

The *Almerian* and the *Mount Temple* – A Tale of Two Ships

(Revised 20 March 2013)

by Samuel Halpern

INTRODUCTION

On May 14, 1912, day 7 into the British Wreck Commission's investigation into the *Titanic* disaster, Captain Stanley Lord of the SS *Californian* was questioned by Mr. Robertson Dunlop, representative of the Leyland Line, about the movements of his vessel on the morning of April 15, 1912:

7399. (*Mr. Dunlop.*) Your Lordship will see they first of all cut through three miles of field ice. (*To the Witness.*) Then at 6.30 you steered a southerly course and passed the "Mount Temple" and stopped at about 7.30? – [Capt. Lord] Yes.

7400. Was there another vessel near the "Mount Temple"? - There was a two-masted steamer, pink funnel, black top, steering north down to the north-west.

7401. (*Mr. Dunlop.*) After 7.30 had you to navigate through the field ice again? - Yes, I ran along till I got to the "Carpathia" bearing north-east and then I cut straight through the ice at full speed

7402. From 7.30 to 8.30? - We were not going through ice the whole of that time. We were running [along the western edge of the ice] till it must have been about eight.

This was the first time that Capt. Lord mentioned that he saw a vessel having two masts with a pink funnel and black top in the vicinity where *Californian* passed a stopped *Mount Temple* on the western side of a vast field of pack ice that separated his ship from where *Carpathia* was picking up survivors.

The following day, *Californian*'s third officer, Charles Victor Groves, also testified about seeing a small steamer near *Mount Temple*:

8339. Did you see any other vessel [besides *Carpathia*]? – [3/O Groves] Yes, I saw two other vessels.

8340. At this time? - Yes. I fancy one of them was in sight at the same time as I noticed this four-master [*Carpathia*].

8341. (*The Commissioner.*) Do you know what they were? - I know what one of them was.

8342. What was it? - The "Mount Temple."

8343. (*Mr. Rowlatt.*) Where was she? - She was ahead, a little on our starboard side when I saw her first.

8344. Before you changed your course? - Before we headed for the "Carpathia."

8345. How far off was she, do you think? - Well, when I noticed her first - I had been paying particular attention to this other steamer [*Carpathia*] - I should think she [*Mount Temple*] would be perhaps a mile and a half away from us.

8346. Nearer than the "Carpathia." - Much nearer than the "Carpathia."

8347. Was she stopped? - Stopped.

8348. In the ice? - In the ice.

8349. Did you see any other vessel? - I saw another vessel a little on our port bow; she was coming down almost end on.

8350. (*The Commissioner.*) You do not know her name? - I do not, but as far as I remember she had a black funnel. She was a small steamer.

So here we have two witnesses from *Californian* who said they saw a small steamer with a single funnel in the vicinity of *Mount Temple* as they ran down the western side of the pack ice. However, Capt. Lord said she had a pink funnel with a black top, while Third Officer Groves described her as having a black funnel.

Californian's second officer, Herbert Stone, also testified about seeing "three steamers the next morning." However, he was not asked to identify what three steamers he saw.

Additional evidence about there being a small steamer with a single funnel comes from *Mount Temple*'s Captain James Henry Moore:

9253. Later on did you see a light or lights of any other vessel? – [Capt. Moore] I had seen the lights of a vessel proceeding the same way, but steering a little more to the southward than mine; I could see a stern light.

9254. At what time was that? - Shortly after we turned round [for the SOS position].

9255. That is earlier than this. About what time was that? - Say one - between one and half-past one.

9256. You only saw a stern light? - We saw a stern light, and then the masthead lights as she was crossing our bows to the southward.

9257. Beyond that you know nothing of her? - I saw her afterwards in the morning, when it was daylight. She was a foreign vessel - at least, I took her to be a foreign vessel. She had a black funnel with a white band with some device upon it, but I did not ascertain her name.

9258. How are you able to say that the vessel that was showing you a stern light was the vessel you saw at daylight? - We saw her all the time.

9259. You kept her under observation? - Yes.

9260. Was she going west? - She was going east.

Capt. Moore's own vessel, the Canadian Pacific SS *Mount Temple*, was an immigrant ship of 8,790 gross tons with a length of 485 feet between perpendiculars and a beam of 59 feet. She carried four masts and a single yellow funnel.

On June 4, 1912, *Carpathia*'s Captain Arthur Henry Rostron signed an affidavit in New York which said:

It was daylight at about 4.20 a.m. At 5 o'clock it was light enough to see all round the horizon. We then saw two steamships to the northwards, perhaps seven or eight miles distant. Neither of them was the 'Californian.' One of them was a four-masted steamer with one funnel, and the other a two-masted steamer with one funnel.

Four separate eyewitnesses specifically mentioned seeing a small steamer in the vicinity of the *Titanic* disaster on the morning of April 15, 1912. Capt. Lord said she was a 2-masted vessel with a pink funnel with a black top, Charles Groves said she was a small steamer with a black funnel, Capt. Moore said she was a small steamer with a black funnel with some device in a white band upon it, and Capt. Rostron said he saw a 2-masted vessel with a single funnel near a 4-masted vessel with a single funnel at 5am, but did not mention any funnel colors or other distinguishing markings.¹

¹ In 1912, most ships carried what was called Apparent Time which was based on the position of the true sun at local apparent noon (LAN) when the sun reached its highest point in the sky. As a result, clocks had to be adjusted each day to compensate for a ship's eastward or westward travel so that at LAN they would read 12:00. On the morning of April 15, 1912, clocks on *Californian*, *Carpathia* and *Mount Temple* were all within a few minutes of each other.

THE MOUNT TEMPLE STORY

The first mention of this small steamer by Capt. Moore came on April 27, 1912, day 9 into the United States Senate investigation into the loss of *Titanic*, when he was being questioned by Senator William Alden Smith.

Mr. MOORE. Well, it may have been the light of the tramp steamer that was ahead of us, because when I turned there was a steamer on my port bow.

Senator SMITH. Going in the same direction?

Mr. MOORE. Almost in the same direction. As he went ahead, he gradually crossed our bow until he got on the starboard bow, sir -

Senator SMITH. Did you see that ship yourself?

Mr. MOORE. I saw it myself. I was on the bridge all the time.

Moore went on to say that she was a 4,000 to 5,000 ton vessel, and that he saw her until some time after 9am. As he described it:

[I] had no communication with her. We were trying to pick him [the small tramp steamer] out in the signal book, and we were trying to signal with him, because I think he was under the impression that I was going to the eastward, that I was bound to the eastward, and I think when I turned back after we both stopped, when we found the ice too heavy, he followed me, because when I turned around, after finding the ice too heavy to the southward, after I went to the southward later on in the morning, when it got daylight, and I went down to where he was, thinking he perhaps had gotten into a thin spot, when I got there he had stopped, he had found the ice too heavy. I went a little farther, and I turned around because it was getting far too heavy to put the ship through. But that would be about 5, or perhaps half past 5, in the morning, sir.

When Moore was asked by Senator Smith about the color of this vessel's funnel, Moore said, "If I can remember rightly it was black, with some device in a band near the top."

Mount Temple departed Antwerp at 1pm on Wednesday, April 3, 1912, on her sixty-second voyage westbound for St. John, New Brunswick and then on to Halifax, Nova Scotia. She carried 1,466 passengers, mostly steerage, and a crew of 143. 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 westbound steamers at 42°N, 47°W. From there she would go on a rhumb line course (constant heading) of 276° True for Cape Sable (43° 29'N, 65° 43.5'W) at the southernmost tip of Nova Scotia, a distance of about 830 nautical miles, and then into the Bay of Fundy and up to St. John. Her speed was about 11 knots.

After receiving an ice warning Saturday night (April 13, 1912) from *Corinthian*, Capt. Moore prudently decided not to turn his ship at the corner point, but to continue on past the corner and head down to 41° 15'N, 50° 00'W, a decision that would take his ship about 10 miles south of the reported ice. From this new turning point he would then head for Cape Sable and then on up to St. John. By doing so, he would only extend the total voyage distance by about 22 miles, or about two hours of steaming, and thereby avoid encountering ice along the way.

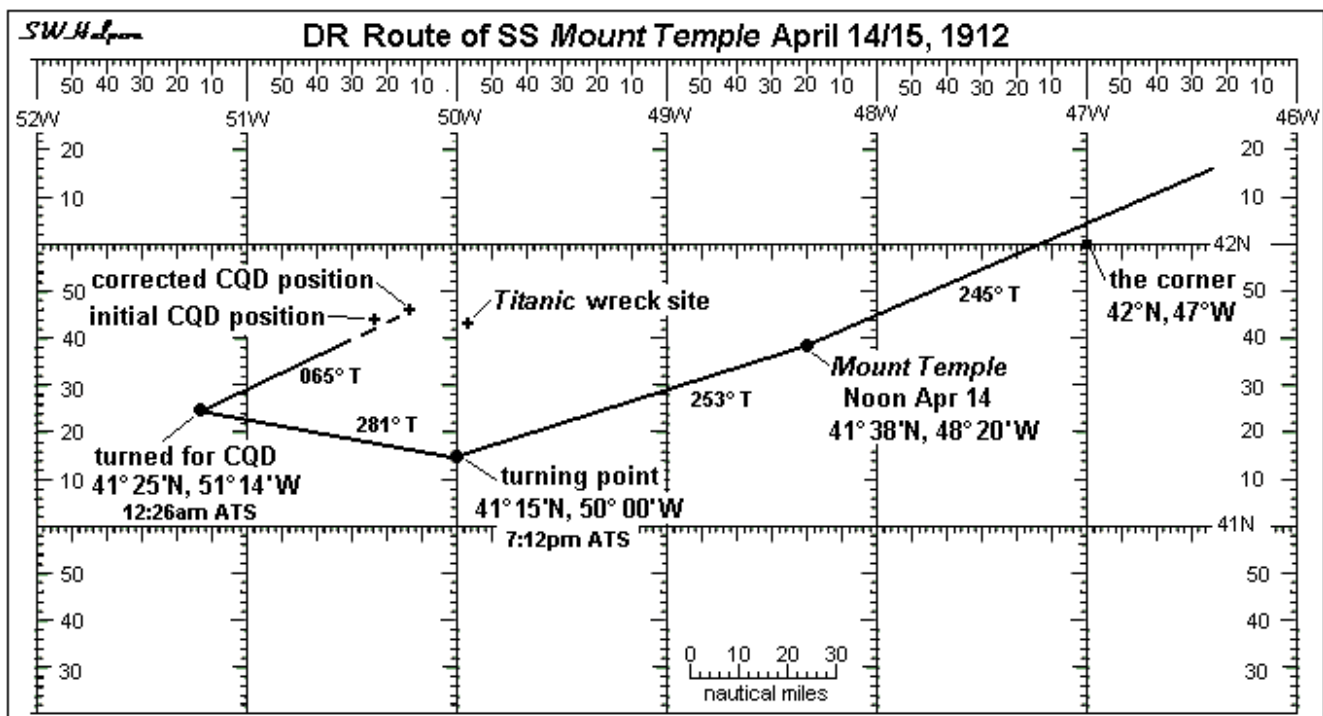
At local apparent noon April 14, *Mount Temple's* position was fixed by solar observation at 41° 38'N, 48° 20'W. Apparent time for *Mount Temple* was now 3 hour 14 minutes behind GMT, or 1 hour 46 minutes ahead of mean time in New York (NYT). With the ship's noontime position now fixed,

Mount Temple was put on a heading of 253° True to take her down to the new turning point at 41° 15'N, 50° 00'W. The distance was about 78½ miles. At about 7:12pm (22:26 GMT) *Mount Temple's* course was changed to a heading of 281° True to make Cape Sable.

At 12:11am (03:25 GMT) *Mount Temple's* wireless operator John Durrant picked up a distress message from *Titanic* that said she required assistance. The distress position given at that time, and immediately reported to Captain Moore, was 41° 44'N, 50° 24'W, the same coordinates picked up by the land station at Cape Race, and by the steamships *La Provence* and *Ypiranga*. Capt. Moore then blew the whistle of the speaking tube in his cabin and told his second officer on the bridge to put his ship on a course of 045° True and then come down to his cabin. At 12:21am (03:35 GMT), Durrant picked up another distress message from *Titanic*, the same that *Carpathia* picked up, which gave a "corrected" distress position of 41° 46'N, 50° 14'W. This revised position was sent to Captain Moore who then laid the course off on a chart and put his ship on a heading of 065° True toward the revised position.

The position of *Mount Temple* when she was turned onto this new heading was given by Capt. Moore (in evidence after consulting a memorandum) as 41° 25'N, 51° 14'W. The time that *Mount Temple* was put on her course to the revised distress position was marked as 10:40pm NYT (03:40 GMT) in Durrant's wireless log, just five minutes after he received the revised coordinates. It would be 12:26am *Mount Temple* time, or 12 hours 26 minutes since noon of April 14. The distance traveled from her April 14th noontime coordinates down to the turning point at 41° 15'N, 50° 00'W and then up to the turnaround point (41° 25'N, 51° 14'W) for 12:26am April 15th is 135 nautical miles. Her average speed since noon works out to almost 10.9 knots, in full agreement with the navigational information given in evidence.²

The chart below shows the dead reckoning (DR) path of *Mount Temple* for April 14 and the early morning hours of April 15. Also shown on the chart (for reference) are the locations of the two distress positions sent out from *Titanic* as well as the now known location of the *Titanic* wreck site.³



² Moore, BI 9266.

