

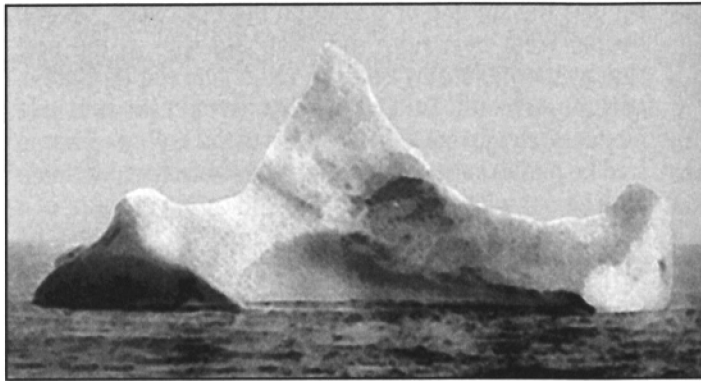
# THE PRINZ ADALBERT ICEBERG:

## The iceberg that did not sink the *Titanic*

By Brian T. Hill, Alan Ruffman and Rolf-Werner Baak

### Introduction

There has been much discussion in the press recently, and indeed elsewhere, about the genuineness of certain *Titanic* artifacts offered up for auction. These items are principally the violin said to be that of Wallace Hartley, the famed bandleader who according to tradition was still playing as water lapped at his feet as the ship was sliding away beneath him, and photographs of the supposed actual iceberg that had performed the foul deed of sinking the



*Titanic*. Indeed, the authors were in the process of researching the documentation relevant to these when they came across a discrepancy in the dates associated with a photograph of one of the icebergs. The auction house was advertising for sale a photograph of an iceberg that supposedly sank the *Titanic* as seen by the *SS Etonian* on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1912, two days before the actual collision. In their catalogue description, the

Figure 1: The iceberg photographed from the *SS Prinz Adalbert*. The auction house implied that the iceberg seen by the *SS Prinz Adalbert* reproduced in Walter Lord's classic book, *A Night to Remember*,<sup>1</sup> was the same iceberg as that photographed from the *SS Etonian* (Figure 1). The caption to the photograph in Lord's book reads in full:

'Many an iceberg has been identified as 'the iceberg that sank the *Titanic*,' but this one has a better pedigree than most. It was photographed near the scene on April 15. The Chief Steward of the German ship *Prinz Adelbert* [*sic*] took the picture, not because of the *Titanic* – he hadn't yet heard – but because a great scar of red paint ran along the berg's base. It suggested a recent collision with some ship. White Star vice president Philip A. S. Franklin was sufficiently impressed that he always refused to look at the picture.'

In this paper we show that the *Prinz Adalbert* could not have seen the iceberg that sank the *Titanic* because it passed north of the collision site on April 16<sup>th</sup>, not the 15<sup>th</sup>, and by then the iceberg was well to the south. In addition we show that the officers and likely most of the crew of the *Prinz Adalbert* had already been alerted to the disaster. The 'great scar of red paint' is not discussed here. It is quite impossible to tell from the black-and-white photograph what is being referred to, and if a red discoloration existed, it could be due to a number of things. Since the authors intend showing that it was impossible for this iceberg to have sunk the *Titanic* due to its location, then the cause of the redness becomes irrelevant to this discussion.

### The date: April 15<sup>th</sup> or the 16<sup>th</sup>?

No one appears to know how, or where, Lord obtained the photograph. There appears to be no known history of the photograph in the 44 years prior to the 1955 publication of *A Night to Remember*, and Lord does not give a source for the photograph. To date we have been unable

<sup>1</sup> *A Night to Remember*; Lord, W.; Henry Holt & Company, New York; 1955.

to establish the name of the chief steward of the *Prinz Adalbert*. The photograph is not found in the Lord-McQuitty Collection at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, England. The discrepancy lies in the date the photograph was supposed to have been taken, 'near the scene on April 15,' a date that has since been parroted in many books and articles, including in material supplied by the Henry Aldridge auction house in England in the lead-up to an October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 auction sale. Our own records, initially from the *Hydrographic Bulletin*, indicated that *Prinz Adalbert* was in the ice on April 16<sup>th</sup>, not the 15<sup>th</sup>. With the typical flow of the Labrador Current heading south along the coast of Labrador and south along the east coast of Newfoundland and south along the easternmost edge of the Continental Shelf edge of the Grand Banks, it is difficult to imagine an iceberg standing still long enough to be essentially in the same place for a day or so, as in the time interval between the sinking of the *Titanic* on the 15<sup>th</sup> and being seen by the *Prinz Adalbert*, never mind the three- or four-day time interval between being seen by the *Etonian* and the *Prinz Adalbert*. But which date was correct: the 15<sup>th</sup> or the 16<sup>th</sup>?

