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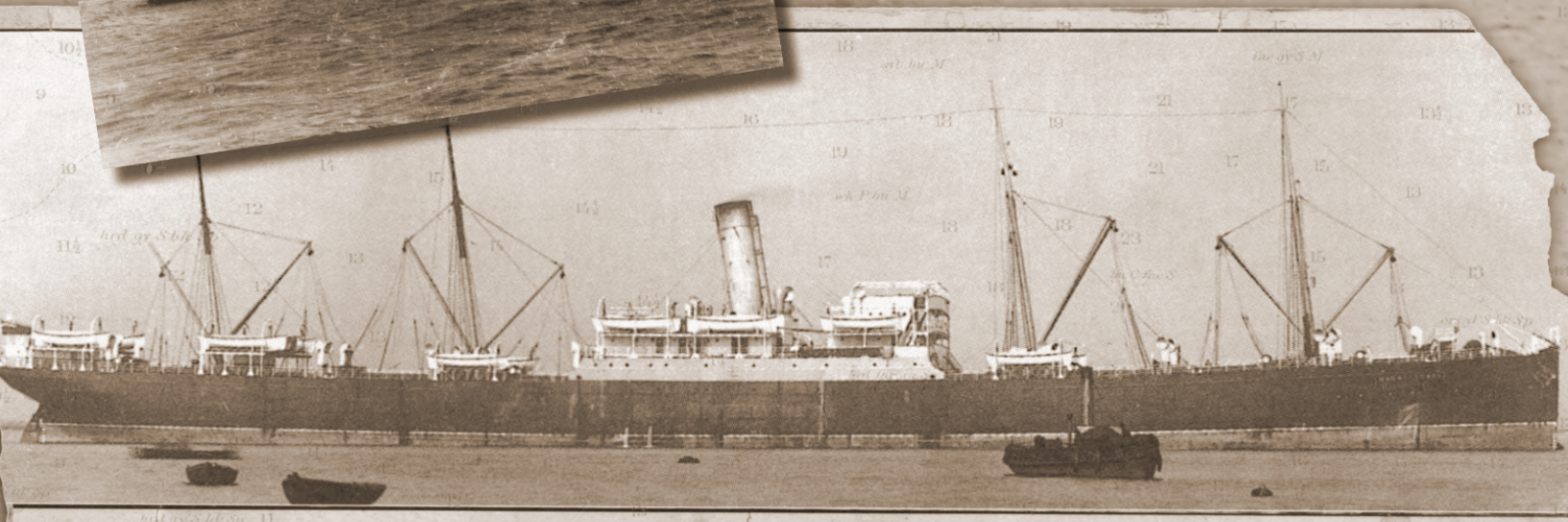
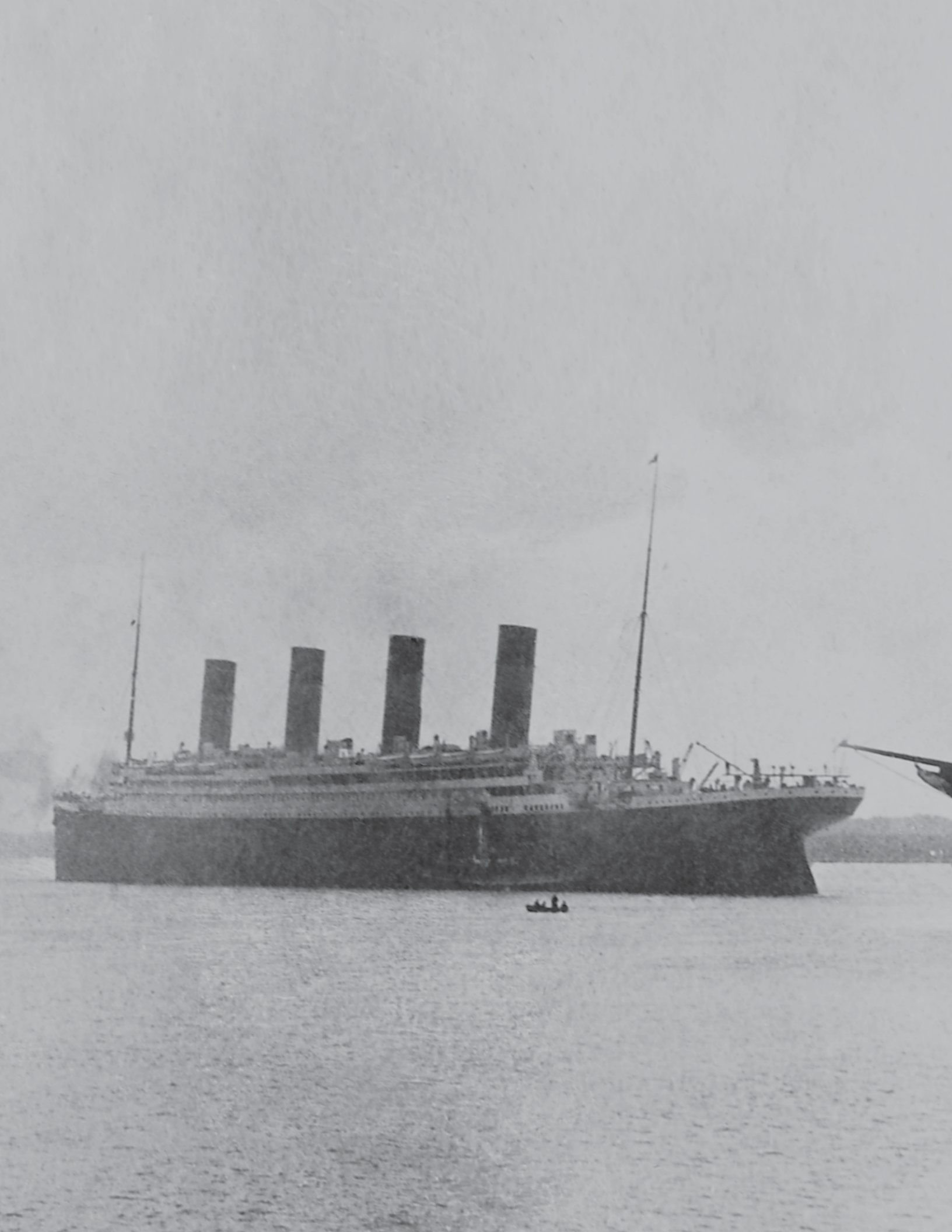


STEAMSHIP MOUNT TEMPLE



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Cover photos: Titanic *departing Southampton on 10 April 1912 (Authors' Collection), the Leyland liner* Californian *(National Archives, Authors' Collection), and the Canadian Pacific liner* Mount Temple *(Wikimedia Commons, digital enhancements by J. Kent Layton).*

Opposite title page: *This photo was taken as* Titanic *paused in the Solent on 10 April 1912 to offload unnecessary standby crewmen; she had just escaped a collision with the docked liner* New York. *(Authors' Collection)*

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Introduction

'Fantastic stories seem to thrive in the wake of extraordinary events.' — Samuel Halpern, *Titanic* historian and author.

On 4 November 2020, a new programme aired on PBS in the United States. Aired as an episode of the *Secrets of the Dead* series, it was entitled *Abandoning the Titanic*. In certain other countries, the programme aired under the title *Titanic: A Dead Reckoning*. The show featured a number of major historical errors; indeed, its very premise was historically flawed. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that at least one of the individuals involved in the show's content has previously been responsible for the dissemination of some dramatically-flawed conspiracy theories.

In previous endeavours, we have tried to correct the historical record; we have also pointed out that today, the history of the *Titanic* has never been in greater crisis. Despite the abundance of excellent research carried out on the subject, myths and conspiracy theories have also been propagated in a very convincing manner, and given worldwide attention in the media. This has convinced many passing enthusiasts that the myths and the conspiracy theories presented in these shows, or in other media forms, are a reality.

In our last book, *Titanic: Solving the Mysteries*, we addressed the grievous historical distortions contained in the show *Titanic: The New Evidence* (which was later re-released under other titles). Yet again, we find it necessary to step in and place before the public the facts of a matter that could easily become nothing more than fantasy, garbled myth at worst, if we did not try to take corrective measures as quickly as possible.

The basic premise of *Abandoning the Titanic* centres around one of the most controversial, and hotly-debated, subjects of that fateful night: the so-called *Californian* affair. This subject has long divided *Titanic* historians. In more recent years, however, a number of critical pieces of evidence – including the correct location of the wreck site, and some fantastic research into the historical record – have begun to make it more difficult for those who would try to clear the *Californian* and her officers from all blame to make an argument that stands up to the facts.

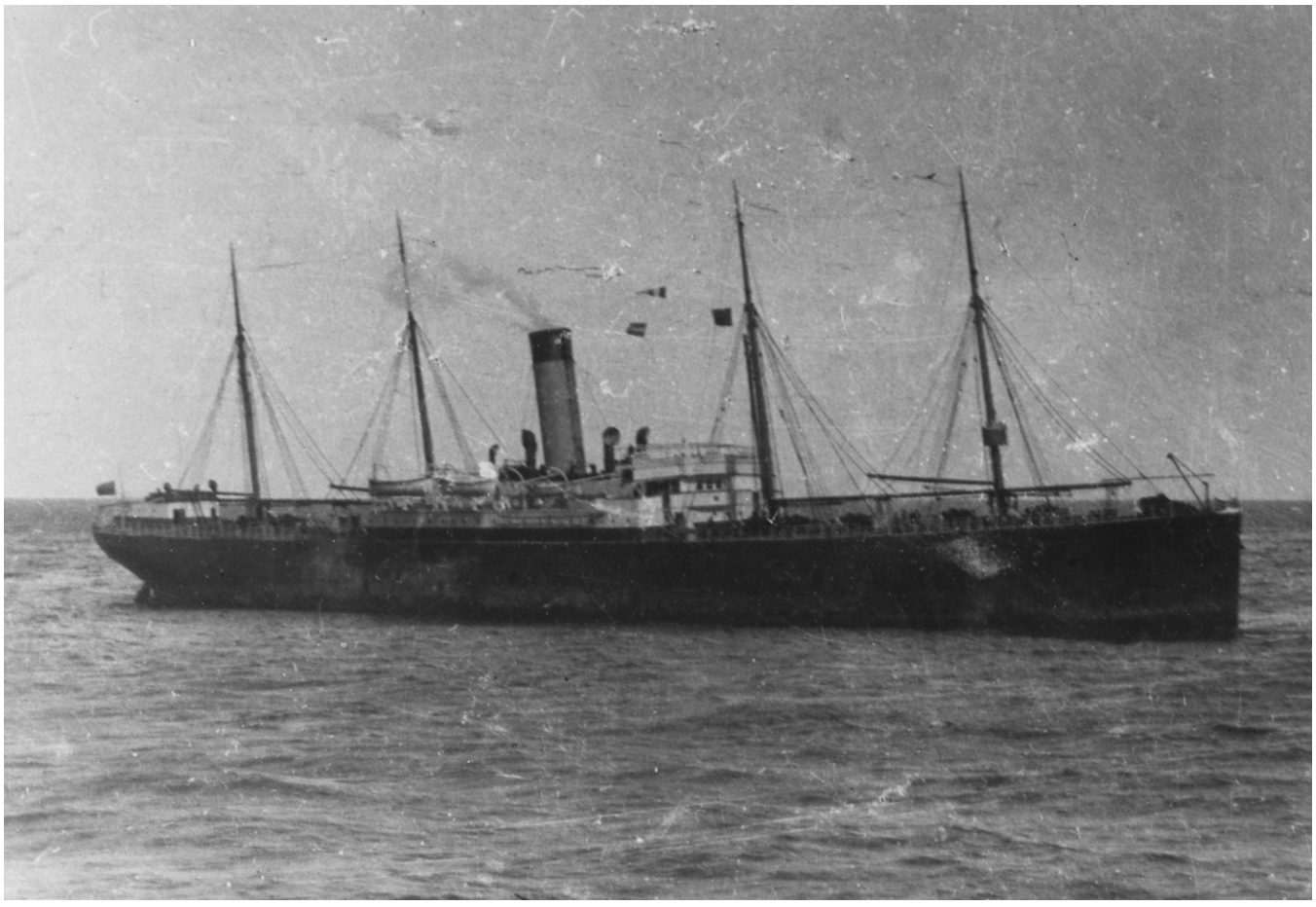
It is worth pointing out that journalist Senan Molony, who played a prominent role in the new show's content and is credited both as a producer and a writer for it, is known for his decades-long attempts not only to clear the *Californian* and her officers of all blame, but also to cast aspersions and blame for events leading up to and during the tragedy in any – and indeed, nearly all – other directions.

A more balanced approach to the facts is what we have long encouraged: follow the facts and evidence to reasoned conclusions. Do not focus merely on minutiae in order to try to support a foregone conclusion; instead, follow the larger body of evidence in whatever direction the facts may support. That has long

been our team's *modus operandi*, and those familiar with our previous works will hopefully recall the way that we work in order to reach unbiased conclusions. In this paper we will now point out the fatal historical errors in the new show, and in as succinct a manner as possible, make the facts available to all.

