

Chamfering of Thicker Teak Sheathing on *Titanic's* Forecastle Deck

By Bob Read, D.M.D.

Introduction

This article will demonstrate the chamfered areas on the thicker 10 in. x 4 in. deck sheathing planks found in the central part of *Titanic's* forecastle deck. This article is primarily directed at the researcher and the digital modeler.

Overview

In the midline area of *Titanic's* forecastle deck from just forward of the #1 hatch to the forward anchor well, the steel deck was sheathed with 10-inch-wide x 4-inch-thick teak planks. This plank sheathing was thicker than the 5-inch-wide x 3-inch-thick pitch pine sheathing on the majority of the rest of the deck. There were teak margin planks around the perimeter of the forecastle deck and around various pieces of deck equipment. This teak margin plank sheathing was 3 inches thick (with exceptions which will be noted) like the pitch pine sheathing but the widths varied.

On some other ships like *Lusitania* there was no chamfering of the thicker planks where they met the thinner planks. Figure 1 shows this "step" between the thicker central plank sheathing on *Lusitania*.

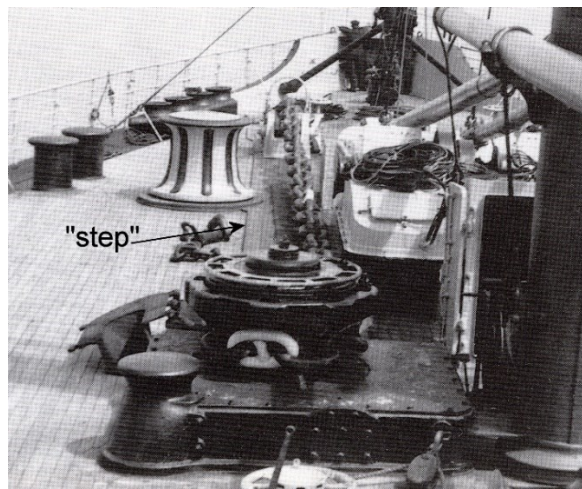


Figure 1

Unchamfered planks on *Lusitania*

Harland and Wolff used a different practice for the junction between thicker and thinner plank sheathing. They chamfered the edges of the thicker plank sheathing where they met thinner plank sheathing, whether it was pitch pine sheathing or teak margin planks. Figure 2 shows how on *Oceanic* that the wider thicker planks were chamfered to meet the narrower thinner ones.



Figure 2

Chamfering of forecastle plank sheathing on *Oceanic*

Plank Sheathing on Forecastle of *Titanic*

Figure 3 shows how the 4 in. thick teak plank sheathing on *Titanic* was chamfered to the same level as the adjacent 3 in. thick pitch pine plank sheathing which ran parallel to the thicker teak sheathing planks.

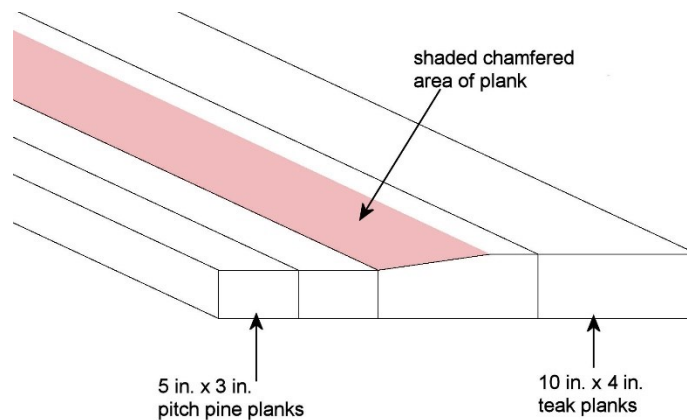


Figure 3

Teak plank sheathing chamfering on *Titanic*

The chamfer area of the thicker teak sheathing occupies approximately 7 in. of the 10 in. width of the plank and is shown by the pink color on the drawing.

Figure 4 shows how the ends of the thicker teak sheathing are chamfered when they meet a 3 in. margin plank.

