

# Wisconsin's UNDERWATER HERITAGE

Vol. 19 No. 1

A publication of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association

March 2009

## Fathoms Deep But Not Forgotten: Wisconsin's Historic Shipwrecks

### Part V: Milwaukee County, 1900–1925

by Brendon Baillod

This article is the fifth in a continuing series examining the historical maritime archeology sites in Wisconsin. This installment will review the historical shipwrecks of Milwaukee County in its modern period. By 1900, Milwaukee's Lake trade had begun to change from grain to manufactured goods and fewer schooners were seen. Most vessel traffic was in the form of large, modern lake steamers, which began to dominate the bulk freight trade. Milwaukee's waterfront started to look much like it does today, with the modern straight-cut into the harbor and many of

the buildings seen today along the waterfront. The period 1900 – 1925 saw a surge in abandonments and scuttlings as the old sail and small steam vessels of the 1800s were replaced by giant bulk freighters and gas powered boats. Environmental laws did not prohibit the sinking of derelicts until well after WWII and many vessels were simply disposed of in the depths. The following list details all the historic total loss shipwrecks and hulls known in Milwaukee County from 1900 to 1925. This list includes only registered commercial vessels. Countless small, unregistered pleasure boats

grace the bottom off Milwaukee but these are outside the scope of this article.

Schooner *G. Ellen* (10194), built 1854, 78.6 x 21.3 x 5.0 ft., 71.41 gt., rebuilt c. 1865, 92.6 x 21.9 x 6.4 ft., 85.88 gt.

The schooner *G. Ellen* was bound from Pine Lake, MI to Racine when she became waterlogged 20 miles off Milwaukee with a cargo of wood on September 15, 1901. Her crew was taken off by the steamer *Nyack* and the schooner eventually drifted ashore on the Michigan coast near Grand Haven where she was abandoned. She is often incorrectly stated to be a Milwaukee wreck.

Schooner *Ella Ellinwood* (8604), built 1869, 106.0 x 26.0 x 9.0 ft., 163.17 gt., 3 masts.

The *Ellinwood* went aground north of Fox Point, 14 miles north of the Milwaukee harbor entrance on September 21, 1901 due to smoke from the city. Her crew escaped in their yawl, which capsized nearly drowning them. The schooner broke up on September 24. Her remains are likely still in the area but have never been identified.



*Schooners off Milwaukee — 1900, Brendon Baillod collection*



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## Association News

### Action Meeting

The next Action Planning meeting will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2009 at Brendon's house in Marshall, WI. All members are welcome to attend. For directions, meeting time or other details check the WUAA web site or email us at [wuaa@mailbag.com](mailto:wuaa@mailbag.com).

### WUAA 2009 Field Project Fireboat 23

The Fireboat #23 project, in Lake Michigan, offshore from Milwaukee, will continue this summer. The project schedule is being prepared. If you are interested in participating, contact Kimm Stabelfeldt or check the WUAA web site at [www.wuaa.org](http://www.wuaa.org).

### WUAA 2009 Field Project Bailey's Harbor

The project at Bailey's Harbor, in Door County, will also continue this summer. Contact Russ Leitz or check the WUAA web site, at [www.wuaa.org](http://www.wuaa.org), for information.



*Tug Molly Spencer, Brendon Baillod collection*

## ***Wisconsin's* Underwater Heritage**

is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association, a nonprofit association of individuals and organizations interested in studying and preserving the underwater cultural resources and historical sites of Wisconsin.

In addition to publishing this newsletter, the Association also holds

semiannual meetings and provides support to members' research and publication projects. Annual membership dues are \$20. For membership information write to the postal or email address below.

**Mail correspondence to:**  
WUAA  
PO Box 6081  
Madison, WI 53716

**email:** [wuaa@mailbag.com](mailto:wuaa@mailbag.com)

**web site:**  
[www.wuaa.org](http://www.wuaa.org)

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Marshall

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## From The Archives

*The following article is from the Door County Advocate of August 5, 1915.*

### To Test Stability Of *Columbus*

It is reported in the outside newspapers that a test is to be made to determine the stability of the excursion steamer *Christopher Columbus*. Owing to the scare that has been thrown into the hearts of the public by the disaster to the steamer *Eastland*, the officials of the Goodrich Transit Co., to prove the confidence they have in the big whaleback excursion boat, volunteered to let the public officials of Chicago take the craft out in the lake and capsize her if they can, being willing to risk the steamer if she can be rolled over and sent to the bottom.