At the outset, we should point out that this programme falls into several of the very common pitfalls that tend to plague most shows on the subject of the *Titanic*. These include some photos of other ships being used to 'stand in' for photos of *Titanic* that do not exist, but which were not clearly labelled as 'stand-ins'; there were also some mislabelled photos of *Titanic*'s officers. Such errors are not intrinsic to the larger historical errors in the show's premise. However, we do feel that it is good at this point to remind enthusiasts everywhere that most shows about the *Titanic*, including this one, are prone to errors. They are not always the most reliable places for obtaining facts and evidence, although some are better (and rise to the level of being a true documentary rather than just a programme or show) than others.

The Leyland liner SS Californian *as seen from the decks of the Cunarder* Carpathia *on the morning of Monday, 15 April 1912. Controversy over the role the* Californian *played in the* Titanic *disaster has led to many distortions, half-truths, or even utter fabrications as some have attempted to justify the actions of her officers and Captain, Stanley Lord. (National Archives, Authors' Collection)*



1.

Was Titanic Pointed West After the Collision?

One underlying premise of *Abandoning the Titanic* is this: that *Titanic*'s bow was pointing west after the collision because she was put back on her westward course toward New York for about ten minutes following the impact with the iceberg. This is not a new concept, and has been argued before. But why is her heading after the collision important?

If this claim were true, the 'mystery ship' seen off *Titanic*'s port bow after the collision had to be west or southwest of the stricken liner, rather than to her north, and thus would have been located on the other side of the ice field that was in *Titanic*'s path. A visual illustration of this is shown some 30 minutes and 30 seconds into the show. Since the Leyland liner *Californian* is known to have stopped *north* of *Titanic* that night – her Captain, Stanley Lord, claimed that she was some 19 miles north of *Titanic*, claims that the show repeats – having *Titanic*'s bow pointing west after the collision makes it impossible for the *Californian* to have been the mystery ship. Instead, it moves the liner *Mount Temple*, then southwest of *Titanic*'s position, into the cross-hairs as the prime candidate for being the mystery ship that ignored *Titanic*'s signals of distress. (See 40 minutes and 50 seconds into the show.)

If *Titanic* was indeed pointing to the west when she came to a stop, then the show's underlying premise could rise to a level of plausibility that might be worth exploring further. However, there are very good reasons to conclude that *Titanic* was actually pointed north when she came to rest after the collision. Sadly, *Abandoning the Titanic* ignores or fails to present any of the vital evidence on this matter, nor do those involved present any evidence for their unsupported claim that Captain Smith continued with his westward journey for ten full minutes before receiving any damage report.

In order to support the idea that *Titanic* was headed west after the collision, the show completely ignores the 'hard-a-port' order given during the evasive action First Officer Murdoch took in his attempt to avoid further damage to the ship's starboard side. The historical record clearly shows that after Murdoch's well-known 'hard-a-starboard' order, he subsequently ordered 'hard-a-port' moments after the initial impact with the berg. This had the effect of turning the *Titanic*'s bow northward as she moved around the iceberg.

What evidence is there for this maneuver? Considering the circumstances, it is surprisingly well-documented. For example, Quartermaster Olliver witnessed and testified to the order itself.[1] We also know that Quartermaster Rowe testified that the ship's stern was 'swinging' to the south, and that her bow was pointed north, after she came to a stop.[2] Quartermaster Hichens, the helmsman during the collision, gave an account to *Carpathia* passenger Howard Chapin claiming that a hard-a-port order immediately followed the hard-a-starboard order.[3]

We also know that Able Bodied Seaman Joseph Scarrott testified that 'the starboard bow was going

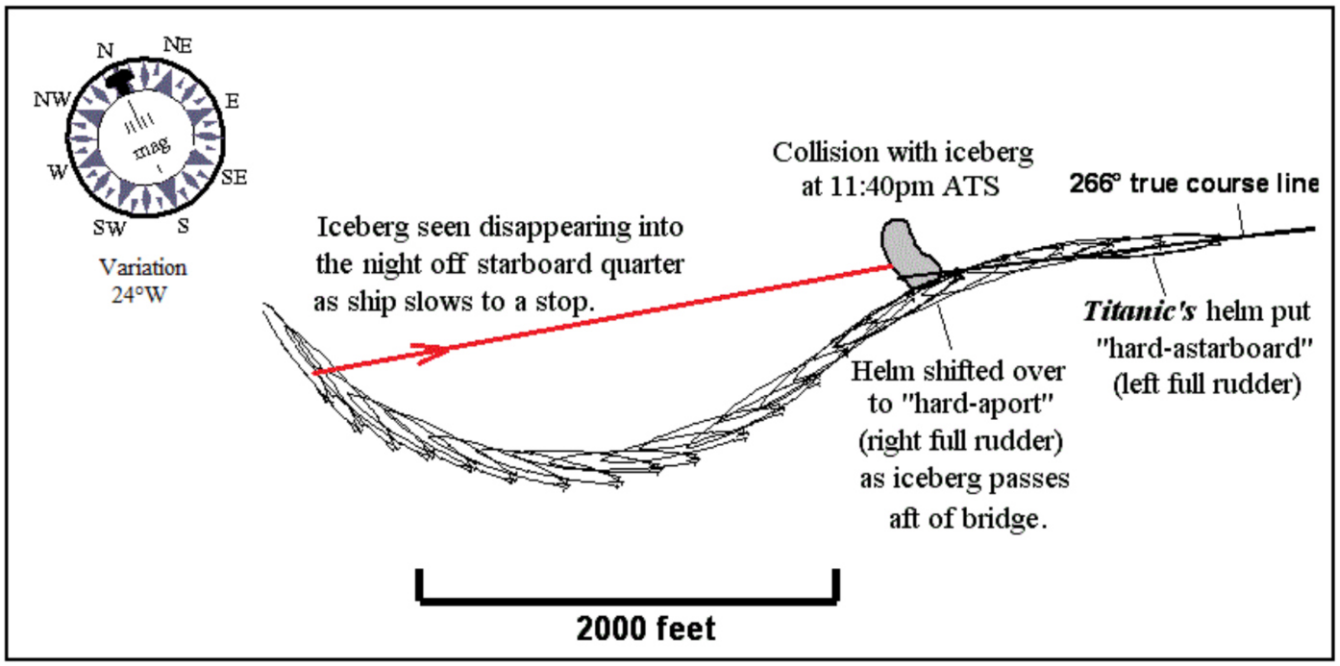


Figure 1: *This chart shows* Titanic*'s original course of approach to the iceberg, 266° true, and the combined effects of Murdoch's hard-a-starboard and hard-a-port orders as he attempted to, and succeeded at, preventing damage to the ship's stern. The red line also shows the iceberg was seen off the starboard quarter after the collision. (Authors' Collection)*

as if to make a circle round it [the iceberg].'[4] Fifth Officer Harold Lowe also described how, later in the sinking, as he was loading Boat No. 1, the lights of a ship were visible 'on the port bow' and were 'about five miles to the northward of us,' indicating that *Titanic*'s bow was then facing in that direction.[5]

Additional proof of the hard-a-port order and the direction that the bow swung following the accident comes from the post-collision actions of Captain Smith, First Officer Murdoch, and Fourth Officer Boxhall. All three officers went out onto the starboard wing of the Bridge in order to look for the iceberg immediately after the impact. This is a vital detail, because if the ship had remained under starboard helm – turning her bow to port – then the natural place to go in order to see the iceberg would have been the *port* side wing. Instead, all three men first went to the *starboard* side, and Murdoch pointed to the berg – which was then off the ship's starboard quarter.[6] **(See Figure 1.)**

In fact, if a hard-a-port order had not been given, the starboard-aft quarter of *Titanic* would have remained directly in line to strike the berg. However, we know that the damage the liner sustained was actually concentrated in the forward regions of the ship's starboard side. The only way that the stern half of the ship's starboard side could have escaped damage under this sort of collision scenario, following an initial 'hard-to-starboard' order, is if the helm had subsequently been reversed with the very sort of 'hard-to-port' order that we have just seen evidence for. Since *Titanic* was steering nearly due west on a course of 266° true before the evasive action, Murdoch's maneuvers would have turned the bow of the ship in a northerly direction as she came to a stop. All of these dynamics of her evasive turn are why Captain Smith, Murdoch, and Boxhall were all able to see the iceberg off *Titanic*'s starboard quarter after the collision from the *starboard* Bridge wing.

Perhaps most telling, we have the fact that the wreck of the bow on the seafloor *still points northward today*.[7] Furthermore, it ended up almost half a mile north of the centre of the boiler field, the spot over which the ship was seen to split in two;[8] this indicates

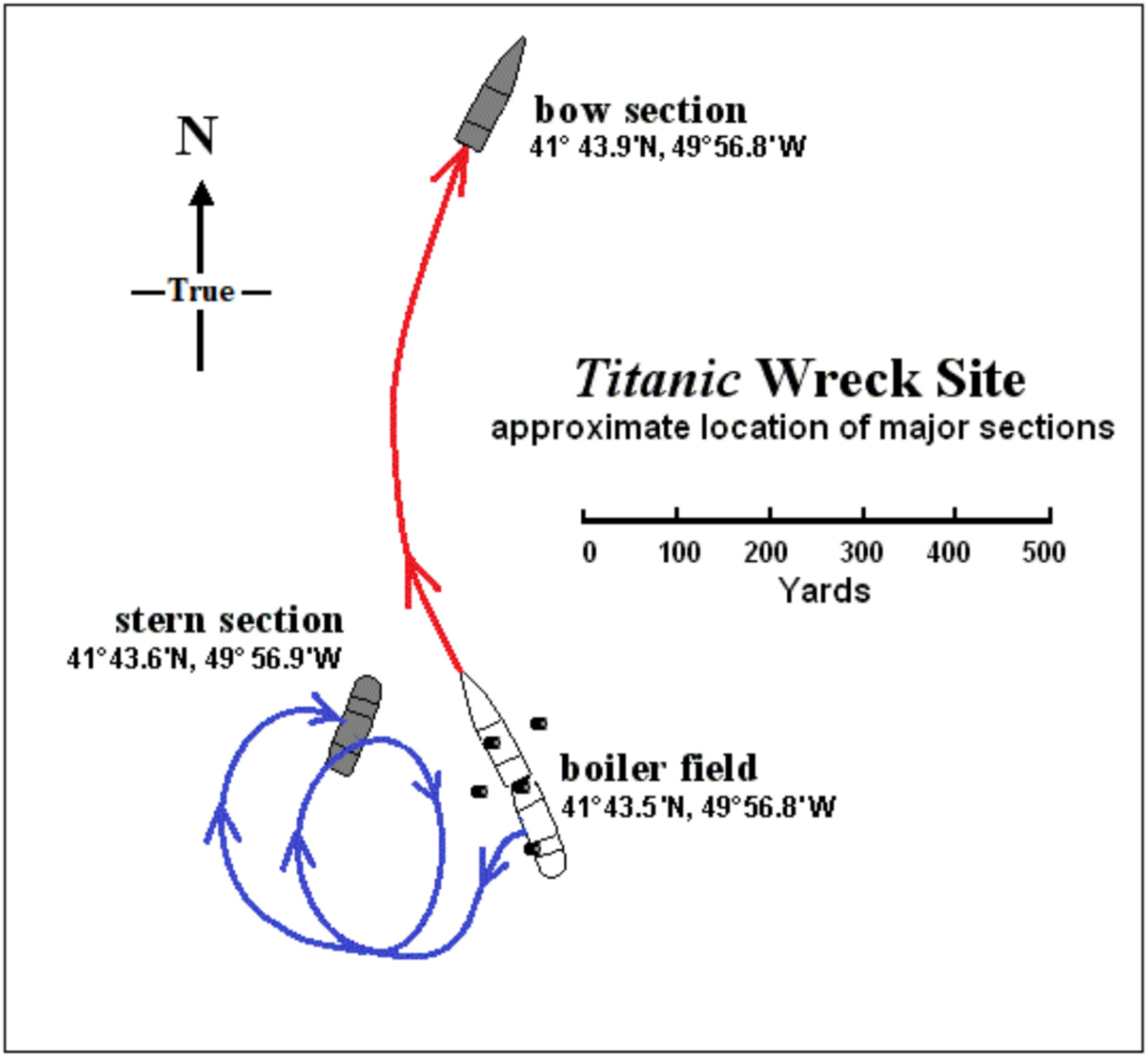


Figure 2: *This illustration shows how the bow section's northward orientation came about. The coordinates of the boiler field's centre on the sea floor today are shown, as are the coordinates of the bow and stern sections. The centre of the boiler field has been described as the 'hypocentre', as it is generally believed that the heavy boilers fell more or less straight down from the spot at which the ship broke up, spilling them into the sea. It has been demonstrated that the stern section spiraled in a clockwise direction, seen from above (blue arrow), as it descended to the sea floor. There is evidence that during the course of the sinking, the* Titanic *slowly turned to starboard from the northwest true direction she was initially pointed in when she stopped. All evidence indicates that when it left the surface, the bow section followed its final northward heading to its final resting place on the sea floor today. The approximate locations of the bow section, stern section and the five single-ended boilers in the boiler field are taken from a map of the wreck site produced after the August 2005 dives to the wreck.*

that as the bow section sank to the sea floor, it was also travelling northward. The hatch cover for Cargo Hold No. 1 also rests north of the bow section, having landed some two hundred feet away from it, indicating that when it was wrenched loose, its momentum was in a north-bound direction.[9]

Interestingly, in the late 1990s, a team of researchers who believed that the bow of the wreck spiralled down to the sea floor as it left the surface performed a series of model drop tank tests in an attempt to prove their theory. To their consternation, they found instead that the bow more or less maintained its heading from the time it left the surface, planing forward during its descent in a sort of dive-and-stall manner, rather than turning or twisting as it fell.[10] They even modeled in flanges at the stern end of their model in some of their drop tests, trying to see if jagged portions of the hull in the area of the hull break could have acted as a sort of 'rudder' for the bow as it sank to the bottom; however, they found no effect on the direction in which the bow was pointed as it sank through the water column.[11] This indicates that since the bow is pointed in a northerly direction today, it was pointed in a northerly direction when it sank beneath the surface – the same direction that survivors reported she was facing after the collision and during the evacuation.