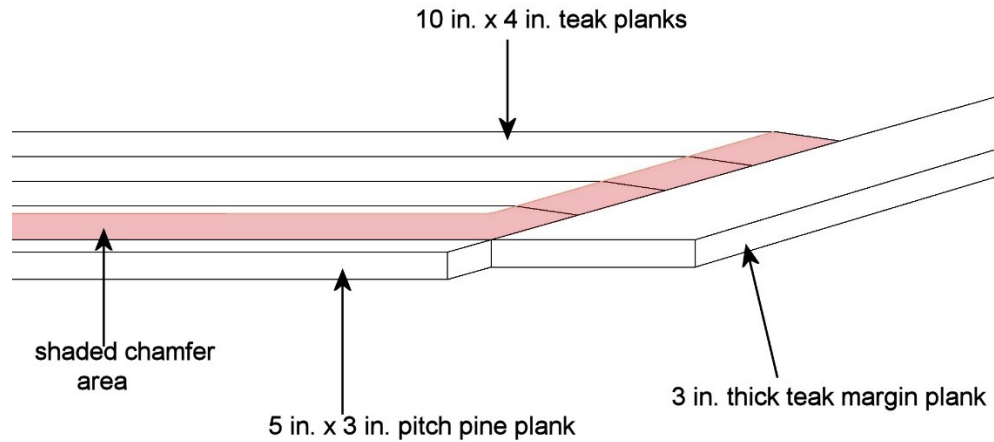


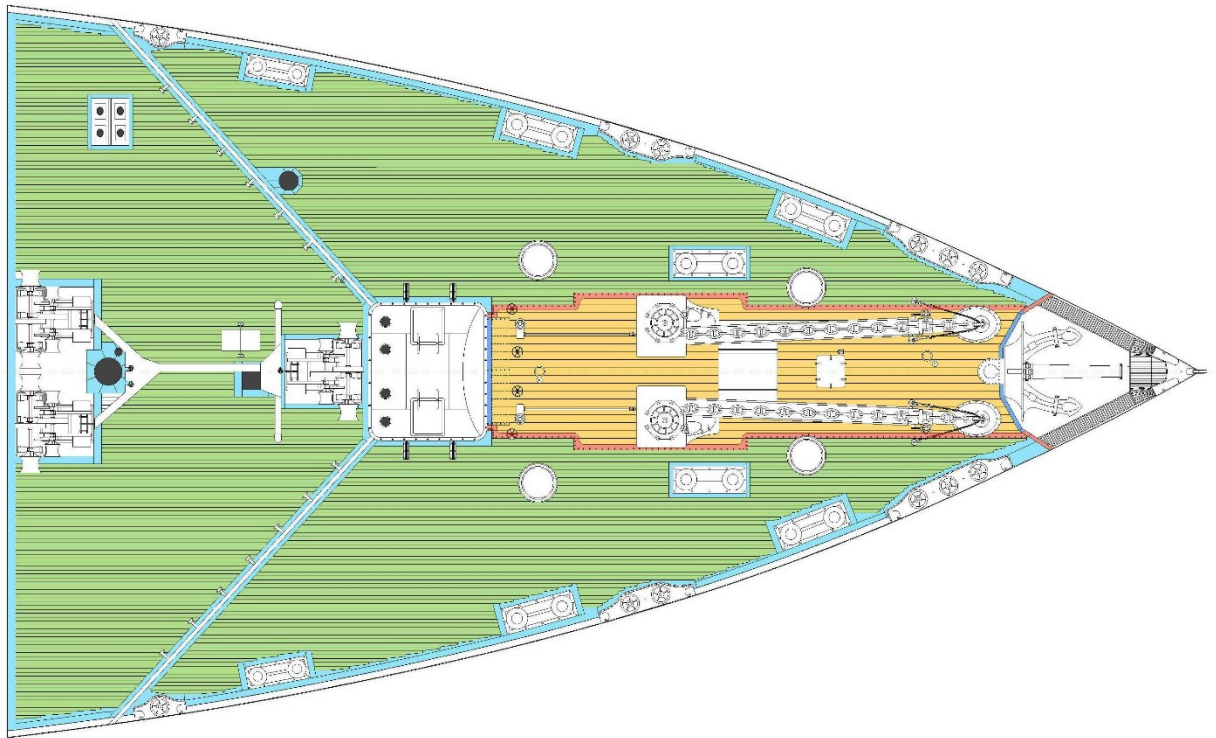
Figure 4

Chamfering of 4 in. thick sheathing where it meets 3 in. thick margin planks at its ends

This figure also shows a transition of the chamfering from the ends to the side of the thicker teak sheathing. The chamfered area is shown in pink.