It is claimed that the challenge is to be accepted and that the *Columbus* will be loaded with iron and an effort made to roll her over. President Goodrich says that if the boat can be upset he wants to know it and would rather have her do so under a test than with passengers

on board. They have other boats and he claims that if any of them are not stable it is time they were. His company has carried 300,000 passengers a year without having lost a soul in the 35 years they have been in the business.

*The following article is from the Door County Advocate of August 12, 1915.*

### Goodrich Make Stability Test

The recent disaster to the *Eastland* has caused much apprehension to the traveling public as to the safety of other excursion steamers and to offset their fears the Goodrich Transit Co. made a test at Chicago last Thursday which virtually was a bet in which the company put up 300 lives, a steamship worth over \$400,000 and their reputation that their boats were absolutely safe.

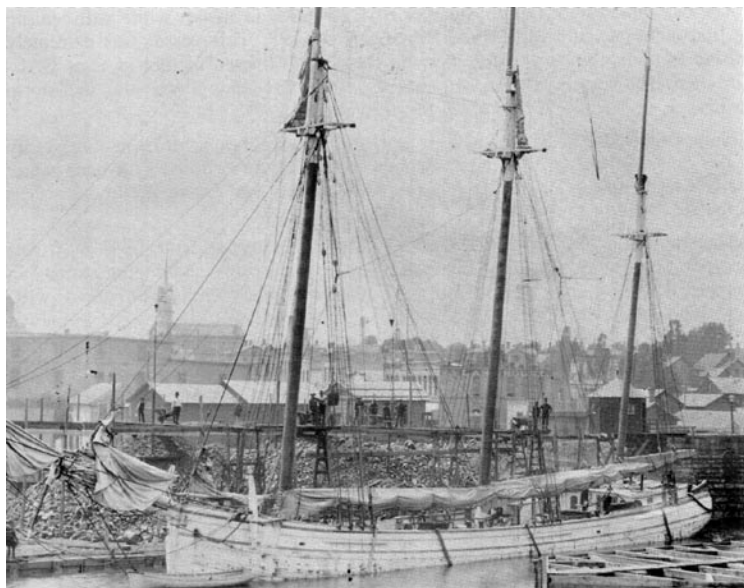
The test was made with the Goodrich steamer *Columbus*, the popular whaleback plying between Chicago and Milwaukee and the result caused much elation to the

officials of the company. It was made by distributing 100 lb. sacks of sand among the three passenger decks in such a manner as though they were people who had rushed to the sides of the boat. 7500 bags were carried aboard by the stevedores, it taking two hours to load them. This would be equal to 4687 passengers weighing 170 lbs. each and as the boat never carried more than 3736 persons, including the crew, the safety of the *Columbus* has been proven beyond a doubt.

On the craft during the test were the crew and stevedores, numbering about 250, besides 40 passengers and a number of newspaper men. A few of the passengers were a bit shaky during the test, the boat having listed to an angle of 10 to 12 degrees.

The test was in charge of James Forbes, head of the hull department of the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Co.

*Schooner Ella Ellinwood, Brendon Baillod collection*



## Milwaukee County Shipwrecks

*continued from page 1*

Schooner **A.B.C.F.M.** (12978), *built 1854 as the J & A Stronach, 109.9 x 23.9 x 2.0 ft., 143 gt.*

This schooner was renamed for the *American Baptist Council Foreign Mission* in October 1881, serving briefly as a floating bethel. After a long career as a lumber carrier, she was abandoned in the KK River in July 1900. She was towed out and scuttled off Milwaukee in the summer of 1902. Her remains have yet to be found.

Schooner **Dale** (unregistered), *built c.1890, 87 x 19 x c.5 ft.*

Milwaukee shipwreck researcher Gary Arlov tentatively identified the remains of a small wooden schooner inside the breakwater off the South Shore Yacht Club as the schooner *Dale*, lost July 16, 1903. The author would welcome additional historical information about the vessel and loss, as no matching vessel record or

*Schooner ABCFM Brendon Baillod collection*



loss account can be located in official registers.

Schooner **Rough and Ready** (110686), *built 1885, 41.0 x 14.7 x 4.3 ft., 12.0 gt.*

The little coastal schooner *Rough and Ready* was lost when she sank near Milwaukee on November 10, 1904. Further research would be needed to determine the exact location.

