

THE CEDARVILLE CONSPIRACY

Lost Ship's Captain Takes 5th Amendment at Inquiry

By STODDARD WHITE
Detroit News Marine Writer

ST. IGNACE, Mich., May 13.—The American captain whose lake freighter sank last Friday in the Straits of Mackinac refused to submit to cross-examination yesterday after telling a board of inquiry that he believes the Norwegian ship that hit his could have avoided the collision.

District merchant marine safety officer, said all parties have the right to cross-examine and call witnesses and instructed the captain to answer Keig's first question.

MORE BODIES FOUND

Keenan, in turn, instructed the captain to refuse to answer.

terday in the engine room after divers cut open an outside door with a torch. They were bodies of F. Donald Lamp chief engineer; and Reinhold Radtke, the third assistant neer, both of Rogers C. This left three men still ing and presumed dead was Charles Cook the

2 DEAD, 8 MISSING SHIP SINKS IN MACKINAC

THE CEDARVILLE CONSPIRACY

Indicting U.S. Steel

L. Stephen Cox

Saturday, May 8, 1965

SING AS SHIP
INAC STRAITS

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To my young bride

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Len and Pat Gabrysiak, and all of the families and crewmen of the SS *Cedarville*. This is their story. Of course, its telling would have been impossible without the generous assistance of Victor Hanson, Chuck Marsh and the good people at Durocher Dock & Dredge. To Pauline, what more can I say? H². And finally, to our literary, but bashful, uncle: my regards to the bugling elk.

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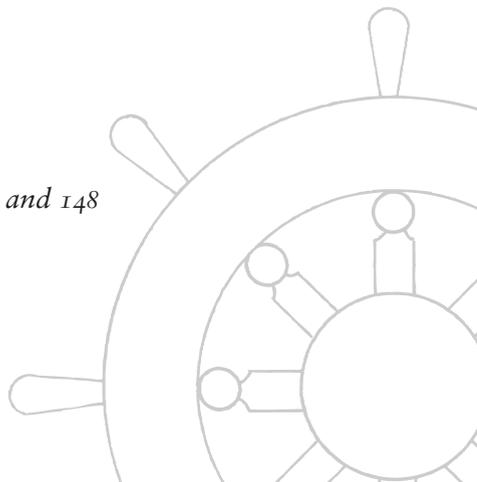
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Preface

Recounting conspiracies can be tricky business. When I set out to tell the tale of the ill-fated steamship *Cedarville*, I rediscovered the adage that there are two sides to every story. The survivors of the tragedy alleged corporate malfeasance and criminal misconduct. The owners denied all impropriety. The trial court, however, found the company's version to be lacking and sided with the claimants. Eventually, after much research, I too was forced to choose sides. In the end, I adopted the conclusions of the trial judge, as they appeared as clear to me as they had to the court nearly four decades earlier.

How then to paint the portrait of a conspiracy? Many Great Lakes histories have made objective mention of the *Cedarville* incident. But to date, none has explored its deeper themes of heroism and villainy; of betrayal and vindication; of courage and cowardice; of survival and death. Such a story deserves telling in the grandest of maritime traditions—as a historical narrative. As such, I have endeavored to reconstruct the actions and dialogue of crew members, corporate officers, family, friends, rescuers, and those aboard other vessels as accurately as possible from the available record.

Conversations and actions of surviving crewmen and their families are taken directly from the exhaustive personal accounts reflected in their depositions, correspondence, personal notes, hearing transcripts, diaries, logbooks, and press accounts. The remainder of their dialogue was provided by the participants interviewed. The more mundane bridge communications and radio calls (not typically recorded) are portrayed in a manner typical of ships navigating in the

various circumstances presented or otherwise prescribed by international law or treaty—particularly with regard to the foreign seamen involved. All judicial opinions and deposition testimony are quoted directly, except when necessary to condense or to correct occasional grammatical errors. Finally, questionable communications of company officials surmised by the trial judge to be in furtherance of the conspiracy are reconstructed in the spirit of the court's factual determinations.

In the face of uncertainty and apparent cover-up, this account makes every effort to shed light on that which can never be fully known. But it is the conflicting nature of the testimony that gave rise to the conspiracy and made this a rewarding and entertaining book to research and to write. That journey began when I chanced to stumble upon an obscure but fiery judgment in a dusty legal text. . . .