Figure 5 shows the various sheathing on *Titanic's* forecastle deck. The color-coded legend identifies the different types of planking.

Go to next page



- 10 in. x 4 in. teak planks
- 5 in. x 3 in. pitch pine planks
- 4 in. thick custom margin plank
- 3 in. thick margin planks
- Area where 4 in. thick planks are chamfered

Figure 5

Various types of plank sheathing on *Titanic's* fore-castle deck

Figure 6 is a close-up view of the various plank sheathing arrangements just forward of *Titanic's* #1 hatch. The arrangement of the margin plank sheathing on the forward aspect of the hatch cannot be confirmed by any photos. In areas like this there is a general rule which must be followed:

Only upper surfaces of plank sheathing may be exposed.

Go to next page

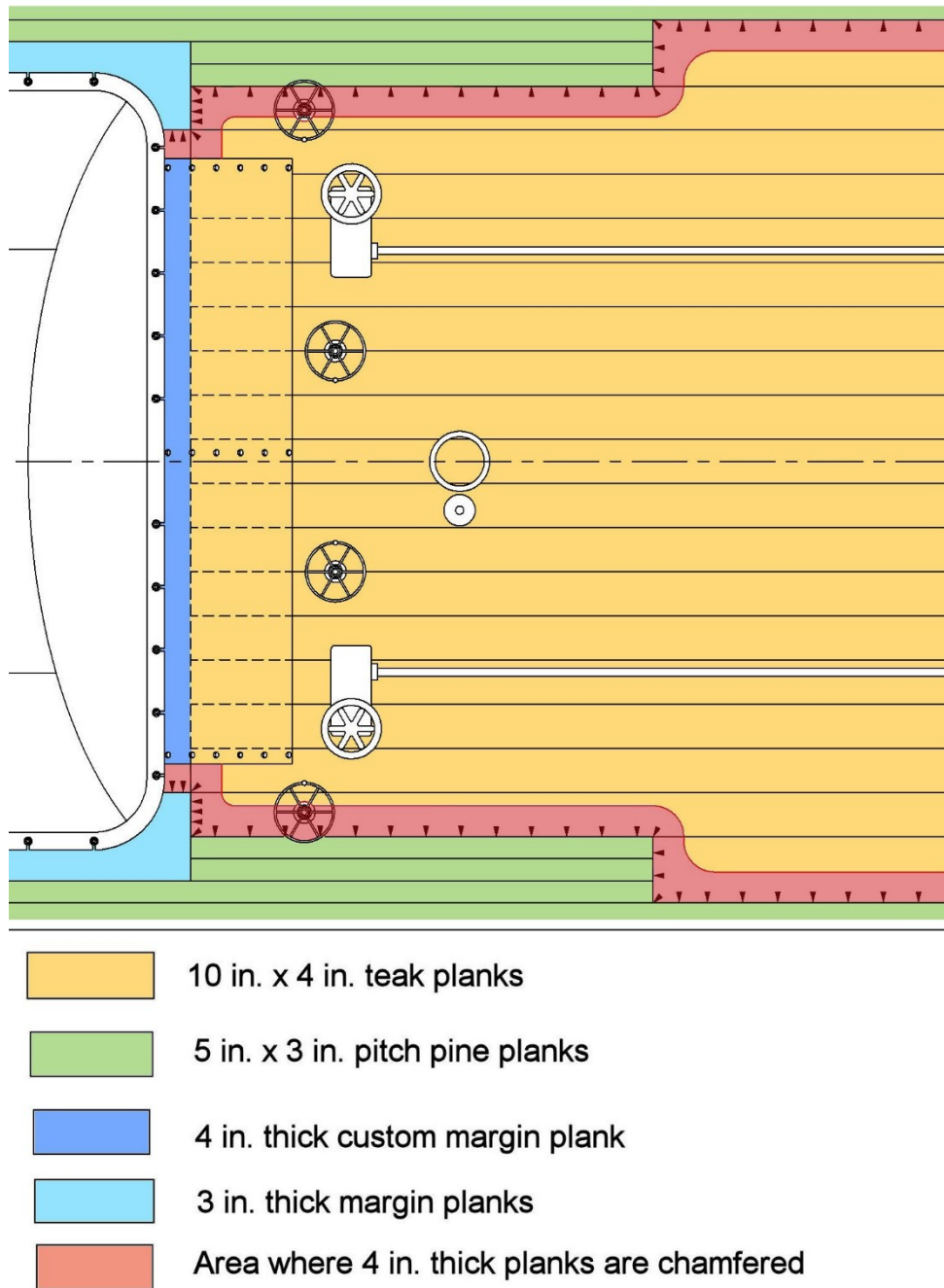


Figure 6

Plank sheathing just forward of *Titanic's* #1 hatch

The margin plank just forward of *Titanic's* #1 hatch is, I believe, 4 in. thick margin planking. I postulate that the reason for this is because the forward hatch brackets need to be secured to a level planking base. If it were only 3 in thick there would have to be measures taken to manage the transition to the 4 in. teak planks forward of it. This way, the only chamfering necessary is on the margin plank ends where they meet the 3 in. margin planks at the port and starboard

ends. The outboard capstan steam valves are within a chamfered area. To compensate for this, I believe that the valve base was modified so that it allowed the valve base to sit plumb.

Figure 7 shows the forecastle plank sheathing in the area of the windlass and the forward capstan.

