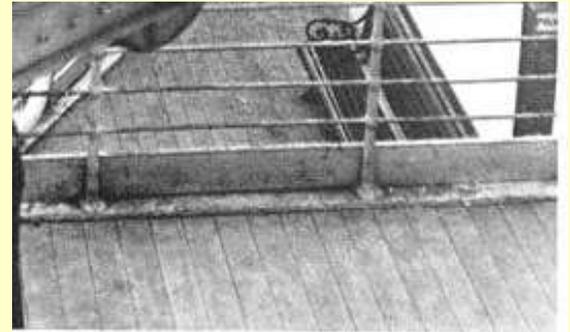


Below are recommended paint colors for those wishing to simulate rust on their model.

Paint brand or mix	Paint number & colors	Finish	Accurate for scale effect	Color Sample
Testors	#1166 Flat Brown	glossy	no	
Humbrol	#9 Tan	glossy	yes	

2. Weathering / dirt

This can be seen around the corners and edges of some of the deck areas and along the washplates at the base of some of the passenger deck railings and would have been present on the funnel casings and deckhouse roofs as well. The Poop Deck, and especially the Forecastle Deck and Well Decks would have also been slightly dirtier as they were working decks. Model railroad weathering powders work well for this, but should *only be used by experienced modelers, and then very sparingly and only after experimenting first on other surfaces to achieve the desired look.* In *Titanic's* case, any weathering or dirt applied should be minimal and just enough to give a realistic appearance without being readily apparent.



Two superior products available in the US are Bragdon Enterprises Weathering System, available in three color sets and Doc O'Brien's Weathering Powders. (A Google search should yield sources for each; as URLs change over time, no links have been provided here.)

Canvas took in a darker appearance over from coal smoke in the air. This included the lifeboat covers and the weatherproofing canvas stretched over all the hatches except the No. 1 hatch on the Forecastle Deck. The hatch canvas did not darken nearly as rapidly as the lifeboat covers, though, since it was not in place all the time. New canvas was white, and after several years of service became very dark. At the time *Titanic* sailed her canvas was still new and had not darkened to any significant degree, so it was only off-white. In the Paint Reference there are recommendations for the proper color to use. Modelers building models of *Titanic's* sister ship, *Olympic*, need to darken the lifeboat canvas somewhat to reflect its greater time in service.

3. Miscellaneous scrapes and marks

Along the lower areas of the bulwarks (walls) along the outer decks, especially the Well Decks and Boat Deck, there would have been a few marks and scrapes that had not been touched up. Two such marks are visible to the left of the stairs in the photo at right, taken aboard *Olympic* in New York at the conclusion of her maiden voyage. This does not mean that the modeler should intentionally add such marks, but if a tiny smudge or mark results from handling or working on a piece, providing it's low down to the deck it need not be touched up.

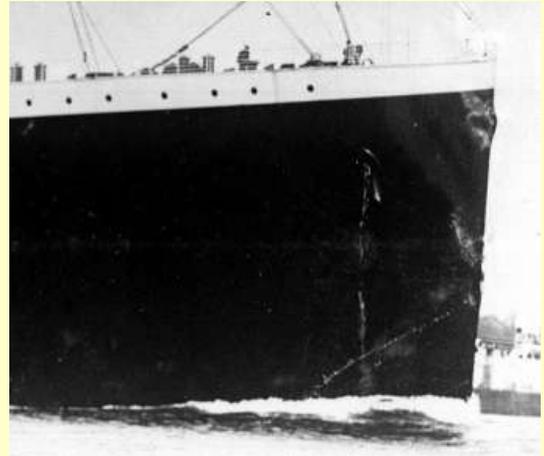


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4. Scrape along hull below starboard bow anchor

During the near-collision with the New York at Southampton, Captain Smith ordered the starboard bow anchor lowered to the waterline. Photos show a fine light-colored, slightly jagged line where the anchor scraped the black paint of the hull. This can be drybrushed on lightly with flat light-grey paint.

(Note – the diagonal line running from the stem to the waterline is a scratch on the photograph negative. The anchor scrape is vertical and runs from the hawsehole to the white water below.)



4. Cranes on Poop Deck

Some modelers interpret the photograph at the right to suggest the possibility that the masts and jibs on the Poop Deck cranes may not have been as white as on the other cranes due to the primer (anti-rust) undercoat partially bleeding through, and possibly because those parts of the Poop Deck cranes had not received their final coat of white. Those suggesting this possibility base it on the slightly darker appearance of the masts and jibs of those cranes compared to their bases, but this is *speculation only* and not a general consensus of the Titanic research community. Modeler's choice; if going this route, the Poop Deck crane jibs and masts (but not the bases) can be painted with the scale white recommended in the Paint Reference, tinted more off-white by the addition of slightly more grey primer.

