**Henry Cort Podcast**

**Mixter 28 Sept 2020**

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|  | **Capt. Charlie Cox and oiler Fred Kirkbride were caught in a November gale aboard a uniquely shaped freighter called a whaleback..** |
|  | **Spun like a top just a few miles from their destination of Chicago.. the crew of the *Henry Cort* were in for the ride of their lives.. hear their stories in this edition of shipwreck podcast dot com. I’m Ric Mixter.** |
|  | **Shipwreck podcast dot com contains actual interviews from shipwreck survivors on the Great Lakes. All of this audio is copyright Airworthy Productions and may not be duplicated or used in other forms without written permission from the copyright holder. This is an eyewitness account of the loss of the whaleback steamer *Henry Cort,* lost on Lake Michigan in 1934.** |
|  | **Alexander McDougall took his years of sailing experience to develop a lake freighter that would be unlike anything else.. rounded like a cigar and flat on the bottom.. with turrets on each end. He would claim his whalebacks were unsinkable, because it was nearly underwater when loaded.. but in reality, over half of his inventions would end up on the bottom of the ocean and in four of the Great Lakes.** |
|  | **A relatively new rail-line that reached near the shipyard caught wind of the new steamers and The Soo Line asked McDougall to add a mid deck on his next two steamers.. so they could ship merchandise more effectively. The two new ships would be the only whalebacks launched with side hatches to access that mid-deck.. and the ships would be named for two of the major investors of the rail-line.. Charles Pillsbury and William Washburn.** |
|  | **Pillsbury would have its 320 foot keel laid down on January 4th, 1892 in Superior, Wisconsin. Just months later, the Pillsbury splashed into the slip, ready for fit out after launch on June 25th.** |
|  | **Use as a package steamer didn’t last long, especially after a lawsuit claimed McDougalls boats were 200 tons shy of what he had promised. The boats were transferred to the Bessemer fleet and renamed with an iron-age innovator’s name, as per their tradition.** |
|  | ***Washburn* became *James Beaumont Neilson*, after the Scottish inventor who used hot air in blast furnaces, allowing for cheaper raw coal to be used to create metal. The *Pillsbury* became the *Henry Cort,* for the English inventor of the puddling process, which used pig iron to create wrought iron.** |
|  | **The Steamer *Cort* was gutted inside to haul iron ore and coal.. and it was quickly apparent that the 14 hundred horsepower triple expansion steam engine combined with the rounded bow made for a fantastic icebreaker.. so *Cort a*nd *Neilson* were often the first boats to open the season.** |
|  | **That abuse sank the Cort at least three times in her career, with the first being a December run near where the Detroit River spills into Lake Erie. After breaking out several ships, the *Cort* turned into the path of the 600 foot *Midvale* and was cut amidships. The ship sank in 35 feet of water, the crew barely making it off the ship to a passing car ferry before the steamer disappeared into the icy abbyse.** |
| Capt FA Bailey raised wreck with Trotter Towing & Wrecking assist sept 23 1917 | **Salvors returned to the spot that next spring but were surprised to find it was nowhere to be found. Dragging lines for some five miles, they learned the ice and waves had moved the whaleback back to the shipping lanes. Just seven feet down, it would have caused another wreck if it hadn’t been pumped out and removed.** |
| Cort Parnell collision | **It’s interesting to note the *Cort* survived the King of Storms on Lake Superior, putting an estimated 400 tons of ice on her hull as it made it’s way to the west end of the lake.** |
| Cort found April 1918 Lake survey office 9.5 miles e of Detroit river light- ice carried away stack and upper works | **Rebuilt at Toledo and sailing for Pittsburgh steamship, the *Cort’s* profile was dramatically changed with the addition of two whirley cranes on deck. The whaleback continued its tradition of opening the season, using its pig nosed snout to ride up on the ice until the weight of the freighter broke a path for others to follow. In the Spring of 1927, *Cort* was again stranded after breaking ice off Colchester Reef in Lake Erie.** |
