

Wisconsin's Underwater Heritage

Vol. 3 No. 1

A publication of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association

Jan.-Feb. 1993

Around the state **Annual spring meeting set for Madison in March**

The third annual spring meeting of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association is scheduled for Saturday, March 20, at the State Historical Society in Madison.

The tentative program includes a report by John Johnson on his research work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers along the Mississippi River, and an update on the underwater film work of Al Brown. Other speakers may include Andy Baker of the U.S. Forest Service Laboratories on restoration work on the U.S.S. Constitution, and George Nau, the Green Bay author of *The Nau Tug Line*.

Plans for another spring seminar weekend will also be discussed, as followup to our successful training program in May of 1992. We will also try to solidify plans for this year's research projects in Door County and other parts of the state.

Although we would like members to pre-register (see page 4 for details), everyone is welcome to attend the members, which begins at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday

DCMHS plans two programs

The Door County Maritime Heritage Society has announced plans for a series of programs on basic underwater archeology and maritime research beginning in February.

The first two programs are scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 27, from 9:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., at the Sturgeon Bay Public Library. A \$10 donation is requested for materials. For more information, contact John Van Harpen at 414-854-2275.

Field work and publication are highlights of state work in '92

By DAVID J. COOPER
State Underwater Archeologist
State Historical Society of Wis.

The past year was another very busy one for the state of Wisconsin's underwater archeology program.

Fieldwork included investigations of the schooner barges *Pretoria* and *Noquebay* in the Apostle Islands, the steamer *Niagara* at Port Washington, the schooners *Carrington* at Hat Island and *Emeline* at Baileys Harbor.

Other work was done at sites at Strawberry Shoal (Green Bay), Sturgeon Bay, Fish Creek, Rock Island, and the Little Daisy Sawmill site at Bayfield. Work was also done on the tug T.H. Camp in the Apostle Islands, jointly with a team of Minnesota volunteers.

Survey objectives included site documentation, photography, nomination of sites to

the National Register of Historic Places, and development of a diver's visitor guide to the *Noquebay* wreck in conjunction with the National Park Service.

Program staff also worked on Tidewater Atlantic Research and the City of Sheboygan in documenting and developing a conservation plan for a shipwreck found within the boundaries of the city's new marina development. This vessel is believed to be the schooner *Lottie Cooper*.

As part of a public education efforts, twenty-one slide presentations and programs were conducted on Wisconsin's underwater archeological program and shipwreck preservation during 1992. Program staff also helped organize and conduct the WUAA's training workshop in Door County, and participated in other WUAA activity throughout the year.

Continued on page 2

Report on Door county light- houses presented to society

(Editors note: this is an edited version of a story by Bob Pohl that appeared in the Door County Advocate of Nov. 13, 1992)

In the fall of 1991, the Door County Historical Society commissioned Steve Karges, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater to write a history of the county's lighthouses.

In November of 1992, Professor Karges reported on his work to the historical society. The report started with a description of the historic importance of water and maritime transportation to the development of Door County, which has more than 250 miles of shoreline.

At one time, there were more than 13 lighthouses or stations that aided navigation in the county. Railroads didn't arrive in

Sturgeon Bay until well after the turn of the century, while steamboats traveled on regular schedules between Green Bay and eastern ports, such as Buffalo, N.Y.

By the 1890s, propeller-driven steamboats, such as Hartline and Goodrich, brought regular passenger service to several Door County ports, including Ephraim, Sturgeon Bay, Fish Creek and Washington Harbor. The ports' gradual decline began in the 1920s with the development of improved roads, cars and trucks.

In 1832, a group of 30 merchants, ship owners and businessmen, primarily from the Detroit area, petitioned Congress to build Door County's first lighthouse on the heights of Rock Island. The purpose of the light was

Continued on page 3

Field work

Continued from page 1

The underwater archeology program of the State Historical Society was closely involved in 1992 legislative efforts, working with diver and preservation groups to shepherd through Wisconsin Act 269. The act authorizes the designation of state marine preserves and beefs up protection of state underwater archeological resources.

Among the new law's other provisions, the act facilitates better law enforcement by making artifact theft and site looting on state lands and bottomlands a crime rather than a civil offense. Unfortunately, funding for the preserves portion of the law was vetoed, and the future of shipwreck preserves in Wisconsin will require a renewed legislative effort for funding.