Other independent forensic investigations of the wreck site have come to similar conclusions. In his book *Exploring the Deep*, James Cameron put forth a very detailed analysis of the wreck site, following the evidence on the sea floor and postulating a forensic team's assessment of what happened during the disaster. His conclusions matched very closely those of the model tank tests performed in the late 1990s, including the bow's forward trajectory as it sank,[12] the bow's speed upon impact with the seafloor,[13] its fall-and-stall manner of descent, and other details. He even wrote:

> And the stern experienced the same stall-fall cycle as the bow did. However, where *the bow planed away to the north, following its final heading at the surface all the way to its final resting place,* [authors' emphasis] the stern spun downward in a wide spiral.[14]

A rendering of the description given above is shown in the **Figure 2**. **(Preceding page.)**

No plausible forensic analysis has come forward to explain how the bow currently points north if the ship really had been pointing west when it came to a stop following the collision with the iceberg, as the show claimed.

As far as the ship resuming her course westward for ten minutes in a damaged condition following the collision, one must seriously question how such claims of gross negligence on the part of *Titanic*'s officers was conceived.

Prior to the collision, Trimmer Thomas Patrick Dillon was on duty in the main Reciprocating Engine Room. He was cleaning some gear because the boilers in his usual stokehold section, the single-ended boilers in Boiler Room No. 1, were not yet lit that Sunday night. He was later questioned extensively at the British Inquiry about what he saw happen with the ship's engines after she struck the iceberg. He said that the engines first came to a stop about one-and-a-half minutes after the impact, remained stopped for about half a minute, and then went astern slowly for about two minutes before stopping again. Asked about further engine movements, Dillon said that the engines went ahead again for about two minutes before coming to a final stop. He did not, however, say how long it was after reversing that the engines went ahead again, only that they went ahead for about the same amount of time that they had gone in reverse.[15]

Other evidence of engine movements following the collision comes from passenger Henry Stengel, who estimated that the ship's engines came to a stop about two or three minutes after the impact, and then started up again 'just slightly' as if they were backing, although he felt very little vibration.[16] Stengel did not mention any other engine movements.

Quartermaster Alfred Olliver, who witnessed the hard-a-port order given by Murdoch, also testified that while he was on the Bridge, he saw Captain Smith himself put the engine telegraphs to half-ahead. That was some time after the ship struck, but Olliver did not know if the engines were backed to stop the ship before that, or how long they remained set to ahead, because he had errands to run. He did

say, however, that he believed they were not set to go ahead for very long.[17]

Then we have the very confusing testimony of Greaser Frederick Scott, who at the time of the collision was standing in the Turbine Engine Room, next to the watertight door in the bulkhead which separated that compartment from the Reciprocating Engine Room. According to Scott, he looked into the main Engine Room through the opened door and he recalled: 'They rang down "Stop," and two greasers on the bottom rang the telegraph back to answer it. Then they rang down "Slow ahead." For ten minutes she was going ahead. Then they rang down "Stop," and she went astern for five minutes.'

This evidence was all somewhat confusing to those questioning him, so the Wreck Commissioner, Lord Mersey, asked: 'The orders were "Stop," "Slow ahead," and then "Astern"?' To this Scott replied: 'No, it was "Stop," and then "Astern." She went astern for five minutes. Then they rang down "Stop."'

Still confused, Mersey then asked, '"Stop," "Slow ahead" - 10 minutes, you say?' Scott replied, 'Yes, about 10 minutes.'

Still unsure of the sequence that Scott was telling them, Lord Mersey asked: 'Then "Stop" again?' Scott answered: 'Yes, "Stop"; then she went astern for about five minutes.'

Still not quite sure of the sequence, the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs, then asked: 'Did you hear the order about "Astern"?' Scott replied: 'Well, it was on the telegraph.' Still somewhat confused, Scott was then asked, 'What was the order?' Scott answered: '"Go astern" - "Slow astern." Then they rang down "Stop," and I do not think the telegraph went after that.'[18]

So if we read this for what it's worth, it seems that Scott was saying that he watched these orders come down on the engine telegraphs from where he stood in the Turbine Engine Room, and the sequence was: First 'Stop', then 'Slow ahead' – which order lasted ten minutes – then 'Stop' again, then 'Slow astern' for 5 minutes, then finally 'Stop' for the last time. And all of this happened after the shock of collision, while he was standing near the open watertight door – a vital detail, as we shall soon see.

Scott was asked more questions about the length of time that took place between the changes he saw on the engine telegraphs. For example, they asked him: 'Can you tell us at all what time passed between the order "Stop" and "Slow ahead"?' Scott replied: 'I should say about 10 minutes or a quarter of an hour.' Scott also said that it was about four or five minutes between the orders 'Stop' and 'Slow astern', which lasted about five minutes before the final 'Stop' order came down. All of this supposedly happened before Scott was sent to rescue one of his mates who was trapped in the after-most shaft-tunnel compartment because of the closing of the watertight doors.[19]

So if we try and piece the timing of the engine orders according to Scott into some form of timeline, we have the time of impact [T=0], followed immediately by:

- T=0 min 'Stop'
- T=15 min 'Slow ahead'
- T=25 min 'Stop'
- T=30 min 'Slow astern'
- T=35 min 'Stop'

Quite frankly, none of this testimony sat well with the Wreck Commission because it made very little sense. They then asked Scott how long after the last 'Stop' order it was that they sent him aft to release his mate who was trapped in the tunnel compartment. Scott told them that it was about 15 to 20 minutes after the 'Stop' order, and that it took him about ten minutes to release him and return. That brings his timeline to:

- T=55 min Sent to release his mate
- T=65 min Returns to engine room

With the collision happening at 11:40pm, all of this brings Scott back to the Engine Room at about 12:45am ship's time.[20] Scott also said that it was just over a half-hour 'from the time the doors were lowered and we went and let him [his mate] out [of the tunnel].'[21] If that were true, it would mean that the watertight doors did not close until about 25 minutes, or thereabouts, after the collision occurred. Of course, if the watertight doors closed earlier than that, it would mean Scott could not have seen those orders rung down to the Reciprocating Engine

Room telegraphs from his location in the Turbine Engine Room.

Yet we know that the watertight doors closed within moments of the collision. On the Bridge, First Officer Murdoch was seen operating the switch that closed the watertight doors within moments of when the ship struck ice; he was able to report to Captain Smith, upon the Captain's arrival on the Bridge seconds after the collision, that the watertight doors were *already* closed. Other eyewitnesses below, such as Leading Stoker Frederick Barrett, recalled that the watertight doors were closed immediately following the collision; indeed, Barrett and Second Engineer Hesketh just barely made it through the door that separated Boiler Rooms Nos. 6 and 5 before it shut within moments of the iceberg damaging the starboard hull plates of Boiler Room No. 6.[22]

Does any of this testimony from Greaser Scott sound like it came from a credible eyewitness? No wonder Lord Mersey pointed out: 'I am told by one of my colleagues that it [Scott's evidence] is directly in the teeth of this evidence [from Trimmer Dillon].'[23]

Mention should also be made that Second Class passenger Lawrence Beesley wrote in his book, *The Loss of the SS Titanic*, that he noticed *Titanic* was steaming ahead again when he saw two small streaks of foam along the ship's side when he came up on deck following the mishap. This was just before he noticed an officer throwing the covers off of Boat No. 16, just as he was going below.[24] If his recollection on this point was accurate, that would place the ship moving forward at nearly midnight, which is about when the order was given to uncover the boats.

Additionally, it should also be noted that Charles Lightoller and Fireman Alfred Shiers also noticed the ship moving ahead very slowly after the collision; but these reports were clearly only a few minutes after the collision, when they went outside to see what had happened. Seeing the ship still moving ahead a few minutes after she struck makes sense, since it does take a certain amount of time for a ship to come to a dead stop from her previous speed of about 22 knots. None of this, however, can support the claim that the *Titanic* was deliberately run ahead again for ten full minutes even while the impact damage was being assessed. Of course, Scott's ten minutes of steaming fits in perfectly – if one has a predilection for conspiracy theories, which is why his confusing evidence is so often relied upon by those who make conspiratorial arguments.

While we are on the subject, let's focus for a moment on Lawrence Beesley's statements. He himself noted that *Titanic* had been pointing northward when he was in the lifeboat, wholly contradicting one of the new show's underlying premises. As he wrote in his book:

> So in the absence of any plan of action, we rowed slowly forward – or what we thought was forward, for it was *in the direction the* Titanic*'s bows were pointing before she sank* [authors' emphasis]. I see now that *we must have been pointing northwest* [authors' emphasis], for we presently saw the Northern Lights on the starboard, and again, when the *Carpathia* came up from the south, we saw her from behind us on the southeast, and turned our boat around to get to her.

As we shall see, it appears that *Titanic* was indeed pointing between north and northwest true after she came to a final stop.

There has been much speculation as to why an experienced ship master like Captain Smith would run his engines ahead again, after initially stopping his ship following the collision. It could have been that he wanted to move his vessel away from some scattered nearby ice, in case they needed to launch lifeboats; he may simply have wanted to test whether the ship was capable of proceeding ahead again on her own power, should damage reports indicate that the vessel was not critically damaged. But to suggest that he would resume steaming toward New York for as much as ten minutes before receiving a full damage report – or was influenced to do so by others on board – is not only unsupported and even contrary to the facts we have available, but is at its very core a patently preposterous concept.[25] The direction of the ship's bow at the bottom of the Atlantic proves that there was no attempt to resume steaming to New

York, or elsewhere, in the minutes following the accident.

Those familiar with the *Titanic* inquiries may point to the testimony given by *Titanic*'s Fourth Officer Joseph Boxhall and Third Officer Herbert Pitman regarding the direction that *Titanic* was pointed while the boats were being loaded and distress rockets were being sent up. In the case of Boxhall, he was asked a leading question by Senator Fletcher, who suggested that the mystery steamer came out of the west or southwest and then went away in the direction from which she came. Boxhall's answer was, 'I do not know whether it was southwestward. I should say it was westerly.'[26]

This is the same type of leading question that Fletcher put to Bedroom Steward Alfred Crawford, who had been in Boat No. 8 rowing toward the lights of the mystery steamer: 'If the *Titanic* was moving west you moved southwest?' Crawford had no idea what compass direction they were heading, and he said so, but he agreed that *if Titanic* was pointing west, then his boat had been rowing toward the southwest. He was then asked about the direction from which *Carpathia* came, and agreed that when they turned their lifeboat around, they had to have begun heading northeast toward *Carpathia*, which had stopped three to four miles away, *if* they were initially rowing southwest from *Titanic*.[27]

All of this would make perfect sense if *Titanic* was indeed facing to the west, because the light of the mystery steamer was seen about two points off *Titanic*'s port bow. But the problem with accepting the assumption that Fletcher made regarding the direction *Titanic* was pointing – which assumption was apparently accepted by Boxhall and Crawford, who probably never even thought about this before being questioned about it – is that it puts *Carpathia* coming to the rescue out of the *northeast*. Of course, we know that this is an entirely impossible scenario, because *Carpathia*'s Captain Rostron had steamed up toward the distress position *from the southeast*, on a course of N52°W true; he was *not* coming down from the northeast, as a direct acceptance of the testimony by Boxhall and Crawford would require.

The only way to resolve the issue is to reject Senator Fletcher's initial assumption that *Titanic* was facing westward, and that Crawford's boat was going to the southwest toward the mystery steamer. The only solution that works in resolving all of this is if *Titanic* was facing northward, not westward, after the collision. Only this solution would correctly place the *Carpathia* as coming up from the southeast as we know she did, and would then put Crawford's boat initially heading northwest toward the mystery steamer. This resolution is shown in the diagram on the following page. **(Figure 3.)**

As for Pitman's testimony that the mystery steamer was to the west, right ahead, while he was in his boat, No. 5, he was also asked by Senator Smith: 'Did you hear the testimony of Mr. Boxhall on that point?' Pitman replied, 'No, I did not. [But] I have heard him speak about it.'[28] One must surely, then, ask this vital question: How much of what Pitman had to say was influenced by what Boxhall had to say?