| Newspaper article shows sale of Cort April 1927 and announces launch of Bradley and AF Harvey | **With Pittsburgh’s fleet expanding with four new massive freighters, the need for the smaller *Cort* was only apparent for icebreaking, and the company looked at selling its whalebacks as far back as 1904. They finally found a buyer in a new company in Detroit called Lake Port Shipping and Navigation. It’s president was the former general manager of Solvay Process Company, and a popular businessman in Detroit. Andrew H Green Junior became a machinist in the navy aboard the *Yosemite* but became infamous for an investigation of Detroit’s aldermen and even toyed with the idea of being mayor himself, but by the spring of 1927 he was focused on finding work for the *Cort.* The second engineer of the Cort, Fred Kirkbride.. said the ship’s owner was quite a character.** |
| Fred Kirkbride was second engineer on Cort. | [00:55:17] *Kirkbride You know, Mr. Green was an eccentrical man. A nice tall you only had one tooth. He wouldn’t give that tool up.. it went back and forth. and he had a pet squirrel always rode on his shoulder he’d come to the dining room table, a squirrel that at the. And if he'd get aboard a streetcar in Detroit. He went to the parking lot and if there was a fireman or a policeman. He ran that tree guard. He had a chain on that squirrel and he had to have that on the idea that he would take that flag uniform and call the hell out.* |
| Capt JG Englelmann. | **Lakeport Shipping picked up a lucrative contract with Ford Motor Company, hauling steel bars to Otis Steel in Cleveland to be rolled into sheet metal for cars. 15 thousand tons of steel from Hirschfield in Bay City brought the whaleback up the Saginaw River where its 55 inch magnets grabbed a ton of steel in each lift. The cranes were capable of 100 tons of steel each per hour, and 35 railcars awaited the *Cort* on its first visit.** |
|  | [00:46:58] Fred *Augie Britz He was quite a crane man. I've seen him swing that gall-darn magnet over the back and leave me a ton. So you're in there and you give it. Let her go. And pretty soon he had brakes on the blasted thing and take us use to use the brakes. He was quite a man when he put it right where you want to put it.* |
|  | **On August 30th, 1928 the Cort ripped her bottom on familiar Colchester Reef, and the whaleback was snagged until Great Lakes Towing could pull them off.** |
|  | **In the fall of 1929 the Cort ran into the steamer Sandmaster at Detroit, sending the Sandmaster to the River Rouge yard for repairs.** |
| 1930 crewman lost overboard outside Chicago. 1932 Anthony Pulcer falloff a laer at a dock at Milwaukee and died- brother of Peter Pulcer Dtw | **Cort continued to make headlines as an icebreaker as well, opening up the Soo Locks and even treacherous WhiteFish Bay when 7 inches of ice blocked others from moving. The whaleback was the first out each season and the last vessel moving each winter.** |
|  | *Fred [00:39:40] I was on her twice when she was the first boat through the Straits breaking the ice. Because if you read the history of the boat.. she was weighted down and she had been she had quite a nose on her. And we do we would break the ice all day long. And then we’d shut her down.* |
|  | *Fred 40:40 It was quite the (thing) to be the first ship through the Straits of we were the first ship through that I want especially. We wouldn't make too much time during the day-* |
| 1933 Dec 25  **Cox capt 4 years. 8 years total on Cort** | **Tragedy struck the whaleback during a visit to Milwaukee in June of 1932. A 32 year old coal passer on the whaleback fell off a ladder while boarding the ship at United Coal & Dock. Tony Pulcer fell backward from the seventh rung and hit his head on the concrete dock before falling into the river. His brother was a new second mate on the Cort, who was pictured later that winter with Capt. Charlie Cox and chief engineer August “Augie” Britz after they battled a sub zero gale on Lake Michigan.** |
| Scrap from Detroit to Corricgan-McKinney Steel Co | **That winter layover was barely three weeks long, as the Cort set what the Lake Carrier’s Association thought was a new record of seasoning opening in 1933. Bridge construction on the New York central span had to be hurried and 18 bridge tenders returned to their posts months earlier than expected as the Cort traveled up the Cuyahoga River to Corrigan McKinney Steel. Warmer weather made the trip ice free, but many complained that the tender’s overtime alone didn’t warrant the Cort’s visit.** |