Schooner **John V. Jones** (75766), *built 1875, 125.2 x 27.0 x 8.6 ft., 236.02 gt., 3 masts.*

Bound Traverse Bay to Milwaukee with lumber, the old *J.V. Jones* became waterlogged and capsized on October 20, 1905 about midlake. The *Pere Marquette 18* took her crew off, but two had died of exposure. The hull was recovered by the revenue cutter *Tuscarora* and towed to Milwaukee where it was scuttled at an unknown location.

Wooden Steamer **Appomattox** (107236), *built 1896, 319.8 x 42.0 x 23.0 ft., 2643.0 gt.*

The steamer *Appomattox* was the largest wooden steamer ever built on the Lakes. She was lost November 2, 1905 when she went aground with a coal cargo just off present-day Atwater Beach due to smoke from the city. Her machinery was salvaged but her massive hullbed is now a popular dive site.

Wooden Steamer **Hiram R. Bond** (95966), *built 1888, 113.0 x 26.0 x 7.7 ft., 230.53 gt.*

The *Hiram R. Bond* was built as a steamer but later cut down to an unrigged scow and used as a sandsucker. She was returning to port in dense fog with a load of sand on May 29, 1905 when she was hit by the *Pere Marquette 20* just outside the harbor piers and sent to the bottom. Accounts state she was

dynamited and the site dredged, but a site located by Jerry Guyer is tentatively attributed to her.

Schooner **Cape Horn** (4345), *built 1857, 21.4 x 25.4 x 9.7 ft., 267 gt., 2 masts*

The *Cape Horn* was a 2 masted schooner that had a long career before being abandoned at Milwaukee. She was loaded with rocks, towed out by a fire tug and scuttled 100 feet off Iron Street on September 16, 1910. This places her right off the South Shore Yacht Club. Her remains have never been identified and may have been removed.

Schooner **Kate Howard** (14169), *built 1867, 97.3 x 21.9 x 6.4 ft., 96 gt., 2 masts.*

The schooner *Kate Howard* capsized 13 miles north of Milwaukee with a lumber cargo. She was recovered and towed to Milwaukee where her lumber was removed. She was then towed to Bay View, beached and abandoned (see photo). Her remains may still lie in the area, but have not been identified.

Fish Tug **Dan Costello** (6854), *built 1874, 48.0 x 12.8 x 6.3 ft., 22 gt., later 27.92 gt.*

The *Dan Costello* was a large steam fish tug that ran out of the Jones Island Fisheries. She was scuttled and abandoned near Jones Island on November 8, 1913. The exact location is unknown.

Schooner **Black Hawk** (2140), *launched 1861, 98.6 x 24.4 x 8.3 ft., 178 gt., rebuilt 1891 to 122 x 24 x 8.1 ft.*

After a long career, the *Black Hawk* lay for many years in the KK River bone yard until October 13, 1913 when she was towed out and burned as a spectacle for the Perry Centennial Celebration. Her remains have never been identified.

Steamer **Reliable** (110435), *built 1880 as a schooner barge, 91 x 23*

*x 6 ft., 97 gt., converted to a sand sucker c. 1890. Size also given as 87.0 x 21.9 x 5.6 ft., 69 gt.*

Captain Wm Krumer and his two young sons almost died when the sand-sucker *Reliable* capsized and exploded 2.5 miles south of the harbor entrance on August 16, 1913. They were taken off by a passing steamer, but the *Reliable* was reduced to kindling. Her remains may be one of the debris fields located by Jerry Guyer.

Wooden Steamer *Volunteer* (161592), built 1888, 270.8 x 41.6 x 20.4 ft., 1944.76 gt., later 2316 gt.

The big wooden steamer *Volunteer* was part of a large fleet of aged wooden steamers laid up at Milwaukee after 1910. Most were scrapped, but the *Volunteer* burned and was scuttled about a mile south of the present day South Shore Yacht Club on August 16, 1914. Her substantial remains are now a popular dive target inside the south breakwall.

*Tug Sioux, Brendon Baillod collection*



Tug *Welderine No. 2* (90004), built as Mollie Spencer 1869, 72.0 x 16.0 x 8.0 ft., 53.47 gt., renamed in 1913.

This large tug was abandoned at Milwaukee in 1911. On November 12, 1914, she was towed out into the Lake and intentionally burned and sunk. Her remains have yet to be identified.

Tug *Mae Martel* (92678), built 1895, 71.2 x 14.5 x 6.4 ft., 38.0 gt.

The big wooden tug *Mae Martel* was laid up at Milwaukee on June 15, 1915 and scuttled after a long career in the lumber industry. The exact location is unknown.

