

Appendix T

THE ICEFIELDS AND CHARTS OF CAPTAIN JOHN JOSEPH KNAPP

On Day 17 of the US Senate investigation into the loss of *Titanic*, Captain John J. Knapp of the United States Navy, who worked for the Navy Department's Bureau of Navigation in Washington, DC as Hydrographer, submitted his findings regarding the position of ice and several vessels in the North Atlantic in mid April of 1912. These findings were derived from reports that were filed with the Hydrographic Office, as well as what was presented in evidence during the Senate investigation into the loss of the SS *Titanic*.<sup>1</sup> Contained herein are copies of the three charts that he submitted to the US Senate committee on May 18, 1912, as well as four memoranda that he prepared and submitted to the committee:

CHART NO. 1

A reproduction from Captain Knapp's Chart No. 1 showing the locations of the reported ice in the North Atlantic for mid April 1912 is shown below in Figure T-01.

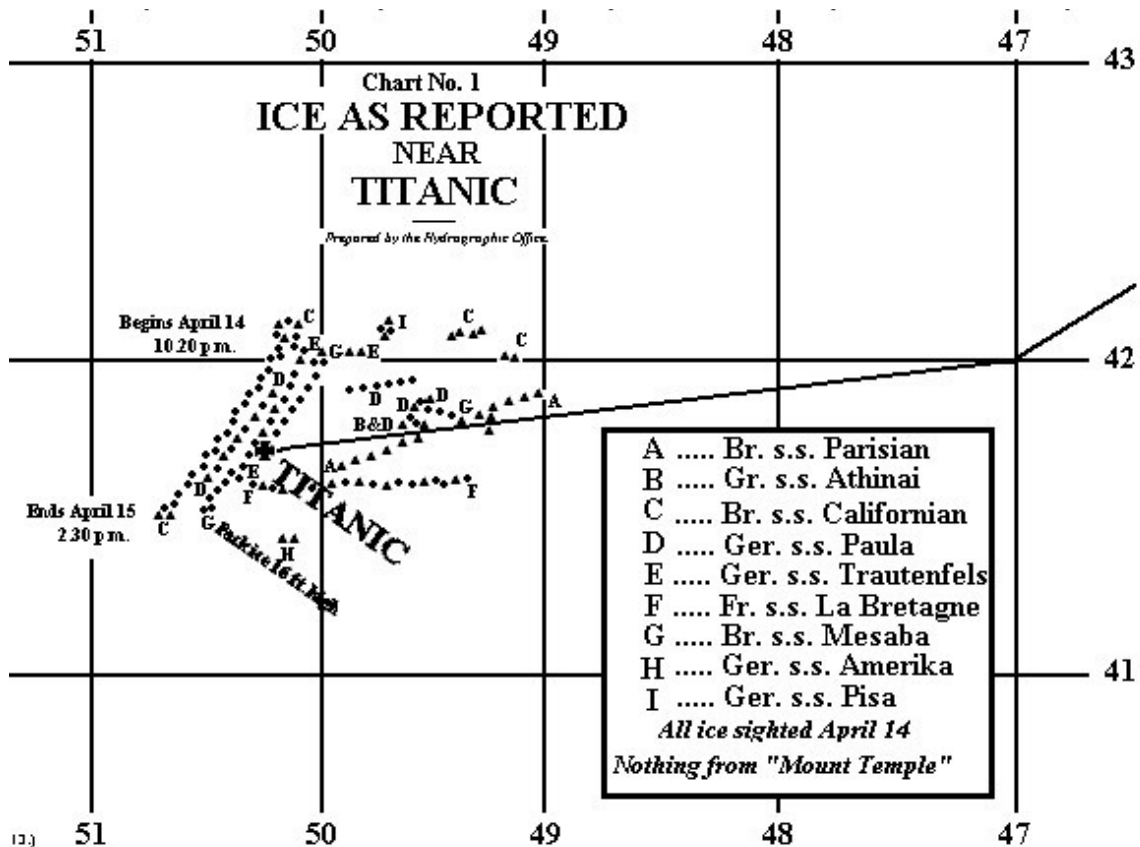
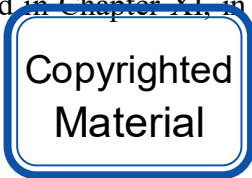


Fig. T-01. Captain Knapp's Chart No. 1 showing locations of reported ice.