### Sources of ice and iceberg data in the North Atlantic

The first two authors have been documenting historical ice conditions<sup>2</sup> off the Canadian east coast and the Grand Banks area for several decades now, and have compiled tens of thousands of ice reports. The reports have been gleaned from a variety of sources, but prior to aviation the vast majority originated with trans-Atlantic or coastal shipping, with a small percentage coming from land stations such as lighthouses and personal diaries. Prior to the sinking of the *Titanic* and the subsequent formation of the International Ice Patrol (IIP), which was responsible for the collection and dissemination of ice information for the protection of trans-Atlantic shipping, several of the larger newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *New York Herald* published occasional information in their columns of marine intelligence. Further information might be found in some of the maritime newspapers such as *Lloyd's List* and the *New York Maritime Register*, and for a few years the *Monthly Weather Review* of the U.S. government published lengthy lists of ice observations, this perhaps in response to the increasing severity of ice conditions at the time.

Then, almost by accident, though aware of it through the occasional obscure reference, the authors stumbled across a photocopy of a weekly, the *Hydrographic Bulletin* of the U.S. Hydrographic Office, while researching ice data at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, D.C., in 2001. Further searching at their College Park, Maryland, archive in 2007 produced almost the full series of the weekly *Hydrographic Bulletin*<sup>3</sup> published from 1889 until 1947 containing a wealth of ice information, and other hazards to navigation, particularly useful for the pre- and early formative years of the International Ice Patrol.

### The *Hydrographic Bulletin* and newspaper sources

An entry in the *Hydrographic Bulletin* No. 1182, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1912, reads:

'April 16. Between 42° 03'N 48° 57'W and 41° 40'N 50° 15'W encountered field ice, icebergs, and growlers. *Prinz Adelbert* [*sic*] (Ger. ss.), Bambur. [Radiogram]'

However, typographical errors in newspapers or in reporting are not uncommon, and, just possibly, the 16<sup>th</sup> might be the date of the radiogram rather than the date of an earlier observation. Having limited radio range, though, and still being some distance from land, such a message would have had to be relayed by another ship, and generally in such instances, the reports would have stated this. So, the authors continued their search in other sources for confirmation of the date and, while a number of newspapers such as *Lloyd's List*, the *New York Maritime Register*

<sup>2</sup> www.icedata.ca.

and the *New York Herald* gave an almost exact version of the message reproduced in the *Hydrographic Bulletin*, they were all without a date. Paul Lee in his *Titanic* website<sup>4</sup> and the Titanic Inquiry Project page on the *Prinz Adalbert*,<sup>5</sup> credited to John P. Eaton, gave a date of the 16<sup>th</sup>, and the ice descriptions were more detailed than had been found so far, implying that their information had come from another source, not referenced. John P. Eaton had published details of the track of the *Prinz Adalbert* in *Voyage 70*<sup>5</sup> but had not given the details of his source. Jack was contacted and he supplied the British Public Record Office reference, and arrangements were made through an interlibrary loan to acquire a copy of the source material in CD-ROM format.

## European and German language sources

The search was now broadened in an attempt to find the departure and arrival times of the *Prinz Adalbert* on its voyage from Hamburg to Philadelphia. By establishing these times, the ship's overall average speed could then be determined and estimates made as to where the ship should have been on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The search was also extended to other *Titanic* researchers to bring in their fields of expertise, particularly to our German-speaking counterparts where our lack of knowledge of the national archiving system and a lack of German language facility were obvious limitations.

The *Prinz Adalbert*, sister ship to the *Prinz Oskar* and one of the seven ships of the Prinzen-class owned by the Hamburg-Amerika Line, later to become Hapag-Lloyd, was a 6,030 gross registered ton, 10-year-old, 123 m long vessel built at the Bremer Vulcan yard, in Vegesack. With a capacity of 121 crew and 1,418 passengers, the *Prinz Adalbert's* 3,350-hp two quadruple expansion steam engines propelling twin screws had a maximum speed of 12.5 knots,<sup>6</sup> but if this trip was anything to go by then she would be hard pushed to match that speed in 1912.