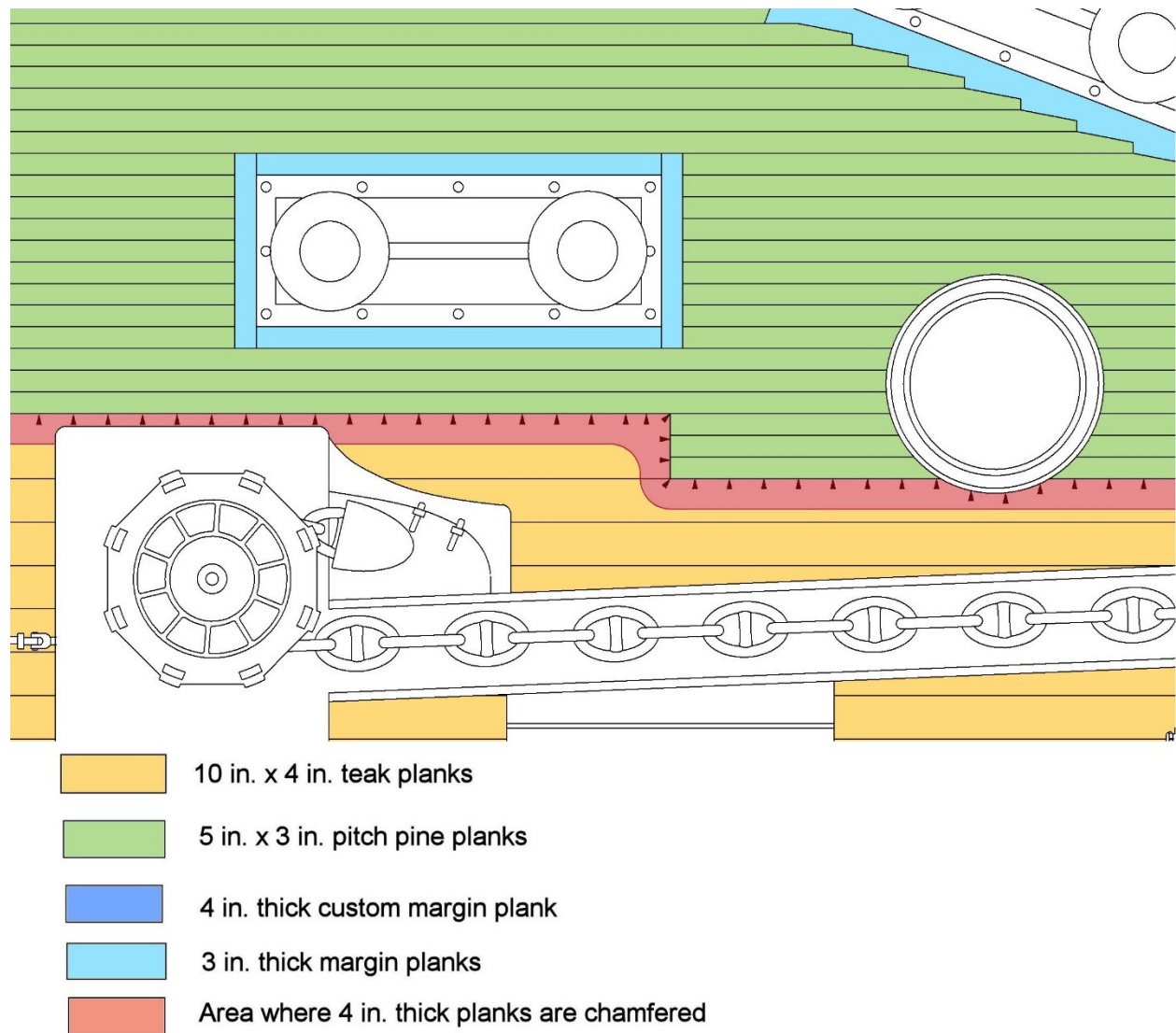


Figure 7

Plank sheathing of *Titanic's* forecastle deck near the windlass and capstan

The chamfered area outboard of the windlass and inboard of the capstan is narrower and thus the chamfer is at a steeper angle. This would not be a problem in these areas because these were not areas of heavy foot traffic and would not present a trip hazard.

Figure 8 shows the plank sheathing in the most forward area of the sheathing.