Tug *Sioux* (95759), built as the Henry Marshall 1883, 71.6 x 16.5 x 8.6 ft., 52 gt., renamed Jesse Spaulding in 1884, renamed *Sioux* 1900.

The *Sioux* was a wooden harbor work tug that had outlived her usefulness. In the summer of 1918 she was stripped and towed to a point behind the north breakwall near the

old city garbage disposal plant and scuttled next to the remains of the tug *Golden*. The site has never been located and may have been cleared by subsequent harbor work.

Tug *Golden* (86194), built 1892, 63.9 x 17.6 x 8.0 ft., 44.0 gt.

The wooden tug *Golden* was a harbor work tug that was abandoned for old age. In the summer of 1918 she was stripped and towed to a point behind the north breakwall near the old city garbage disposal plant and scuttled next to the remains of the tug *Sioux*. The site has never been located and may have been cleared by subsequent harbor work.

Schooner *George W. Westcott* (10335), built 1863, 81.66 x 24 x 9.16; 111.69 gt., rebuilt 1876, 111.5 x 24.66 x 7.66, 122.87 gt.

The old schooner *George W. Westcott* was intentionally beached and stripped just north of Bay View in 1918. Her remains are likely to have been removed.

Tug *S.S. Coe* (23450), launched 1868, 66.3 x 15.0 x 6.8 ft., 31.45 gt.

The old wooden tug *S.S. Coe* was abandoned at Milwaukee in 1917. In the summer of 1919, she was towed out off Milwaukee and scuttled in deep water. Her remains have yet to be identified.

Tug *Starke* (116269), built 1889, 65.3 x 19.1 x 7.7 ft., 49.24 gt.

The wooden steam tug *Starke* had a long career at Milwaukee before being laid up some time after 1910. On November 12, 1919, she was sunk in Milwaukee Harbor in front of the Chase Bag

*continued on page 6*

## Milwaukee County Shipwrecks

*continued from page 5*

Company.

Schooner **Rosa Belle** (21302), *built 1863, 100.1 x 26.3 x 7.1 ft., 132 gt., 2 masts, later 115 gt.*

On October 30, 1921, the schooner *Rosa Belle* was bound from High Island to Benton Harbor, MI when she capsized in a gale about mid-lake off Milwaukee. When she was discovered by the passing steamer *Ann Arbor No. 4*, all her crew of 11 had vanished. Her hull was towed to Racine, stripped and beached north of the Racine Lighthouse. She is often incorrectly stated as a Milwaukee area wreck.

Steamer **John D. Dewar** (76571), *built 1885, 72.0 x 15.5 x 7.0 ft., 52.0 gt.*

On September 19, 1921, the little passenger steamer *John D. Dewar* was being towed from Chicago to Sturgeon Bay for a rebuild by the steamer *Silver Spray* when she sprang a leak and sank behind the Milwaukee breakwall. She was abandoned in place with her engines and boilers being salvaged. Her upper works were burned in 1923.

Her location has not been found.

Steamer **Norlund** (136131), *built as the Eugene C. Hart 1890, 126.5 x 25.0 x 9.5 ft., 407.56 gt., renamed Norlund 1919.*

On November 13, 1922, the passenger steamer *Norlund* was bound for Milwaukee in a storm when she sprang a serious leak. She ran for shore, but foundered just over a mile out. Her 19 crew and passengers escaped. Her wreck was found in 1958 by John Steele, his first wreck discovery.

Steamer **M.F.D. No. 23** (130711), *built as the August F. Janssen 1896, 100.5 x 24.7 x 10.2 ft., 133 gt., renamed in 1903.*

The *MFD No. 23* had a long career protecting the Milwaukee waterfront from fire before outlasting her usefulness in 1922. On July 27, 1923, she was towed out and scuttled directly off the straight cut. Her likely remains were located by Jerry Guyer in January 2005 and were the subject of an archeological survey.

Barge **Transfer** (80268), *built as schooner barge William McGregor 1872, 200.0 x 33.9 x 13.7 ft., 732 gt., rebuilt as barge Transfer, 1910.*

The big barge *Transfer* had been owned by the Milwaukee Western Fuel Co, who abandoned her in

1910. After many years, she was towed out into the lake and intentionally sunk on December 6, 1923. Her unloading machinery was removed prior to her scuttling and placed in the *EMBA*. Her possible remains are believed to have been located by Jerry Guyer.