³ The chart does not show *Mount Temple's* course made good which would, in reality, have set the vessel more to the eastward when down in latitudes south of about 40° 20'N because of the effect of the Gulf Stream.

According to what Capt. Moore testified at the American inquiry, he had to port around what he believed to be a schooner, or some other small sailing craft, which was crossing his bow going from left to right about a mile ahead of him sometime around 3am. Moore's intent was to pass that vessel starboard-to-starboard (green-to-green sidelights). However, after he got the vessel over on his starboard bow, the vessel's green sidelight disappeared, and Moore was forced put his helm hard-astarboard (left full rudder) and reverse his engines for a short time to take some of the way off his ship. The sailing vessel, for whatever reason, did not show a white light or a flare-up light to *Mount Temple* after her green sidelight shut out,⁴ and Moore was forced to take this action as he was afraid that he might be getting too close to the darkened vessel because he heard the vessel blow a fog horn signal as *Mount Temple* was apparently coming up toward it.⁵ The effected avoidance maneuver amounted to a turn to port of two points ($22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$) which was not a very large deviation from the course he was steering. Once clear of the sailing vessel, Moore proceeded back on his course toward the SOS position until he was forced to cut his engines once again to slow his ship down when they started to encounter ice about 3:25am. He then proceeded ahead slowly from that point in time until his path became blocked by a vast field of pack ice ahead.

Capt. Moore estimated that his ship was about 14 miles from of the SOS position when he cut his engines for the second time at 3:25am. This seems to check with the navigational evidence provided since the distance between the DR turnaround point that was given and the "corrected" distress position that was transmitted from *Titanic* is about 49.5 nautical miles, and Capt. Moore said that he believed his ship was making about $11\frac{1}{2}$ knots, or perhaps a little more with the help of the Gulf Stream. This means his expected arrival at the distress position would take about 4 hours and 20 minutes from the time they turned toward it. When Capt. Moore cut his engines at about 3:25am, he would have been about 3 hours into his run. This would put his ship about 15 miles short of the SOS position if she was making exactly $11\frac{1}{2}$ knots. Moore said he thought he was about 14 miles away at that time.⁶

According to Capt. Moore, *Mount Temple* was brought to a stop about 4:30am because he came up to this great field of pack ice that blocked his path further eastward. Later that morning, after it got light enough to see all around, he was able to see that the field of pack ice was about 5 to 6 miles in width and stretched as far as the eye could see from north to south. We know from the wireless log of John Durrant that *Mount Temple* was reported stopped in the ice at 4:46am (08:00 GMT). At the American inquiry Capt. Moore said that he reckoned he was very close to the SOS position at that time. However, it was only with hindsight that he could have said that, because *Mount Temple* could not possibly have closed a remaining distance of 14 miles starting from 3:25am to when she was reported completely stopped in the ice at 4:46am if he was proceeding at slow speed as he said he did. However, in reality, Capt. Moore was able to honestly say what he did at the inquiry knowing that his ship had somehow ended up about 3 nautical miles east of the reported SOS longitude which he discovered after his officers took a Prime Vertical sight of the sun at 6:52am that same morning.

So how was it possible for *Mount Temple* to actually end up east of the SOS longitude when it was estimated that she was about 14 miles away from the SOS position at 3:25am, and then stopped a little over an hour later after traveling at slow speed? The answer has to do with the same reason *Carpathia* accidentally reached *Titanic*'s lifeboats while heading for what we now know to be an erroneous SOS position. Both *Mount Temple* and *Carpathia* had been steaming down in latitudes south of $41^\circ 20' N$ in the late afternoon and evening hours of April 14. Down there, the Gulf Stream

⁴ A fixed stern light was not required according to Article 10 of the Rules of the Road that were in effect at that time.

⁵ It seems that the sailing vessel had acted under Article 12 of the rules which allows a vessel to take necessary actions, including the use of a sound device 'that cannot be mistaken for a distress signal,' to attract the attention of another vessel.

⁶ To be 14 miles short of the SOS position, *Mount Temple* would have averaged 11.7 knots.

dominated, apparently setting both of these ships a number of miles eastward and perhaps a little northward from their dead reckoning course lines.⁷

When *Mount Temple* stopped at the western edge of the pack ice, the only other ship in sight, according to Capt. Moore, was this small tramp steamer with a single funnel that was then a little to the southward and ahead of where *Mount Temple* had stopped. We once again know from Durrant's wireless log that *Mount Temple* did not move again until 5:06am (08:20 GMT), 20 minutes before sunrise in the area, when it became light enough see the full extent of what was around them. It was also about this time that *Carpathia's* Capt. Rostron noticed two unidentified steamers to his northward "perhaps seven or eight miles distant." As we have seen, one of them was described as having four masts with one funnel, and the other two masts with one funnel.⁸ There is little doubt that what Rostron saw that morning were *Mount Temple* and this small, two-masted unidentified steamer, with the latter a little more to the south of the former.

It also appears that during the time that *Mount Temple* was stopped on the western edge of the pack ice she may have been sighted but not identified by *Californian*. It was just a little before 5am that Capt. Lord and his chief officer George Stewart were discussing the possibility of resuming their voyage to Boston after being stopped all night on the eastern side of the ice. According to Capt. Lord:

Well, I was conversing with him [Chief Officer Stewart] about the probability of pushing through the ice, to commence with. I was undecided whether to go through it or to turn round and go back, and we decided to go on, so I told him to put the engines on and stand by. He did so. Then he said, 'Will you go down to look at this steamer to the southward?' I asked him, 'Why, what is the matter with it?' He said, 'He might have lost his rudder.' But I said, 'Why? He has not got any signals up.' 'No, but,' he said, 'the second officer in his watch said he fired several rockets.' I said, 'Go and call the wireless operator.'

Lord was referring to a yellow-funneled steamer that they were able to make out to the southward in the morning twilight. At the American inquiry, Lord stated that "at daylight we saw a yellow-funnel steamer on the southwest of us, beyond where this man had left, about 8 miles away." The only known vessel with a yellow funnel that was then in the area was *Mount Temple*. Despite what Capt. Lord was to claim years later about passing a yellow-funneled steamer stopped on the *east* side of the ice field as he took *Californian* southward along the western side, there were only three vessels seen by those on *Californian* that morning: *Mount Temple*, *Carpathia*, and this small tramp steamer.⁹ Although Chief Officer Stewart testified that he "thought it was a yellow funnel boat when the sun was up," we know that it had to be sometime *before* the sun came up, during civil twilight, since sunrise in that area was at 08:40 GMT, or 5:30am *Californian* time. We also know that it was more than 15 minutes before sunrise when Stewart was sent down to wake his wireless operator, Cyril Evans, because the time when *Californian* first tried to establish wireless contact with any other wireless station that morning was at 3:25am NYT (08:25 GMT), or 5:15am *Californian* time.¹⁰

At 5:06am (8:20 GMT), *Mount Temple* backed out of the ice to go southward looking for a passage through the ice field to the east. Seeing this small tramp to his southward and a little ahead of

⁷ If *Carpathia* had not been affected by the Gulf Stream and held to her DR course line to the SOS coordinates, then she would have passed about 6 miles SW of the wreck site coordinates. In reality, the green flares from lifeboat No. 2 were sighted one-half point (about 5½°) off her *port* bow, not well off her starboard bow as would otherwise have been the case.

⁸ Rostron, BI 25551.

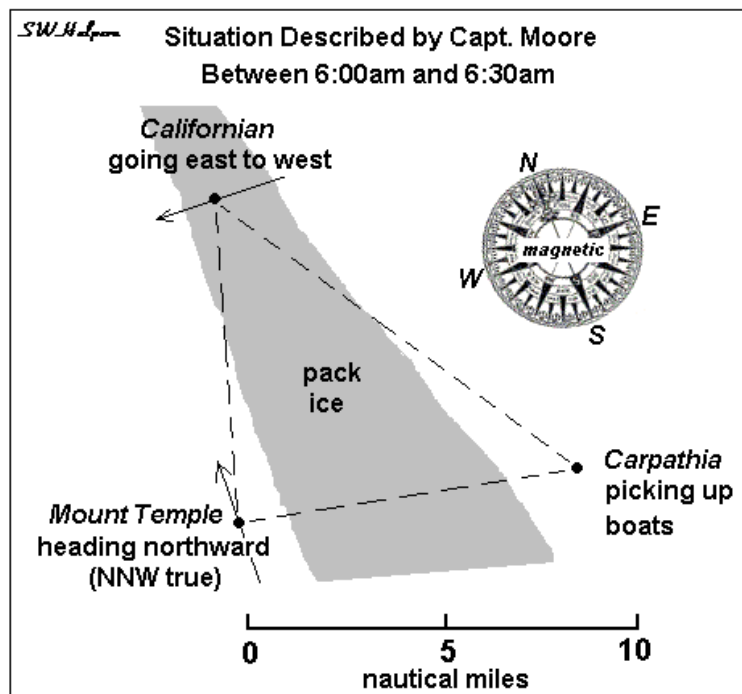
⁹ We know that from the 1912 testimonies of Capt. Lord, Charles Groves and Herbert Stone as previously referenced.

¹⁰ From John Durrant's wireless log, "3.25 [NYT] MWL [*Californian*] calls CQ. I answer him and advise him of MGY [*Titanic*] and send him MGY's position." *Californian* time was 1 hour 50 minutes ahead of NY time, or 4 minutes ahead of *Mount Temple*.

him, Capt. Moore put his ship on a course of SSE true thinking that the ice might be thinner down where this small tramp steamer was heading at that time. After getting down to where this small steamer had stopped, he saw that the ice was not thinner, and so he turned his ship around after passing the steamer to go back north. As he was going north he sighted *Carpathia* on the eastern side of the ice where, as he later found out, she was picking up survivors from *Titanic's* lifeboats. He also sighted what turned out to be *Californian* cutting across the pack ice going westward. The time he estimated this to be was about 6am.

Of course, it proved afterwards when, after coming southward and trying to find some place I could get through, on the way back again - I suppose about 6 o'clock in the morning - that I sighted the *Carpathia* on the other side of this great ice pack, and there is where I understand he picked up the boats. So this great pack of ice was between us and the *Titanic's* position...I was to the eastward of the position the *Titanic* gave me, but she [*Titanic*] must have been to the eastward still, because she could not have been through this pack of ice...This pack of ice between us and the *Carpathia*, it was between 5 and 6 miles. She [*Carpathia*] did not communicate with me at all. When we sighted her [*Carpathia*] she must have sighted us...The *Californian* was to the north, sir. She was to the north of the *Carpathia* and steaming to the westward, because, after I had come away and after giving up my attempt to get through that pack [to the south], I came back again and steered back, thinking I might pick up some soft place to the north. As I was going to the north the *Californian* was passing from east to west...He was then north of the *Carpathia*, and he must have been, I suppose, about the same distance to the north of the *Carpathia* as I was to the westward of her...[The only other vessel] we saw, as I have mentioned, [was] this tramp steamer...About 8 o'clock we sighted [the smoke of] the *Birma*.

We know from other evidence that *Californian* was cutting across two to three miles of pack ice to get to clear water on the western side between the hours of 6:00 and 6:30am.



After passing *Carpathia* to his east, Capt. Moore continued to steam northward for some time before stopping once again. About 6:52am (10:06 GMT), a Prime Vertical sight of the sun was taken which showed that *Mount Temple* was on a longitude line of 50° 09.5' W, just over 3 nautical miles eastward of the SOS longitude. At that time, *Californian* was heading southward along the western edge of the pack ice at about 13 knots. By 7:06am (*Mount Temple* time), just about 14 minutes after that Prime Vertical sun sight was taken, *Californian* was reported as being close to *Mount Temple* as positional reports were exchanged between them by wireless.¹¹ *Californian* then passed *Mount Temple* about a mile off continuing to head southward until *Carpathia* was bearing dead on her port beam. *Californian* then starboarded her helm (turned to port) and headed ENE true straight across the pack ice for *Carpathia*. It was about 8am when *Carpathia*'s Capt. Rostron noticed *Californian* approaching:

The first time that I saw the *Californian* was at about eight o'clock on the morning of 15th April. She was then about five to six miles distant, bearing WSW true [from *Carpathia*], and steaming towards the *Carpathia*.

By 8:30am *Californian* had stopped alongside *Carpathia* as the latter was picking up the last of *Titanic*'s lifeboats.

At 8:31am (11:45 GMT), *Mount Temple* picked up a wireless message from *Carpathia* that said that they rescued 20 boats from *Titanic*. At 9:26am (12:40 GMT), *Mount Temple* picked up a general CQ wireless message broadcast from *Carpathia* saying that there was no need for anyone to stand by any longer; nothing more can be done. *Mount Temple* then resumed her voyage to St. John, New Brunswick.

