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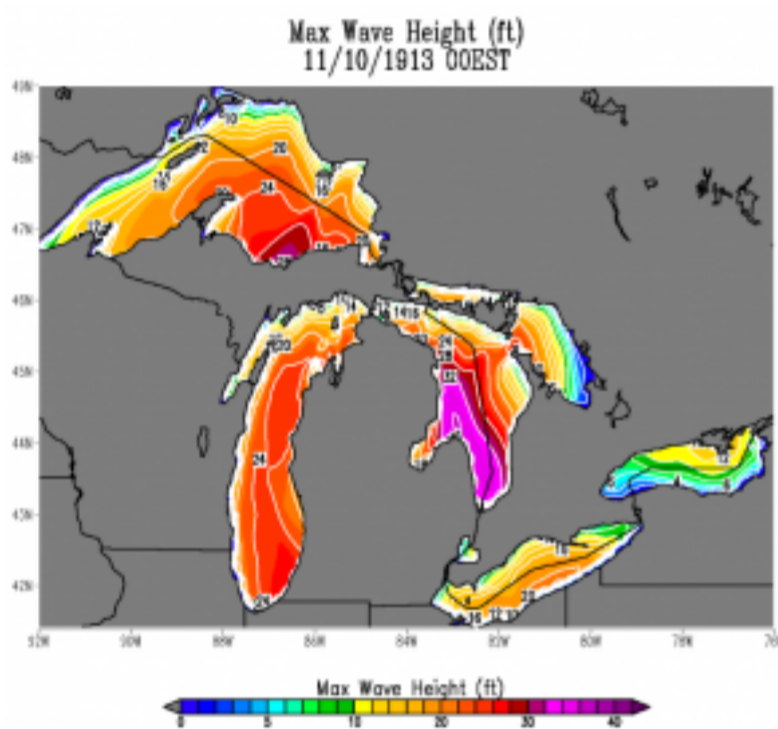
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Blog

Storms of 10 November

Posted by admin on November 10, 2013



November is a storied month on the Great Lakes, as the wrath of severe weather famously has taken its toll on ships sailing late in the season. November 10 is particularly famous in modern times for the sinking of the big freighter *Edmund Fitzgerald*, made popular in a song by Gordon Lightfoot. Yet one hundred years ago was perhaps the greatest tragedy recorded when the Great Storm of 1913 barreled down across the Lakes and left misery and mystery in its wake.

The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald is a ballad by Gordon Lightfoot that annually gets radio airplay on the anniversary of the sinking of the big cargo carrier. Laden with taconite pellets, the *Fitz* headed across Lake Superior into worsening weather. On the eastern side of the lake, weather and vessel integrity declined and the ship succumbed. Twenty nine lives were lost on November 10, 1975.

One hundred years ago was another significant 10 November. Weather doesn't heed the artifice of man, so when a storm swept down from Canada across the world's great freshwater system, the survival of steel ships was no certainty. A dozen major vessels and over 250 lives were lost in the Great Storm of 1913.

Today great weather mapping satellites are tracking global weather, giving advance warning for millions of people. Imagine the devastation and loss from Typhoon Haiyan if there had not been systems and networks and the mindset in place to mitigate the woe. In this centennial anniversary of the Great Storm of 1913, the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association \(NOAA\)](#) writes in an interesting retrospective:

The 1913 storm remains the most devastating natural disaster to ever strike the Great Lakes. One hundred years later, NOAA commemorates the Storm of 1913 not only for the pivotal role it plays in the history of the Great Lakes but also for its enduring influence. Modern systems of shipping communication, weather prediction, and storm preparedness have all been fundamentally shaped by the events of November 1913.

