

### Coming Events

- Sep.20-23, 2001 **Underwater Surveys in Door County**, conducted by East Carolina University and WUAA. Contact Cathy Fach, 608-271-8172.
- Nov. 10, 2001 **Gales of November**, featured speaker Jean-Michael Cousteau. Contact Mary George, 218-727-2497 or email [info@lsmma.com](mailto:info@lsmma.com).
- Nov. 11, 2001 **WUAA Fall Meeting**. Duluth, MN, contact Russ Green, 608-271-8172.
- Nov. 11, 2001 **Smoke on the Water**, WUAA Workshop conducted by C. Patrick Labadie. Duluth, MN, contact Cathy Fach, 608-271-8172.
- Mar. 16, 2002 **Ghost Ships Festival**. Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, Milwaukee, contact Brendon Baillod, 414-403-3240(Cell), [brendon@baillod.com](mailto:brendon@baillod.com), [www.ghost-ships.org](http://www.ghost-ships.org).

**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.***

# Wisconsin's UNDERWATER HERITAGE

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September 2001

## The Wreck of the Luxury Yacht *Rosinco*: An Early Twentieth Century Time Capsule, Part 2

by Dr. Richard Boyd, Jefferson Gray, Russell Green and  
Dr. John Jensen

*In the June 2001 issue of Wisconsin's Underwater Heritage the history and construction of the palatial motor yacht Rosinco was examined briefly. This second installment will highlight the Rosinco's connection to Wisconsin, as well as the yacht's final voyage and archeological significance.*

At the time of its loss in 1928, the *Rosinco* was owned by industrialist Colonel Robert H. Morse, then vice-president and part owner of Fairbanks-Morse and Company in Beloit, Wisconsin. In an era of unprecedented prosperity and leisure activity, Morse's elaborate yacht was a well-recognized symbol of emerging American opulence. Specifically, Morse's yacht, and others like it, reflected the prosperity of a new class of entrepreneur: the



Dining salon of the *Georgiana III*. The Motor Boat 1916.

wealthy industrialist. As the twentieth century unfolded, many successful and famous industrialists cruised the Great Lakes in majestic boats. These individuals included the Dodge brothers (automotive), James J. Hill (transportation), William Harkness (Standard Oil financier), Arthur Shattuck (Kimberly-Clark paper), Russell Alger (lumber), Thomas Cole (mining) and Andrew Carnegie (steel), among others. The vessels they constructed or purchased for private use marked an era when prestige and power afloat were embodied in singular boats. However, their magnificent motor yachts plied the Great Lakes for only a short time. None are known to have survived to modern times, and only a few are represented in the Great Lakes archeological record. It is possible that only two vessels comprise this exclusive latter group: W.L. Harkness' yacht *Gunilda*, which rests in nearly 300 feet of icy Canadian water in Lake Superior, and Colonel Robert H. Morse's *Rosinco*. These two splendid vessels may be the last examples of an era when prestige and power on land were embodied in extraordinary boats.

The final transfer of *Rosinco*'s ownership assigned new significance to the already remarkable craft, for it is indeed difficult to mention Robert



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### Inside, page 4: *Shipwrecks in Review* by Dr. Richard Boyd

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Morse without making reference to Fairbanks-Morse, in the same manner that one associates John D. Rockefeller with the Standard Oil conglomerate, or George Westinghouse with the Westinghouse Electric empire. Fairbanks-Morse and Company was without question an important contributor to the industrial development of Wisconsin and the nation in general. During the nineteenth-century, Fairbanks-Morse was

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A stateroom on the *Georgiana III*. The Motor Boat 1916.

## Association News

### WUAA Fall Meeting

The Fall meeting of the Association will be held in Duluth, MN on Sunday, Nov. 11, 2001, at 9:00 a.m. at the Canal Park Museum. Items of action will include election of officers. For more information contact Tom Villand at 608-221-1996 or tvill@chorus.net.

### Steam Engine Workshop

A workshop on marine steam engines will be held in Duluth, MN on Nov. 11, the day after the Gales of November show. See the enclosed flyer for details and registration information.

### The Dyreson Sawmill Project

June 30th, 8:30 am, ten people gathered to slog thru the waters of the Yahara River in search of the meaning of the logs that had been long ago placed on the river bottom.

The water level was high, one spot was actually over Tom's head, but was clearer than expected.

The logs lay parallel to each other, touching one another, forming two main rows with some cross logs. The upstream log ends are buried in gravelly muck while the downstream ends stick up into the water. This "pile of logs" goes most of the way across the river but, near the west side they stop. Here there are some medium sized rocks where the deepest and maybe the fastest portion of the current goes. These are the features mapped in what has become a WUAA project.

Preliminary reports indicate that this may well be the remains of a crude dam. Craig Malven has an album full of "low water level photos" showing what certainly appears to be a dam. In fact, he has located a reference to a sawmill dam in the area and other mentions of dams.

What's next? We'll go back and do more detailed mapping. Danny Aerts has sketched out what we have so far. Future mapping may happen this



*Survey team at the Yahara River site.  
Photograph by Tom Villand.*

**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 \$15. For membership information, contact the secretary or write to the address below.