Evidently, at about this time her normal master was a Captain Dugge, and it was expected that he would be the captain on the next sailing out of Hamburg on March 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>7</sup> This apparently did not happen, since the *Prinz Adalbert* next sailed out on April 6<sup>th</sup> with Captain Brambeer in charge, misspelled in the above-quoted *Hydrographic Bulletin* April 24<sup>th</sup> report. Captain Theodor Brambeer, 45, had been with the line for some time as master, possibly more than a decade, and was noted as having been in charge of such ships as the *Georgia*,<sup>8</sup> *Acilia*<sup>9</sup> and *Sibiria*.<sup>10</sup> This would be one of his last voyages, as he passed away the following year.

The departure from Hamburg was recorded by the *New York Herald* as being at 11:45 p.m.<sup>11</sup> on April 6<sup>th</sup>, still assuming that Captain Dugge was in command, thereby commencing a 70-mile or so run down the River Elbe to the open sea. At the other end of the voyage, Philadelphia lay some 85 miles beyond the entrance to Delaware Bay and up the tortuous Delaware River. Navigation of both these inland waterways obviously demanded great care and was very much influenced by tides and weather such as fog and high winds. The time of arrival has not been found in any of the major stateside newspapers, but the date has been given as April 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>12,13</sup> However, the 'Manifest of Alien Passengers' is signed and dated with an arrival date of the 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>14</sup> This suggested that the ship may have arrived sufficiently far up-river for the press to record her

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.paullee.com/titanic/ice.html>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.titanicinquiry.org/ships/prinzadalbert.php>. Drawn from Profile of a Disaster: *Titanic-Related Ships - 119: Prinz Adalbert; Voyage*, journal of the Titanic International Society; Issue 70.

<sup>6</sup> [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prinz\\_Adalbert\\_\(Schiff,\\_1903\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prinz_Adalbert_(Schiff,_1903)).

<sup>7</sup> Weekly Compendium; *New York Maritime Register*; April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1912; p. 42. Also Movements of Ocean Steamers for Philadelphia; p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.desena.com.br/arvore/desena/list\\_pass.htm](http://www.desena.com.br/arvore/desena/list_pass.htm).

<sup>9</sup> *The Call*; January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1909; Vol. 105; No. 49. Accessed via <http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SFC19090118.2.11#>.

<sup>10</sup> Mafia Scare for Sailors; *The New York Times*; November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1905. Accessed via <http://query.nytimes.com>.

<sup>11</sup> Herald Cable Reports; *New York Herald*; April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1912; p. 21; col. 5 (top).

<sup>12</sup> Philadelphia; *Lloyd's List*; April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1912; p. 11; col. 28. Also Philadelphia; *Lloyds List*; May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1912; p. 5; col. 17.

<sup>13</sup> American Ports - Philadelphia, Section 5; *New York Herald*; April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1912; p. 3; col. 2 (middle).

<sup>14</sup> List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States Immigration Officer at Port of Arrival; Philadelphia; SS *Prinz Adalbert*; April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1912. Accessed via: <http://archive.org/stream/passengerlistsof0101unit#page/n382/mode/1up>.

arrival as the 20<sup>th</sup>, but perhaps she did not arrive dockside until the early hours of the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> and then had to wait for immigration procedures. Captain Brambeer was the captain who signed the immigration documents in Philadelphia, not Captain Dugge.

A departure time of the *Prinz Adalbert* of 11:45 p.m. on April 6<sup>th</sup> from Hamburg had thus been established, and *Lloyd's List* provided a date of April 8<sup>th</sup> for passing Dover<sup>15</sup> and a time and date of 8:20 a.m. on April 9<sup>th</sup> of being 50 nautical miles to the east of the Lizard,<sup>16</sup> a reef near the western entrance to the English Channel (although this time was later to prove suspect as it could not be reconciled with times given in the ship's meteorological log). The ice description given in the Titanic Inquiry Project also provided 3:30 a.m. on the 16<sup>th</sup> as the time of seeing the first ice, and 10 a.m. as the time of clearing the last ice, and already approximations of the vessel's speed from these times and locations were beginning to confirm an ice observation date of April 16<sup>th</sup> rather than the 15<sup>th</sup>. Up until this point, the authors were beginning to think that no one else had noticed the discrepancy in dates. We would like to recognise the postings of David Gittins on the website <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org> dated November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003,<sup>17</sup> November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006<sup>18</sup> and March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009,<sup>19</sup> in which he expressed his misgivings that the *Prinz Adalbert* could have seen the culprit iceberg, as by a day later the iceberg would have drifted well beyond the scene. We confirm his misgivings in this article and present a careful documentation for the dates and *Prinz Adalbert's* track, and hopefully draw all the threads together in a coherent fashion.