What all of this means is that we have overwhelming evidence regarding *Titanic*'s original course before the evasive maneuver, the way the evasive maneuver played out, the direction that the ship's bow was pointing in after she came to a complete stop, and the direction in which her bow is still pointed today – and this entire chain of evidence lines up perfectly. Each link is mutually supportive of the larger picture, and the chain completely debunks the underlying premise presented in *Abandoning the Titanic*, namely that her bow was still pointed west after the collision, in order to make the *Mount Temple* a viable candidate as the 'mystery ship' seen from *Titanic*.

The show, however, completely ignores all of the hard evidence on the matter that disagrees with the conspiracy theory it propagates, namely that the ship resumed steaming on her course in a damaged condition for ten minutes following the accident, and was pointing west when she came to a final stop. This is a highly biased 'starting point' for viewers to begin considering other evidence regarding the claim that the *Mount Temple* was the 'mystery ship' seen from *Titanic*. Readers might logically wonder at this point: aside from the question of *Titanic*'s heading during the sinking, is there other evidence that the *Mount Temple* might possibly have been the 'mystery ship' seen from *Titanic* as she sank?

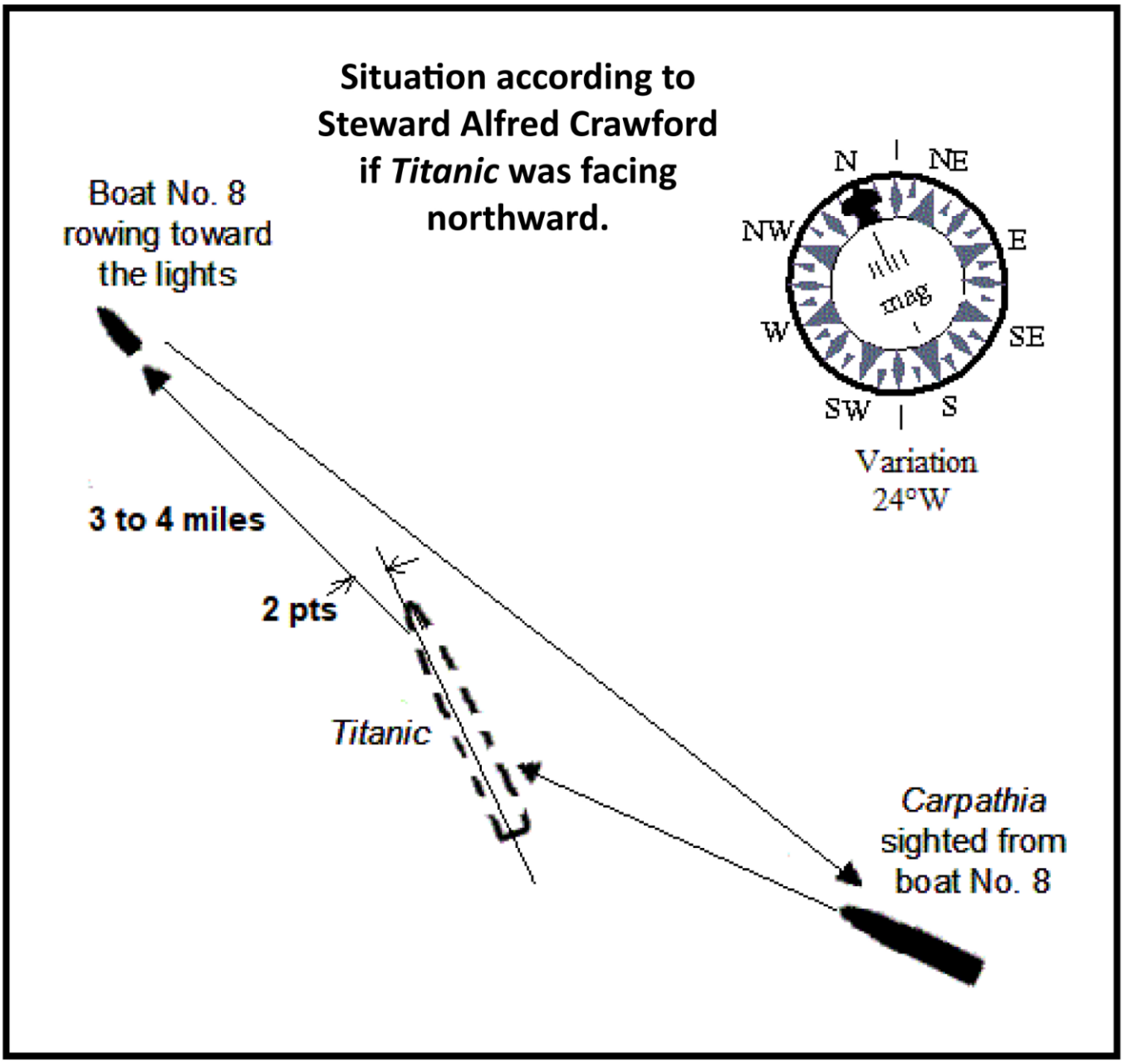


Figure 3: *This illustration shows the spatial orientation of* Titanic*'s bow after the collision, of Steward Crawford's lifeboat as it rowed toward the lights of the other vessel on the horizon, and the direction from which the* Carpathia *was sighted, if the entire situation was corrected for the* Titanic *was facing northward after she hit the iceberg.*

Opposite page: *Boat No. 11 alongside the* Carpathia *on the morning of 15 April 1912. Knowing that the* Carpathia *approached the scene of the disaster from the southeast helps us to understand the testimony of Steward Alfred Crawford regarding the direction in which his lifeboat was rowing toward the lights of the other steamer after* Titanic *sank. Instead of being proof that the mystery ship was to the west of* Titanic*, and that* Titanic*'s bow had been pointed west after the collision – which would require the* Carpathia *to have steamed up to the wreck site from the northeast, which is an impossibility – re-orienting Crawford's testimony correctly lines up three separate factors: the direction* Titanic *was pointing when she sank, the correct direction to the mystery ship, and the direction from which the* Carpathia *approached the scene the morning after. (Authors' Collection)*

2.

The SS Mount Temple: The Ship That Boxhall Couldn't Have Seen

To answer the question of whether there is any evidence that the *Mount Temple* might be the 'mystery ship' seen from the *Titanic*, let us first see what a key *Titanic* eyewitness, Fourth Officer Joseph Boxhall, had to say about the time he first observed the mystery ship:

> I was unlacing covers on the port side myself and I saw a lot of men come along - the watch I presume. They started to screw some [lifeboats] out on the afterpart of the port side; I was just going along there and seeing all the men were well established with their work, well under way with it, and I heard someone report a light, a light ahead. I went on the bridge and had a look to see what the light was…. I do not know who reported it. There were quite a lot of men on the bridge at the time…. It was two masthead lights of a steamer. But before I saw this light I went to the chart room and worked out the ship's position…. I must have been to the Marconi office with the position after I saw the light…. I submitted the position to the Captain first, and he told me to take it to the Marconi room.[1]

So according to Boxhall, while he was unlacing boat covers on the port side, someone reported that a light was seen ahead. He then went to the Bridge to have a look, but before actually seeing this light, which later turned out to be a steamer with two masthead lights, he apparently got waylaid by Captain Smith; Smith asked his Fourth Officer to confirm their position based on the star sight fix that had been taken at 7:30pm. Boxhall did so, and took the revised position to the Marconi operators for them to transmit.

The order of the events here is vital. The lights of the unidentified steamer were spotted *before* the revised distress coordinates were sent by wireless or, indeed, before Boxhall had even been asked to work them up.

We know that the first distress position was transmitted ten minutes before the position that Boxhall worked up was sent out. That first position (41° 44' N, 50° 24' W), apparently worked up by Captain Smith himself, was sent out at 10:25pm New York time (NYT). It was picked up by the land station at Cape Race and by the steamships *Mount Temple*, *La Provence*, *Frankfurt*, and *Ypiranga* – the latter picking up the call three minutes later at 10:28pm NYT. We also know that Boxhall's so-called 'corrected' position, 41° 46' N, 50° 14' W, a position which we now know was about 13 miles west of where *Titanic* actually sank, was first transmitted at 10:35pm NYT, and was picked up by *Carpathia*, *Birma*, *Mount Temple*, *Cape Race*, and with the steamship *Ypiranga* logging the call one minute later at 10:36pm NYT.

When *Mount Temple*'s wireless operator John Durrant received the 10:25pm distress call from *Titanic*, he sent a steward to wake Captain Moore and deliver the distress message to him. Ten minutes later, *Ti-*

tanic's revised position – the one worked up by Fourth Officer Boxhall – was delivered to Moore. It was to that corrected position that Moore laid in a course, and prepared *Mount Temple* for a rescue operation. Durrant's wireless log recorded the time that his ship was put on a course for the revised coordinates as 10:40pm NYT, five minutes after Boxhall's revised coordinates were received.

Notice that these events aboard the *Mount Temple* all took place *after* the light of a steamer had already been reported to Boxhall on the *Titanic*; it was those reports that prompted Boxhall to go to the Bridge to have a better look. Yet until she received the distress messages and changed course, *Mount Temple* was located far to the southwestward of *Titanic*, heading westward for St. John, New Brunswick. In other words, she was continuing to steam further and further *away* from *Titanic* even as the mast lights of the infamous 'mystery ship' seen from *Titanic* opened up, or became visible, to those on the sinking liner. Since the distance between *Titanic* and *Mount Temple* was then *increasing*, and continued to increase until *Mount Temple* turned around, she simply could not have been the 'mystery ship'.

However, *Abandoning the Titanic* distorts vital elements of Boxhall's story. Roughly fifteen minutes into the show, it was said that Boxhall worked out the first distress position that was sent, that it was then reviewed and deemed wrong and recalled, and that a new revised position was sent out 13 minutes after the first. This is incorrect. Boxhall himself stated in a 1962 BBC broadcast that Captain Smith was the one who worked out the first distress position, and that it had been based on the ship's eight o'clock dead reckoning [DR] position. Boxhall also said that he was the one who suggested working up a position based on the 7:30pm star sights that they had taken, resulting in the revised and now-famous coordinates that were then transmitted.

The show is also quite mistaken in placing 13 minutes between the transmissions of the position worked up by Captain Smith, and Boxhall's revised position based on the star fix. Instead, the historical record shows that the first distress message, containing Captain Smith's coordinates, was sent at 10:25pm NYT, while the so called corrected position was sent out precisely ten minutes later, at 10:35pm NYT. While it may seem like a minor time difference, this is very illustrative of the problems with this programme – erroneous claims are made, even when established facts disproving the claims are readily available. Neither of these claims – that Boxhall worked out both positions, and the amount of time separating the two transmissions – has any basis in fact. What *is* a fact is that both distress positions were far to the west of where *Titanic* actually was.

But we can do even more to prove that *Mount Temple* was nowhere near *Titanic* when she first turned around. Let's look at the navigational details.

3.

The SS Mount Temple: The Ship That Was Too Far Away

The Canadian Pacific Line's SS *Mount Temple* was an immigrant vessel of 8,790 gross tons, with a length of 485 feet. She carried four masts and a single yellow funnel. At 1pm on Wednesday, 3 April 1912, *Mount Temple* departed Antwerp on her sixty-second voyage; she was west-bound for St. John, New Brunswick and then planned to proceed to Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was carrying 1,466 passengers, mostly steerage, and a crew of 143. Like *Titanic*, she was equipped with 20 lifeboats, but whereas *Titanic*'s boats had a total rated capacity of 1,198, the capacity of the *Mount Temple*'s boats was only about one thousand.

Her planned route of travel would take her westward through the English Channel to a departure point just off Bishop Rock (49° 52' N, 6° 27' W) at the westernmost tip of the Isles of Scilly, then 1,734 nautical miles along the great circle path to 'the Corner' point for west-bound steamers at 42° N, 47° W. From there she would take a rhumb line course of 276° true for Cape Sable (43° 23.4' N, 65° 37.3' W) at the southernmost tip of Nova Scotia, a distance of about 825 nautical miles, and would then proceed into the Bay of Fundy and up to St. John. Her speed was almost 11 knots.

At local apparent noon, Saturday, 13 April 1912, *Mount Temple* was located about 200 nautical miles from the west-bound Corner point (42° N, 47° W). It was expected that she would reach 'the Corner' in a little over 18 hours.