THE ALMERIAN STORY

The Leyland liner *Almerian* departed Mobile, Alabama on April 3, 1912 with a cargo of cotton and lumber bound for Liverpool. She reached Liverpool on April 25. As we have seen, Captain Lord told the British Wreck Commission on May 14th that he had sighted an unidentified two-masted steamer with a pink and black funnel on the morning of April 15. The funnel colors were those of the Leyland Line, but Capt. Lord did not mention that particular detail, or offer a name for this ship. Nor did he mention anything about seeing a small steamer near *Mount Temple* on the morning of April 15th when he testified before the American inquiry back on April 26, 1912. Between his arrival at Liverpool on the 11th of May and appearing before the British inquiry on the 14th of May, Lord had visited the Leyland Line's office in Liverpool to report to the line's Marine Superintendent Captain Fry.¹² It is possible that during Lord's visit to the Leyland Line's office he may have been given information that the Leyland liner *Almerian* had been close to the reported area where *Titanic* foundered on the morning of April 15, 1912.¹³

A handwritten version of an unsigned document was discovered among the papers of Capt. Lord that formed part of the material assembled by him on or about May 21, 1912. It was unmistakably written by Capt. Lord himself. However, the wording in the report makes it sound as if it came from *Almerian*'s Captain Richard Thomas.¹⁴ The report was prepared as exhibit B on October

¹¹ An entry in the wireless log of *Mount Temple* read: "5.20 [NYT]. Signals *Californian*. Wants my position. Send it. We are very close." 5:20am NYT corresponded to 7:06am on *Mount Temple*.

¹² Affidavit of Capt. Stanley Lord, June 25, 1959.

¹³ Leslie Harrison, *A Titanic Myth*, pp. 132-133.

¹⁴ In Senan Molony's book, *Titanic Scandal* (Amberley Publishing, 2009), it is suggested that the handwriting in the first two paragraphs may have been that of *Almerian*'s Capt. Thomas, with the rest of the document written by Capt. Lord.

26, 1964 by Leslie Harrison, a friend and supporter of Capt. Stanley Lord, while preparing a petition to the Board of Trade. (See Appendix A for a complete transcript of the report.)¹⁵

The report states that at about 3am on April 15, 1912 *Almerian* had come to a stop because of ice that was encountered in her path. On her port quarter was a steamer which they tried to communicate with, presumably by Morse lamp as *Almerian* did not carry a wireless installation. The only signals they were able to make out were the letters "OUNT." At daylight, listed in the report as about 4am, they were able to see the full extent of the ice that was about, which included field ice and icebergs that extended from as far to northeast and south as they could see. *Almerian* then "proceeded at various speeds in a northerly direction on the western extremity of the icefield" seeking to find a way to get to clear water to the east of the field. It was also reported that the vessel seen at 3am was also steering in a northerly direction at this time. Some unspecified time later, they sighted a large four-masted steamer on the eastern extremity of the icefield about 6 to 6½ miles off. Shortly after that they sighted smoke ahead which turned out to be a Leyland Liner coming down from the north. At this time the unidentified steamer that was first sighted at 3am, and now steering northward ahead of them, suddenly headed to the northwest. As *Almerian* approached the Leyland Liner that was coming down the western side of the icefield, but before they could come close to it, they saw it turn eastward and steam through the ice toward the four-masted vessel that was on the other side. *Almerian* then continued on in a northerly direction, and to their "astonishment," the unidentified vessel, that they had in sight all along since 3am, suddenly turned and headed to the east, coming close enough for her name to be read with the aid of glasses. It was identified as "*Mount Temple*." After reading her name, the vessel turned away and headed once again to the northwest while *Almerian* continued to go north until about 9:50am. *Almerian* then steamed slowly through the icefield which they said was cleared at 10:30am. After that, nothing more was seen of the other vessels mentioned.

The report also listed some specific navigational data:

3:05am	Stopped	41° 20' N 50° 24' W
10:30am	Cleared ice	41° 48' N 50° 24' W
Noon		41° 51' N 50° 00' W

Also written in the report was *Mount Temple's* turning point coordinates and time when she first headed for the SOS position that was given in evidence by Capt. Moore at the American inquiry, 0.25am – 41.25 N, 51.14 W.

There has been much speculation concerning this report. It has been said that the weakness of the report can be found in the navigational data. As we have seen, the report claimed that when *Almerian* had stopped, about 3am, a ship later identified as *Mount Temple* was seen off her port quarter. The location in the report was put down as 41° 20' N, 50° 24' W, a position that is 20 miles from any point on *Mount Temple's* reported DR track to the SOS location. The report then had *Almerian* steaming northward about 4am, only to reach a position at 10:30am that was 28 miles due north of her 3am stopped position.

This account would have seemed reasonable back in 1912 given the general acceptance that *Titanic* foundered at the SOS position in longitude 50° 14' W. A ship passing northward at longitude 50° 24' W would only have been a little over 7 miles from *Carpathia*, and would have seen *Californian* steaming south ahead of them on the western side of the icefield as described.

We now know that the position given by the SOS coordinates is not where *Titanic* foundered, and that *Carpathia* actually picked up *Titanic's* lifeboats east of 50° W longitude, about 20 miles from

¹⁵ Copies of the two-page handwritten manuscript of this report can be found at:
<http://www.titanicebook.com/Almerian%20report%20hand%20written.jpeg>, and
<http://www.titanicebook.com/Almerian%20report%20hand%20written%20part%202.jpeg>.

any ship heading north on a longitude line of 50° 24'W. The report seems to fit with evidence presented at the American inquiry, and does not agree with the facts as we now know it to be. On the other hand, the evidence given by *Mount Temple's* Capt. Moore, that *Titanic* had to have foundered well east of 50° 09.5' W, was discounted in 1912. The forensic evidence discovered 73 years later on the bottom of the Atlantic was to prove that Capt. Moore was right.

It is also of interest to note that the Board of Trade was advised by the Leyland Line on June 7th that only two of its ships, *Californian* and *Antillian*, had been in the area of the *Titanic* disaster on the 15th of April.¹⁶ When Capt. Lord's counsel, Robertson Dunlop, addressed the Wreck Commission on June 28, he made no mention of *Almerian* being in the region despite his efforts to identify other ships that were, and his having access to the records of the Leyland Line.

ALLEGATIONS AND INSINUATIONS

In a cleverly crafted book, *Titanic Scandal*, author Senan Molony concocted a fictional trial of *Mount Temple's* Capt. James Henry Moore to present arguments challenging the veracity of evidence presented by Moore in 1912 before two inquiries.¹⁷ There is no pretense about the book's real purpose. As written on the back cover of *Titanic Scandal*:

The surpassing scandal is the plain truth that the British Board of Trade was told in 1912 of serious allegations against the Canadian Pacific liner *Mount Temple* and her Captain, James Henry Moore – and failed to take any steps at all.

This book uncovers those allegations, the identity of claimants, and the reasons why they must be taken seriously. A century after the sinking comes the trial of the *Mount Temple*...

Our main interest here is in the tying together of events concerning *Mount Temple* and *Almerian*.

Almerian is first introduced in *Titanic Scandal* by the fictional council for the *defense* as part of a poorly framed attempt to absolve *Mount Temple* “of any possible idea that she could have been the *Titanic's* mystery ship.” The *defense*, in this make believe trial, introduces the two-page handwritten document prepared by Capt. Stanley Lord that we have talked about, and makes particular reference to the bottom part of the document where various positions and times were recorded for *Almerian*. The *defense* tries to argue that *Mount Temple* could not have been the mystery ship seen only 5 miles from *Titanic* while distress rockets were being sent up because the document offered into evidence proves that *Almerian* and the nearby *Mount Temple* were “31 nautical miles as the crow flies” from the now known location of the wreck site at 3am that morning.

Then it becomes the *prosecution's* turn to deal with the *Almerian* story during closing arguments in this tale by presenting a mass of contentions in an attempt to convict Capt. Moore “on a specimen charge of perjury.” Some of the points presented by the council for the *prosecution* in this mock trial are:

- Capt. Moore makes clear that he stopped on the western side of what may be called “the *Titanic* icefield.”
- *Almerian's* Capt. Thomas got there at 3:05am and noticed *Mount Temple* already there.
- There is a clash between the stories of Capt. Thomas and Capt. Moore as to the time that *Mount Temple* got to the icefield, and that Capt. Thomas must be considered another witness for the *prosecution* in providing evidence that *Mount Temple* was there the whole time, thus collaborating tales of some of *Mount Temple's* passengers.

¹⁶ This letter from the Leyland Line to the Board of Trade can be seen at: <http://titanicebook.com/Leyland%20letter.html>.

¹⁷ Senan Molony, *Titanic Scandal*, Amberley Publishing, 2009.

- The positional coordinates given in the *Almerian* document for 3:05am and 10:30am were both in error because they were only dead reckoning positions, and the longitude reported for those positions is contradicted within that same document by the 40 minutes of steaming eastward to clear the ice field by 10:30am.
- *Almerian*'s true stopped position had to be affected by the Gulf Stream which pushed the ship further northward and eastward than indicated by those DR coordinates.
- The evidence offered by *Carpathia*'s Capt. Rostron that he saw two vessels about 7 to 8 miles to his northward about 5am “clearly indicates, from reality, that *Almerian*'s suggested night position was too far south, emphasizing again that the reported 3:05am position was in error.”
- The coordinates for those earlier positions may have been “reversed-estimated” by Capt. Thomas after he learned about the sinking, and therefore assumed that when he saw *Carpathia* on the east side of the ice field on the morning of the 15th of April, it must have been at the coordinates of the SOS position which were almost universally accepted as being accurate.
- The noontime position reported for *Almerian* had to be “unimpeachably accurate” because it would have been based on an observation taken of the sun by the ship's officers. Since it is highly unlikely for *Almerian* to have steamed 18 miles from her 10:30am reported position to her noontime position, the 10:30 position had to be wrong.
- The “10:30am and 3:05am citations [in the report] are impossibly too far west,” relative to where *Titanic* actually sank. “Therefore the *Almerian* – and *Mount Temple* – must both have been much closer to the sinking during the night than is indicated on the face of the coordinates offered for 3:05am.”
- Both *Mount Temple*'s Capt. Moore and *Californian*'s Third Officer Groves described the funnel colors of the small steamer seen near *Mount Temple* in the morning “wrongly,” while Capt. Lord described them “accurately.” Furthermore, Groves saw only the top of the funnel which was black as *Almerian* presented an end-on view to him as *Californian* was coming down from the north, and that Capt. Moore was either being “deliberately obscure” about the funnel colors, or couldn't recall them accurately. If Moore was being deliberately obscure, it was “to disguise her [*Almerian*'s] identity, in order that she is not found, so that he can thereby camouflage himself.”
- Since *Almerian* saw the ‘Ount’ vessel at 3am, and Capt. Lord saw the pink funnel of *Almerian* the next morning, it proves that the two vessels were together all the time.
- John Durrant's wireless log entry for 2:36am (ship's time) read: ‘All quiet now. *Titanic* hasn't spoken since 11:47pm [NYT (1:33am ship's time)]’. His log entry for 4:46am (ship's time) read: ‘All quiet; we're stopped amongst pack ice.’ The first entry stating that all was quiet at 2:36am was unnecessary if *Mount Temple* was “still rushing headlong for the scene.” The twice mentioning of ‘all quiet’ therefore “reveals their ongoing quietude, their immobility, in a vicinity full of pack ice.”
- Adrian Havard, grandson of *Almerian*'s second officer, Essex Harries Havard (who told Capt. Thomas about the ‘Ount’ signal), said that his father, John Heywood Havard, was told by his grandfather that *Almerian* had stopped for the night in roughly the area where *Titanic* sank, that his grandfather along with some of the crew “had seen lights in the sky that looked like the distress signals then in use,” and that after hearing about *Titanic*, realized that the time he saw those lights “would have been about the same sort of time as the *Titanic*'s rockets were being launched.”

- “In the final analysis, the mystery ship certainly saw *Titanic*’s rockets. If the *Almerian* saw those rockets, then the *Mount Temple* also saw them, because the latter was beside the former at 3:05am.”

In the role of *prosecutor*, the author of *Titanic Scandal* makes several assumptions in presenting these arguments. One such assumption is that Capt. Lord had to be right while Third Officer Groves and Capt. Moore had to be wrong about the color of the steamer’s funnel that was seen. He also assumes that the *Almerian* account written by Capt. Lord came from *Almerian*’s Capt. Thomas, and that the account was mostly accurate except for the 3:05am and 10:30am reported positions, which the author assumed to be wrong because of their distance from the now known location of the wreck site. In fact, he seems to go far out of the way to explain how or why *both* of those positions were wrong. As *prosecutor*, arguing that those positions were wrong was critical to the claim that *Mount Temple* was stopped on the western side of the ice field not far from where *Titanic* had been at least since 2:26am, a time noted in Durrant’s wireless log as ‘all quiet now.’