Then, almost simultaneously, the authors received both the CD-ROM produced by the British Public Record Office via an interlibrary loan, and a copy of the appropriate pages of the meteorological log of the *Prinz Adalbert* (Figure 2), which arrived from Rolf-Werner Baak in Hamburg, Germany. Figure 2 is below and on the following page we present a verbatim transcript

Figure 2. Extract from the *Prinz Adalbert's* meteorological log.

<sup>15</sup> Dover; *Lloyd's List*; April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1912; p. 9; col. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Wireless Reports; *Lloyd's List*; April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1912; p. 11; col. 26.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/forums/collision-sinking-theories/9729-sketches-iceberg-2.html>; November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/forums/collision-sinking-theories/9725-iceberg-4.html>; November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/forums/collision-sinking-theories/9725-iceberg-4.html>; March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

of the whole letter from the Hamburg-Amerika Line to the Assistant Secretary, Marine Department of the Board of Trade in London, England, dated Hamburg June 29<sup>th</sup> 1912, as found at the Public Record Office of the British National Archives:<sup>20</sup>

'Gentlemen,

Referring to our different respects, in reply to your favour of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst., we had today the captain of our s.s. "Prinz Adalbert" here, who reported as follows:

On the 14<sup>th</sup> April I received from the "Caronia" by wireless telegraph a detailed ice-report. On the 16<sup>th</sup> April 3:30 a.m. we sighted the first iceberg on Latitude 42° 03'N, Longitude 48° 57'W. We kept our true course S 78° W but reduced our speed from 3:30 a.m. till 3:57 a.m. Wind was N.W.½ smooth sea and clear weather but overcast sky.

At day-break in clear weather, we saw in the South, in addition to single bergs, a huge field of ice with several more or less high peaks stretching as far as the eye could reach. Towards 8 a.m. we found that this field, in horseshoe form, also extended to the North. We altered our course to the South, and steamed along the field in order to break through at a suitable spot when the floes were less compact, and where the western boundary of the field was clearly to be seen [sic] discerned.

Our true courses we steered from 8 [sic] a.m. were the following:

S 62° W 4 miles  
S 77° W 5 "  
S 18° W 12 "  
S 78° W 7 "

At 8:40 a.m. we found such a suitable spot, and after we had gone through the field with the engines working slowly from 8:45 a.m. till 9:55 a.m., we once more gained open water on the other side at 10 a.m. and took up our true course S 85° W. Latitude 41° 37'N, Longitude 50° 14'W.

In reply to your last question we beg to acknowledge that the instructions we gave years ago to our Captains in the North Atlantic trade about courses, are the following:

Our Captains have to keep the track strictly, unless there is any very urgent reason for deviation, but they have the right to leave their course if they consider this necessary for the safety of the ship. We leave it to the discretion of our commanders to deviate or slacken speed, or to take any other measures they deem fit to avoid danger.

Enclosed you will find the Captain's copy of the wireless telegraph received from the "Caronia."

We are, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servants  
Hamburg-Amerika Linie  
Nautische Abteilung

(signed) F. V. Reichenbächer.'

<sup>20</sup> Reichenbächer, F. V. 1912. Letter-report, of mainly the words of Captain [Brambeer] of the SS *Prinz Adalbert*, addressed to the Assistant Secretary, Board of Trade, Marine Department, London. Hamburg-Amerika Linie, Nautische Abteilung, Hamburg, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2 pp. plus enclosure. April 14<sup>th</sup>, 01:35 wireless telegram copy, Deutsche Betriebsgesellschaft für Drahtlose Telegrafie M.B.H. Field ice and iceberg report of April 12<sup>th</sup> from Captain Barr of SS *Caronia*, 1 p. in Public Record Office (now National Archives). *Titanic: The True Story*, 24 pp. booklet and CD-ROM containing the 20 official *Titanic* files from the Public Record Office, comprising 8,717+ pp. The above letter-report can be found in Record Group MT 9/920E of 812 pp., Document M18975, pp. 421-425 (CD-ROM files 431.TIFF-433.TIFF and 435.TIFF-436.TIFF; 434.TIFF is a duplicate of p. 423).

Figure 3 is a general map of the area showing the estimated location of the collision of the *Titanic* with the iceberg at  $41^{\circ} 46'36''\text{N}$ ,  $49^{\circ} 56'48''\text{W}$ <sup>21</sup> in relation to the Grand Banks and Cape Race at the southeastern extremity of the island of Newfoundland. The rectangular outline with the collision location near its midpoint is the area shown in Figure 4 on page 30. This shows the track of the *Prinz Adalbert* based on the information above showing the 3:30 a.m. position on first observing ice and the course alterations made to clearing the ice at 10 a.m. The plotted course alterations were calculated by working back from the 10 a.m. position in nautical miles.