|  | **Second Mate Peter Pulcer moved up to first mate that next season, and in 1934 he told reporters it was tough after the loss of his brother.** |
|  | “*We had a lot of tough luck in the five years I was on the boat” he said. “Last Christmas we tore out eight plates on Ballard Reef in Livingstone Channel. The boat was filling with water when we pulled into River Rouge and we hadn’t left her long before she went to the bottom,. That was another big repair job for the company’* |
|  | [00:43:09] Fred *there weren’t any buoys out or anything to guide by. So we came across Lake Erie at night and in the morning just before daylight, we got to Ballard’s reef. I don't even remember what happened there, didn't they? It was a bump. All right. But then as far as I was concerned, it didn't throw things around.* |
|  | **With a dozen plates in her hull damaged, Capt. Cox figured he might as well run for the dock.. and the engineers started pumping water as they made the desperate push for Detroit.** |
|  | [00:43:36] *She started taking water so it was full speed and speed service will be darned And when they got up to the dock, we ran to turn her in full speed ahead right close to the dock as possible to go round because there was a* Nicholsons, *Nicholsons of course.* |
|  |  |
|  | [00:44:09] *She was getting pretty low in the water. When We turned in there all the way up the river.* |
|  | [00:44:29] *we had to use what steam we had and they had a set of fire in there, but they were getting where they were putting wet coal in there and the fellas were working in water. I don't know how deep is that. The fuel you used wasn’t much good to you.* |
|  | **Newspapers said the Cort sank five minutes after tying up in the Detroit River.. and divers were dispatched to repair the broken plates. Fred spent the holiday aboard as he was one of the few officers that were not married. Nearly all of the other crew were from south Michigan, and they were able to spend Christmas at home.** |
|  | ***Cort* was getting bad press that next summer as well.. when a fishing boat refused to move as they entered Muskegon harbor. Pulcer said** |
| 1928 Neilson Spokane Transport of Dtw auto carrier | “*Three men were fishing in our course. We signaled to them but they paid no attention. Their boat kept drifting more and more into our way. We steered aside and tried to stop in time but it was too late. Two of the men drowned and our men saved the third.”* |
|  | **Ragnar Baglien and Oscar Nyberg were killed in the accident, with Erick Dahlberg the only survivor. Government inspectors held an inquiry and Cox and Pulcer were cleared of any wrongdoing. The season continued to be difficult for the Cort as it found a November gale while heading across Lake Superior.** |
|  | *3:22 Fred we broke our back one time on Lake Superior.*  **Fred remembers the Cort had just cleared the Soo Locks when the storm hit.. and Capt. Cox put them at anchor for two days at White Fish Point. The gale still hadn’t blown itself completely out when Cox decided to head out.** |
|  | *3:30 Fred We thought the storm was over and the boats decided to pull out so we pulled out. started. We got around Crisp Point and snapped just just for ahead of the aftercabin. And we were in Duluth getting it repaired. We snuck around the back ways until we got there. One thing she could go in any depth of water, lighten her up and she’d float* |
|  | **The season of misfortune would reach its apex during a trip down Lake Michigan on the last days of November. Capt. Cox recalled the trip in a newsreel filmed in 1934.** |
|  | 6:27 Charlie Cox (wide shot) *we were enroute for Holland Michigan to South Chicago Illinois for a load of pig iron for the Holland Furnace Company when 35 miles off south Chicago we were struck by a sou-wester which turns us around regardless of the engine and we tried several times to bring her up back around into the wind but she wouldn’t go and we decided to run back with the wind to the east shore which was the only place we could go.* |
|  | **Engineer Kirkbride adds a few more details in this conversation with historian Gareth McNabb in 1982.** |
|  | [00:08:28] *we were headed down light*.[00:07:53] *Yeah, we were down. Down Muskegon to Chicago. We could see Chicago.* |