In the guise of acting as the council for the *defense* during closing arguments, the author of *Titanic Scandal* only points out that the story offered by Adrian Havard, grandson of *Almerian*’s Second Officer Essex Havard, clashes with a short note written by his father, John Havard, to the Mercantile Marine Services Association in July 1980 when he was 62 years old. In that note, John Havard claimed that his father, *Almerian*’s Second Officer Essex Havard, told him that *Almerian* may have been the mystery ship at the time of the *Titanic* sinking because when they were stopped, they thought they saw a ship in the distance that may have been in trouble, that *Almerian* fired some rockets thinking that if the ship was in trouble they would answer back with distress signals, but there was no reply. Of course, as pointed out by the *defense*, this hearsay story directly clashes with what John Havard’s son Adrian claimed his father had told him, and also clashes with what was found in Capt. Lord’s papers in 1964.

But if the author of this mock trial had intended to be truly objective when preparing arguments for the *defense*, then he should have brought up a number of other points that would simply negate many of the arguments he raised when acting in the guise of the council for the *prosecution*. For example:

- The Gulf Steam could not possibly account for a gap as large as 25 to 30 miles in the stopped position for *Almerian* as conjectured.
- That a sun sight would have been likely taken in the forenoon, as was the practice of the time, showing that *Almerian* was indeed on a line of longitude of 50° 24’W while heading northward.
- The same end-on view presented to Charles Groves would have been presented to Capt. Lord since they both were on the same vessel. The picture of *Almerian* shown on p. 214 of *Titanic Scandal* clearly shows *Almerian*’s single funnel towering well over the tallest part of the ship’s superstructure with its black top taking up less than 1/3 of the presented funnel view even if seen end-on.
- *Californian*’s Charles Groves and *Mount Temple*’s Capt. Moore both described the small steamer that came near *Mount Temple* as having a black funnel. It was only Capt. Lord who said she had a pink funnel. Why should Capt. Lord’s words carry more weight than the word of his third officer and that of Capt. Moore?
- If Capt. Moore was interested in disguising the identity of the small steamer by being “deliberately obscure” about her funnel color, then why would he have even mentioned seeing this small steamer in the first place when he testified voluntarily before the two inquiries in 1912?

- Finally, the words 'all quiet' or 'all quiet now' used by a wireless operator was their way of saying that there is no activity on the air waves at that time. Those words had nothing to do with the movement, or lack thereof, of the ship they were on.

None of these points were raised in this made up trial setting "before the bar of History" to indict Capt. Moore of covering up the full truth concerning the whereabouts of his vessel at the time *Titanic* sank.

SOME NEW EVIDENCE

What do we really know about the location and movements of *Almerian* on April 15, 1912? We now have a copy of a Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form that was filled out during *Almerian's* April 1912 transatlantic voyage from Mobile, Alabama to Liverpool, England. It lists her coordinates and weather observations taken each day at 12:00 GMT from April 4, 1912 to April 22, 1912.¹⁸ Also listed were weather conditions taken between observations (obtained from the ship's log) and recorded on a Daily Journal form. Of most interest to us are the positional reports listed for each 24 hour period, from 12:00 GMT one day to 12:00 GMT the next day, as well as the local time listed for each date. Scans of these forms showing the recorded data are presented in the images below.¹⁹

7.09
Date on this sheet transferred to punch card **11**

Form No. 1201—Marine, 1910. A

GREENWICH MEAN NOON OBSERVATIONS.

See instructions, pages 1, 2, 5, and 6.

Vessel Almerian Captain R. Thomas
 Nationality and kind British S.S. Observer Whitlan
 Voyage, from Mobile, Texas, U.S.A. toward Liverpool, England

(Use Daily Journal on back.)

CIVIL DATE.	PORT OR POSITION.		WIND.	FORCE 0-12.	BAROMETER.		TEMPERATURE.			WEATHER.	CLOUDS.	
	Latitude.	Longitude. (Greenwich.)			As read off.	Alt. ther.	Air, dry bulb.	Air, wet bulb.	Water, at surface.		State of sky by symbols.	Forms of clouds by symbols.
Year, 19 <u>12</u> April												
4 th @ 6 th 11	29-30	82-27	N E	5	30- ⁵² 67	68	—	68	10	Bir	W	3
5 th @ 6-23	26-6	84-18	N E E	5	30- ⁵² 71	74	—	74	6	Bir	N E	6
6 th @ 6-35	24-11	81-47	East	4	30- ⁵² 74	72	—	72	13	Bir	East	4
7 th @ 6-41	27-26	78-40	E S E	4	30- ⁵² 73	74	—	74	6	Bir	East	4
8 th @ 6-44	31-12	79-2	N N E	5	30- ⁵² 68	64	—	64	6	S-Bir	—	10
9 th @ 6-58	33-28	78-30	N N E	3	30- ⁵² 61	64	—	64	13	Bir	N E	3
10 th @ 7-13	36-33	71-45	N E E	6	30- ⁵² 62	64	—	64	13	Bir	—	5
11 th @ 7-13	27-54	82-05	N N W	4	30- ⁵² 70	68	—	68	7	Bir	N N W	3
12 th @ 7-48	38-40	63-39	N N W	8	30- ⁵² 63	67	—	64	6	Bir	N N W	6
13 th @ 8-04	39-58	58-08	E S W	4	30- ⁵² 62	62	—	62	6	S-Bir	South	7
14 th @ 8-23	40-46	54-09	N E	4	30- ⁵² 60	62	—	64	6	Bir	N E	6
15 th @ 8-38	41-48	50-24	East	3	30- ⁵² 62	62	—	62	13	Bir	—	5
16 th @ 8-58	42-36	45-34	N S W	4	30- ⁵² 70	68	—	67	6	Bir	N S W	6
17 th @ 9-17	43-50	40-39	N S W	6	30- ⁵² 60	60	—	58	6	S-Bir	N S W	5
19 th @ 9-52	46-52	32-07	N N W	6	29- ⁵² 61	68	—	54	13	Bir	N N W	3
20 th @ 10-10	48-14	24-34	N N W	8	30- ⁵² 60	54	—	52	13	Bir	N N W	3
21 st @ 10-31	49-38	22-13	South	8	30- ⁵² 61	58	—	52	6	S-Bir	South	7
22 nd @ 10-56	30-36	16-00	South	4	30- ⁵² 61	58	—	52	6	S-Bir	South	6

Weather Bureau List Barometer No. 1076 Kind of Barometer (Aner. or Merc.) Aneroid
 Barometer reads { too high 0.09 Barometer was last compared at Salveston
 { too low _____ (Date) July 20th, 1911
 Record barometer and thermometers precisely as read. All necessary corrections are applied by the U. S. Weather Bureau.

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P. 196000

¹⁸ The Observations form as several columns: Civil date and local time, Latitude, Longitude, Wind direction, Wind force, Barometer, Air temperature, Water temperature, Weather state, Cloud types, Cloud movement, and Cloud coverage.

¹⁹ Provided by Tim Maltin and shown in his eBook, *A Very Deceiving Night*.

A1
DAILY JOURNAL

Of weather experienced between the observations, to be taken from ship's log. Use only local time. (See Instructions, page 6, paragraph 6.)

CIVIL DATE.		
Year, 1912		
Thursday	4 th	Fresh breeze & rough sea. Fine & clear
Friday	5 th	do do do
Saturday	6 th	Fresh breeze to mod. breeze & sea. Fine & clear
Sunday	7 th	Mod. to light breeze & sea. Fine & clear
Monday	8 th	Strong breeze & rough sea. Cloudy
Tuesday	9 th	Mod. to strong breeze & rough sea. Clear
Wednesday	10 th	Strong breeze & high sea. 6 PM Wind veered N N W. Heavy rain
Thursday	11 th	Mod. breeze & sea. Fine & clear
Friday	12 th	Mod. to light breeze & fine & clear
Saturday	13 th	Light var. air to mod. N E breeze & occasional rain
Sunday	14 th	Mod. to light breeze. Smooth sea. Clear
Monday	15 th	Light breeze & calm. Smooth. In evening fresh sea.
Tuesday	16 th	Light var. breeze to strong N E breeze & rough sea
Wednesday	17 th	Strong breeze to mod. gale & high sea. Overcast & cloudy
Thursday	19 th	Mod. gale to fresh breeze & high sea. Squally
Saturday	20 th	Mod. breeze & sea. Clear & cloudy
Sunday	21 st	Fresh breeze & rough sea. Cloudy & overcast.
Monday	22 nd	Mod. breeze & sea. Clear & cloudy

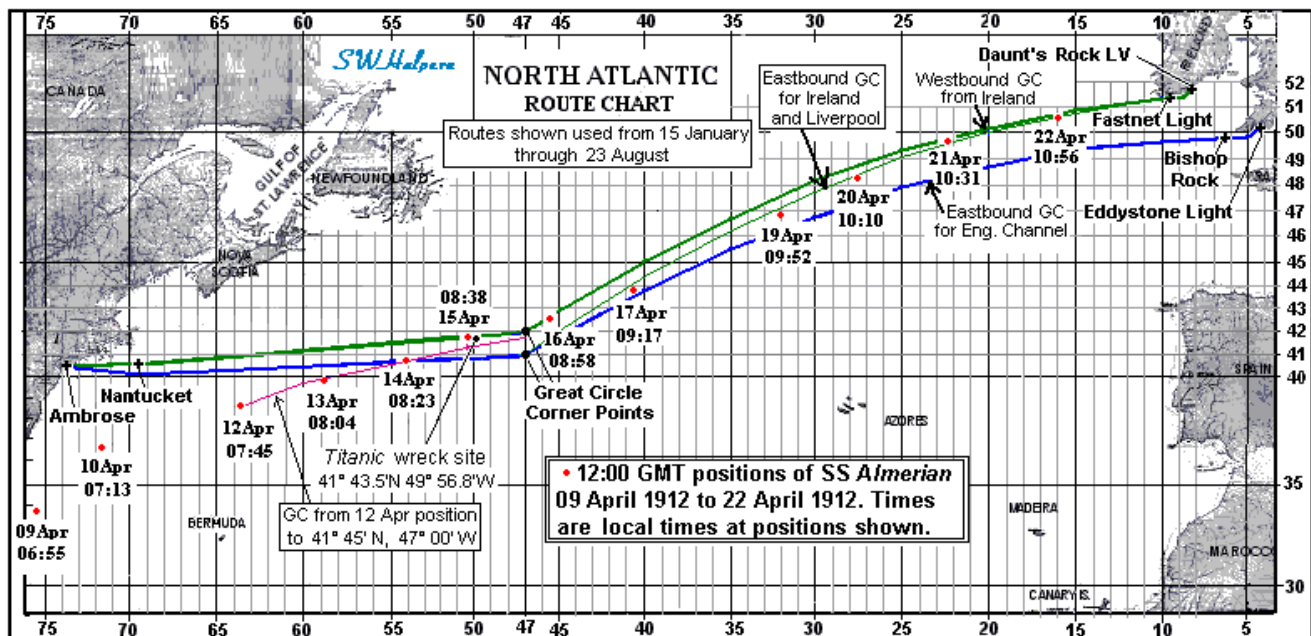
The following table was compiled from the data provided on these forms. It should be noted that the local times recorded appear to match well, for the most part, with Local Mean Time (LMT) for the ship's longitude at 12:00 GMT for each date shown. (LMT[hrs] = GMT[hrs] - lon[deg W]/15). Consecutive dates represent a period of exactly 24 hours from 12:00 GMT one day to 12:00 GMT the next day. From the positional data presented we were able to determine the distance traveled (in nautical miles) from the previous position given, as well as the average speed made good between positions (in knots).²⁰

Civil date recorded (April 1912)	Local time recorded (am)	Latitude recorded (N)	Longitude recorded (W)	LMT based on Longitude given	Distance derived from last position (nautical miles)	Average speed derived (knots)	NOTES
04	6:14	28° 30'	86° 27'	06:14	N/A	N/A	Local time checks with LMT
05	6:23	26° 06'	84° 15'	06:23	186	7.75	Local time checks with LMT
06	6:35	24° 11'	81° 47'	06:33	N/A	N/A	LMT based on lon is 06:33
07	6:41	27° 25'	79° 40'	06:41	N/A	N/A	Local time checks with LMT
08	6:44	31° 12'	79° 02'	06:44	229	9.54	Local time checks with LMT
09	6:55	33° 38'	75° 30'	06:58	231	9.63	LMT based on lon is 06:58
10	7:13	36° 33'	71° 45'	07:13	254	10.58	Local time checks with LMT
11	Data for this date not easily readable						
12	7:45	38° 40'	63° 39'	07:45	405	8.44	Local time checks with LMT
13	8:04	39° 50'	58° 55'	08:04	231	9.63	Local time checks with LMT
14	8:23	40° 44'	54° 09'	08:23	225	9.38	Local time checks with LMT

²⁰ The distances derived were straight line distances which are approximately accurate for most segments on the open ocean that do not require diversions around land masses such as the Florida peninsula or around large fields of ice.