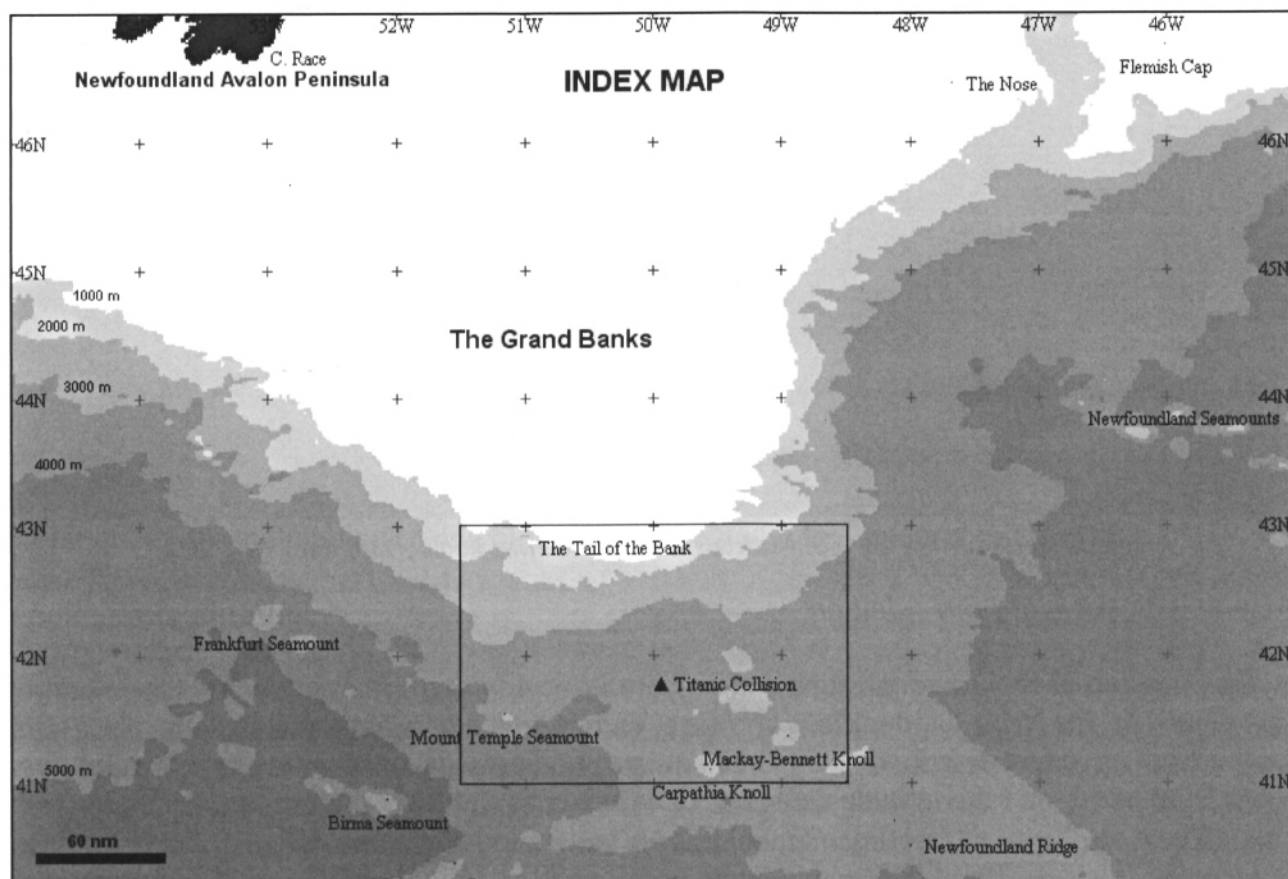


Figure 3. General map of the area showing the estimated location of *Titanic's* collision with the iceberg.