|  | **Fred worked in the engine room all day and then headed to the officers dining room before getting some sleep.** |
|  | *6:40 Well, For one thing, I do remember very distinctly that Charlie Cox the Skipper and I had dinner together because I had the first watch.*  [00:07:03] *We had dinner together and we were sitting at the dining table, looking out over across the water and the little funnels were coming up the lake. He said we're going to have a storm. I said, it looks like it to me forI saw little funnels on the water.. dropping down.* |
| *Naturally, six on Six off.* | **Cox reported that a 60 mile per hour gale was brewing from the south, and the whaleback was bobbing around without cargo.. so Cox went back to work above the dining area.** |
|  | [00:07:31] Fred *He went to the pilothouse. I went to try to get some sleep. And next thing I knew, she was pitching.* |
|  | [00:08:13] *And, the next thing I knew.. she was almost laying on her side. She was trying to turn around and head back into Chicago. That was an hour or so later.. and the next thing I knew we were almost laying on our side. He turned around and it was a heck of a blow and he wanted to get into cover.* |
|  | *Cox 5;20 About 35 miles off Chicago we were driven back by a heavy sou-wester which turned us around against our rudder with full speed ahead. We tried twice to come back into it but she wouldn’t take the wheel so we decided the only thing to do was let her go for the shore or try to make Muskegon Harbor.* |
|  | [00:08:28]  *he's trying to turn her back and almost capsized her.* |
|  | *8:28 So he just straightened up and tried to haul her out as much as we could from the Michigan shore because he said he could not clear Point Betsy, because the wind kept blowing us over all the time. So I got up to there he says well, boys. And we're going in Muskegon, we got to we can't get to Point Betsie because the water's shallow.* |
|  | [00:20:18] *I would say at that time at that time, we were probably out there. I would say probably three, four miles away. we weren’t making any headway anywhere we were sideways. We were all trying for the middle of the lake. There was no chance, but still couldn’t Clear Point Betsey. He knew it, what would happen if he did. Because we had hauled Rip raft to those islands they were building up there before that wave of riffraff that we had hauled Stone to help build those islands so we could have ports and some kind of a beach had to go to. I've even forgotten the term to use for some reason. I don't know,* a long time*. Fifty years ago, yes, it was a long time ago.* |
|  | 7:14 Charlie Cox *we tried to hold to the northern to get by the Sables but the wind drove us several miles off our course* |
|  | [00:08:02] *And the next thing I know she had a big roll.* |
|  | *7:31 Charlie Cox as we was getting near Muskegon harbor the seas seemed to go down and we steered in on the ranges for about five miles* |
|  | [00:09:37] *He didn't try that again.* |
|  | [00:10:09] *That was at noon hour and I don't think we didn't had supper that night.* |
|  | [00:10:17]it was too rough to know even if we were going to live. |
|  | 5:43 Charlie Cox *as we made Muskegon harbor the wind shifted in our favor .. more to the sou-west so we decided to make the harbor rather than beach her as we figured or I had figured we would lost most of our crew doing so. So we headed her for the harbor.* |
|  | [00:17:20] *Well, I was in the engine room. I couldn't see much action.*  [00:14:33] *I know as you were rolling and pitching to beat the dickens.* |
|  | [00:14:43]Fred *In order to hold or draw that course at all.. steering are doing. Well, the rudder didn't seem to have any control whatsoever. The steering engine roaring back and forth. Just spinning that wheel up there thing that we have to tell the way that was alll power driven of steam driven.* |
|  | **Several levels below the pilothouse, the only way they could get orders from the Captain were through the telegraph or chadburn.. and a metal speaking tube that looked like a snorkle.** |