In addition to fieldwork on Great Lakes sites, program staff also conducted several other research projects, including a study on

maritime transportation and associated shipwreck on the Mississippi River for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a report on 24 shipwreck sites surveyed in 1991, continued work on the state shipwreck inventory, and a background study on Great Lakes maritime transportation.

Additionally, a final report on the 1990-91 Apostle Island surveys was published, entitled *By Fire, Storm, and Ice: Underwater Archeological Investigations in the Apostle Islands*. The report is available at some libraries, and may be ordered from the state underwater archeology program by calling 1-608-264-6493.

Five state shipwreck sites were placed on the National Register of Historic Places this year. The eight sites currently listed with the National Park Service include the schooner *Lucerne*, U.S.L.H.S. Light Vessel 57, steamer *R.G. Stewart*, tug *Ottawa*, steamer *Louisiana*, schooner-barge *Noquebay*, steamer *Sevona*, and the wrecks at Pilot Island in Door County.

Many more nominations are on the way, including the steamers *Frank O'Connor* and *Niagara*, schooner-barge *Pretoria*, tug *T.H. Camp*, and schooners *Meridian* and *Carrington*. The program also worked closely with state and local law enforcement agencies, investigating various reports of site lootings and illegal salvage.

State personnel assisted the Door County District Attorney's office in prosecuting a Chicago man for the theft of an anchor from the site of the *Frank O'Connor*. In an out-of-court settlement, the defendant agreed to return the anchor to the state and paid for the

cost of moving it.

The anchor's new home is the Cana Island lighthouse, which is operated by the Door County Historical Society, close to the location of the *O'Connor's* loss in 1919. The plight of the newly -discovered wreck received state-wide recognition when the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation placed it on the group's list of Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in Wisconsin.

Program staff during 1992 included: Dave Cooper, state underwater archeologist; John Jensen, assistant underwater archeologist and maritime historian; Megan Partlow and Stephanie Sechler, work-study students; and numerous volunteers.

The 1992 seasonal crew included: Rob Barros and Ray Tubby, field archeologists; Robert Tom, Charlie Tom, Al Brown, WUAA volunteers; and many local divers. Funding for this year's research was provided by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, and the St. Paul district of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Additional assistance was provided by the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and private donations. We'd like to thank all the WUAA members and other divers who have helped us throughout the year.

Among those volunteers' activities were documenting sites, researching, assisting with training, reporting new sites, stewarding their favorite sites, reporting artifact looting, spreading the preservation ethic, and doing what it takes to help preserve Wisconsin's underwater archeological heritage.

Wisconsin's

Underwater Heritage

is published by the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association.

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Wisconsin's Underwater Heritage is published four times per year. Contributions are welcomed. For more information, call Bob O'Donnell at 800-236-5739 days or 414-722-8465 evenings. Materials may be mailed to P.O. Box 767, Neenah, WI 54957-0767.

Upcoming Events and Conferences

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| Feb. 20 | Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival , presented by the Ford Seahorses Scuba Diving Club at the Ford Motor Co headquarters building in Dearborn, Mich. Seminars and film festival. For more information, call 1-313-769-2458. |
| March 20 | Annual Spring Meeting of Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association at State Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison. For more information, call 608-221-1996 or 414-722-8465. |
| March 31 | The 1993 Great Lakes Shipping Season begins with the opening of the Soo locks. When's WUAA's first open water project? |
| May | WUAA Spring Training Seminar , tentatively planned as a followup to last year's successful event with dates and details to be discussed at spring meeting. |
| Sept. 16-18 | Association for Great Lakes Maritime History , annual convention at South Haven, Mich. |

Lighthouses

Continued from page 1

to guide ships safely through the passage between Rock and St. Martin islands, from Lake Michigan into the bay of Green Bay.

In 1836, a contract was let for construction of the lighthouse, which was completed in 1838. In 1848, President James Polk reserved all of Plum Island for lighthouse purposes.

In 1849, the federal government built a lighthouse on the southeast side of Plum Island, along the Porte des Morts passage. In 1858, the Porte des Morts station was relocated to its present location on Pilot Island.

