

The other ships in the fleet, including CEDARVILLE, carried on, and when the original CALCITE was retired at the end of the 1960 season, the Bradley Line received, via a transfer from the straight-deck fleet, another of the CEDARVILLE's near-sisters, this being the 1929-built WILLIAM G. CLYDE, which was converted to a self-unloader and renamed (b) CALCITE II. She was commissioned in Bradley colours during July of 1961, although the formal rechristening did not take place until mid-August.

Over the winter of 1960-1961, CEDARVILLE received new boilers and automatic stokers while she was in winter lay-up at Rogers City. Her original Scotch boilers were removed and in their place were fitted two water-tube boilers newly manufactured by the Foster-Wheeler Corporation. Fired with fine coal, they had a grate surface of 145 square feet and heating surface of 8,828 square feet. They produced steam at 213 p.s.i., and this increased working pressure may well have been the cause of the reported increase in I.H.P. from 2,100 to 2,200 which we mentioned previously.

At the same time as the new boilers were fitted, CEDARVILLE received a new, short and streamlined smokestack of what observers termed the "coffee pot" style. CALCITE II and MYRON C. TAYLOR received similar streamlined stacks in 1964 and 1968 respectively, but in each of their cases, the cause was not a reboiling but rather a complete repowering with diesel engines. Had CEDARVILLE survived, she might also have been repowered at some point in time, and she might still be running along with the TAYLOR and CALCITE II, but unfortunately this was not to be the case.

At about 5:00 a.m. on the morning of Friday, May 7th, 1965, CEDARVILLE departed Calcite with a cargo of stone en route to Gary, Indiana. As the steamer made her way up Lake Huron and around toward the Straits of Mackinaw, the seas were choppy and visibility was reduced due to fog over the cold water. There was heavy vessel traffic in the area of the Mackinaw Bridge, with at least four other ships in the immediate vicinity, all groping their way through the thick fog. One of these, the Hamburg-Amerika Linie's motorship WEISSENBURG, was in radio contact with the CEDARVILLE to warn that an "unidentified" Norwegian vessel was preceding the WEISSENBURG eastbound under the bridge. This ship proved to be the 406-foot, 1959-built TOPDALSFJORD, of Den Norske Amerikalinje A/S, more commonly known as the Norwegian America Line. The TOPDALSFJORD, a most handsome "salty" of then-modern design but fairly traditional centre-island construction, was a fairly frequent visitor to the lakes along with other ships of the fleet. She was commanded by Captain Rasmus Haaland.

Captain Martin Joppich of the CEDARVILLE tried to contact the Norwegian ship by radio but without success, yet still the CEDARVILLE proceeded under full speed. Finally, with visibility down to only some 300 feet, and with a radar target dead ahead, Capt. Joppich at last ordered his ship down to half speed and twice changed course. CEDARVILLE was blowing fog signals on her typhon whistle, and other whistles could be heard in the vicinity, but radar targets were confused and of little use at such close range.

Finally, the bow of TOPDALSFJORD appeared out of the fog, only some 100 feet away from CEDARVILLE. Captain Joppich reduced CEDARVILLE's speed to slow ahead, but realizing that a collision was imminent, he tried to take evasive action and then rang for full speed ahead. The net effect of these actions was that CEDARVILLE was turning right across the bow of TOPDALSFJORD. At 9:45 a.m. (some sources have said 9:55), May 7th, the bow of the salty cut into the port side of CEDARVILLE at the seventh hatch, opening a 20-foot-wide gash that extended well down below the waterline. The collision had occurred at a point almost exactly two miles east of the Mackinaw Bridge.

As revealed in the evidence developed during the subsequent enquiry into the accident conducted by the United States Coast Guard, a strange sequence of events unfolded aboard CEDARVILLE after the collision. Captain Joppich or-