|  | [00:17:24] *Oh yeah.. the only connection you had was it was it chadburn and the intercom.* OK. *The intercom was a piece of pipe, you know, a little funnel on it And you had to watch your wheel when the wheel when it kicked out of the water, you get the pressure off out out of here wouldn't throw a bucket. You had to reduce his steam and watch your back. You didn't dare lose that.*  19:24 *Get a little steam on.. too much vacuum, And those engine turning over just as hard as you could turn. And when she left, you had to get the power off so she wouldn't snap your driveshaft break a bucket off. We had lost buckets before,, we didn't wanna lose any buckets right then.* |
|  | **It was important to have their full propulsion as they tried to thread the north and south break walls at Muskegon..** |
|  | [00:18:21] I had the throttle when she hit. [00:21:20] *full speed ahead.*  [00:21:31] *We had to have all the speed, you know, straight up as possible. And we had the throttles are wide open. The bypass were open and she was getting all the steam we had. But the boys kept a head of steam on. All right, everybody, there wasn’t any water in the water glass very often because of us doing this, but I didn't make much difference. But full speed ahead, no slow about her. Everything you got to give it to her. All you do is pull the throttle down and reach up and try to regulate the throttle.* |
|  | **The screaming winds and confused waves were only part of the problem. Fred says the wheelsman was also unqualified for such a maneuver- wishing that their regular mate Pete Pulcer had the wheel instead.** |
|  | [00:16:18] Fred *Pete was off that. Yeah. He took that trip off for some reason or another.* |
|  | **Pulcer was in Detroit, tending to a sick wife when the Cort attempted to save itself by running full speed between the breakwaters.** |
|  | [00:48:10] *Fred We had a lot better chance to make it. I said he was a wheelsman and he understood two and two made four.* |
|  | **Cox ordered all non essential men out of the engineroom.. leaving just the three engineers as they attempted to make the harbor.** |
|  | 7:42 Charlie Cox *As we were coming through the piers the sea caught us on a starboard side and landed us over onto the north breakwater, smashing a hole In our side and she hung to the wall and wouldn’t go inside so we backed her and landed alongside of the breakwater where she filled with water and sank in five minutes.* |
|  | *25:15 Fred So when we when she hit, then we all went on, hurry fast, we get everything securely as possible. If she blew up, she'd blow. IF She didn't blow up. THANK Goodnes* |
|  | [00:23:09] Fred ***I remember the last order was given to the firemen to get him out and get up on deck because we were that close. ~~We knew they had one fire, whether it would last just some steam as far as I was concerned, because~~ I remember Get him hot and get on deck.*** |
|  | [00:22:37] Fred *You do a lot of things in a hurry. Yeah. Right now, not after a while. You don't have to look around.* |
|  | **Fred says the crew was far from calm.. but never totally lost their wits in the crash.** |
|  | *Oh They didn't get hysterical.*  [00:31:52] t*hat was one consolation, 32:00 But everybody was scared to death.* |
|  | **Looking around the engine room, Fred said the first engineer Rosie was frozen gripping a rail. Chief Engineer Britz was in worse shape.** |
|  | [00:19:24] *He was sick and he was scared to death right out of his pants. here he was.* |
|  | [00:18:35] ***(Auggie)*** *I think he was praying because he had sank before in it.* |
|  | **In the galley, steward Harry Sutton had been thrown hard to the floor.. one newspaper said he broke his pelvis.** |
|  | [00:27:24] Fred *All I know is one hell of a crash She she swung around to crash again. The nose hit the sides. The rippraff.. the stone,.. That’s what held us.* |
|  | **It was in the black of night.. 9:40pm November 30th. Now impaled on the rocks, the crew were trapped.. too far from shore to swim and in waves too big to launch a lifeboat.** |
|  | 32:00 *Oh, only poor Jack.He never left my belt. All night long.* |
|  | **Fred’s companion in the darkness was the oiler who worked with him during his six hour shifts.. They were now watching the walls move back and forth with the storm..** |
|  | 28:?? *Well, I was with Jack Meyers. My oiler and I were in the dining room, which was right next to the galley. And there was all this kind of Wainscoting, a calendar hanging out on. That was the only way of telling how far she was going one way or How far she was going the other. Every three, four minutes she'd slide over one way, then she’d gradually start and come back again. You didn't know what that was going to be a last time to come back or what. But that was what my indicator was.* |