At 8:45pm New York Time (NYT), *Mount Temple* received a wireless call from the SS *Corinthian* reporting that the SS *Corsican* had seen ice at 41° 25' N, 50° 30' W.[1] At the time this message was received, which was about 10:53pm ship's time,[2] *Mount Temple* was heading close to 245° true toward the west-bound Corner point.[3] After receiving the ice warning from *Corinthian*, *Mount Temple*'s Captain, James Henry Moore, prudently decided to heed this warning and not to turn his ship at 'the Corner', but to instead continue past 'the Corner' and head down to 41° 15' N, 50° 00' W before turning; this decision would take his ship about ten miles south of the reported ice. From this revised turning point, he would head up for Cape Sable and finally proceed to St. John. By making this adjustment in his course change, he would only extend the total voyage's distance by about 22 miles, or about two hours of steaming, but he would also hopefully avoid encountering any ice along the way.

At about 6:23am on 14 April, *Mount Temple* would have passed the longitude of 'the Corner' (47°W). She then continued steaming on the same course line until reaching her noontime position, which was fixed by solar observation as 41° 38' N, 48° 20' W.[4] Local apparent noon (12:00pm Apparent Time Ship [ATS]) on that date at that location came precisely at 3:13:37pm GMT. Thus we find that *Mount Temple*'s clocks would have been set 3 hours and 14 minutes behind GMT, or 1 hour 46 minutes ahead of NYT, which was in full agreement with the evidence provided by Captain Moore and his wireless operator John Durrant. (It was sometime in the forenoon that

Sunday morning that *Mount Temple*'s clocks were adjusted to account for the westward progress she was making.) The run time between noon 13 April to noon 14 April was 24 hours 22 minutes, encompassing an overall distance of about 265 nautical miles at an average speed of around 10.9 knots.

With the ship's noontime position fixed, *Mount Temple* would have been put on a heading of 253° true to take her down to the revised turning point at 41° 15' N, 50° 00' W. The distance from her noontime position to the revised turning point works out to about 78½ miles. At an average speed of 10.9 knots, it would have taken *Mount Temple* about 7 hours and 12 minutes to reach that location. Therefore, at about 7:12pm ATS, *Mount Temple*'s course would have been changed to a heading of 280.5° true to make Cape Sable.

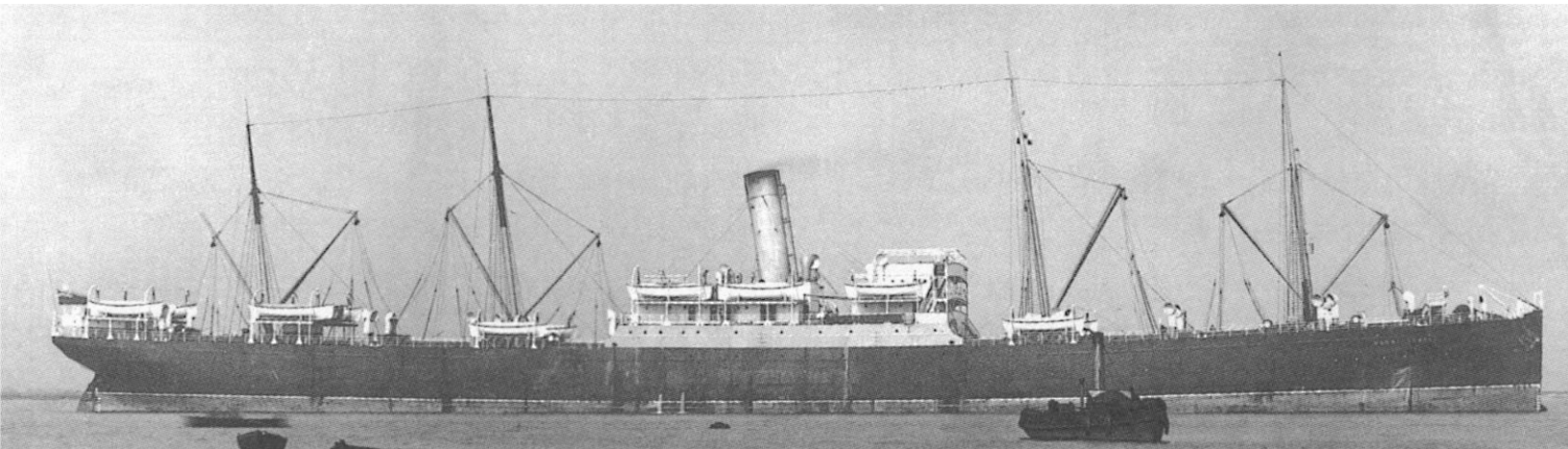
At 10:25pm NYT, or 12:11am *Mount Temple* ATS, wireless operator John Durrant picked up the CQD message from *Titanic* stating that she required assistance. As previously noted, the distress position given at that time was the initial one worked up by Captain Smith at 41° 44' N, 50° 24' W. Durrant responded to *Titanic*'s call, but it was difficult for *Titanic*'s operator Jack Phillips to fully hear the transmission because of the racket caused by steam then blowing off from the escape pipes on *Titanic*'s funnels. Durrant's message to Captain Moore read: '*Titanic* sends CQD. Requires assistance. Position 41° 44' north, longitude 50° 24' west. Come at once. Iceberg.' At the bottom of the message it said, 'can't hear me.'

When this message was received, Captain Moore was asleep. It was a steward who woke him up and handed him Durrant's message.[5] At 10:35pm NYT (12:21 ATS), just ten minutes after receiving *Titanic*'s initial distress call, Durrant picked up another CQD distress message from *Titanic*; this was the same one that *Carpathia* picked up, which gave Boxhall's 'corrected' position of 41° 46' N, 50° 14' W. It was immediately passed on to Captain Moore. This corrected position was actually ten minutes-of-arc, or about seven-and-a-half nautical miles, east of the first one that Moore was given. Moore put down his own ship's position on a chart, along with the corrected CQD position, and then 'steered her by the compass north 65° east true [065° true].'

The position of *Mount Temple* when she was turned around and placed on this heading was given in evidence as 41° 25' N, 51° 14' W. That would put her 56.5 nautical miles from her 7:12pm (ATS) turning point down at 41° 15' N, 50° 00' W. The time of this course change to make for the 'corrected' CQD position was recorded as 10:40pm NYT in Durrant's wireless log. That would be 12:26am *Mount Temple* ATS, or 12 hours 26 minutes since noon of 14 April. The distance traveled from her 14 April noontime coordinates to the turning point at latitude 41° 15' N in longitude 50° W, and then up to a turnaround point at 41° 25' N, 51° 14' W at 12:26am was 135 nautical miles. Her average speed since noon thereby works out to have been 10.9 knots, which is in full agreement with the information that was later given.[6] Furthermore, the course from her 7:12pm (ATS) turning point down at 41° 15' N, 50° 00' W up to the turnaround point at 41° 25' N, 51° 14' W works out to 280.5° true; this is the exact course heading for Cape Sable.

It should be noted that the dead reckoning location at which the *Mount Temple* turned around at 12:26am

The Canadian Pacific steamship Mount Temple*, seen here in London. (Wikimedia Commons)*



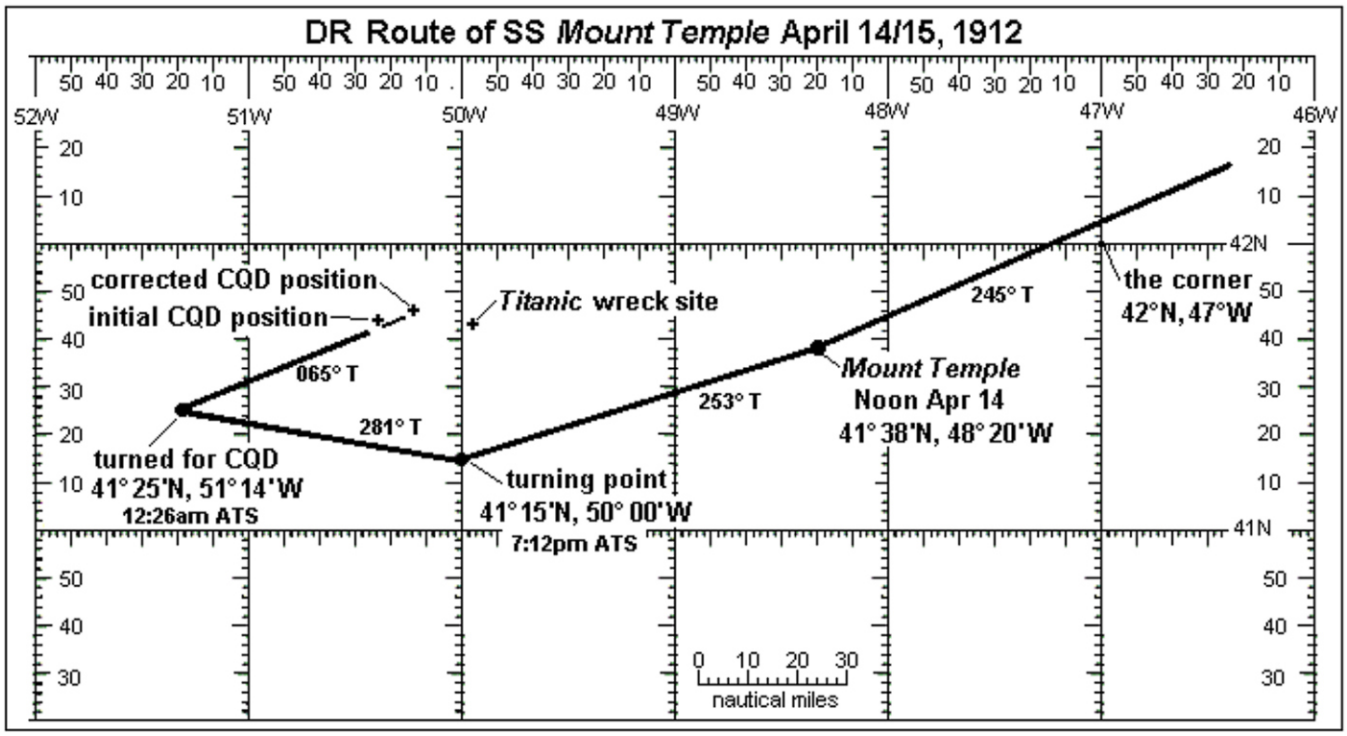
Mount Temple ATS (which equates to 12:42am *Titanic* ATS) and began making for *Titanic*'s revised distress coordinates is a distance of about 61 nautical miles from the now-known location of the *Titanic* wreck site. This is well beyond the range that the lights of either vessel, or for that matter, any distress rockets, could be seen. That turnaround point for *Mount Temple* was also some 49.5 nautical miles from the famous distress position coordinates which had been worked out by Boxhall, and the bearing to that distress position from the turnaround point is 065° true, both in full agreement with the data provided in evidence at the inquiries.

Making a somewhat increased speed of 11.5 knots as she headed to the rescue, it would have taken *Mount Temple* 4 hours and 18 minutes to reach the distress position that was given, which itself was about 13 miles west of the now known wreck site location. However, as it turned out, *Mount Temple* and *Carpathia* were both being set easterly by the Gulf Stream when they were down in the lower latitudes. As a result, *Mount Temple* started to encounter ice around three hours into her run, at which time Captain Moore decided to cut his engines and proceed at a more cautious pace. In the wireless log of John Durrant there is an entry for 3:00am NYT that read, 'All quiet; we're stopped amongst pack ice.' That entry time would equate to 4:46am *Mount Temple* time. When she came to a stop, *Mount Temple* had reached the western side of this great ice barrier, about 2 hours and 40 minutes *after Titanic* had already sunk below the surface of the Atlantic. What we do know is that she was stopped there for at least 20 minutes, if not a little longer, before she backed out of the ice at 5:06am ATS [3:20am NYT], which was about 20 minutes before sunrise.[7] She then proceeded SSE true, trying to find an opening in the ice to pass through.

The 14 April 1912 dead reckoning track that we derived for the *Mount Temple* is shown in **Figure 4**.

Taking into account an allowance for the Gulf Stream affecting both *Mount Temple* and *Carpathia*

Figure 4: *This chart shows the 14 April 1912 dead reckoning track that we derived for the* Mount Temple. *It must be emphasized that these positions took into account the ship's speed and course headings from a fixed starting position, her noontime 14 April position. It does not, however, include the effect of any currents encountered along the way, nor any possible steering errors. (Authors' Collection)*



while in lower latitudes, we were able to come up with likely courses made good (CMG) for both these vessels. These are shown in **Figure 5**.