In 1862, Joseph Harris, the publisher of the newly-formed Door County Advocate, began promoting the idea of a canal linking Lake Michigan and the bay of Green Bay. Although it had additional promoters, the canal idea was put aside during the Civil War.

At the end of the Civil War, there was a surge of economic activity in Door County. Returning veterans and westbound settlers and immigrants moved into the county, causing a substantial expansion of coastwise traffic along the east shore of Green Bay from Egg Harbor, Fish Creek, Ephriam, Sister Bay, Ellison Bay and Hedgehog Harbor.

In response to pleas from mariners, the federal Lighthouse Board in 1868 built two almost identical lighthouses— one on the northeast side of Chambers Island and one of Eagle Bluff between Ephriam and Fish Creek.

The major difference in the two stations is the tower projecting above the dwelling. The one at Eagle Bluff is square while the one at Chambers Island is hexagon, allowing sailors to use the towers as day markers.

Increased lumber and farming activity following the Civil War also brought new life to Jacksonport and Baileys Harbor, because those ports remained open for the navigation after the Green Bay ports were locked up with ice.

As a result of an increase in activity, the Lighthouse Board replaced the lighthouse at Baileys Harbor with a set of range lights in the late 1860s. Those lights are still well-known landmarks in the Ridges Sanctuary.

In 1869, the federal government established the Cana Island lighthouse, probably the most photographed and painted point in Door County. The purpose of the light was to mark the location of Mud (now known as Moonlight) Bay and North Bay, both regarded as excellent anchorages.

During the 1870s, the Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal was constructed and operated by a private company. To create a safe refuge within Sturgeon Bay, the Lighthouse Board was persuaded to build two piers with a

pierhead light on the north pier near Dunlap Reef.

After financial difficulties and complaints from shippers using the toll waterway, the federal government took over the canal in 1893. In the 1890s, shipping interests complained that the pier headlight at entrance to the ship canal was inadequate. What they wanted was a more powerful coast light like the one on Cana Island.

An appropriation was made by Congress to construct a Sturgeon Bay light in 1899. However, the original light was plagued by problems and in 1903 major renovation took place.

Also in 1903, the original light on Rock Island was razed and Dunlap Reef was removed, along with the ruins of the original Porte des Morts lights on Plum Island. The federal government had constructed a set of range lights on Plum Island in 1896.

Although it wasn't apparent in the first decade of the 1900s, the heyday of shipping in Door County waters had passed. Improved roads and vehicles spelled the end for shipping of all but bulk cargos.

In 1926, the piers and cribs were removed from the Sturgeon Bay harbor. To aid vessels entering and leaving the harbor on the Green Bay side, the Lighthouse Board ordered the construction of the Sherwood Point lighthouse, the last lighted navigational aid project in Door County.

WUAA Membership Application



As a private, non-profit organization, the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association is an opportunity for both individuals and organizations to participate in underwater archeological research and contribute to the preservation of Wisconsin's underwater cultural resources. Dues are \$15 per year.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Telephone: Day Evenings

Since we are a new organization, we would like your input on the types of goals the association should have:

- ☐ Documentation of state underwater archeological sites
- ☐ Training individuals in u/w archeological methods
- ☐ Exchange of information between members
- ☐ Preservation of state underwater archeological sites
- ☐ Public education on underwater heritage
- ☐ Creation of state underwater preserves
- ☐ Others:

I would like to be involved in the following activities:

- ☐ Archival research
- ☐ Training in archeological methods
- ☐ On-site work - shoreside
- ☐ On-site work - underwater
- ☐ Association Committees:
 - ☐ Newsletter ☐ Organization
 - ☐ Training ☐ Membership
 - ☐ Other:

Make \$15 check payable to "WUAA" and mail with this form to:

Wis. Underwater Archeological Association - P.O. Box 6081 - Madison, WI 53716

WUAA Spring General Meeting

WHEN: Saturday, March 20
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: The State Historical Society Library
816 State Street, Madison

In addition to our business meeting and planning sessions for summer training programs and research projects, we are also planning a series of speakers (see story on page 1 for details).

**Pre-registration requested, call Tom Villand
at 608-221-1996 or Dave Neudek at 608-246-0351.**

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For those interested in
preserving Wisconsin's unde