



The Christmas Tree Ship

Carol Crane

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On November 21, 1912, the schooner Rouse Simmons set sail from a small northern Michigan town across Lake Michigan. Affectionately dubbed the "Christmas Tree Ship," this was an annual trek for the Rouse Simmons. With its cargo of Christmas trees, the ship was bound for Chicago. There Captain Herman Scheunemann would sell the trees for 50 cents or \$1.00 and even gave many away to needy families. But the schooner never makes its destination. The Rouse Simmons, with all hands and cargo, disappears into the cold waters. The ship's wreckage is not found until 1971. Drawing from stories told by her grandfather, author Carol Crane weaves a fictional tale based on the true events of the doomed schooner. And she explains how the captain's widow went on to continue his tradition of delivering holiday trees to Chicago. Carol Crane's many books for Sleeping Bear Press include the best-selling *P is for Pilgrim: A Thanksgiving Alphabet* and *The Handkerchief Quilt*. As a literacy advocate, Carol speaks at schools and conferences. She lives in North Carolina. Chris Ellison has illustrated children's picture books and adult historical fiction for nearly 20 years. His book *Let Them Play* was a 2006 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People. Chris lives in Mississippi.

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