|  | **With no idea how deep the water was off the break wall, the crew worried they would get washed off rocks and swamped in the waves.** |
|  | [00:29:16]Fred *If She did. We were all done right. We never could have gotten out because we were right by the door and going on deck from the dining room.. And of course, the fellows in the in the in the galley, they were right there by the door to get out to the galley door. It was on the net was a side we would have to go with the left hand side to go roll over to the right. If you went anywhere, you couldn't go left. If you did like, we'd be on dry land.* |
|  | [00:30:41] Fred *the way the wave was going over the you over the wall. You had no idea how in the world you're ever going to get to shore.* |
| Capt said ate turkey Mince pie after lighting stove,. | **If there was any consolation, it was that the shipwreck happened just a day after Thanksgiving. Capt. Cox said they ate turkey and mince pie while the Coast Guard pushed their under powered surfboat into the crashing waves.** |
| Washed out of boat when it reached Cort. Surfboat flipped in the surf later Basch , Charles Bontekoe, Edwin Bekman and Roger Stearman thrown into water.  lashed to the boat, engine flooded and lost power. 40hp compared to 90hp | **The lifeboat had one of the tiniest outboards in the service.. 40 horse instead of 90 that most other stations had.. but four men jumped in just minutes after the wreck and tied themselves into the boat. Bos’n mate Charles Bontekoe circled the Cort and was making another approach when a wave washed two turfmen overboard. Roger Stearman managed to cling to the side of the boat but Jack Dipert vanished in the blinding spray. Overwhelmed in the storm, the surfboat crashed ashore, spilling all of the survivors into the water.** |
|  | **The cutter Escanaba pulled alongside the wreck at 2am and lit it with a million candle power search light. The crew of the Cort answered by flashing their lights and the cutter moved to a safe location on the other side of the breakwall. By daybreak a new plan was in place.. to scale the breakwater and toss a line to the ship. Sutton was the most injured and he was first to leave the ship.** |
|  | [00:34:37] *They all went down from the ship to the rippraff in a bosn chair.* |
| dropped out of college to join coast Guard. | First Mate Harvey Mathews was next over the side, staying near the ship to help 23 other men off to the rocks that were being battered by the waves. Rescuers tied a line around the men and slowly walked them in groups to safety some 3 thousand feet away. |
| Grand haven station motored to wreck Pt Betseys captain was Wm Dipert.. Jack’s dad at 27 yr vet | [00:35:22 Fred ***what you once got to the riff raff. that’s why we attached them all together. So if one or two got weaker. Lost their line and and couldn't hang onto the riffraff. That's why they were fastened together. That's why when That big sea was coming in. Hey, look for a piece of riffraff. You have one spot. You didn’t go five or six feet between seas you went Very, very slowly. Rock by rock by rock.*** |
|  | **The cook would be rushed to nearby Hackley hospital.. and he'd be joined by four others.. not crewmen.. but four gawkers who were part of the 50 thousand who raced to the beach to get a look at the wreck. Three mile traffic jams were reported and several accidents were the result.** |
|  | *T****he remaining crew were transported to the Civilian Conservation Camp to recooperate.*** |
|  | 9:11 and *the commanding officer Capt. Palmer of the CCC camp*  *The ah Coast Guard deserve full credit for taking the crew off this boat the 676 company CCC were glad to do what they could to help. The call came in here at 10:30 on the night of the accident simply said that a boat was down . We turned out the company and went down to patrol the beach for three hours* |
| Anthony Grenier was at wheel when ship sank. first to testify | **A single suitcase was packed for Fred.. but the assistant engineer lost everything he owned in the engine room.** |
|  | [00:37:55]Fred *I never got my hundreds of dollars with the tools in the bottom of Lake Michigan. My license and everything else was at the bottom of lake Michigan because I had to be posted in the engineroom* |