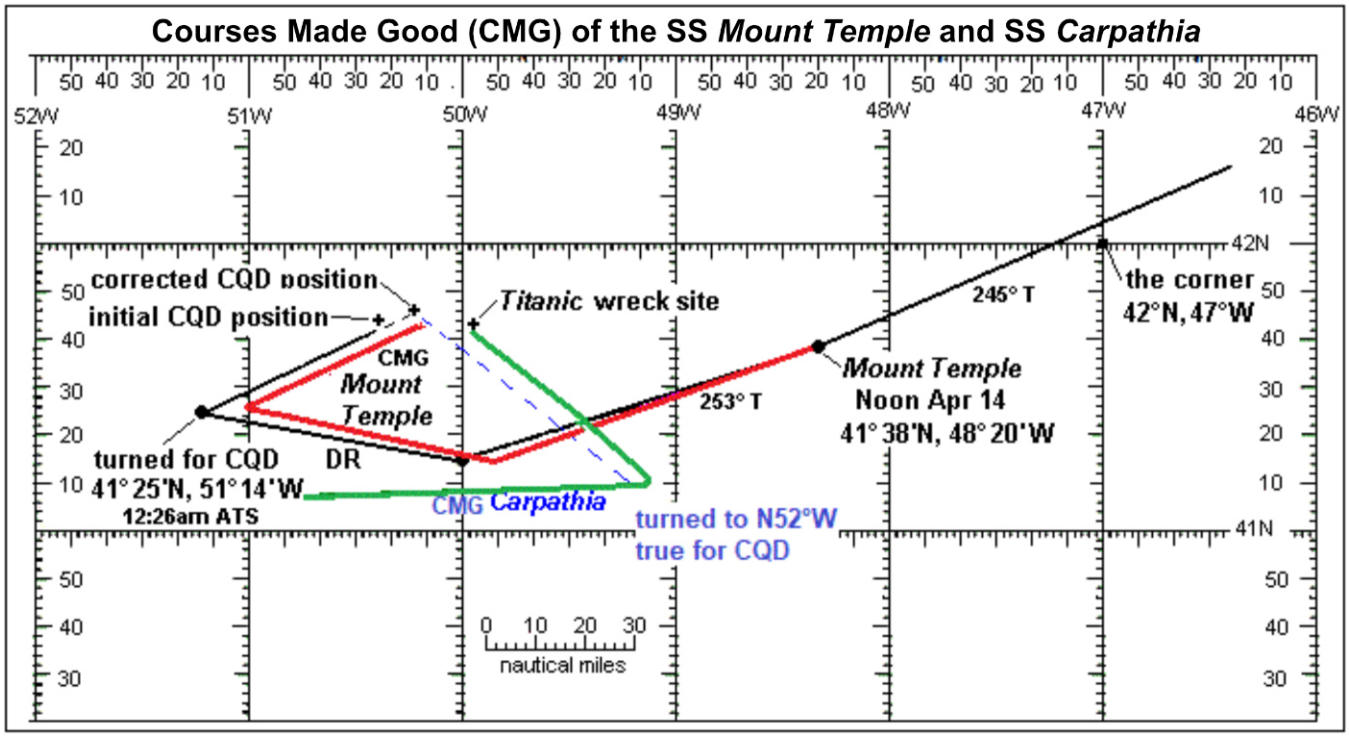
It should also be pointed out that *Carpathia* had reached the position of the first lifeboat to be picked up on the eastern side of the ice barrier about 1 hour 50 minutes after *Titanic* had sunk. *Mount Temple* found herself stopped on the western side of the ice about an hour later. It was at about this time that she was apparently sighted in the early twilight by *Carpathia*'s Captain Rostron. He did not discern the identity of the *Mount Temple* then, but judged the ship with four masts and a single funnel to be about eight miles away.[8] Interestingly enough, *Californian*'s Captain and Chief Officer also observed an unidentified vessel with a yellow funnel – the same funnel color as *Mount Temple* – to the southwest of their position, also about eight miles away. That was shortly before Captain Lord sent Chief Officer George Stewart down to wake up wireless operator Cyril Evans.[9]

The bottom line of all this is that *Mount Temple* arrived on the scene well after *Titanic* was at the bottom of the Atlantic. This was *hours* after the last distress rocket was fired from *Titanic* in their vain attempt to engage a steamer whose lights opened up to them from the time they first started to swing out her lifeboats.

The table on the following page shows the events on the *Titanic*, the *Mount Temple*, and the *Californian* in relation to each other.

What all this means is that *Mount Temple* was much too far away to be seen from *Titanic*'s decks at any point during the disaster. She could not have been the 'mystery ship' they were observing no matter what direction *Titanic* was pointed in as she sank.

Figure 5: *Working from the DRs of each steamship, as well as the now-known location of the* Titanic*'s wreck, and taking into account an allowance for the Gulf Stream which affected both the* Mount Temple *and the* Carpathia *while they were in lower latitudes, we were able to come up with the likely courses made good [CMG] for both of these vessels. (Authors' Collection)*



Chronology of times 14 - 15 April 1912
Titanic*, *Mount Temple* and *Californian

NY Time	*Titanic* ATS	*Mount Temple* ATS	*Californian* ATS	Event
8:30 PM	10:32 PM	10:16 PM	10:20 PM	*Californian* stops in ice
9:38 PM	11:40 PM	11:24 PM	11:28 PM	*Titanic* hits icebeg
10:23 PM	12:25 AM	12:09 AM	12:13 AM	Light reported ahead of *Titanic* (approx)
10:25 PM	12:27 AM	12:11 AM	12:15 AM	*Titanic* sends out first position
10:35 PM	12:37 AM	12:21 AM	12:25 AM	*Titanic* sends out Boxhall's corrected position
10:40 PM	12:42 AM	12:26 AM	12:30 AM	*Mount Temple* changes course to northeast
10:45 PM	12:47 AM	12:31 AM	12:35 AM	*Titanic* sends up first rocket (approx)
11:50 PM	1:52 AM	1:36 AM	1:40 AM	*Titanic* sends up last rocket (approx)
12:18 AM	2:20 AM	2:04 AM	2:08 AM	*Titanic* sinks
2:08 AM	4:10 AM	3.54 am	3.58 am	*Carpathia* reaches first lifeboat (approx)
3:00 AM	5:02 AM	4:46 AM	4:50 AM	*Mount Temple* stops in ice

Titanic ATS was 2 hours and 2 minutes ahead of NYT
Mount Temple ATS was 1 hour 46 minutes ahead of NYT
Californian ATS was 1 hour 50 minutes ahead of NYT

These times were all based on where each vessel was when local apparent noon occurred for them on 14 April 1912.

4.

The SS Californian: The Ship That Couldn't Be Where Her Captain Said She Was

According to the evidence provided by *Californian*'s Captain Stanley Lord, he stopped his ship on the eastern side of the infamous ice barrier at a position of 42° 05' N, 50° 07' W that Sunday night, and she remained there until six o'clock in the morning the next day. This was a distance of about 19 miles from the famous Boxhall distress position that was sent out from *Titanic*. Unfortunately, since the discovery of the *Titanic* wreck site, this story cannot any longer be taken seriously – even if Captain Lord himself believed it was true.

The evidence to unlocking the puzzle regarding the whereabouts of *Californian* when *Titanic* went down comes from the mutually supporting observations of *Californian*'s Second and Third Officers, Herbert Stone and Charles Groves, her Apprentice Officer James Gibson, and the now-known location of the *Titanic* wreck.

When Second Officer Stone came up to relieve Third Officer Groves at 12:08am, *Californian* ATS,[1] the lights of this stopped steamer were dead on their starboard beam bearing south-southeast by compass. Groves pointed out to Stone that their own ship was then pointing east-northeast by compass, and had been slowly swinging to starboard. Stone then went to the standard compass, and 'on looking at the compass I saw this was correct and observed the other steamer SSE dead abeam.'[2] This situation was confirmed by Apprentice Gibson when he came up with the coffee at about 12:15am.[3] We also know that at approximately 12:35am, *Californian* time, Captain Lord called up the speaking tube and asked Stone if the position of this stopped steamer on their starboard beam had changed. Stone replied 'that she was on the same bearing.' Then about ten minutes later, the first of eight white rockets was seen exploding silently over the steamer.[4]

The total compass correction for magnetic variation and deviation from true north in that location was about 22° west, or almost exactly two points on the compass.[5] This makes the bearing from *Californian* to the steamer and its exploding rockets roughly 135° true, which is southeast true of *Californian*. From *Titanic*, *Californian* had to be on the reciprocal line-of-bearing of 315° true, or northwest true of *Titanic*. And since we know that neither ship had moved relative to each other soon after *Titanic* came to a stop following the collision with the iceberg, *Californian* had to be on that same line of bearing from *Titanic* until she foundered at 2:20am *Titanic* ATS (2:08 *Californian* ATS). And thanks to Dr. Robert Ballard's discovery of the wreck in 1985, we now know precisely where she sank.

Figure 6 (following spread) shows the situation at 2:20am *Titanic* ATS, the time she foundered; it shows Captain Lord's claimed overnight stopped position for *Californian*, and the SOS distress position worked out by *Titanic*'s Fourth Officer Joseph Boxhall. Also shown is the 315° line-of-bearing extending from *Titanic* for the time shown. *Californian* had to be located somewhere along that line at that time; thus, she could not have been where Captain Lord later said

she was. We now know that *Californian* was to the northwest of *Titanic* (bearing NNW magnetic) on that fateful night in April of 1912, stopped at the eastern edge of that vast icefield, an icefield that extended, according to *Carpathia*'s Captain Rostron, 'as far as we could see, N.W. to S.E.'[6]

Around 49 minutes into the show, David Hutchings – a naval architect and author, not a navigator – stated that *Titanic*'s position was an estimated position, while *Californian* had been stopped and had time to take star sights and get an accurate position. This is an entirely fallacious assertion. When *Californian* stopped at 10:20pm Sunday night on the east side of the ice barrier, it was already completely dark. Star sights for fixing a ship's position are taken during the time of Nautical twilight, when both the stars and a clear view of the horizon are visible, so that the angular height of each star above the horizon can be measured by sextant. When *Californian* stopped at 10:20pm, it was already about three hours past the time that accurate star sights could be taken to fix her position. As Captain Lord would later explain, there was then only what is called a 'soft horizon' visible from the bridge of his ship. 'It was hard to define where the sky ended and the water commenced', he said.

The position that Lord gave to the inquiries was only a dead reckoning (DR) position, based on her course and speed since the last fix was taken. For *Californian*, that last fix was at noon that day, and placed *Californian* at 42° 05'N, 47° 25'W. From there she was taken on a course of 269° true to make 42°N, 51°W before turning for Boston, according to an affidavit written by Captain Lord in 1959. In fact, the latitude sent in a wireless message to the steamship *Antillian* at about 6:30pm *Californian* time put *Californian* at a DR latitude of 42° 43'N, already two miles south of her noontime latitude. Allegedly, Lord's Chief Officer, George Stewart, took a star sight of the polestar Polaris at 7:30pm, which allegedly showed *Californian* maintained the same latitude as she had at noon. However, in a wireless message to *Virginian*'s Captain J. T. Gambell the next morning, the position that was sent to Gambell had *Californian* at the same latitude as given to the *Antillian* the previous evening. This latitude was strangely corroborated in a letter that Captain Lord himself later wrote to the Assistant Secretary of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade on 10 August 1912, putting *Californian* 17 miles north of *Titanic*'s SOS latitude – not the 19 miles that was later written in *Californian*'s logbook.

The truth of the matter is that Lord only had a DR position to work with, not a star fix position as claimed in the programme. As *Californian* was heading westward at a little over 11 knots Sunday afternoon and evening, she came under the influence of the cold Labrador Current which set her southward, along with all the ice and other vessels in that area, including *Titanic*. Water temperature data supplied by Captain Lord to the American Inquiry confirms that *Californian* entered waters that were just 4°F above freezing (36°F) from 4pm onward that Sunday.[7] At 4pm she was only about 70 miles from the location at which she stopped because of the ice barrier that she encountered. As Captain Lord himself once said, 'But in the Arctic current you always get cold water, even if there is not any ice.'

