



National Transportation Safety Board

Marine Accident Brief

Collision Between Bulk Carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip*

Accident no.	DCA-12-LM-019
Vessel names	Bulk carriers <i>Mary Ann Hudson</i> and <i>Star Grip</i>
Accident type	Collision
Location	Houston Ship Channel, Texas (City Dock 23)
Date	June 6, 2012
Time	0530 central daylight time (coordinated universal time – 5 hours)
Injuries	None
Damage	> \$500,000
Environmental damage	None
Weather	Clear; unrestricted visibility; calm winds; air temperature 82°F
Waterway information	The Houston Ship Channel extends from the city of Houston, Texas, to Galveston Harbor at the Gulf of Mexico, and is a busy shipping lane.

On June 6, 2012, at 0530 central daylight time, the underway bulk carrier *Mary Ann Hudson* collided with the moored bulk carrier *Star Grip* while the *Mary Ann Hudson* was being moved from City Dock 21 to City Dock 29. No one was injured and no pollution resulted from the accident; however, both vessels sustained damage totaling more than \$500,000.

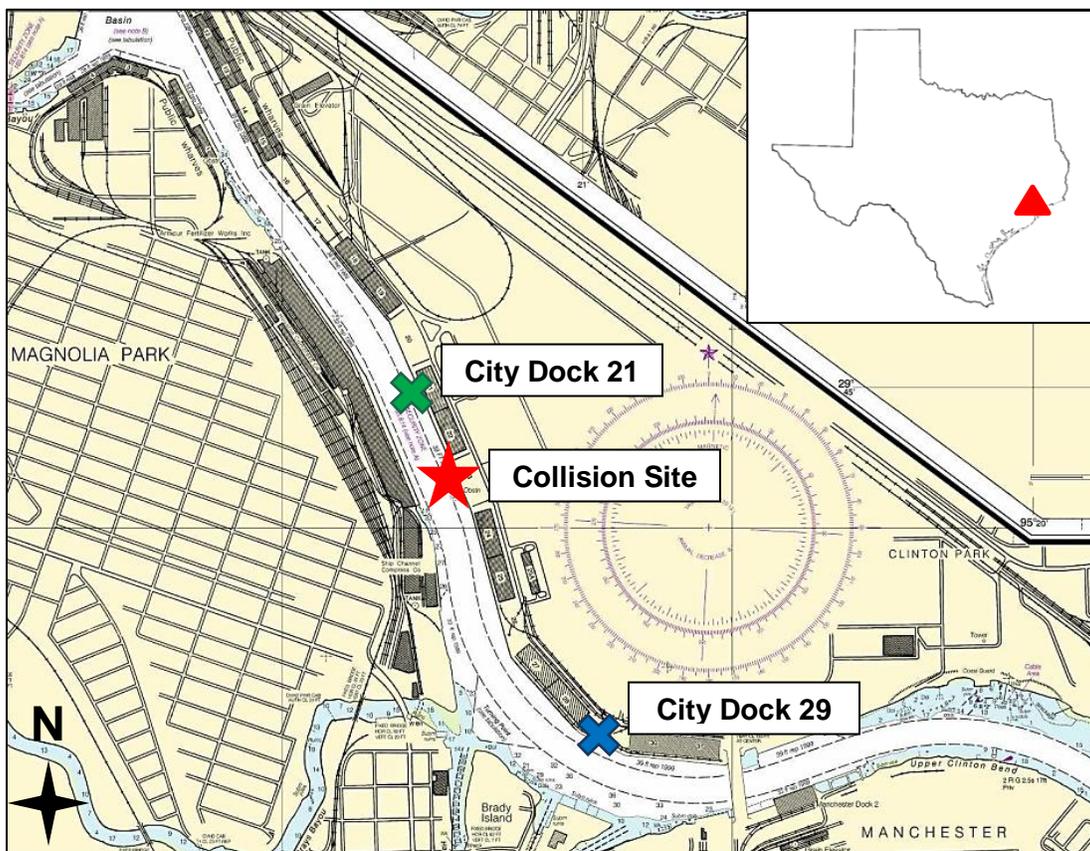


The *Mary Ann Hudson* in port. (Photo available at www.vesseltracker.com)

Collision Between Bulk Carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip*