15	8:38	41° 48'	50° 24'	08:38	N/A	N/A	Local time checks with LMT. Ship "In among pack ice" was noted on Journal form.
16	8:58	42° 36'	45° 34'	08:58	220	9.17	Local time checks with LMT
17	9:17	43° 50'	40° 39'	09:17	227	9.46	Local time checks with LMT
18	No data recorded for this date						
19	9:52	46° 52'	32° 07'	09:52	403	8.40	Local time checks with LMT
20	10:10	48° 14'	27° 34'	10:10	202	8.42	Local time checks with LMT
21	10:31	49° 38'	22° 13'	10:31	227	9.46	Local time checks with LMT
22	10:56	50° 36'	16° 00'	10:56	242	10.08	Correct lat is 50° 36'N, not 30° 36'N as written on form. Local time checks with LMT

Based on the data provided on the Observations form, we have marked *Almerian's* daily 12:00 GMT positions and local times reported on a chart of the North Atlantic along with the accepted steamer routes used in April 1912. This is shown below:



Almerian's voyage should have taken her around the southeast coast of the United States on a path toward the eastbound corner point (at 41° N, 47° W) that was used at that time of the year by eastbound steamers bound for Europe. From the eastbound corner point, a ship bound for Liverpool would normally take the accepted great circle route to a point just south of Fastnet Light off the southwestern coast of Ireland, and from there head eastward across the Celtic Sea, then up through St. George's Channel into the Irish Sea, and on up to Liverpool on the west coast of England. However, there appears to be a discontinuity in *Almerian's* course that took place between 12:00 GMT April 14 and 12:00 GMT April 15. At 12:00 GMT April 15, 8:38am local time, the Observations form reported *Almerian* at 41° 48' N, 50° 24' W, a position about 50 miles north of the track to the eastbound corner point. This is the same position that was listed for 10:30am in the report prepared by Capt. Lord, a time when *Almerian* had supposedly cleared the ice. We also find on the Observations form that the sea temperature at 8:38am local time was below freezing, measuring 31° F, and on the Daily Journal form, which listed weather conditions between daily observations, we find a note that says: "Light Breeze & Calms. Smooth [sea]. In among pack-ice."

We know from a wireless message from *Carpathia*'s Capt. Rostron to *Olympic*'s Capt. Haddock sent in the afternoon of the 15th of April, that the south point of the pack ice did not extend below 41° 16' N latitude.²¹ According to the written report prepared by Capt. Lord, *Almerian* had stopped at 3:05am in latitude 41° 20' N, a latitude that would almost certainly put *Almerian* into the ice heading eastward.²² Therefore, we can only conclude that *Almerian* was indeed more than 16 miles north of 41° N latitude when she came up to pack ice in the early morning hours of April 15, and very likely at the latitude put down in the report prepared by Capt. Lord as we will see shortly.

But what about the longitude of *Almerian*'s stopped position given in that report? After allowing for a 19 minute advance in *Almerian*'s clocks due to her eastward progress based on data from the Observations form, we find that the time interval from her previous day's position for 8:23am local time April 14 to 3:05am local time April 15 would be 18 hours 23 minutes. Her average speed over the distance run to where she reportedly came to a stop works out to 9.44 knots, just slightly better than her previous day's run of 9.38 knots. So what we find is that *Almerian*'s reported position for 3:05am on April 15 seems to fit, more or less, with the navigational information derived from the Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form.

But the question remains is why was *Almerian* 20 miles north of the latitude of the eastbound corner point at the time she was forced to stop? Her latitude should never have been above 41° N in the first place if she was bound for the eastbound corner, in which she should have been heading on a course of 087° True from her 8:23am April 14th position. Instead, we find that her course made good from 8:23am April 14 to 3:05am April 15 was about 078° True, or heading about 9 degrees too far northward. Why?

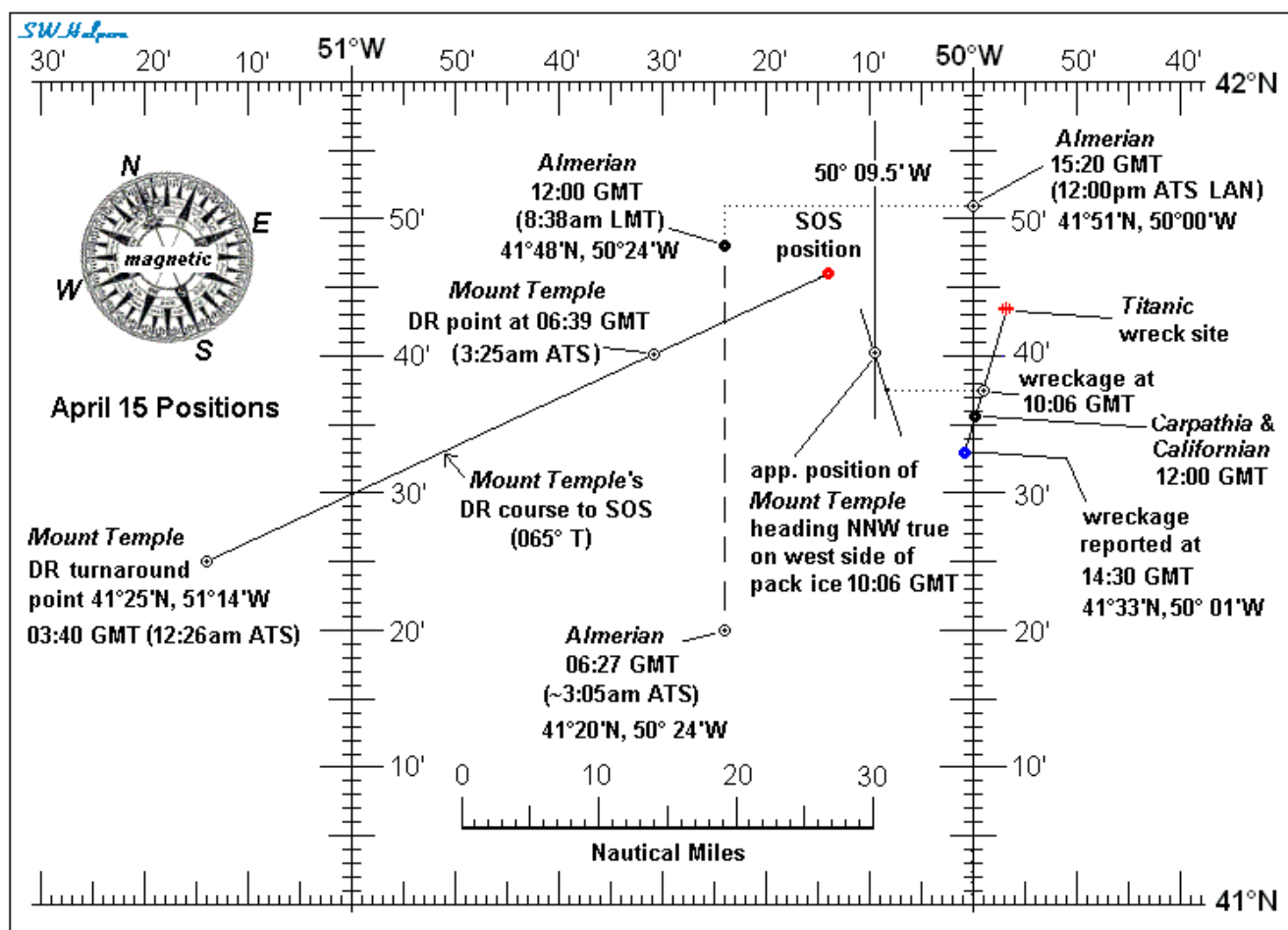
The answer seems to be that *Almerian* may *not* have been heading for the eastbound corner as one would expect. Instead, it appears that *Almerian* was heading for 41° 45' N, 47° 00' W, a point 45 miles north of the eastbound corner point. Her positions appear to track a great circle path from her noon GMT April 12th position to that point. This can easily be seen by the data shown in the table below, which includes the reported longitude where *Almerian* had stopped at 3:05am local time on April 15. (This great circle path is also marked on the chart of the North Atlantic shown above.) It appears that *Almerian*'s Capt. Thomas may have been trying to 'cut the corner' to save a little time on the homeward voyage. Based on a measured 44° F water temperature at noon GMT April 14, it is also apparent that *Almerian* was not in Gulf Stream waters during her last 18 hours 23 minutes of travel before coming to a stop because of ice in the early morning hours of April 15.

Points on a Great Circle path from 38° 40'N, 63° 39'W to 41° 45'N, 47° 00'W		
Longitude points on the Great Circle	Latitude points on the Great Circle	<i>Almerian</i>'s reported latitude at the longitude points given
63° 39' W	38° 40' N	38° 40' N at 7:45am April 12
58° 55' W	39° 49' N	39° 50' N at 8:04am April 13
54° 09' W	40° 45' N	40° 44' N at 8:23am April 14
50° 24' W	41° 20' N	41° 20' N at 3:05am April 15
47° 00' W	41° 45' N	N/A

²¹ *Corinthian* reported ice down to latitude 41° 25' N on April 13, and in *Olympic*'s wireless log for April 15 there is an entry for 4:00pm NYT (21:00 GMT) when a message was received from *Carpathia*'s Capt. Rostron to *Olympic*'s Capt. Haddock that read: "South point pack ice 41.16 north. Don't attempt to go north until 49.30 west. Many bergs. large and small, amongst pack. Also for many miles to eastward."

²² We know from Capt. Rostron that the ice field in the vicinity of the wreckage trended from NW to SE. But it extended well to the south beyond the horizon reaching down to a reported latitude of 41°16'N. *Carpathia* had to first go southeastward before she could turn southward and then westward. Eventually, she was able to head due west upon reaching a latitude of 41°15'N, one mile south of the pack ice, and we know she was at longitude 50°20'W about 3 hours after departing the wreckage. Local apparent noon came for *Carpathia* at 15:22 GMT that Monday morning, and her noontime position works out to be at 41° 15'N, 50° 28'W. It took *Carpathia* about 4 hours to finally be clear of all ice.

The following chart shows the reported positions for *Almerian* and *Mount Temple* for April 15, 1912. Also shown is the location of the SOS position, the *Titanic* wreck site, the wreckage reported for 14:30 GMT (the time *Californian* departed the area), and the position of *Californian* and *Carpathia* at 12:00 GMT, shortly before *Carpathia* departed the area with survivors from *Titanic*. Included on this chart is an approximate position for *Mount Temple* when she took a Prime Vertical sight of the sun at 10:06 GMT which put her on a line of longitude of $50^{\circ} 09.5' W$.²³ *Carpathia* would have been within 2 or 3 miles of the wreckage at that time picking up survivors, and *Californian* would have been steaming SSE true coming down on the west side of the pack ice at 13 knots toward *Mount Temple*. About 15 minutes later, at 10:20 GMT, John Durrant, *Mount Temple*'s wireless operator, reported that *Californian* was very close after an exchange of positions between the two vessels by wireless.²⁴



²³ The time that the sun would be due east true for the wreck site location on April 15, 1912 was 10:06 GMT. The approximate position for *Mount Temple* at 10:06 GMT was derived by knowing that the ice trended from NNW true to SSE true on the western side, and the wreckage was reported about 7 to 8 miles to the east from that line. The wreckage itself would have drifted southward on a line of drift from the wreck site to its reported position for 14:30 GMT when *Californian* departed the scene. At 10:06 GMT, the location of the wreckage would have been about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of its 14:30 GMT position on that drift line. The position for *Mount Temple* would be at the intersection of the NNW-SSE true line centered 7-8 miles west of the wreckage, and a line of longitude at $50^{\circ} 09.5' W$.

²⁴ From the Durrant's wireless log: "5.20 [NYT] Sigs. [signals exchanged with] MWL [*Californian*]; wants my position; send it. We're very close."

CLAIMS, POSSIBILITIES AND REALITIES

Accepting the 3:05am position for *Almerian* as correct, and assuming that *Almerian* did not get under way again until about 4am as written in the report prepared by Capt. Lord, we find that *Almerian* would have taken about 4 hours and 40 minutes to travel the 28 miles due north to the 8:38am position given on the Observations form. That is an average speed made good of only 6 knots compared to her average voyage speed of 9 knots taken over the period from 12:00 GMT April 4 to 12:00 GMT April 14.²⁵ This is not unreasonable given that *Almerian* was traveling in ice infested waters which we know had patches of field ice and icebergs that extended as far west as 50° 42'W longitude.²⁶ It should also be noted that *Almerian*'s best speed during her entire voyage never exceeded 10.6 knots, and that was the run from April 9th to the 10th when she would have been helped along by a strong Gulf Stream component in that area.

With all the information now available to us, we can check some of the other events claimed in the report prepared by Capt. Lord.

One of these claims is that the ship seen off *Almerian*'s port quarter when she came to a stop about 3am because of ice turned out to be the SS *Mount Temple*. It was also claimed that both *Mount Temple* and *Almerian* remained stopped until "about 4am" when both ships started to go northward along the western extremity of the ice. It was also claimed that it was light enough at that time to see the full extent of the ice field and the icebergs that were in that area.

Using data from the US Naval Observatory,²⁷ we find the following times for the beginning of twilight times and sunrise on April 15, 1912 in the reported area where *Almerian* had stopped:

Times for the following astronomical events at 41° 20'N, 50° 24'W on April 15, 1912		
Astronomical twilight began	07:04 GMT	3:42am local mean time
Nautical twilight began	07:40 GMT	4:18am local mean time
Civil twilight began	08:14 GMT	4:52am local mean time
Sunrise	08:43 GMT	5:26am local mean time

For *Almerian* at the position given, 4:00am local time would be 7:22 GMT, still in the middle of Astronomical twilight. It would be almost 20 minutes before the start of Nautical twilight, the period when reliable star sights could be taken using a visible horizon for a reference. At the beginning of Nautical twilight, under good atmospheric conditions, only the general outlines of objects may be distinguishable. Most observers would consider the entire sky fully dark before Nautical twilight began. If *Almerian* was really able to see the full extent of the ice field at "daylight" as claimed, then it had to be some time after the start of Nautical twilight, perhaps closer to 4:30am, if not later. According to Capt. Rostron, it was about 4:20 when it first started to become daylight, and about 5 o'clock when it was light enough to see "all round the horizon."