This chart was based on reports from nine steamers (*Pisa*, *Paula*, *Trantenfels*, *Athinai*, *La Bretagne*, *Mesaba*, *Parisian*, *Californian* and *Amerika*) that were filed with the Hydrographic Office. As explained in Chapter XI, in his Chart No. 1 Knapp shows an ice



barrier running in a generally northeast to southwest direction, and shows *Titanic*'s SOS position over on the east side of the barrier in a position that today we know is about 13 miles too far west of where *Titanic* actually sank. His chart was based on essentially the same ice reports that were later available to Albert Foweraker who came up with a totally different picture of what the ice region looked like. (See: Appendix K – “The Icefields of Albert Moulton Foweraker.”)

Looking at the reports that were filed, it is easy to come up with a mistaken picture of what was really there on April 14-15, 1912. For example, in his Chart No. 1, Captain Knapp shows the reported positions of several icebergs that were sighted from *Californian* at 6:30pm, 7:15pm and 7:30pm on Sunday, April 14. He also shows the 10:20pm position of *Californian* as reported by Captain Lord for where Lord said he stopped his ship because of encountering “heavy packed field ice,” and marked the position where Lord said he was the next day at 2:30pm when *Californian* passed the last icebergs and field ice after resuming her voyage to Boston. (All of *Californian*'s reported positions are marked by the letter C in Knapp's Chart 1 as shown in Fig. T-01.) However, John Knapp then decided to connect the dots between Lord's 10:20pm stopped position for Sunday night to Lord's last reported position on Monday afternoon at 2:30pm. Knapp thus totally ignored Captain Lord's statement in the report that he filed with Hydrographic Office that the ice barrier encountered at 10:20pm Sunday night was “extending north and south as far as the eye could see and about 5 miles wide.” (See Knapp's Memorandum No. 1 below for the text of the full report submitted by Captain Lord to the Hydrographic Branch Office in Boston.) Instead, Knapp shows an unbroken field of ice extending southwestward from Lord's stopping point down to where *Californian* cleared all the ice the next day.

It is quite clear that John Knapp was unwilling to accept what Stanley Lord actually said about heavily packed ice extending north and south “as far as the eye could see” from his claimed stopped position at 50° 07'W longitude because then Knapp would have been forced to show an unbroken field of pack ice about 5 miles wide that would have blocked *Titanic* from ever reaching her reported SOS position in 50° 14'W longitude that he, and most everyone else, blindly accepted as fact. Similarly, Knapp also rejected *Mount Temple*'s Captain Moore's evidence that he was blocked on the western side of the same field of pack ice Monday morning in longitude 50° 09.5'W because that too would have meant that *Titanic* could not have reached her SOS position in 50° 14'W longitude that was sent out by wireless; a position that even *Carpathia*'s Captain Rostron swore was correct.

## CHART NO. 2

Captain Knapp's Chart No. 2 is shown in Figure T-02. Here Knapp shows what he believed to be the positions and movements of several vessels that tried to reach *Titanic*. However, Captain Knapp does more than just show the position of vessels reported from the evidence that was submitted. He also goes as far as to introduce a “hypothetical” position for the SS *Californian* so as to suggest that she came much closer to *Titanic* than what was reported by Captain Lord. As Knapp explained it to the Senate committee:

“I invited especial attention to that part of the memorandum referring to the hypothetical position of the *Californian*, as shown on that chart, and, in connection therewith, it is desirable to explain that the arcs of circles drawn about the position of the steamship *Titanic* and about the position of the steamship *Californian* were drawn to graphically illustrate the testimony of certain witnesses before your committee...On the hypothesis that the