The *Star Grip* under way. Visible immediately forward of the superstructure at the stern of the ship are two gray-colored gantry cranes. In this photo, the cranes' cantilever arms are folded inward toward the center of the ship. (Photo by Frank Katzer, available at www.marinetraffic.com)



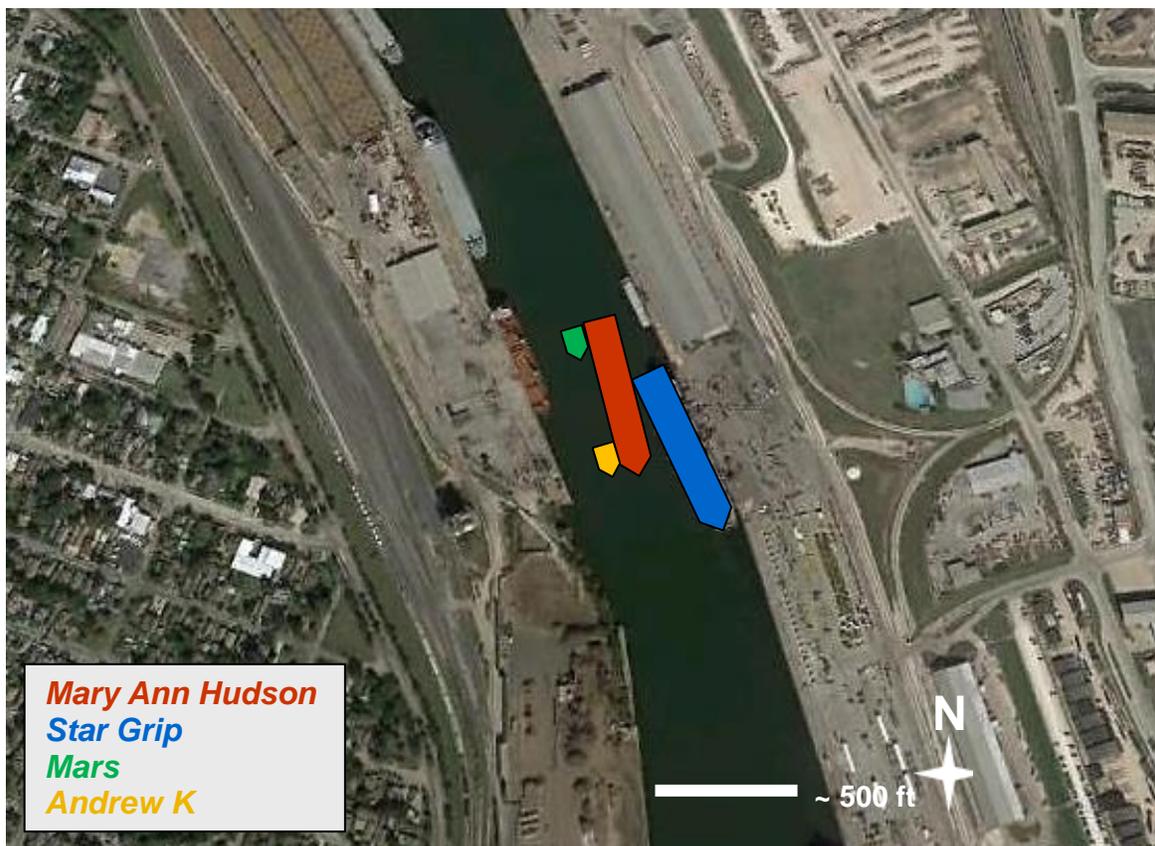
Extract of NOAA chart 11325, showing the section of the Houston Ship Channel where the collision occurred. The *Mary Ann Hudson* departed from City Dock 21, marked by the green X. The approximate collision location is marked by the red star. When the accident occurred, the *Mary Ann Hudson* was being moved to City Dock 29, marked by the blue X.

Collision Between Bulk Carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip*

On June 6, 2012, about 0445, a pilot with the Houston Pilots Association boarded the *Mary Ann Hudson*, moored port side to at City Dock 21 in the Houston Ship Channel. The pilot was on board to shift (relocate) the vessel to City Dock 29, about a half mile down the channel. While awaiting the arrival of assistance tugboats, the master conducted the master-pilot exchange, discussing the vessel particulars and the route. Two tugboats, the *Mars* and the *Andrew K*, arrived about 0450. The pilot positioned the *Mars* on the bulk carrier's starboard quarter and the *Andrew K* on the starboard bow.