|  | **Capt. Cox gave reporters his written account of what happened to the Cort and talked to newsreel cameras on the scene.** |
| Fred Kirkbride died Sept 11 1984 Imlay City. Sacred Heart Catholic Church. | 4:26 Charlie COX: *I’m glad that all the members of the crew are safe, and ah nobody was hurt in any way. Sorry that the actions of the Coast Guard, losing their man. And I think we did the only thing we possible could have done to save the lives of the crew. Thanks to the assistance of the CC camps and the efficient work of the Coast Guards* |
|  | ***[01:17:34] After we got the CC camp and the newsmen had been bothering the heck out of these fellows, I had a platform because Auggie he'd like to talk, you know. But these these poor beggars had been through hell, have laid back again. I see. And the nerves.. And so this one newsman, he and I finally got in session. I told him, leave these fellers alone.*** |
|  | **Obviously upset over the questions by reporters and the fact that he had been sunk three times by the whaleback.. Auggie Britz was brief in his statement about saving the Cort.** |
| ***[01:18:19] And he's says to hell with it.*** | [01:17:16]***I remember you said very plainly. Oh to Hell with it.*** |
|  | **Fred Kirkbride was done sailing as well..** |
| wife Anna Marie from wisconsin. | [00:24:21] *I had a good job in machine repair and then I went in safety in Detroit.* *That was my last trip* |
|  | **Lake Port no longer had a ship, so Captain Cox signed on with Gravel Motorship.. sailing under Captain James Larsen aboard the 250 foot Ormidale. 11 months after the Cort sank, Cox found himself in thick fog in northern Lake Huron. Captain Larsen.. went below to get some sleep and ordered Cox to maintain course near Alpena. On November first, the Ormidale slammed into the side of the Norwegian freighter Viator, mortally wounding the Viator. The Norwegian crew abandoned ship and the Viator slipped beneath the waves. Cox was investigated for the accident and his license was suspended for 90 days.** |
|  |  |
| 10 July 1934 dynamite US Corps Engineers shook CG buildings blasting away upper works - plan to fill with rock | **The shipwreck of the *Cort* was quickly destroyed by Lake Michigan, ripping its bow off in weeks and slipping beneath the waves soon afterwards. Lakeport managed to salvage one of the cranes from the deck before the hull rolled over and was crushed, and the remaining crane, anchors and superstructure were removed by the Army Corps of Engineers on July 8th 1935. The barge *Kenosha* brought 100 tons of plate steel ashore and the forward crane base was sold to Love Construction for fifty bucks.** |
|  | **Today 6000 tons of rock that repaired the north break wall have crushed the wreck even further, with only scattered plates and a boiler visible. The aft crane mount.. essentially a 10 foot diameter gear.. is also recognizable.. as are the aft mooring rings.. the famous pig snout of the whaleback.. which welcomes divers who still visit Cort today.** |
|  | **This shipwreck podcast featured interviews with engineer Fred Kirkbride from Imlay City, Michigan, who passed away in September of 1984. We also heard from Captain Charles V Cox, who served as a lieutenant in World War Two and then sailed for Columbia as captain of the William (Stee-fel) and WC Richardson until retiring in 1965. Captain Cox passed away November 3 1965 and was buried in Carsonville, MI.** |
|  | **First mate Peter Pulcer, who missed the sinking of the Cort by a week, would return as mate on Columbia’s crane ship GG Post. In 1945 he became a captain on the Harry Ewig and moved up the line to the *Richardson, Buckeye* and in 1965 he became the second Captain on the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. Pulcer retired from the Fitz in 1971, five years before it was tragically lost on Lake Superior.** |
|  | **For shipwreck podcast.. I’m Ric Mixter.** |
|  | **Audio interviews from this podcast are copyright airworthy productions 2020 and may not be rebroadcast or copied without written authorization. This podcast would not have been possible without the amazing research of Gareth McNabb and Neel Zoss. Dan and Heather Bloom of the West Michigan Dive Center provided boat transportation to the Cort and we gratefully acknowledge the research of Ken Thro.** |
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