The sum of the distance travelled after 8 a.m. in the above list of courses and distances is 28 nautical miles, and the description implies that all the course changes were made within the 2-hour period from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. This clearly cannot be, as the ship would have had to travel at 14 knots, far faster than at any point in her voyage, and that while navigating through ice in which, we are told, she was going very slowly at times. An examination of the track illustrated in Figure 4 on page 30 reveals what was likely meant in the description. Working back from the 10 a.m. position of clearing the ice, the overall course changes of 28 nautical miles puts the ship back on her original course of  $S 78^{\circ} W$  ( $258^{\circ}$ ) after leaving her 3:30 position, so the distance appears to be essentially correct. However, along this track the first two course changes made are fairly small; first, a  $16^{\circ}$  change to the south, then a  $15^{\circ}$  change north back to almost her original course. Then comes a significant course change to almost straight south ( $18^{\circ}$  west of south), made, no doubt, as the ice edge in the horseshoe shape swept around to intervene. The position of this course change is calculated to be  $41^{\circ} 50'N$ ,  $50^{\circ} 00'W$ , and it is suggested that this is the 8 a.m. position in the captain's narrative when he headed south to avoid the ice and to start looking for a way through. So, though the total distance of course changes is 28 nautical miles, the actual time spent actively negotiating the ice was the 2-hour time period from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

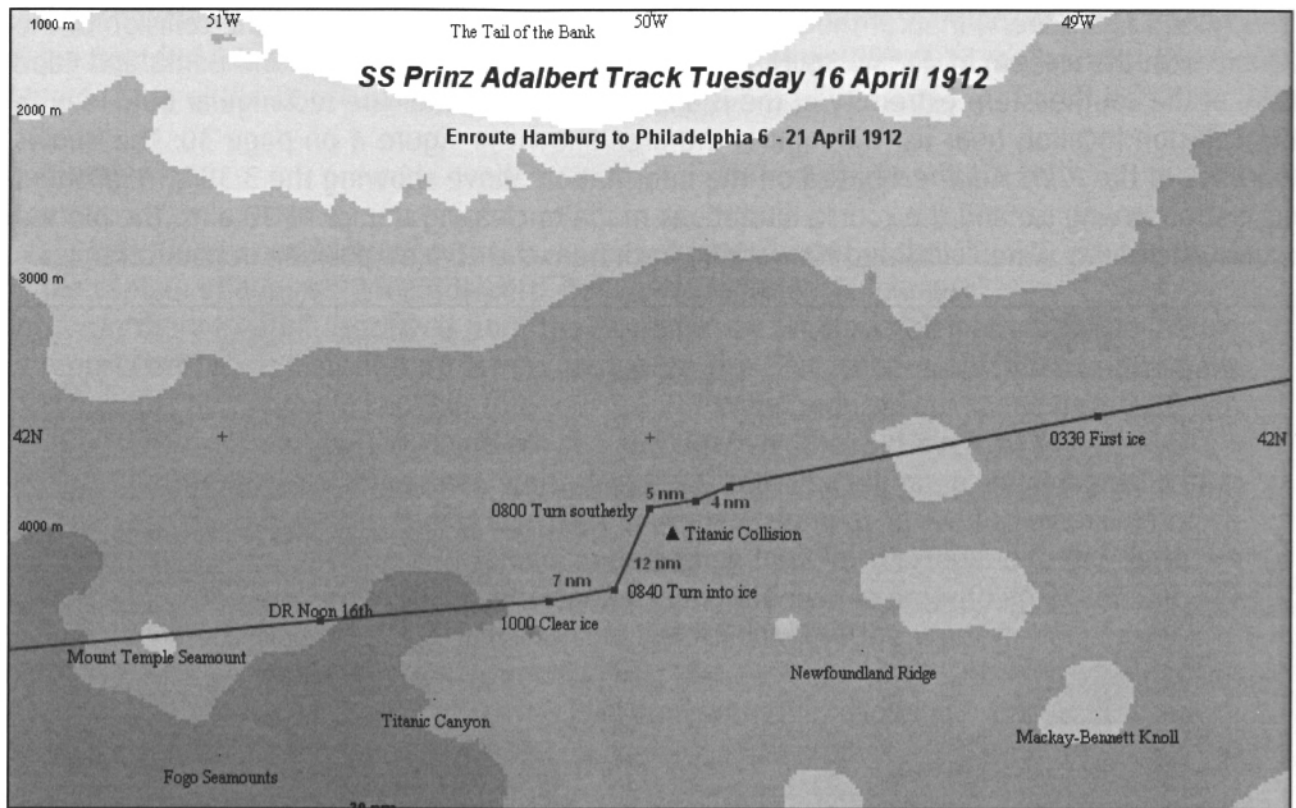


Figure 4. Map showing the reconstructed track of the *Prinz Adalbert* for April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1912.