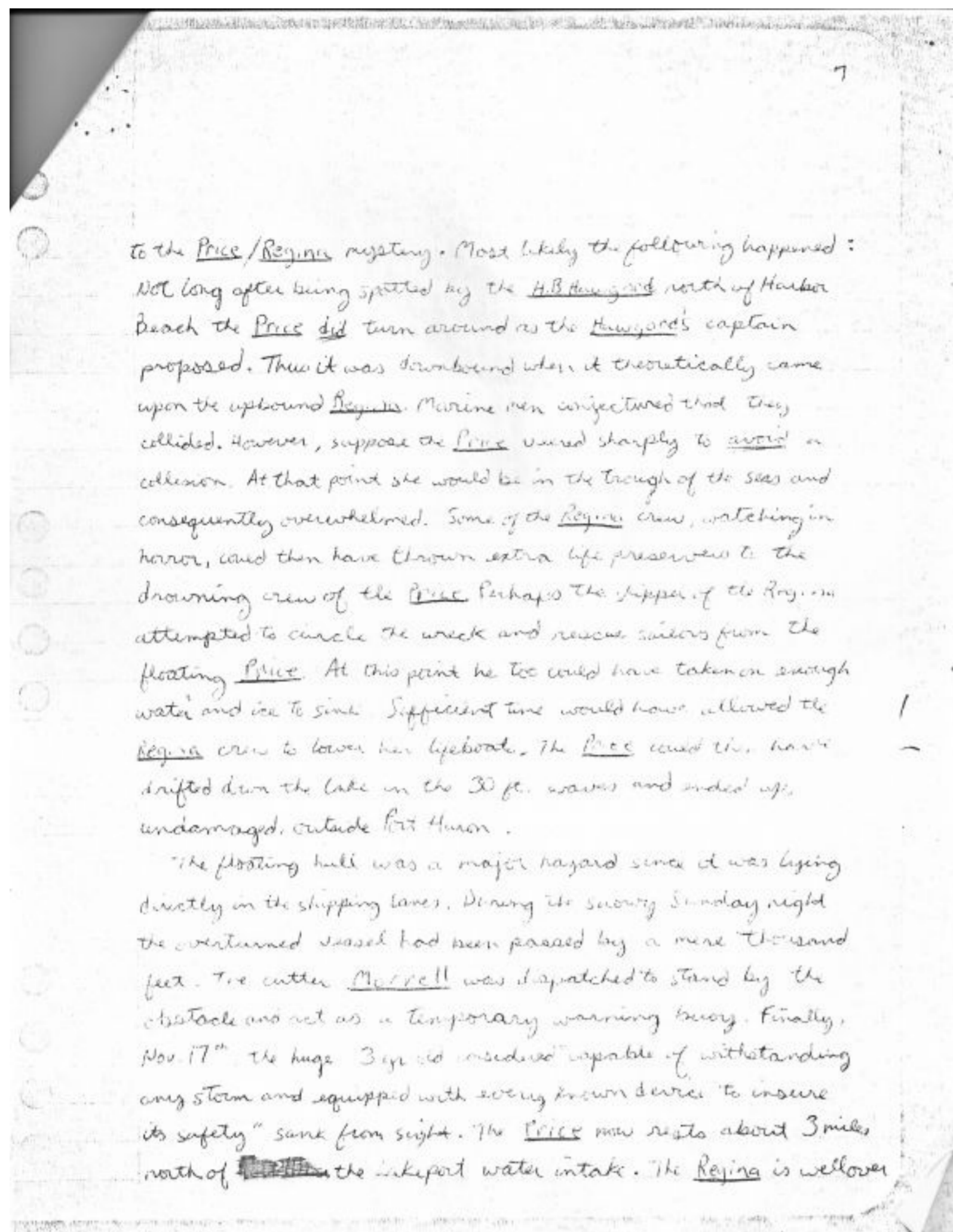
A mystery in the aftermath of that wretched week in 1913 involves three vessels struggling northbound on Lake Huron. The freighters *Charles S. Price* and *Regina* were spotted by the *H.B. Hawgood*, whose captain opted to turn around and head back south. The other two labored in the seas as the onslaught peaked. The *H.B. Hawgood* eventually went aground on a Canadian beach.

When bodies that washed up on the shore were identified by friends and relatives, reports claimed crewmen from the *Charles S. Price* were found wearing life jackets from the *Regina*. Many people conjectured that the *Charles S. Price* turned around and soon collided with the upbound *Regina*, but the [wreckage of Charles S. Price](#) and of the [Regina](#) were found and there was no sign of collision.

Part of the record is the [recollection](#) of Edward Kanaby, a young wheelsman of the *H.B. Hawgood* during the 1913 storm. Personally, I think the most poignant moment of his narrative comes at the two-minute mark in the [video](#) at which Kanaby looks at the camera and says, "And I made two more trips after that, and laid her up in Buffalo."

Ten November. It was also a play I saw in a small theater in Chicago. One of the most memorable lines was when one crewman asked another what he was going to do, and the reply was to crawl into his bunk and pull his covers over his head. A valid reply.

Here's an [excerpt](#) from a paper I wrote as a high school assignment, in which I proposed the *Charles S. Price* turned around after the *H.B. Hawgood* sighted her. The downbound *Charles S. Price* encountered the *Regina* and foundered while turning broadside to the waves to avoid collision. Witnessing the loss, crew from *Regina* may have passed lifejackets or rescued enough sailors for them to don the *Regina* lifejackets before the *Regina* itself went down that night. Again, though, total tenth grade conjecture.



to the Price/Regina mystery. Most likely the following happened:
Not long after being spotted by the H.B. Howard north of Harbor Beach the Price did turn around as the Howard's captain proposed. Thus it was downbound when it theoretically came upon the upbound Regina. Marine men conjectured that they collided. However, suppose the Price veered sharply to avoid a collision. At that point she would be in the trough of the seas and consequently overwhelmed. Some of the Regina crew, watching in horror, could then have thrown extra life preservers to the drowning crew of the Price. Perhaps the skipper of the Regina attempted to circle the wreck and rescue sailors from the floating Price. At this point he too could have taken on enough water and ice to sink. Sufficient time would have allowed the Regina crew to lower her lifeboats. The Price could then have drifted down the lake in the 30 ft. waves and ended up, undamaged, outside Port Huron.

The floating hull was a major hazard since it was lying directly in the shipping lanes. During its snowy Sunday night the overturned vessel had been passed by a mere thousand feet. The cutter Marvell was dispatched to stand by the obstacle and act as a temporary warning buoy. Finally, Nov. 17th the huge 3 eyeed vessel "incapable of withstanding any storm and equipped with every known device to insure its safety" sank from sight. The Price now rests about 3 miles north of ~~the~~ the lakeport water intake. The Regina is well over

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