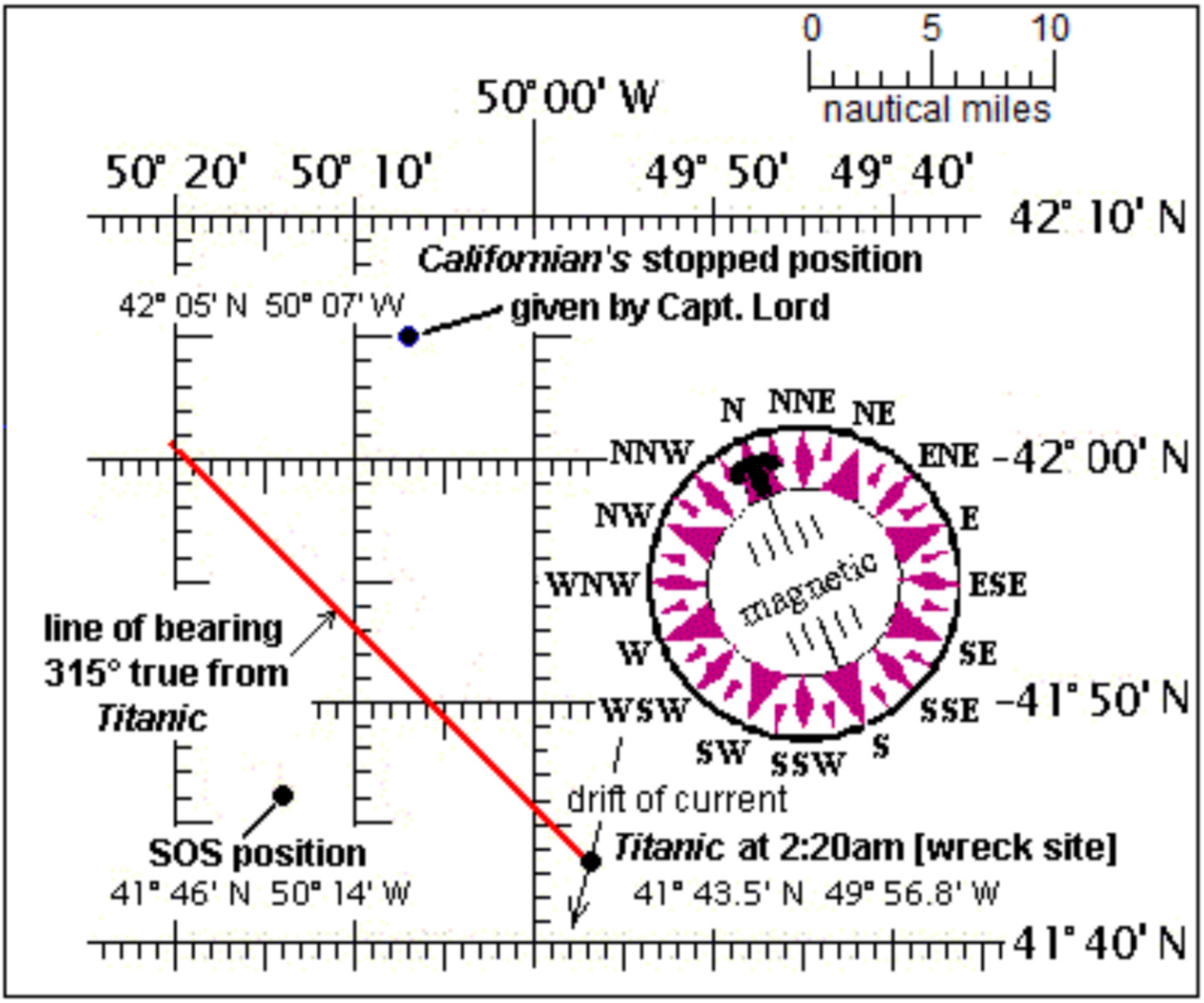


Figure 6: *This diagram shows the situation at 2:20 am* Titanic *ATS, the time she sank. We can see the position where Captain Lord claimed his ship had stopped for the night, the SOS distress position for the* Titanic *worked up by Fourth Officer Boxhall, and the actual coordinates where she sank, as can now be determined by the location of the wreck. The red line also shows us the 315° line of bearing extending from* Titanic *for the time shown. The* Californian *had to be located somewhere along that line of bearing at that time; this means that there is no way that she could have been where Captain Lord later said she was. There is no doubt now that the* Californian *was northwest of* Titanic *(bearing NNW magnetic) on that fateful night in 1912. She was stopped at the eastern edge of the icefield that extended northwest to southeast as far as the eye could see, as Captain Rostron later said.*

5.

The SS Mount Temple: A Ship With Closely Spaced Masts

About 50 minutes into the programme, some new circumstantial evidence was presented in an attempt to claim that the *Mount Temple* was the mystery ship seen from *Titanic*. The claim started by quoting *Titanic*'s Fourth Officer Joseph Boxhall when he said of the 'mystery ship':

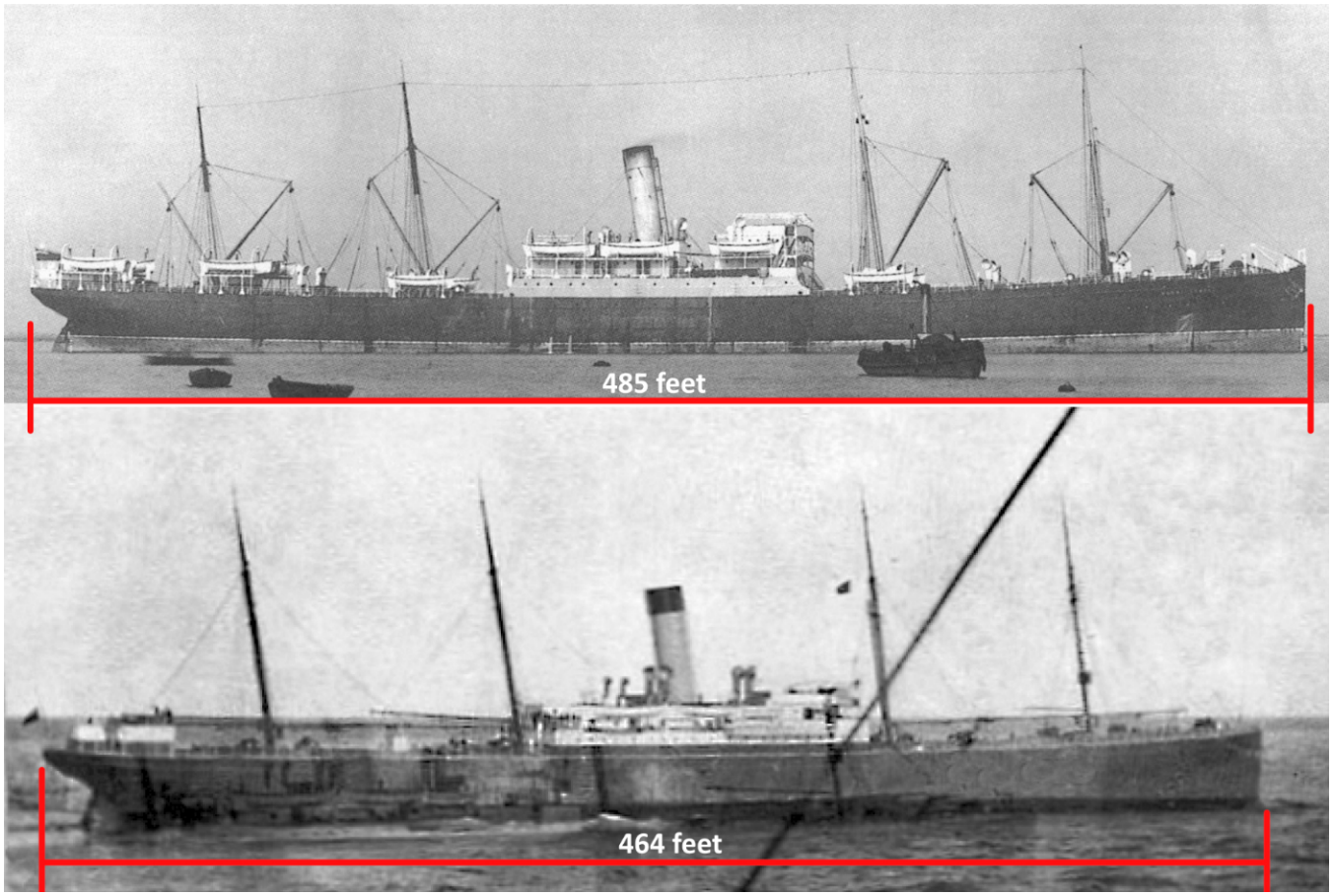
> I judged her to be a four-masted steamer.... By the position of her masthead lights; they were close together.[1]

Then some new evidence was presented. It came from the wartime diary of the German raider that sank the *Mount Temple* during World War I, and it was attributed to her Captain, Nikolaus zu Dohma-Schlodien. In that diary, it was written that *Mount Temple* had masts that were close together. Somehow, this statement was to be taken as the missing connection which implicates *Mount Temple* as the mystery ship seen from *Titanic*. Why? Because of the statement made by Boxhall in 1912, shown above and taken completely out of context, which described the mystery ship he was watching as having masts that were 'close together'. Amazing?

Not really. What Boxhall was really describing was that the other ship's two masthead *lights* appeared to be relatively closely spaced. This was indicative of a vessel that was pointing more or less toward him and *Titanic*; the more closely spaced the lights, the smaller the angle on the bow of the observed vessel. As a ship swings round toward an observer, just as *Californian* was doing that night, the two masthead lights will appear to get closer together until one light is seen directly over the other. At that point, the vessel would be pointing directly toward the observer. Boxhall's statement had nothing to do with the actual physical separation of the masts.[2] In fact, he was referring to the apparent distance between her masthead *lights*; only these lights could be seen, not the other vessel's masts themselves, nor her funnels or hull. Why? As Boxhall himself stated before the inquiries: 'Oh, no; it was too dark.'[3]

In any event, whether or not *Mount Temple*'s masts were close together or not is completely meaningless; it proves absolutely nothing and merely 'muddies' the waters on the subject. On the opposite page are pictures of both the *Mount Temple* and the *Californian*. Both are four-masted vessels, shown in comparative broadside profile. Interestingly, *Mount Temple*'s overall length was 485 feet, while *Californian*'s overall length was somewhat less, at 464 feet. It should be obvious from a careful inspection of these pictures that the separation between the masts on *Californian* was actually smaller than those on *Mount Temple*; *Californian*'s masts were actually more closely spaced than *Mount Temple*'s.

Instead of considering how close or far apart the *Mount Temple*'s masts were, a far more important topic to have considered in this show would have been the eight white rockets that were seen from the Bridge of *Californian* during the Middle Watch that night. These were reported to her Captain on three



Top and above: *These two profile photos show the* Mount Temple *(top) and the* Californian *(bottom). Both are four-masted vessels with similar overall profiles bearing a single funnel and four masts. The new programme argues that the* Mount Temple *was the mystery ship seen from* Titanic *because her masts were spaced closely together. However, the show does not bring out the fact that the* Californian *was extraordinarily similar in appearance; furthermore, the show does not accurately point out the fact that Boxhall was not looking at actual masts, but instead at the closeness between her masthead lights, which actually indicated how broadside or bow-on the other vessel was in how she was turned toward* Titanic*. The actual masts themselves would not have been visible to Boxhall that night.*

separate occasions, and yet *Californian* stood still. No significant response was ever made to the mysterious steamer and its white rockets; no serious investigation was made to determine why she was signalling in that manner; her wireless operator was not even awakened and asked to see if he could find out what was going on. *Californian*'s officers would spend the rest of their lives trying to explain their inaction in those hours. But the show remained entirely silent on this vital matter.

Once again, the writers of this programme tried desperately to shift blame for failing to go to the aid of Titanic off of the Captain of *Californian* and onto the Captain of *Mount Temple* .

6.

Flawed Allegations & False Accusations

When *Mount Temple* arrived at St. John, two passengers and some crew members made statements that their ship had been close to *Titanic* while she was sinking, and even saw her distress signals. One such claim, mentioned in the programme, has to do with the statements made by *Mount Temple* passenger Dr. F. C. Quitzrau; he related second-hand information about some of the ship's officers and crew having sighted the *Titanic* as it was sinking. Quitzrau's accusations were considered and largely discounted by both inquiries, and none of *Mount Temple*'s officers ever came forward to the Board of Trade to support such claims.

Yet these accusations were brought up in the show as if they were reliable. They were even used to support the premise that *Mount Temple* was not at the position reported by Captain Moore at the time she received the distress calls from *Titanic*, and even that Moore refused to cross the ice field to go to the aid of a sinking *Titanic* that was plainly in sight of his ship. These claims include the accusations that Moore ignored *Titanic*'s distress rockets, had all of *Mount Temple*'s lights shut off when they came to within five and ten miles of *Titanic*, and turned away and abandoned *Titanic* – hence, the show's very title – as she sank. All of this was to suggest that *Mount Temple* was the mystery ship seen from *Titanic* rather than the *Californian*, as the two inquiries concluded.[1]

Although it is easy to prove that *Mount Temple* could not have been the mystery ship seen from *Titanic*, as we have just done, one must ask why some of the crew would be 'seething' and 'angry' enough to make such claims to the press and others at the time? As Captain Lord of the *Californian* himself had stated, when confronted in Boston with accusations that rockets were seen from *Californian* the night *Titanic* sank and *Californian* failed to respond: 'Sailors will tell anything when they are ashore….. With the engines stopped, the wireless was of course not working, so we heard nothing of the *Titanic*'s plight until the next morning.'[2]

What we do know is that *Mount Temple* received distress calls from *Titanic*, and that Captain Moore *did not ignore* them. He turned his ship around and headed for the position given, and prepared his ship for a rescue. Moore, his ship, and his crew, did not 'abandon *Titanic*'. However, what Moore did not expect was to come up to the vast ice barrier that blocked his way eastward. He also realized that *Titanic*'s position, as given by wireless, had to be wrong. He was not willing to risk the lives of his passengers and crew to attempt to cross an icefield in the dark of night, but when it did grow light enough to see all around, he backed out of the ice and took his ship southward trying to find an easy path to get to the other side. Unable to find a safe path after going south, he turned around and headed back northward when *Carpathia* was seen picking up boats on the eastern side of the ice. It was also at that time, around six o'clock in the morning, that Moore spotted *Californian* heading westward crossing the icefield, about the same distance to his north as *Carpathia* was to his east.