The handwritten report by Capt. Lord also said that the field ice that was seen extended to the "NE & Southward" as far as they could see. Yet, it also said that they "proceeded at various speeds in a northerly direction on the western extremity of the icefield with the object of finding a way to clear water in the east." This seems to be somewhat contradictory. If they proceeded on the western extremity of the field, and the field extended to the northeast as claimed, then they should have been moving northeastward from their stopped position, certainly not directly north. Yet we know from the Observations form that *Almerian* was on the same line of longitude at 8:38am as she was at 3:05am

²⁵ Total distance traveled from 12:00 GMT April 4 to 12:00 GMT April 14 was 2,163 miles. Total time traveled was 240 hours.

²⁶ Hydrographic Office Report file copy No. 62908-2995. Received from SS *Californian* at the Hydrographic Branch Office Boston, MA on April 22, 1912, and received at the Hydrographic Office Washington, DC on April 23, 1912.

²⁷ Astronomical Applications Department, US Naval Observatory, Washington, DC.

when she was reported stopped. How can that be unless she first moved northeasterly, then northwesterly, only to arrive back to a point exactly due north from where she started from more than four hours later?

The report written by Capt. Lord also said that *Almerian* was steaming to the north until about 9:50am, and then steamed slowly through the ice which was cleared at 10:30am. As noted before, the reported position given for *Almerian* when she cleared the ice was 41° 48'N, 50° 24'W, the exact same coordinates listed on the Observations form for 8:38am local time. If *Almerian* had to clear the ice field, it had to steam eastward to get to clear water on the other side, and her longitude could not have remained at 50° 24'W when the ice was cleared. Clearly, the position put down in the report for 10:30am, when *Almerian* supposedly cleared the ice, had to be erroneous. Those coordinates were for 8:38am, a position west of that field of pack ice.

But what about the position put down for local apparent noon, 41° 51'N, 50° 00'W? At local apparent noon, a sun sight would be obtained to fix the ship's latitude. Her longitude would be obtained by running up a forenoon longitude sight to local apparent noon thereby establishing the ship's noontime position. On April 15, 1912, for the position given, local apparent noon occurred at 15:20 GMT. This position is 3 nautical miles north and about 18 nautical miles east from *Almerian's* 8:38am (12:00 GMT) position. If *Almerian* had steamed 3 miles further to the north from her 8:38am position, and then turned to the east to reach a noontime position at 41° 51'N, 50° 00'W by 15:20 GMT, her average speed made good would have been about 6.3 knots, about the same average speed made good since leaving her reported stopped overnight position in those ice infested waters. Given the reported location of wreckage for 14:30 GMT (see area chart above), and knowing that the field of pack ice in the vicinity of the wreckage trended more toward the NNW, it would be only a matter of time for *Almerian* to come up against the western side of the pack ice after turning eastward. However, we know from *Californian* that the pack ice well north of the wreckage area was perhaps only 2 to 3 miles across, a distance that *Californian* crossed in about 30 minutes averaging 4 to 6 knots. It is therefore not unreasonable for *Almerian* to have entered the ice at about 9:50am as claimed if she was heading eastward, and be clear of it by about 10:30am as claimed.²⁸

As for the claim that a ship was seen off their port quarter at 3am, and that later that ship was identified as *Mount Temple*, one must weigh that claim against all the other information that we have available to us.

We have already seen that *Carpathia's* Capt. Rostron had noticed two ships to his "northward" about 7 to 8 miles from *Carpathia* about 5am; one of them a 2-masted vessel with one funnel, and the second a 4-masted vessel with one funnel. This also fits with evidence given by Capt. Moore and John Durrant. What we have from Moore and Durrant is that *Mount Temple* had stopped along the western edge of the icefield along with this small, unidentified steamer who was to the southward and a little ahead of them. *Mount Temple* first backed out of the ice at 5:06am (*Mount Temple* time) and headed SSE true to see if the ice was thinner down there. She went a little beyond where this small steamer had gone, and not finding a path to get across the ice, turned around and went back to the north with that small steamer following her a little time later. On her way back north, some time around 6am it was claimed, *Mount Temple* sighted *Carpathia* across the ice on the eastern side.

These movements seem to be indirectly supported by additional evidence provided by *Carpathia's* Capt. Rostron. In response to a request by *Californian's* Capt. Lord for additional information concerning the two vessels that Rostron said he sighted 7 to 8 miles away at 5am on April 15, Rostron wrote to Lord on September 5:

²⁸ *Almerian* could have reached the position (42° 36'N, 45° 34'W) given in the Observations form for 12:00 GMT on April 16 after departing the position (41° 51'N, 50° 00'W) given for local apparent noon (15:20 GMT) on April 15 if she had worked up to an average speed of 9.78 knots.

I'm sorry I cannot give you any detailed description of the two steamers seen by me. All I know – one, a four-masted one funnel steamer dodging about, I suppose amongst the ice to the northward; the other, two masts and one funnel coming from W to E straight on his course. I did not see the color of the funnels, or notice anything which might distinguish either. You can imagine, I was quite busy enough.

Then on November 6, 1912, Rostron wrote to Lord once again about this:

Could you find out if he [the SS *Mount Temple*] was dodging about somewhere about 5.30 or 6am – I certainly saw the steamer turning and dodging about that time, and if a 2-masted one funnel steamer passed them about 6 to 6.30a.m coming from the westward?²⁹

From what we have seen, *Mount Temple* was certainly dodging about that morning. She backed out of the ice a little after 5am and headed southward, turned around again somewhere close to 5:30 after failing to find a clear path to the east, sighted *Carpathia* on her way back north around 6am, and about the same time, or soon thereafter, noticed *Californian* steaming westward crossing the ice about as far to the north as *Carpathia* was to the east.

Considering the drift of wreckage in the 2½ hours since *Titanic* disappeared, *Carpathia* would have been close to 41° 41'N, 49° 58'W at 5am in the morning when Rostron saw his two steamers 7 to 8 miles to his “northward.” On the other hand, according to the *Almerian* report written by Capt. Lord, *Almerian* would have been steaming northward from her stopped position for only about one hour, if indeed she got underway as early as 4am as claimed. At an average speed of 6 knots, *Almerian* would have reached about 41° 26'N, 50° 24'W, assuming her stopped coordinates were anywhere near accurate. *Almerian*, with *Mount Temple* allegedly steaming ahead of her, should have been about 25 miles, or thereabouts, southwestward of *Carpathia* about 5am that morning, not the 7 to 8 miles to the “northward” of *Carpathia* as observed by Capt. Rostron and indirectly supported by the evidence given by *Mount Temple*'s Capt. Moore. So the question remains, what was real and what was not real in the *Almerian* story?

The data from the Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form tells us that *Almerian* was averaging about 9 to 10 knots for the most part on her voyage from the Gulf coast of the United States to Liverpool, England in April 1912. We have seen that she was apparently heading along a route that would take her to a point about 45 miles north of the eastbound corner point when, in the early morning hours of the 15th of April, she apparently was forced to stop by a field of pack ice in her path in about 41° 20'N latitude. Later, after it became light enough to see all around, she headed northward averaging about 6 to 6½ knots, depending on exactly when she got underway and the actual route followed. At 12:00 GMT, according to the Observations form, *Almerian* reached 41° 48'N, 50° 24'W, 24 nautical miles due north from her reported stopped position. Local mean time was then 8:38am.

As was the navigational practice in those days, a traditional longitude-by-chronometer sight of the sun would have been taken in the forenoon hours to be used in conjunction with the traditional

²⁹ These letters were written 5 and 7 months after the events. Rostron gave only very general directional observations, but the reference to the 2-masted steamer coming from W to E on her course may seem a bit strange given that the ice field blocked the path of any ship coming from the westward and heading east. It simply may have been that he noticed the direction that the vessel was pointing in at the few times that he took notice of it. We also know that there was quite a bit of loose ice on both the eastern and western side of the heavier field of pack ice, and it is not unreasonable for any vessel moving northward or southward along the side of the pack ice to dodge some of the large chunks of ice that broke off from the solid pack. It should also be noted that Rostron testified that the eastern side of the pack ice trended from NW to SE in the vicinity where *Carpathia* had stopped. The western side of the pack ice trended more from NNW to SSE according to both Capt. Moore and Capt. Lord.

noontime sun sight.³⁰ It would also be used to precisely adjust ship's clocks to Apparent Time.³¹ It is more than likely that *Almerian's* longitude (50° 24'W) was firmly established by this forenoon sight while she was still heading northward in the early morning hours, also used in working up the ship's 12:00 GMT position that was put down on the Observations form, as well as fixing the ship's position at local apparent noon.

The rest of *Almerian's* movements is somewhat more speculative, but it seems that it can be resolved to fit some of the navigational data in the handwritten report that was prepared by Capt. Lord.

About one-half hour after passing the location given on the Observations form, *Almerian* would have reached a latitude of 41° 51'N. There she apparently turned eastward to cross a field of pack ice that would be seen about 4 miles ahead and perhaps only 2 to 3 miles wide. The time she turned eastward would have been about 12:30 GMT. About 40 minutes later, about 9:50am local time (13:10 GMT), she would have entered the pack ice, and by about 10:30am (13:50 GMT), she would have cleared it.

After steaming eastward for about another hour and a half after clearing the ice, sights would be taken of the sun to determine *Almerian's* precise latitude at local apparent noon when the sun crossed the ship's local meridian. Combined with the forenoon sight that would be run up to noon, her noontime position, both in longitude and latitude, would be fixed. It would then show that she reached 41° 51'N, 50° 00'W. (An explanation of how this would be done in 1912 is described in Appendix B.)

With mostly ice-free water ahead, *Almerian's* average speed seems to have been increased to about 9.8 knots, possibly to make up for some of the lost time, because we know from the Observations form that at 12:00 GMT the following day (April 16), *Almerian* had reached 42° 36'N, 45° 34'W. She was then heading to intercept the great circle route for eastbound steamers going up toward Ireland and ports on the west coast of England. (See Atlantic routes chart above.)

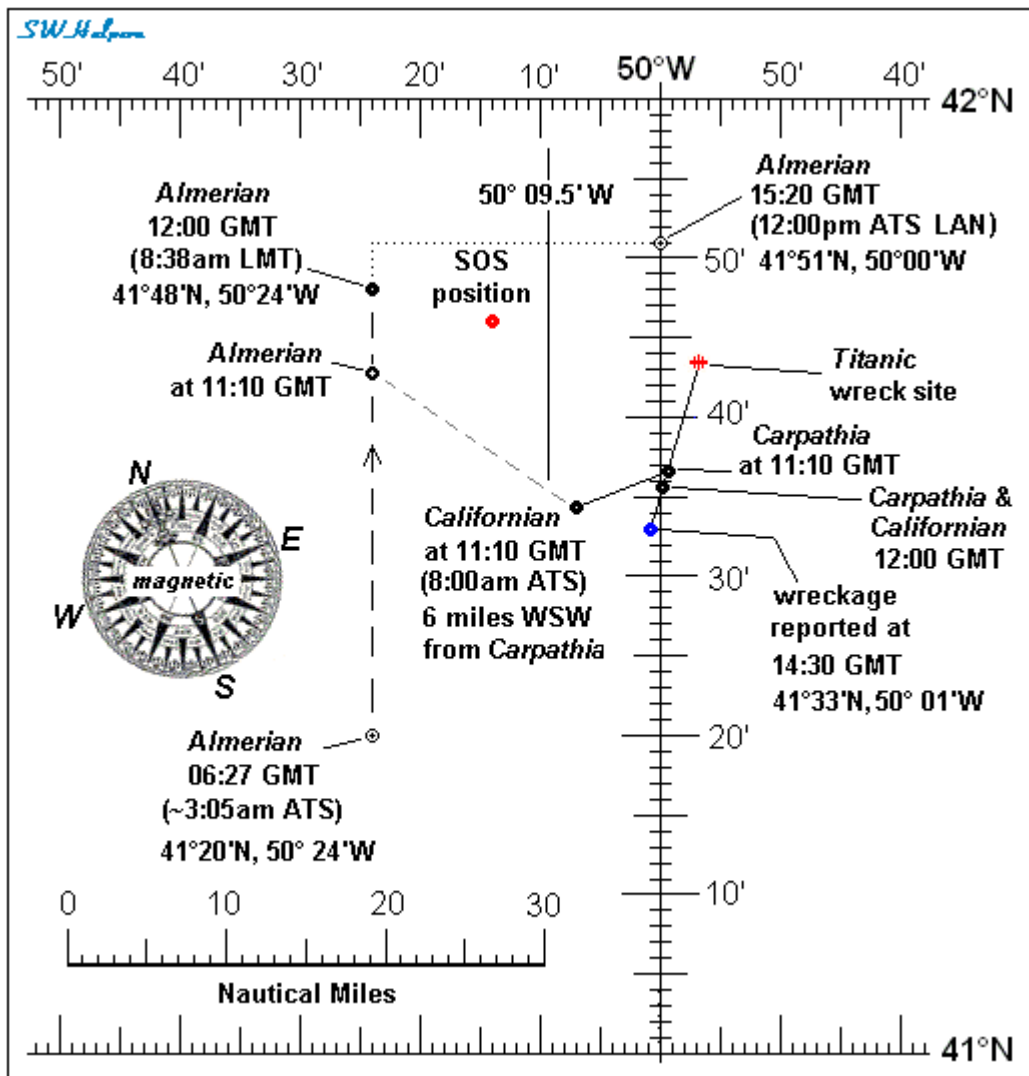
But is it possible for *Almerian* to have sighted *Carpathia* on the other side of the pack ice, or have sighted *Californian* steering down the western side of the pack and then cut across the ice field toward *Carpathia* during her journey northward on the morning of April 15?