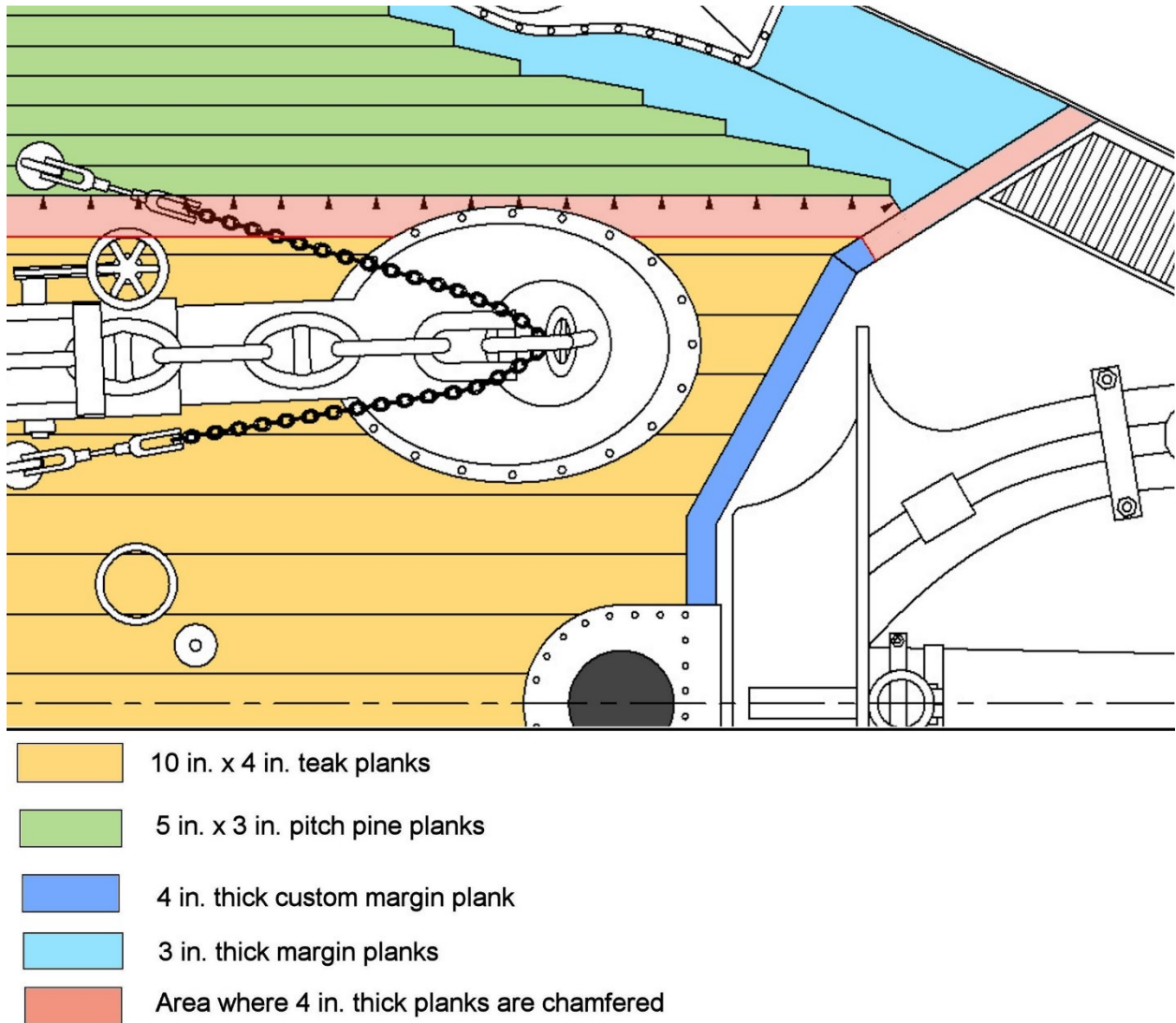


Figure 8

Forward area of plank sheathing on *Titanic's* forecastle deck

The margin planking around the aft edge of the forward anchor well is another instance of 4 in. thick margin plank sheathing. The outboard margin planks here begin as 4 in thick margin plank sheathing then taper down to 3 in. thick for most of their lengths. Figure 9 shows an actual photo of the plank sheathing in this forward area.

Go to next page

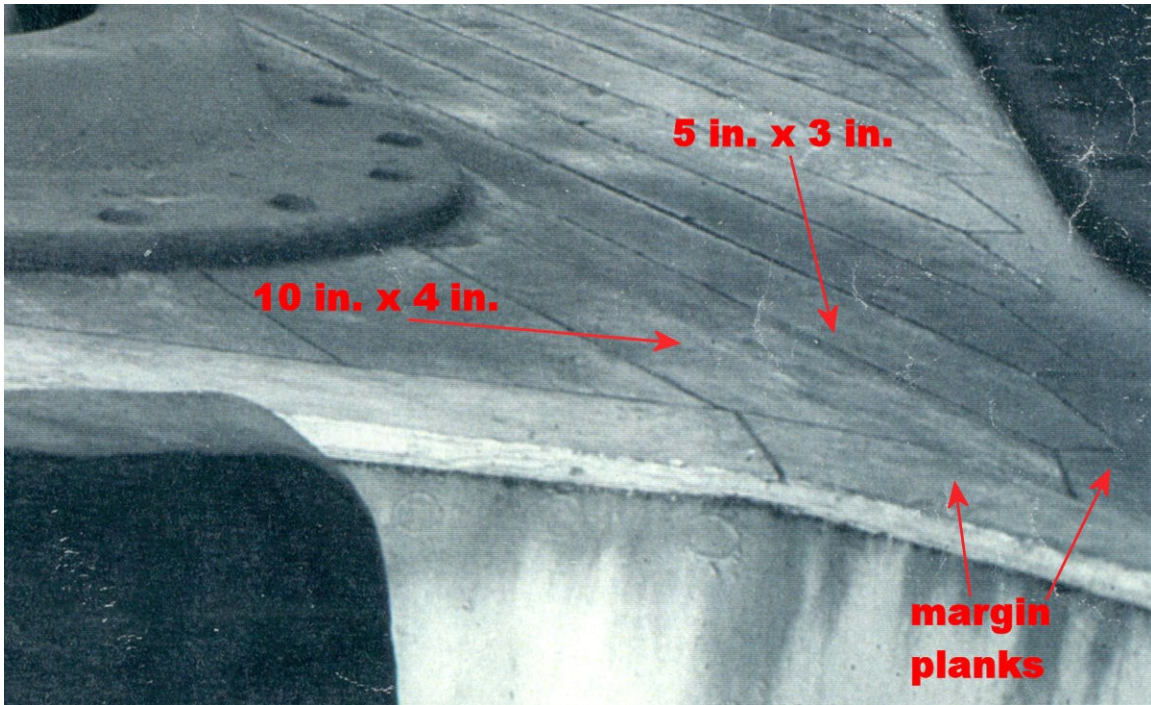


Figure 9

Plank sheathing at forward end of forecastle deck

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated the chamfering of the thicker central planks of *Titanic's* forecastle deck sheathing. The chamfering was done to create a smoother transition from the thicker plank sheathing to the thinner sheathing. While there is not enough photographic coverage to document every area of this sheathing, the general rule which must be followed is that only the upper surface of the sheathing planks can be visible.