Gas Fish Tug **Mayflower** (213449), *built 1915, 33.5 x 9.4 x 3.9 ft., 12 gt.*

Three lives were lost when the fish tug *Mayflower* burned about 8 miles off Milwaukee on June 11, 1924. Two burned bodies were found on raft about 8 miles east of Port Washington, but the vessel had gone to the bottom.

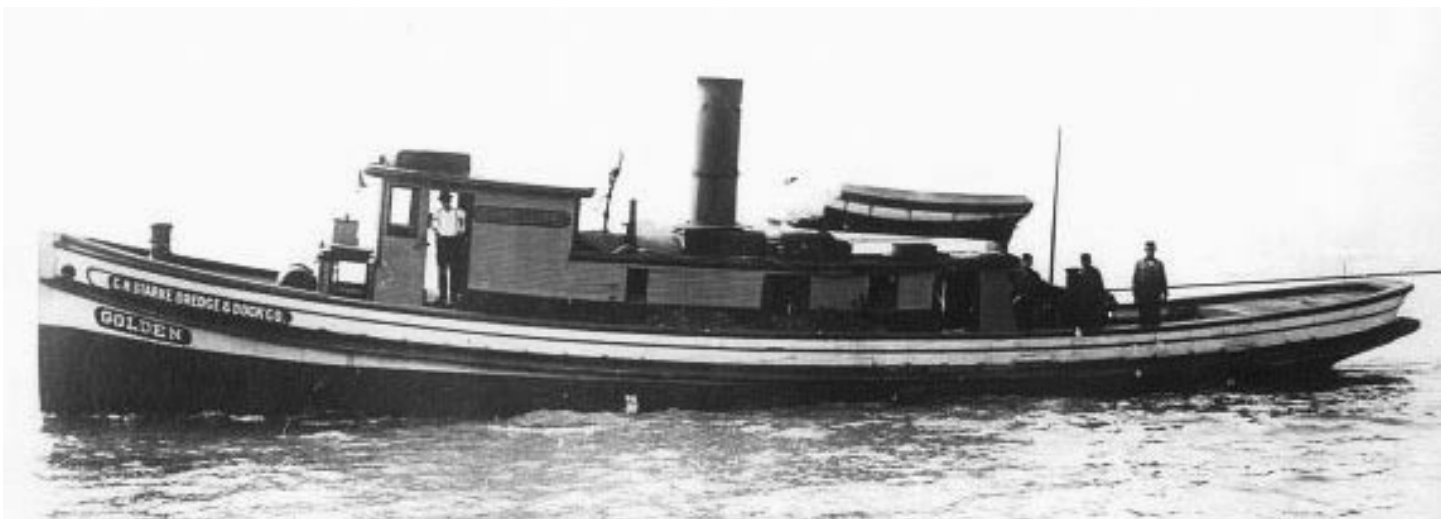
Steamer **Lightship No. 57** (no number), *built 1891, 90 x 20 x 8 ft., 130 gt.*

This venerable Great Lakes lightship was owned by the District 12 US Lighthouse Board and had served as the Grays Reef Lightship for many years. She was abandoned in Milwaukee Harbor in 1924 after being sold to the South Shore Yacht Club as a clubhouse vessel. Her remains are now buried.

Sand Sucker **Ellen** (136358), *built as a scow 1893, 121.0 x 30.6 x 8.0 ft., 350 gt.*