Based on the location of the wreck, the drift of wreckage, and the data recorded on *Almerian's* Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form for April 15, 1912, *Almerian* was located 22 miles to the northwest from where both *Carpathia* and *Californian* were at 12:00 GMT on that date. On *Californian* it was 8:50am, and *Carpathia* was just about ready to depart the area leaving *Californian* behind to continue to search around to leeward.

If we move things back by 50 minutes in time to when it was 8:00am on *Californian* (11:10 GMT), we find that *Almerian* would have been about 19 miles from *Carpathia* and the wreckage, and about 15 miles NW by W true of *Californian*, who was then seen by Capt. Rostron to be cutting across the pack ice at a distance of 5 to 6 miles WSW true from a stopped *Carpathia*. These locations and times are shown on the chart below:

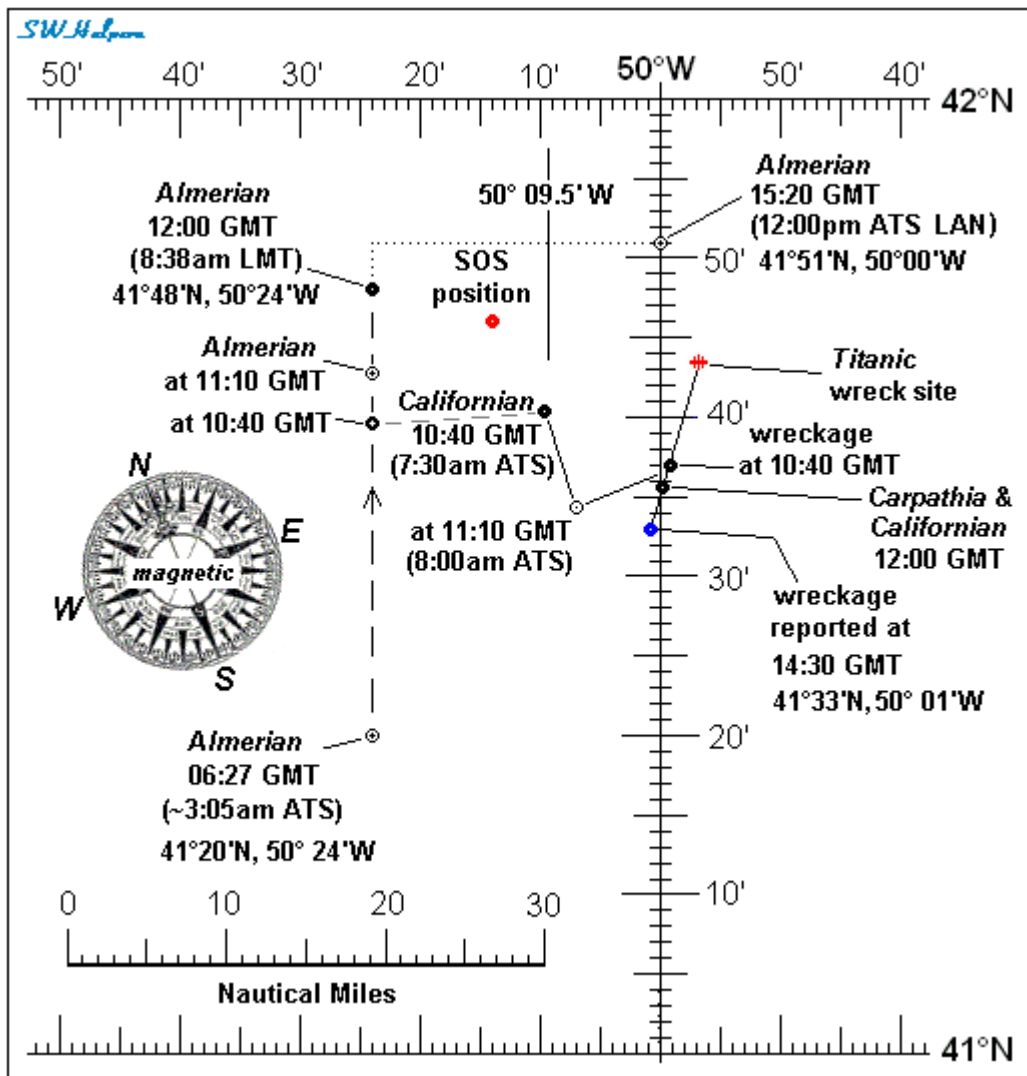
³⁰ Commander W. E. May, *A History of Marine Navigation*, W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1973.

³¹ The difference between Apparent Time and Local Mean Time is equal to the Equation-of-Time for a particular date. For April 15, 1912, that difference amounted to a mere 12.6 seconds.



Notice that these results do not depend on any evidence provided by Capt. Moore or his wireless operator John Durrant. They come only from the navigational data recorded on *Almerian's* Observations form, evidence provided about the movements of *Carpathia* and *Californian* on the morning of April 15 given by Capt. Rostron and Capt. Lord at the 1912 inquires, and the now know location of where *Titanic* really sank. The above clearly shows that *Almerian* had to be a good 15 miles from *Californian* and to the northwest when *Californian* cut across the pack ice to reach *Carpathia* on the other side. She could not have been seen first approaching *Californian* from the south as claimed in the written report prepared by Capt. Lord.

If we trace the movements of these ships further back in time to about 7:30am on *Californian* (10:40 GMT), then we have the situation shown on the following chart:



Here we see that *Almerian* would have been about 10½ nautical miles almost due west of *Californian* who was then heading down along the western side of the ice field steering SSE true at about 13 knots. If Capt. Lord sighted a 2-masted steamer with a pink funnel and black top about this time, as he claimed before the Wreck Commission on May 14, then it would have been somewhat hull down beyond the visible horizon to his west and steering to the northward. *Mount Temple* would have been relatively close to *Californian* at that time, and equally well eastward from *Almerian*. It should also be noted that Capt. Lord did not specify in what direction he saw that small steamer with a pink funnel when he testified before the Wreck Commission in 1912.

In 1959, Stanley Lord signed an affidavit prepared with the assistance of his friend and supporter Leslie Harrison. It had this to say about *Almerian*:

At 6.30 a.m. I cleared the field ice and proceeded [southward] at full speed (70 revolutions). At 7.30 a.m. approximately, we passed the *Mount Temple* stopped in the reported position of the disaster. As there was no sign of any wreckage I proceeded further south, shortly afterwards passing a ship having a pink funnel and two masts, bound north, which turned out to be the *Almerian*. A little later, I sighted a four-masted steamer to the SSE of us on the east side of the ice field, and received a verbal message from the Wireless Operator that the *Carpathia* was at the scene of the disaster. I steered

to the south until the steamer was nearly abeam when I altered course and proceeded through the ice field at full speed, making for the other steamer. She proved to be *Carpathia* and I stopped alongside her at about 8.30 a.m. Messages were exchanged regarding the disaster and subsequent rescue operations.

In this account, written 47 years after the event, Lord indicates that he passed what turned out to be *Almerian* shortly after passing a stopped *Mount Temple* as he continued to head southward before turning toward *Carpathia*. Yet, in the two-page handwritten account of the *Almerian* story, Lord wrote that the Leyland Liner [*Californian*] commenced steaming through the ice in the direction of other 4-masted steamer [*Carpathia*] before *Almerian* got up to where *Californian* was. It should be obvious that you simply cannot pass a vessel coming up toward you from the south if you turned eastward before you reached the vicinity of the approaching vessel. These two renditions of what took place are in obvious conflict.

For *Almerian* to have been close to *Californian* or *Mount Temple* about 7:30am, *Almerian* would have to have been heading northward on a line of longitude close to 50° 10'W, not at 50° 24'W. And if the small two-masted vessel seen near *Mount Temple* was really *Almerian*, then why would both *Californian*'s Third Officer Charles Groves and *Mount Temple*'s Capt. Moore describe her as having a black funnel if ships of the Leyland line carried a pink funnel? If that small steamer had a black funnel, then it could not have been *Almerian*. In reality, it is likely that Capt. Lord did not take particular notice of this small vessel on the morning of the 15th while he was busy searching for a way through the icefield that separated him from *Carpathia*. He certainly made no mention of seeing a vessel with a pink funnel when he testified before the American inquiry on April 26, and it was only after his arrival back in England that he could have found out that *Almerian* was more or less in the general vicinity on April 15.

Another point to consider in the *Almerian* story report written by Capt. Lord is the claim that *Mount Temple*, after steaming to the north ahead of *Almerian*, suddenly turned and headed to the northwest shortly after smoke, from what turned out to be *Californian*, was sighted ahead, almost as if to avoid the approaching vessel that was coming down from the north. Then later, at some unspecified time after *Californian* had turned eastward toward *Carpathia*, it was claimed that *Mount Temple* suddenly turned to the east and conveniently approached close enough for *Almerian* to make out her name with glasses, only to suddenly turn away once more and again steam away to the northwest. Now why would *Mount Temple* do all that?

In contrast to this account, we know that *Californian* actually passed within 1 mile of *Mount Temple* on her run southward along the western edge of the pack ice before turning for *Carpathia* on the eastern side. As we have seen, *Californian*'s third officer testified that *Mount Temple* was stopped on the western side of the ice as they came down and approached her from the north. Capt. Lord also testified that *Mount Temple* was stopped when they passed her that morning.

Evidence offered from the wireless log of John Durrant also tells us that *Mount Temple* was still "cruising" around the western side of the pack ice at 12:40 GMT when a wireless message was picked up from *Carpathia* (a general CQ call) saying that there was no longer a need for any ship to remain in the vicinity as nothing more could be done.³² By that time, *Carpathia* was already steaming southeastward along the eastern side of the pack ice to get around it to the south, and from our navigational analysis, *Almerian* had already turned eastward to cut across the ice field up in latitude 41° 51'N. If *Mount Temple* was "cruising" back down toward the vicinity where *Californian*

³² 7.40 [NYT] MPA [*Carpathia*] calls CQ and says: "No need to stand by him; nothing more can be done." Advise my captain, who has been cruising around the ice field with no result. Ship reversed. Standing by [the wireless] rest of day. MPA [*Carpathia*] and MKC [*Olympic*] very busy.

previously cut across the ice to reach *Carpathia* earlier that morning,³³ then she would have been down near latitude 41° 35'N when that transmission from *Carpathia* was received. Her direction would then be “reversed” (as written in Durrant’s wireless log) in order to resume her voyage to St. John. At that very time, *Almerian* would have been about 18 miles to the northwest of *Mount Temple* and heading eastward, too far away to be seen.

It seems that when Capt. Lord wrote up that *Almerian* report, some of the details, either given to him or interpreted by him, were not very accurate, or were adjusted to fit some of the details from the US Senate inquiry that already had become public knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on data from a Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form and its associated Daily Journal form, we were able to get a more complete picture of the whereabouts and movements of the SS *Almerian* during her April 1912 voyage from Mobile to Liverpool. Considered along with some navigational data put down in a handwritten report discovered in the papers of Capt. Stanley Lord, we can now state the following:

- *Almerian*’s best single day speed for her entire voyage was the run from 12:00 GMT April 9th to the 12:00 GMT April 10th when she averaged 10.6 knots.
- From 12:00 GMT April 12th until she was forced to stop at 06:27 GMT April 15th (3:05am local time), *Almerian* was apparently on a great circle path to a point 45 miles north of the corner point for eastbound steamers heading to Europe for that time of the year.
- Not having wireless, *Almerian* was unaware that pack ice and icebergs were reported north of 41° N in the region she was steaming through.
- Both the latitude and longitude of *Almerian*’s stopped position for 3:05am on April 15th (41° 20’N, 50° 24’W) that was put down in the *Almerian* account written by *Californian*’s Capt. Stanley Lord seems to fit the navigational data derived from the Observations form.
- The position put down in the handwritten account for 10:30am (41° 48’N, 50° 24’W) was actually *Almerian*’s position for 8:38am local time (12:00 GMT) as noted on the Observations form.
- *Almerian* probably started to steam northward from her stopped position closer to 4:30am, during the period known as Nautical twilight, when it became light enough to make out the general outlines of nearby objects.
- A traditional longitude-by-chronometer sight taken in the forenoon would have fixed *Almerian*’s longitude, and later run up to local apparent noon to fix the ship’s traditional noontime position using a noontime latitude sight of the sun. The forenoon sight would also be used to make any needed adjustment to Apparent Time carried on board, and would also be used to establish the ship’s position for 8:38am local time (12:00 GMT) that was put down on the Observations form.
- *Almerian*’s position at local apparent noon April 15, 41° 51’N, 50° 00’W, shows that the ship had averaged about 6.3 knots between her 8:38am position (at 12:00 GMT) and her noontime position (at 15:20 GMT). This is about the same speed she averaged heading northward after departing her overnight stopped position.
- It is possible that *Almerian* had entered an icefield close to 9:50am and cleared it by about 10:30am as given in the handwritten account. However, for her to do, and be at her reported noontime position, she would have turned east about 9:10am when the western

³³ In Durrant’s wireless log it was noted that *Mount Temple* had both ships in sight at 11:00 GMT, which was about the time *Californian* turned to cut across the ice field. (*Californian* time would have been 7:50am.)

edge of the field was about 4 miles away to her east. The pack ice in the area where she crossed was likely 2 to 3 miles wide with mostly clear water seen on the other side.