Despite Moore's failed attempt to reach *Titanic* before she sank, it seems that some members of his crew apparently became disappointed, and even angry, that more effort was not made to get to *Titanic* that night. Why would that be? The answer to this question may possibly be found in a statement by *Californian*'s Captain Stanley Lord during an interview with Leslie Harrison, held at Lord's Merseyside home in February 1961:

> It's very funny, isn't it? It was the height of every shipmaster's ambition in those days, and officers and crew too, to pick up a ship in distress. That means losing a propeller, losing a rudder, and getting a tow… the wages were so small in those days that a man getting a few hundred pounds salvage money, it was a godsend. And if we'd had any sign of anything like that, we'd have been after it like a shot. Everyone on the ship would have been.[3]

In that same interview, Lord was later asked by Harrison: 'But if there had been any emergency, you would have been right back up [to the Bridge] like a shot?' Lord's response was: 'Of course I would. In any question of salvage, it was what we were looking for all our lives. Get a tow, or… when he [Stewart] said he [the ship seen at 5:00am in the morning] might not have a rudder, I said "Go and call wireless, and find out."'[4]

Yet, during the night of 14-15 April 1912, when Stanley Lord was informed about rockets being seen on three separate occasions, the thought of waking up and calling out his wireless operator apparently never crossed his mind. And of course, nothing about any of this was ever brought up during the new programme. Why? Because the show's obvious purpose was to shift blame away from *Californian* and her Captain, Stanley Lord, and deflect it onto the *Mount Temple* and Captain James Henry Moore; the programme presented a highly biased, highly flawed, and very one-sided story.

7.

Conclusions

So what have we proven in this short article? We have covered a lot of ground, we have looked at things from a number of different angles, and we can now determine the following facts:

1. The new show *Abandoning the Titanic* totally ignored the overwhelming evidence that *Titanic* ended up facing northward after she came to a final stop following the accident. She was not put back on her course for New York after the collision.
2. The *Mount Temple* was too far away for anyone to have seen her from the *Titanic*, and conversely no one on the *Mount Temple* could have seen the *Titanic*. Our independent navigational analysis proved that *Mount Temple* could not have been within visual distance of the wreck site until long after the *Titanic* sank.
3. The show specifically cherry-picked what evidence they presented to support their claim, namely that the *Mount Temple*, not the *Californian*, was the ship seen close to the *Titanic* as she sank.
4. The show's writers also chose to ignore any evidence that contradicted their many allegations. They even took a statement made by a surviving *Titanic* officer in 1912 completely out of context in a desperate attempt to link it to similar wording used in a totally unrelated entry in a World War One war diary from a German raider.

In short, the show's main point was to prove that the *Mount Temple*, not the *Californian*, was the ship seen from *Titanic* on the night of 14-15 April 1912, and that she allegedly saw *Titanic*'s distress signals, but chose to turn away. However, our careful investigation has shown that those responsible for the programme's content did not even remotely make progress toward proving anything. Indeed, we have found that the show's very premise, namely that the *Mount Temple* was the mystery ship, is intrinsically flawed.

Acknowledgements

We would very much like to thank the assistance of George Behe in the preparation of this article. His insights were, as always, very much appreciated and useful to us. We also want to thank our longtime team member Ioannis Georgiou for his help; even though his busy schedule prevented him from being a co-author of this article, his support and assistance is, as always, highly valued, and we look forward to working with him on the next project that our team tackles.

We also sailed on without our previous co-author Steve Hall for this paper. Quite simply, this project had less to do with technical matters that pertained to the *Titanic* herself – a subject that Steve excels at – than would have merited his full involvement. However, as always, we appreciate his ongoing support and continue to consult with him on technical matters 'behind the scenes'.

We also would like to thank our families for their support and patience as we worked through this project. These endeavours always take time and even mental energy from our busy lives, but thankfully our families understand the value of our attempts to preserve history for others to understand in a way that dignifies the memory of those who underwent these events.

Finally, as we reflect on the tragedies and stresses that many have faced around the world during the past year during the global COVID-19 pandemic, we want to convey to you that our thoughts are with all of you moving forward. Stay safe, and keep hanging in there.

Endnotes

Chapter 1.
Was *Titanic* Pointed West After the Collision?

1. AI (American Inquiry), p.527.
2. BI (British Inquiry), 17670-17672.
3. 'The *Carpathia* and the *Titanic:* Rescue at Sea', George Behe, 2011. For unknown reasons, Hichens only talked about the helm orders received prior to the impact with the berg in his inquiry testimony.
4. BI 354-356.
5. The deposition of Harold Godfrey Lowe before the British Consulate General in New York, May 1912.
6. BI 15356 and 15513; AI p.230.
7. There is evidence that the stern section began to rotate at the surface as it sank. Jack Thayer and Eugene Daly, for example, recalled that the stern rotated above them as it reared up. There is also evidence that the stern continued to rotate during its descent to the sea floor. However, there is no evidence that the bow rotated in such a manner as it sank.
8. The boilers were cylindrical and extremely heavy. They were not made to be hydrodynamically efficient. Thus, it is largely agreed that the five single-ended boilers from Boiler Room No. 1 more or less dropped directly from the spot where the ship broke in two, travelling very little in any lateral direction as they sank. In other words, the centre of the boiler field is considered to be more or less the exact geographic location where the ship broke in two at the surface.
9. *Exploring the Deep*, James Cameron, p.233.
10. It has been calculated that during this fall-and-stall descent to the sea floor, the bow might have achieved a speed of 22-25 knots.
11. The drop tank tests were filmed and subsequently released in a documentary called *Titanic: Answers From the Abyss*.
12. This equated to approximately one foot forward to every five (according to the conclusion drawn by Cameron and his team and presented in *Exploring the Deep*) or six feet (just by the numbers of the bow being about 2,000 feet north of the centre of the boiler field after falling 12,500 feet vertically) that the bow sank toward the sea floor .
13. The tank drop tests indicated roughly 22 knots, Cameron's team estimated about 25.
14. *Exploring the Deep*, James Cameron, p.234.
15. BI 3720-3729.
16. AI p.975.
17. AI p.531-533.
18. BI 5609-5614.
19. BI 5625-5627.

20. BI 5634-5639.
21. BI 5630-5631.
22. AI Day 18; Br. 1898-1919.
23. Discussion following BI 5629.
24. Lawrence Beesley, *The Loss of the S.S. Titanic*, Chapter 3, originally published by Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912.
25. The claim that *Titanic* was deliberately driven ahead on course for New York for about ten minutes after the collision, thus hastening her initial flooding rate and eventual demise, is not new to this programme. However, we have noticed that among those who assert this claim, there is often an attempt to blame such decisions on pressure from J. Bruce Ismay on Captain Smith. Again, this is a biased starting point that has no basis in fact. Indeed, quite to the contrary, it seems that Ismay did not arrive on the Bridge and meet up with Captain Smith until about the time that the engines were rung off for the last time. (See *On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic*, Appendix O: 'J "Brute" Ismay'?)
26. AI p.914.
27. AI p.830-831.
28. AI p.292.

Chapter 2.
The SS *Mount Temple* – The Ship That Boxhall Couldn't Have Seen
1. Boxhall, BI 15385-15392.

Chapter 3.
The SS *Mount Temple* –
The Ship That Was Too Far Away
1. Durrant, BI 9442.
2. It can be shown that on 13 April, *Mount Temple* apparent time ship [ATS] was 2 hours 8 minutes ahead of NYT.
3. Moore, BI 9299.
4. Logbook of the *Mount Temple*.
5. Moore, AI p.759-760. Moore said the time was about 12:30am on Monday morning, 15 April. But that must have been on a clock that for some unknown reason had not been put back to reflect ATS carried from noon 14 April onward. The correct apparent time had to have been a little after 12:11am when the CQD was first received.
6. Moore, BI 9266.
7. *Procès-verbal* [PV] *Mount Temple*. Sunrise in the vicinity on 15 April was at 08:41 GMT.
8. There was a much smaller vessel with two masts and a single funnel that was also sighted by Rostron at that time. This was the small, two-masted steamer with a single black funnel and white band that Captain Moore first encountered while he was heading eastward, before he was forced to stop because of the ice. That small vessel was kept in sight by *Mount Temple* all along, and was even referred to by *Californian*'s Third Officer Charles Groves as coming up from the south almost end-on when *Californian* was passing *Mount Temple* on the western side of the icefield later that morning. *Californian* was, at that time, heading southward trying to come abreast of *Carpathia*, which was picking up boats on the eastern side of the icefield. It was a long, circuitous route that took *Californian* about 2½ hours to navigate, and one where she had to cross the pack ice twice in order to reach *Carpathia*. By the time she arrived beside *Carpathia*, all survivors had been picked up, leaving *Californian* to make two large, unproductive sweeps of the area south of the wreckage before resuming her voyage to Boston.
9. Lord, AI p.733; BI 6963-6971. We know that the first wireless message sent out by Evans was at 3:25am NYT, or 5:15am *Californian* time. Stewart, who also saw this steamer with a yellow funnel [likely the *Mount Temple*], was sent down to Evans just a few minutes before to

wake him up. And from Durrant's wireless log, we know the *Mount Temple* was stopped between 3:00am and 3:20am NYT at the western edge of the pack ice, just when both Lord and Stewart were on the Bridge of their ship discussing the events seen during the night and talking about resuming their voyage to Boston.

Chapter 4.

The SS *Californian* – The Ship That Couldn't Be Where Her Captain Said She Was

1. *Californian* ATS was 1 hour 50 minutes ahead of NYT, *Mount Temple* ATS was 1 hour 46 minutes ahead of NYT, and *Titanic* ATS was 2 hours and 2 minutes ahead of NYT. These times were all based on where each vessel was when local apparent noon occurred for them on 14 April 1912.
2. Report to Captain Stanley Lord by Second Officer Herbert Stone, 18 April 1912.
3. BI 7437-7439.
4. Report to Captain Stanley Lord by Second Officer Herbert Stone, 18 April 1912.
5. BI 6782.
6. BI 25501.
7. AI p.1142.

Chapter 5.

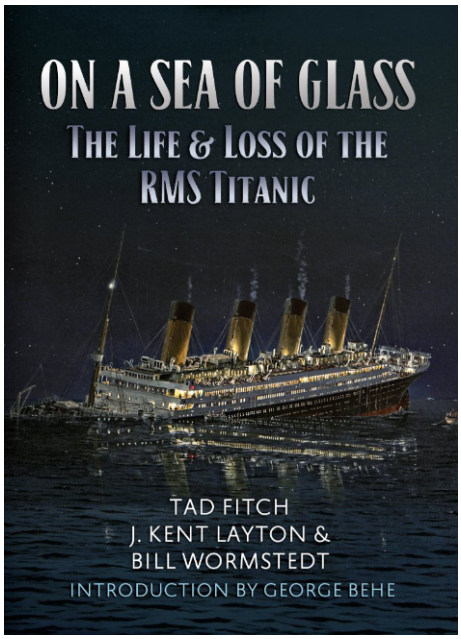
The SS *Mount Temple* –
A Ship With Closely Spaced Masts

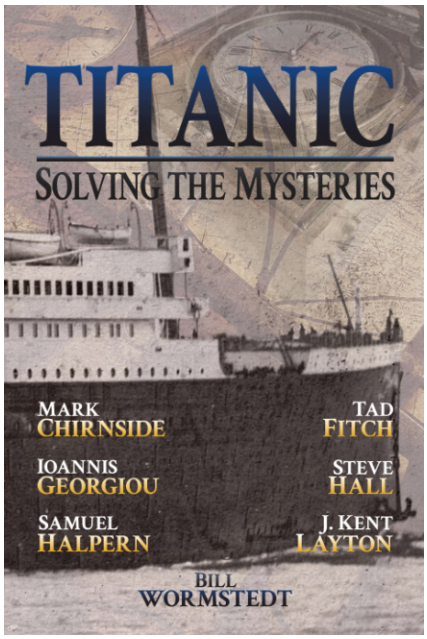
1. BI 15401-15402.
2. The requirements dealing with ships that have two masthead lights states that the after-most mast light must be at least 15 feet higher than the light on the foremost mast light, and the two lights must be spaced apart at least as much as the difference in their height.
3. AI p.934.

Chapter 6.

Flawed Allegations & False Accusations

1. *The New York American*, 25 April 1912; *The Boston Globe*, 25 April 1912; *The [Montreal] Gazette*, 25 April 1912; affidavit by Dr. F. C. Quitzrau to American Inquiry, 29 April 1912, AI p.1098.
2. *The New York Herald*, 24 April 1912.
3. Lord-Harrison taped Interview, February 1961, Q.192, https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/captain-lord-1961-interview.html.
4. Lord-Harrison taped interview, February 1961, Q.378, https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/captain-lord-1961-interview.html.





Recommended Reading:

On A Sea of Glass: The Life & Loss of the RMS Titanic
Amberley Books, Softcover, Third Edition

Titanic: Solving the Mysteries
Blurb Books, Hardcover, First Edition

Conspiracies At Sea: Titanic & Lusitania
Amberley Books, Softcover, First Edition

Report Into the Loss of the SS Titanic
The History Press, Softcover, Second Edition

Strangers On the Horizon: Titanic and Californian – A Forensic Approach
Independently Published, Softcover, First Edition.