

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Steamboat Inspection Service

In reply refer to
File 1581
Office of Local Inspectors
District of Los Angeles, Cal.
at SAN PEDRO, CAL.
524 - West 6th Street

March 12, 1928

STATEMENT OF EDWARD D. SPRINGER, PUMPMAN ON STEAMER CHUKY

S. A. Kennedy,
Joseph A. "Woody",
U.S. Local Inspectors.

Reported by C. M. Larsen, Clark.

EDWARD D. SPRINGER,

Pumpman on the steamer CHUKY, having been first duly sworn
testified as follows:

INSPECTOR KENNEDY: What is your name?

A. Edward D. Springer.

Q. What is your home address?

A. 2416 Reed Street, Erie, Pa.

Q. Mr. Springer, we have been requested by the Local Inspectors at San Francisco, in a telegram to obtain a statement from pumpman, Springer, steamer CHUKY, passenger on the PRESIDENT PIERCE arriving at San Pedro today, that was yesterday. Will you kindly make a statement as to anything you know leading up to the loss and following occurrences with reference to the steamer CHUKY.

A. The night before the ship broke in two an oiler by the name of McDonald and myself went to the Captain to get some cigarettes from the slop chest, and while in there the Captain received a wireless message from the North, I couldn't say for sure if it was from Nagasaki or not. It was a weather report stating that there was a typhoon heading from the north in our direction and the Captain told me he expected to get hit with it that night, which we did. We got tossed around that night and in the morning it was not quite so bad but heavy seas were coming over. An Astonian sailor came and called me about 7:30 stating that the Captain wanted the electric lights pulled off on the deck, for what reason I don't know, so I ran across the flying bridge and went and pulled the switches. I just got back down to my room and got a cigarette when the ship suddenly gave a lurch knocking me over to one side and I ran up on deck with a life preserver, as I had a feeling that the ship was broke in two, I came up on deck and the ship really did break in two. The wires broke, it seems to me, on the flying bridge leading to the wireless room and I really think that is what started the fire.

We all tried to launch a lifeboat, the one on the starboard side some one had cut the falls so we made for the port lifeboat, and by the use of a steam winch, where man power failed to pull the davits out, we succeeded in swinging the boat out with the steam winch. A few minutes later we all jumped into the lifeboat and stayed by the ship until she went down. We cruised all that day and night and the next morning as near as I can judge around noon, we were picked up the fisherman's boat. That is all I know about it.

Q Why were the starboard boat falls cut, do you know?

A My idea is that someone of the boys got excited, because usually most ships take from one to two or three minutes to sink, and she was already half way down then and somebody in the commotion cut the falls. When the falls were cut the boat slipped down on the deck and smashed the bow, it went up against the railing.

Q Well it wasn't due to the falls being too big for the block or due to faulty equipment?

A No, it was due to some of the boys that got excited and cut the falls when they didn't think they had time to launch the boat.

Q And the ship had a heavy list?

A At that time it was way down 25 degrees and still going down. The forward end of the after half was submerged and it was cut during the time of the fire and smoke. I was inside of the lifeboat myself and I had a rag around my mouth and nose to keep from smothering.

Q You had to use the steam winch to heave out the davit on the port boat, was that on account of the davit being froze?

A No it was free, but the ship had such a degree that we had to swing the lifeboat out and pull the davit astern, which was up grade and man power couldn't pull, it.

Q Was there an explosion or just a fire?

A Really I couldn't say, but my idea is there wasn't.

Q Was it an explosion or a crushing of steel?

A I don't know. The seas battering on the ship, there was a rumbling going on, but I believe if there was an explosion on her I don't think any of us would be here.

Q Have you any complaint to make with reference to the equipment on the vessel or of the licensed personell?

A No, sir.

Q Is there anything else you care to state?

A No, sir.

INSPECTOR KENNEDY: No further questions.

INSPECTOR MOODY: No questions.