The sand sucker *Ellen* was abandoned at the foot of Lyon Street in

*Tug Golden, Brendon Baillod collection*



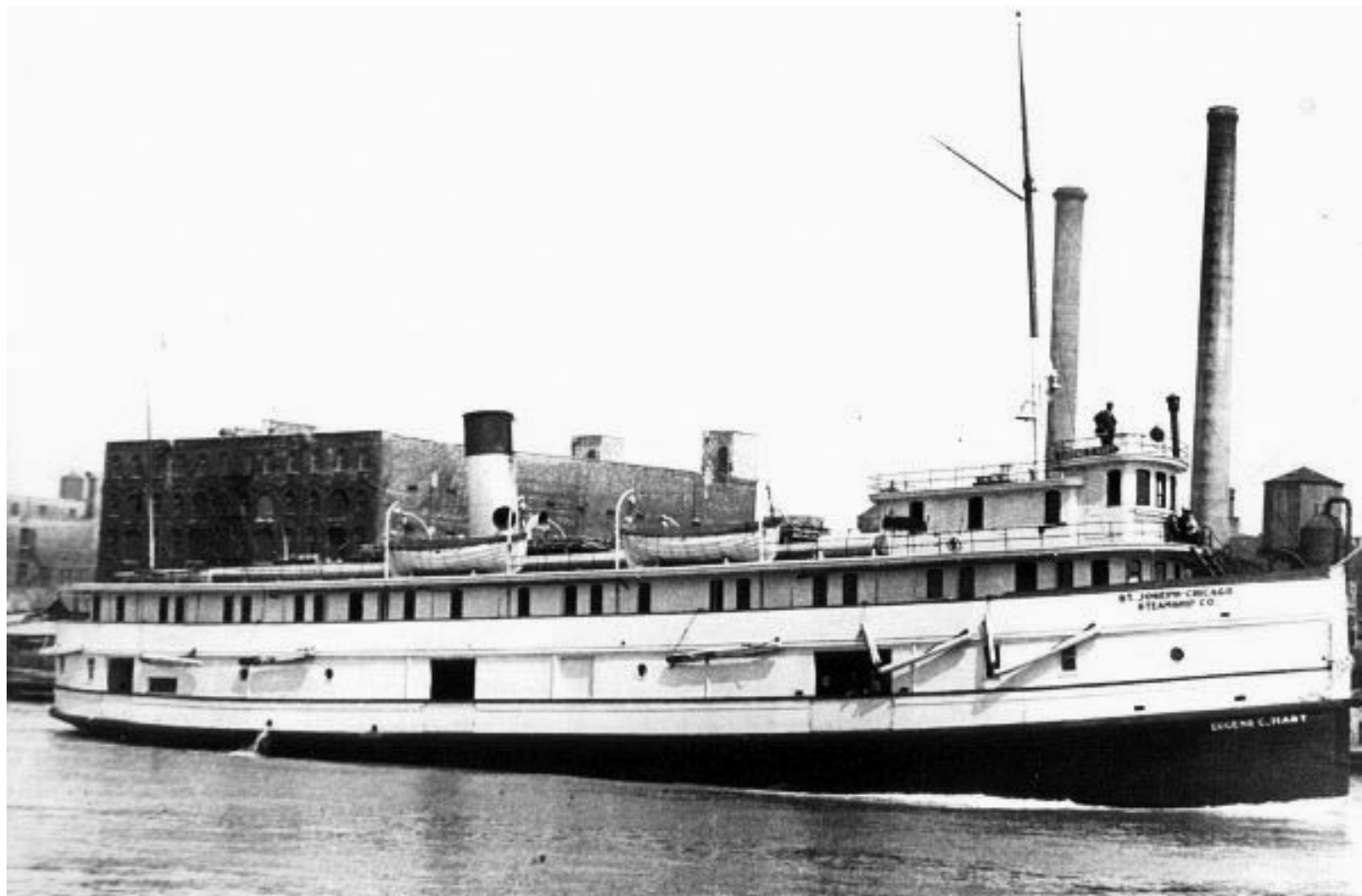


the east branch of the Milwaukee River in 1924 due to age and condition. Her remains were removed and scrapped in the summer of 1931 by Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co. ■



*Steamer John D. Dewar, Brendon Baillod collection*

*Steamer Norlund, Brendon Baillod collection*



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



*For those interested in the study and preservation of  
Wisconsin's underwater history and cultural resources.*

## Coming Events

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| March 20-21, 2009 | <b>Ghost Ships Festival</b> , in Milwaukee. Films, seminars and presentations about great Lakes Shipwrecks. Sponsored by Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation. For information check their web site at <a href="http://www.ghost-ships.org">www.ghost-ships.org</a> . |
| March 21, 2009    | <b>Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association Underwater Survey Workshop</b> , in Milwaukee. 9:30 am - 12:00 pm. For information check the WUAA web site at <a href="http://www.wuaa.org">www.wuaa.org</a> .  |
| April 18, 2009    | <b>Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association Action Planning Meeting</b> , in Marshall, WI. For information check the WUAA web site at <a href="http://www.wuaa.org">www.wuaa.org</a> or email <a href="mailto:wuaa@mailbag.com">wuaa@mailbag.com</a> .                  |
| April 25, 2009    | <b>Mysteries &amp; Histories Beneath The Inland Seas</b> , in Holland, MI. Sponsored by Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates. For information check their web site at <a href="http://www.michiganshipwrecks.org">www.michiganshipwrecks.org</a> .                       |
| June 13-14, 2009  | <b>Lighthouse Walk</b> , Door County, WI. For information check the Door County Maritime Museum web site at <a href="http://www.dcmmm.org">www.dcmmm.org</a>   |