### Meteorological log of *Prinz Adalbert*

Confirmation of the 8 a.m. position comes from *Prinz Adalbert's* meteorological log<sup>22</sup> (Figure 2 on page 27). The log is handwritten, of course, and its legibility is not the clearest in places. In the log what has been described as the 3:30 a.m. position actually looks more like 3:50 a.m. (we accept 3:30 a.m.), and the latitude could easily be taken as 42° 13'N rather than 42° 03'N. (see Figure 5 on page 32 for a close-up image of this part of the log and a translation of the Remarks). However in this case the difference is fairly small, and the latitude of 42° 03'N is universally given in all sources accessed. Based on earlier courses and positions given in the log, it would also appear to be the more likely position. The time and position of this 3:30 a.m. first encounter with an iceberg is written in the 'Remarks' column associated with the 4 a.m. observation on April 16<sup>th</sup>, and the 4 a.m. dead reckoning (DR) position (Figure 2), i.e., half an hour later, is given as 42°N 49°W. Although this looks like a rounded-off approximation, it is still 3.7 nautical miles from the 3:30 a.m. position, which over half an hour is a speed of 7.4 knots which is consistent with the captain's description of travelling at a reduced speed between 3:30 a.m. and 3:57 a.m., whereas his speed prior to that time was in the order of 11 knots.

The next line in the log is the 8 a.m. observation, and the dead reckoning (DR) position is given as 41° 51'N, 49° 59'W and the course is given as S 18° W. The difference between this DR position and the position calculated from the course changes described above is just over one nautical mile. Since both locations can be considered approximations, the difference is negligible, and together they confirm that the vessel turned south at this time close to this point. Again, the legibility of the latitude 41° 51'N in the log is not crystal clear and could be construed as 41° 31'N, but this would be 20 nautical miles south from the calculated position and does not conform with the overall descriptions. As if in final confirmation of the 41° 51'N position are numbers written

<sup>22</sup> Meteorologisches Tagebuch von Bord des HAPAG Dampfschiffes *Prinz Adalbert*, Kapitän Brambeer, Reise von Hamburg nach Philadelphia im April 1912. Meteorological log from HAPAG SS *Prinz Adalbert*, master Brambeer, from Hamburg to Philadelphia in April 1912, archived by Deutscher Wetterdienst, Hamburg.

more faintly and a bit smaller just above the entries for latitude and longitude of 41.9 and 50.0, which are the decimal degree equivalents of 41° 51'N and 49° 59'W respectively. Possibly these entries were made at a later date. The 8 a.m. log entry also has this ice observation in the 'Remarks' column (here in translation into English):

'At 8 a.m. we met on both sides as far as visible an ice field of about 4 to 5 nm extension with large isolated icebergs, counting about 25. Dimensions 100 m long, height 30-40 m. Last ice seen lat. 41° 37'N and long. 50° 14'W.'

However, an inconsistency remains with the times of the last two legs in the captain's report. It is established that the turn to S 18° W was made at 8 a.m. and the description states that 12 nautical miles were run on this course when, at 8:40 to 8:45, the ship turned to a more westerly course to go through the ice at a suitable point, reaching open water between 9:55 and 10 a.m. This is a total run of 19 nautical miles which in 2 hours is 9.5 knots, which is reasonable, but the first leg of 12 nautical miles was supposedly covered in 40 to 45 minutes, which is an impossible 16-17 knots. The distance between the DR 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. positions is 44.8 nautical miles, which thus was travelled at 11.2 knots. Assuming the ship kept this speed on its S 18° W course for 12 nautical miles, that would have taken 1 hour 4 minutes until 9:04 approximately, leaving 50 minutes or so to travel the next 7-nautical mile leg through the ice at a speed of about 8.4 knots, which implies that the ice was fairly open. In fact, from the details given, it would appear that on both occasions when speed was reduced, it was only marginally so, and the ship still proceeded at about three-quarters speed. The last 7-nautical mile leg is also consistent with the comment in the meteorological log of the ice field being 4 to 5 nautical miles wide.

### Radio communication

It is worth noting that Captain Brambeer confirms that he had a working wireless radio on board the *Prinz Adalbert*; he received from the *Caronia* by wireless telegram a detailed ice report on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912. He sent his own ice report of April 16<sup>th</sup> to the US Hydrographic Office by a 'radiogram,' the version appearing in Lloyd's List<sup>23</sup> being dated New York, April 20<sup>th</sup> via Halifax, as the ship with its limited 250 mile nominal wireless range came within distance. The *Titanic's* loss was all over the wireless radio reports out at sea on April 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>. In fact, the *Procès-Verbal* of the *SS Baltic*<sup>24</sup> (the official statement of radio communication) presented at the US Senate inquiry into the *Titanic* disaster, reveals that on the morning of April 15<sup>th</sup> the *SS Californian* was monopolizing the air waves to such an extent that it was effectively jamming other radio traffic, and that at 11 a.m. it was still impossible to work the radio due to the *Californian* being in communication with the *Prinz Adalbert*.