- The details in Capt. Lord's handwritten report concerning what *Almerian* had allegedly seen regarding *Californian*, *Carpathia* and *Mount Temple* are inconsistent with the navigational evidence now available to us, and inconsistent with a number of details given at the 1912 inquiries:
 - *Almerian's* stopped overnight position was over 30 nautical miles from the *Titanic* wreck site.
 - At about 5am *Carpathia's* Capt. Rostron saw two steamers, a 2-masted steamer with one funnel and a 4-masted steamer with one funnel, 7 to 8 miles to her "northward." *Almerian* was at least 25 nautical miles away to the southwest of *Carpathia* steaming slowly to the north at that time, while *Mount Temple* and a small unidentified nearby steamer were on the western side of the ice to the northward of *Carpathia* at that time. It was a little after 5am when *Mount Temple* first backed out of the ice to go southward.
 - The small tramp steamer seen coming up from the south near a stopped *Mount Temple* was described as having a black funnel by two independent eyewitnesses at the 1912 inquiries. It was only Capt. Lord who said she had a pink funnel with a black top when he testified before the British Wreck Commission on May 14, 1912.
 - At about 7:30am, *Californian* was heading SSE true along the western edge of the icefield having passed a stopped *Mount Temple*. *Almerian*, if noticed at all, would have been hull down on the western horizon about 10½ nautical miles away steaming northward. It is possible that *Almerian* saw two ships to her east at this time: one, *Mount Temple*, then stopped; and the other, *Californian*, steaming southward. If *Almerian* sighted *Carpathia* at all, it would have been a little time earlier and southward of the other two vessels, with only *Carpathia's* funnel and masts showing above the visible horizon.
 - At about 8:00am, when *Californian* was crossing the icefield heading ENE true toward *Carpathia*, *Almerian* would have been about 15 miles away from *Californian* to the northwest. She could not have been first approaching *Californian* from the south as claimed in the written report.
- *Mount Temple* did not resume her voyage to St. John until after she picked up a wireless message from *Carpathia* at 12:40 GMT releasing all vessels in the vicinity. At that time *Almerian* was up in 41° 51'N latitude heading eastward.

To summarize, *Almerian* was more or less in the general area of the *Titanic* disaster, but many of the details in the account written by Capt. Stanley Lord are suspect. Subject to the usual errors in 1912 navigation, Capt. James Henry Moore told the truth about his ship's movements during the night of April 14th and early morning hours of April 15th when he testified before the 1912 inquiries. Insinuations that *Mount Temple* was close enough to *Titanic* to see her distress rockets are ludicrously false; a misdirection to blame someone other than Capt. Lord for failure to respond to *Titanic's* signals of distress. Neither *Almerian* nor *Mount Temple* had anything to do with any 'mystery ship' seen from *Titanic* or *Californian*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank Tim Maltin for providing me with copies of *Almerian's* Greenwich Mean Noon Observations form and Daily Journal form that he uncovered, and for letting me include them in this article.

APPENDIX A

Transcript of Original Handwritten *Almerian* Report by *Californian's* Capt. Stanley Lord

April 15. Almerian.

At 3am (approx) I was informed there was ice alongside. I at once ordered the ship to be stopped. There was a steamer then on the port quarter. I asked the 2 Offcr Mr Havard if he had communicated with her. He said he had endeavoured to but could not understand her signals only OUNT.

At daylight (about 4am) we could see ice extending as far to the NE & Southward as we could see. Field ice & icebergs.

I proceeded at various speeds in a northerly direction on the western extremity of the icefield with the object of finding a way to clear water in the East. The vessel which at 3.0am was on the port quarter & stopped was also steering in a Northerly direction & as we thought endeavouring to find a passage through the icefield to the East. Later we saw apparently at the Eastern extremity of the icefield about 6 or 6½ miles off a large 4 masted steamer. With the aid of the telescope we saw she has derrick up at No 1. We could not distinguish her funnel. Shortly we sighted smoke ahead which on nearer approach turned out to be a Leyland Liner. At this time the vessel which had been stopped at 3.0am on our Pquarter & since had been steering to North ahead of us suddenly headed NW. This surprised me at the time up to this point as I thought she was an East-bound ship. As we approached & before we got up to the Leyland Liner ? she commenced steaming through the ice in the direction of other 4 masted steamer we could see East of Icefield. I cont'd in a Northerly direction not having had communication with any vessel. To my astonishment the (Mount Temple) which had been in sight the whole time headed to the East & approached so that with the aid of the glasses I made out her name (Mount Temple). After reading her name she again steamed NW. I cont'd North until about 9.50am when I steamed slowly through the icefield which I cleared at 10.30am. I did not see any more of the vessels mentioned.

April 15 3.5 Stopped 41.20N 50.24 W
 “ “ 10.30 cleared ice 41.48 50.24
 Noon 41.51 50.00

(Mt Temple position at am 0.25am
 (41.25N 51.14

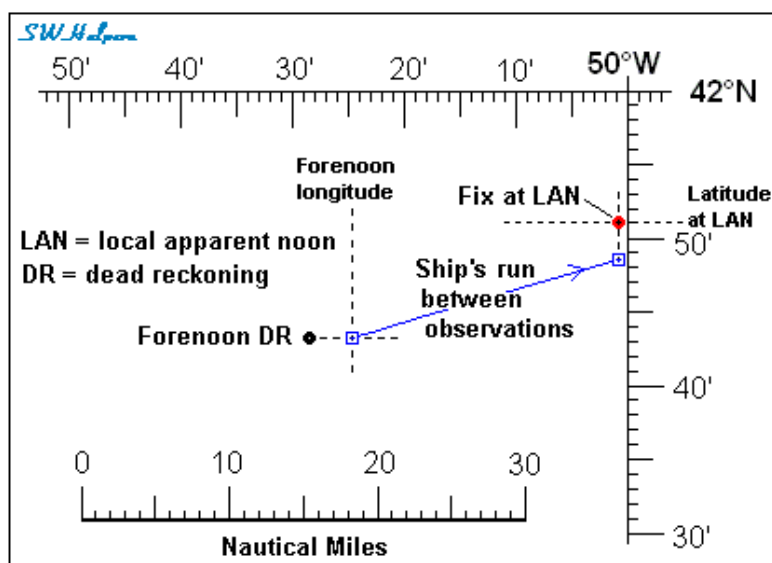
APPENDIX B

Finding a Ship's Position at Local Apparent Noon

In 1912, young officers in the British merchant service would typically use a straight longitude-by-chronometer sun sight taken in the forenoon in conjunction with the traditional noontime sight to fix their ship's position at local apparent noon (LAN).³⁴ Then at noon the ship's course would be set for the next day's run, or to make a particular alter-course point along the route of travel.

The forenoon sight, taken when the sun was east of the local meridian, would be used to get an accurate measure of the time interval to local apparent noon for the ship's position at the moment the sight was taken. Needed to work this out was the ship's dead reckoning (DR) latitude, the angular height of the sun taken from the sextant measurement, the time of the sight in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) taken from the chronometer, and the solar declination from an almanac. Subtracting this time interval (in hours, minutes and seconds) from 12:00:00 gave an accurate measure of Apparent Time on board the ship at the moment the sight was taken.³⁵ Adding an adjustment for the equation-of-time for the date of the observation to the Apparent Time just derived gave the navigator what is called the Local Mean Time (LMT) of the observation.³⁶ The time difference between GMT and the LMT when multiplied by 15 degrees per hour gave the ship's longitude in degrees east or west of Greenwich. (If GMT was less than 12 hours *ahead* of LMT, the ship was *west* of Greenwich; if less than 12 hours *behind* LMT, the ship was *east* of Greenwich.)

At local apparent noon another sun sight would be taken to get a precise measure of the ship's latitude. The longitude obtained from the forenoon sight was then run up to noon by taking into account the ship's eastward or westward progress between the two sights to get the ship's noontime longitude. This is all shown graphically by the example given in the diagram below.



³⁴ Cmdr. W. E. May (Royal Navy, F. R. Inst. Nav.), *A History of Marine Navigation*, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1973, pp. 38-39, and pp. 172-175.

³⁵ This is also used to add or subtract any needed correction to Apparent Time carried on the ship's clocks. According to *Titanic's* third officer, Herbert Pitman, this may result in a correction of ½ to 1 minute of time for clocks that were adjusted the previous midnight so they would read 12:00 at local apparent noon the next day.

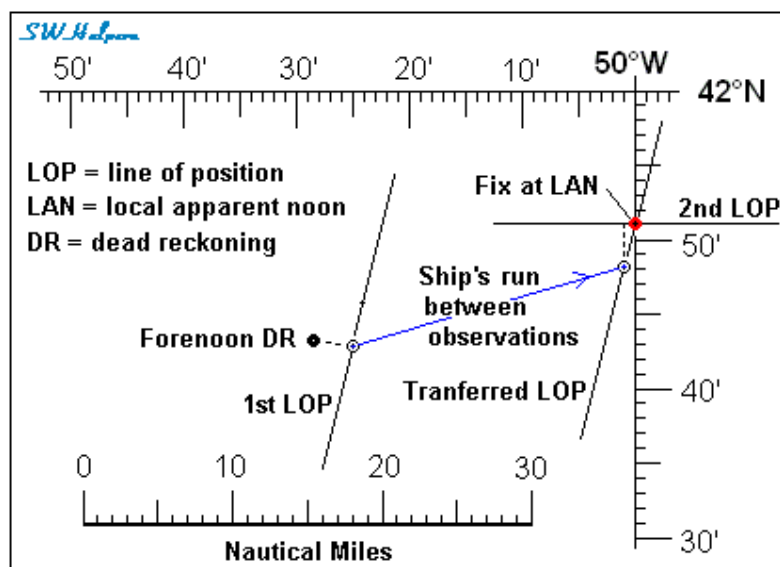
³⁶ The equation of time takes into account the difference between the path of the true sun in the sky and the fictitious sun. Only the fictitious sun takes exactly 24 hours to make one complete circuit of the earth, and gives us what is called "mean time." Greenwich Mean Time, or GMT, is based on the path of this fictitious sun as seen from Greenwich, England.

To get a slightly more precise noontime fix, the forenoon sight was often used to obtain what is called a line-of-position (LOP) which then could be run up to noon and crossed with a latitude line taken from a noontime sight of the sun. The use of a position line was discovered by Capt. T. H. Sumner in 1837 on a passage from Charleston to Greenock. During that passage he discovered that even if his DR position latitude was somewhat uncertain, he could easily find a line on which his ship must be located on using a single sight of the sun (or any other celestial body). Exactly where his ship was on that line he would not know. However, if he took a second sight of the sun later on to get a second LOP, he could then find his ship's position at the point where the two position lines crossed after adjusting the first LOP for the progress made by the ship between sights. This is called a "running fix."³⁷

In 1881 Capt. S. T. S. Lecky, in his book *Wrinkles in Practical Navigation*, pointed out how the Sumner LOP calculation can be shortened using tables giving the sun's true bearing for any time, latitude and declination. The Sumner method became a requirement of the Board of Trade for an Extra Master's certificate in the British merchant service in 1898, and was consequently the one usually practiced. Later on, other methods (such as The Marcq St. Hilaire method) were introduced to the Royal Navy and the British merchant service to calculate position lines.

To get the ship's noontime position using position line navigation, a sight of the sun would be taken sometime in the forenoon. A forenoon line-of-position would then be established along with the time interval to local apparent noon. At local apparent noon another sight of the sun is taken to establish a second line-of-position, which in this case establishes the ship's noontime latitude. Then the first line-of-position is transferred up to noon by the ship's run between sights, and where the two lines cross is the ship's position for local apparent noon.

The use of position lines for obtaining a noontime fix is illustrated by the example in the diagram below.



³⁷ A "fix" can also be obtained if sights of two or more celestial bodies (e.g., different stars) are taken about the same time to establish essentially simultaneous lines-of-position. Where these lines crossed is the ship's position for the time the sights were taken.