On the bridge of the *Mary Ann Hudson* were the pilot, the master, and a helmsman. The vessel's chief mate was positioned on the bow of the vessel along with the boatswain and two able-bodied seamen. The weather was clear, the winds calm, and darkness prevailed in the early morning hour. At 0521, all lines were in and the pilot ordered the tugs to move the *Mary Ann Hudson* away from the dock towards the center of the channel. Once the pilot confirmed that the vessel was clear, he instructed both tugs to slack their lines and lie alongside before he ordered slow ahead with 20 degrees of port rudder. Once the ship was on centerline in the channel, he eased the port rudder command.

Another bulk carrier, *Star Grip*, was moored port side to at City Dock 23, directly forward of the *Mary Ann Hudson*. The *Star Grip* had two gantry cranes on board, and at the time, the cranes' cantilever arms were extended out over the side of the vessel. The pilot told investigators that, as the *Mary Ann Hudson* proceeded down the channel, he felt like the stern of the ship was drifting toward the *Star Grip*.



Aerial image of the waterway where the two vessels collided. Icons representing the vessels are overlaid in the image. (Background by Google Earth)

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At 0528, the chief mate on the bow of the *Mary Ann Hudson* radioed the master and informed him that the aft gantry crane on the *Star Grip* was overlapping the *Mary Ann Hudson* (the crane's cantilever arm was passing over the *Mary Ann Hudson*'s deck). The master told investigators that he saw the crane arm over his vessel's deck somewhere between the No. 2 and No. 3 cargo hatches.

The pilot ordered 20 degree port rudder and half ahead, and ordered the *Andrew K* (on the starboard bow) to back easy, intending to lift the vessel away from the *Star Grip*. However, these actions were not enough to move the *Mary Ann Hudson* clear of the crane. At 0530, the *Mary Ann Hudson* struck the cantilever arm on the *Star Grip*'s aft crane. As the *Mary Ann Hudson* passed by, its port stores crane and the forward port corner of the superstructure were damaged, and railings were knocked down. The pilot told investigators that, in his opinion, the reason the *Mary Ann Hudson* did not move clear of the crane was that the *Mars* was alongside on the starboard quarter.

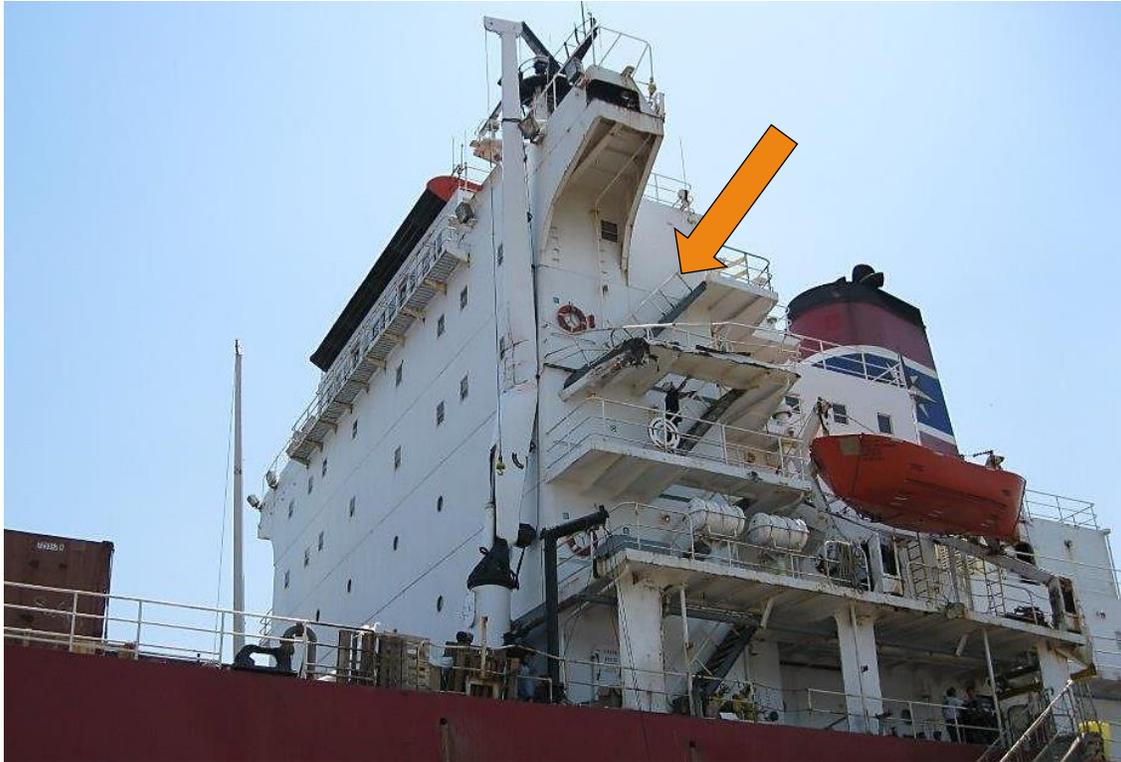
After the collision, the *Mary Ann Hudson* continued toward its intended berth. Once docked, at 0601, the pilot called the US Coast Guard vessel traffic service (VTS) to report the collision. The tug masters were unaware that the *Mary Ann Hudson* had hit the crane on the *Star Grip* until after they had docked the vessel at its new location, and the pilot informed them.