So, we can be sure that everyone on board the *Prinz Adalbert* knew of the *Titanic's* loss, despite any language difficulties there might have been on a German-speaking vessel. Walter Lord wrote in his 1955 caption to the iceberg photograph that:

'The Chief Steward of the German ship *Prinz Adelbert* [sic] took the picture, not because of the *Titanic* – he hadn't yet heard – but because a great scar of red paint ran along the berg's base. It suggested a recent collision with some ship. White Star vice president Philip A. S. Franklin was sufficiently impressed that he always refused to look at the picture.'

Walter Lord could not be correct on this matter. On the morning of Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1912 the chief steward of the *Prinz Adalbert*, whoever he was, had most certainly, as a ship's officer on the passenger vessel, heard of the loss of the *Titanic* a day-and-a-quarter earlier.

<sup>23</sup> Weather & Navigation; *Lloyd's List*; April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1912; p. 9; col. 34.

<sup>24</sup> *Titanic* Disaster. The Official Transcript of the United States Senate Hearings into the Sinking of the RMS *Titanic*; April 19<sup>th</sup>-May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1912.



SW	7	1,0	3 <sup>50</sup> pass. Eisberg in 42°13'N 48°57'W.
SW	8	3,2	5 <sup>30</sup> sah einen großen Baumstamm auf 41°55'N 49°35'W
SW	11/3	10,1	8 <sup>00</sup> trafen ein auf beiden Seiten soweit als sichtbar ein etwa 4-5 nm breites, lang ausgedehntes Eisfeld mit vereinzelt großen Eisbergen. zählten derer ca. 25.
SW	6	16,1	Größe 100 m lang, Höhe 30-40 m.
SW	5	15,0	Letztes Eis: 41°37'N 50°14'W auf Captank.
SW	4	12,9	Meeresleuchten.

03:30 Uhr passierten Eisberg in 42°03'N und 48°57'W  
 05:30 Uhr sichteten einen großen Baumstamm auf 41°55'N 49°35'W  
 08:00 Uhr trafen ein auf beiden Seiten soweit als sichtbar ein etwa 4-5 nm breites, lang ausgedehntes Eisfeld mit vereinzelt großen Eisbergen, zählten derer ca. 25. Größe 100 m lang, Höhe 30-40m. Letztes Eis 41:37N 50:14W ...  
 Meeresleuchten (24 Uhr)

at 3.30 am passed iceberg in 42.03N and 48.57W  
 at 5.30 am great tree log in sight at 41.55N and 49.35W  
 at 8 am we met on both sides as far as visible an icefield of about 4 to 5 nm extension with large isolated icebergs, counting about 25. Dimension 100 m long, height 30-40 m. Last ice seen lat 41.37N and long 50.14W ... (about 10 am) marine phosphorescence (12 pm)

Figure 5. Log extract of *Prinz Adalbert* for April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1912.

## Conclusion

Clearly, as substantiated in the meteorological log and the statement by Captain Brambeer to the Board of Trade, the *Prinz Adalbert* passed the *Titanic* area on April 16<sup>th</sup>, not the 15<sup>th</sup> as declared in Walter Lord's book and which has been generally accepted ever since. Further, examination of the track in Figure 4 shows that the ship passed to the north of the *Titanic* site before turning south in search of open water, consequently staying to the west of the *Titanic* area. The deterioration of ice conditions over the preceding days from almost ice-free along the shipping lanes just a few days prior to the *Titanic* collision, to subsequent days of ice obstruction, demonstrate the swift onset of ice fields from the north flowing south with the Labrador Current. Certainly, the *Prinz Adalbert* passed very close to the *Titanic* collision site, a little over 4 nautical miles when she passed to the north, and about 3½ nautical miles to the west while on her southerly track, and being to the westward also explains why no debris was reported as sighted by the vessel. It is also impossible to believe that an iceberg struck by the *Titanic* some 33 hours earlier would find itself to the north, or to the west, of its original location when it would quite likely be some 30 miles to the south. Hence the photograph shown in Lord's book of an iceberg which has a 'better pedigree than most' in sinking the *Titanic* is a claim that cannot be substantiated and the evidence we have shown points to it as being extremely unlikely.

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