

Captain Santa - The Day Christmas Almost Died

© 2013 by Russ Franzen

Thanksgiving Day was over, Christmas season now would start
With Captain Santa's Christmas Ship tied up to the dock.
But the Clark Street spot was empty, a winter gale to blame,
The Christmas Ship wouldn't come that year, it wouldn't be the same.

A storm took Captain Santa and his Christmas ship away.
And some folks thought that Christmas died that day.

Rouse Simmons was a schooner. A lumber hauler she.
Herman Schueneman was the captain when she started hauling trees.
She looked like a floating forest with five thousand trees per trip.
The cargo hold and deck were packed on the Christmas Tree Ship.
For 30 years he sold the trees from the Clark Street River dock
“My prices are the greatest,” the most expensive was a buck.
Lights were strung from bow to stern, there were garland, wreaths and trees,
But not every tree there was for sale, he gave some to those in need.

In November, 1912, the Christmas Ship set sail
From Thompson's Harbor Michigan, trying to beat the gale.
But she got about to Two Rivers with the gale closing in
She aimed for the shelter of Rowley Point
But was never seen again.

The ship was lost with all her crew, but Christmas didn't die that day.
Captain Santa's kindly spirit on Chicago's docks would stay.
Because even now the Coast Guard cutter Mackinac sails in
Her deck is loaded down with trees to give to those in need.

The storm took Captain Santa and his Christmas Ship away,
But the giving spirit of Christmas is still alive today.