Personnel on board the *Mary Ann Hudson*, including the pilot, and on board both tugboats held appropriate merchant mariner's credentials issued by the Coast Guard for the route, scope of operation, and service of each vessel. Following the collision, these personnel were tested for illegal drugs and alcohol. All test results were negative.

The collision resulted in the following damage:

- *Mary Ann Hudson*: Damage to the port stores crane and the superstructure from contact with the *Star Grip*'s crane. The damage amount was estimated to be \$250,000.
- *Star Grip*: Extensive damage to the aft gantry crane (No. 2) including the cantilever arm, track rails, and wheels. The No. 2 crane was pushed into the forward gantry crane (No. 1). The damage amount was estimated to be more than \$250,000.

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The damaged port stores crane, superstructure, and railings on the *Mary Ann Hudson*, marked by an overlaid arrow. (Photo provided by the Coast Guard)



The damaged aft gantry crane on the *Star Grip*, marked by an overlaid arrow. The vessel is shown from its starboard side. (Photo provided by the Coast Guard)

Collision Between Bulk Carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip*

No one was injured on board either vessel, and no pollution or loss of cargo resulted from the accident.

Probable Cause

The National Transportation Safety Board determines that the probable cause of the collision between bulk carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip* was the pilot's ineffective handling of the *Mary Ann Hudson* and his ineffective use of the two tugboats to maneuver the vessel around the *Star Grip*'s crane arms, which were extending into the navigable waterway.

Collision Between Bulk Carriers *Mary Ann Hudson* and *Star Grip*

Vessel Particulars

Vessels	<i>Mary Ann Hudson</i>	<i>Star Grip</i>
Owner/operator	United Maritime Group	Grieg Shipping Group AS
Port of registry	Houston, TX	Bergen
Flag	United States	Norway
Type	Bulk carrier	Bulk carrier
Year built	1981	1986
Official number (US)	634621	N/A
IMO number	7821154	8420787
Construction	Steel	Steel
Length	612 ft (186 m)	649 ft (197 m)
Beam/width	106 ft (32 m)	96 ft (29 m)
Gross and/or ITC tonnage	21,734 gross tons	27,192 gross tons
Engine power; manufacturer	2 Delaval, 7,800 hp (5,811 kW)	1 Mitsui B&W diesel, 10,120 hp (7,539 kW)
Persons on board	20, including the pilot	N/A; regular crew complement of 31

For more details about this accident, visit www.nts.gov/investigations/dms.html and search for NTSB accident ID DCA12LM019.

Adopted: December 18, 2013

The NTSB has authority to investigate and establish the probable cause of any major marine casualty or any marine casualty involving both public and nonpublic vessels under 49 *United States Code* 1131. This report is based on factual information provided by the US Coast Guard from its informal investigation of the accident. The NTSB did not conduct its own on-scene investigation.