#### President

Jeff Gray  
Madison, 608-271-1382

#### Vice-President

Andy Jalbert  
Madison, 608-257-4840

#### Secretary

Russel Leitz  
Oshkosh, 920-231-9082

#### Treasurer

Tom Villand  
Madison, 608-221-1996

#### Newsletter Editor

Danny Aerts  
Middleton, 608-821-0048

#### Activities Coordinator

Cathy Klecker  
Marshall, 608-655-3769

#### Website Manager

Colin Zylka  
Waukesha, 262-524-0145

#### Directors

Richard Boyd  
Delafield, 414-464-2092

Robert Korth  
Gresham, 715-787-4444

Janet Defnet  
Mukwonago, 414-363-9874

#### Send correspondence to:

WUAA  
PO Box 6081  
Madison, WI 53716

**email:** wuaa@mailbag.com

**website:**  
www.mailbag.com/users/wuaa/

fall or next spring, when there may be less water and better visibility?!

We are also ready to get into the research part of the project. We already have a couple of files of facts, thanks to Craig and Hank Whipple, which we can use for a base to work from. If you'd like to get involved in the research, contact Thomas Villand at tvill@chorus.net or 608-221-1996. He will send a list of what we know and some ideas of what needs to be done.

### ECU-WHS-WUAA Project

Thursday, September 20 to  
Sunday, September 23, 2001

Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

A field opportunity for all association members! East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies has been training graduate students in Wisconsin waters for years. This year, Dr. Brad Rodgers will lead a small group of students to Sturgeon Bay for three weeks as part of their annual fall field school. The Association will be assisting in ECU's mapping efforts over a long weekend from Thursday, Sept. 20 - Sunday, Sept. 23.

ECU students and faculty will be on hand Thursday and Friday to explain ECU's mapping style and how

WUAA's contribution will fit into the project. Wisconsin Historical Society underwater archeologists Russ and Cathy Green will continue to oversee the project on Saturday and Sunday.

The project will cover underwater mapping, as well as transferring the archeological drawings to the site plan. The vessels slated for documentation are three vessels at "Birmingham" on the eastern shore of Sturgeon Bay. All three wooden vessels had been involved in the stone trade at local quarries. The sites lie in 0-10 feet of water, so snorkeling as well as diving opportunities will be available. Participants should bring their dive gear and tanks. Mapping tools will be provided by WUAA and ECU. Please come with tanks filled.

A cabin has been set aside at Birmingham Cottages for WUAA members. Those wishing to stay there will share the cost of the cabin. The cabins are very near the site and do have kitchen facilities, but only 3 beds, so keep in mind that it may involve sleeping bags on the floor. Please get in touch with WUAA member Russ Leitz at 920-231-9082, or at rleitz@vbe.com if you plan to use these accommodations. Space is limited, so contact us as soon as possible.

It is preferable if participants could be there all four days to insure consistency in mapping, etc. However, if you can only come up for a portion of the time that is fine, just indicate which days you will be there so we can plan accordingly.

Participants must sign up in advance! Contact Russ Leitz as soon as possible and let him know how many days you can help out, and if you need accommodation. This is a great opportunity to learn about or brush up on mapping techniques – not to mention watching the leaves turn in beautiful Door County. Members with no field experience to you old pros are all welcome, so come take part in the ECU-WHS-WUAA fall event.

### Figureheads

Cathy Green will present her work on the historical study of ship figureheads to the Four Lakes Scuba Club in Madison on Wednesday, November 7, 2001. The meeting will be held at Jingles Coliseum Bar, 232 E. Olin Avenue. WUAA members are welcome. For further information contact Danny Aerts at 608-821-0048 or djaerts@facstaff.wisc.edu.



*Surveying the sawmill  
site on the Yahara River.  
Photograph by  
Tom Villand.*



## Shipwrecks in Review

by Dr. Richard Boyd

As is our periodic custom, we again review noteworthy underwater archeological happenings involving shipwrecks, centering upon events in the Great Lakes, but also mentioning world-wide discoveries or activities of special importance or particular interest.

This period on the Lakes has not boasted a large number of new shipwreck discoveries, but at least one of great significance has occurred. Along Lake Huron's eastern shore, another "ghost ship" from the Great Storm of 1913, the *Wexford*, was found! That freighter was transporting a cargo of grain and steel rails when she disappeared with all hands in November of 1913 while steaming south from the Goderich area. For years, wreck hunters have unsuccessfully combed that region of the lake for the 250-foot vessel. Last year, a salmon fisherman scanning the lake for fish between Grand Bend and Bayfield noted an unusual bottom contour about 11 kilometers offshore. He reported this to local divers who subsequently confirmed the wreck of the *Wexford* sitting upright in 77 feet of water. The ship is in excellent condition, although it shows signs of having received a terrible battering in the storm and is also covered with a layer of zebra mussels. Several excellent videos have already been made on

the wreck and are now making the rounds of various underwater film festivals.

The Great Storm of 1913 swallowed eight vessels on Lake Huron. With the finding of the *Wexford*, only two vessels still remain undiscovered: the *Hydrus* and *James Carruthers*. A few years ago, the long-lost freighter *Regina* was discovered in 85 feet of water off Lexington, Michigan, and has been a popular dive site ever since. Since the *Wexford* is in Canadian waters, it is under the protection of the Province of Ontario.

Also on Lake Huron at Alpena, the first national marine sanctuary on the Great lakes was officially dedicated on October 7, 2000. The 448-square mile reserve, called Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve contains over 100 shipwrecks and is the first federal marine designate in 25 years to be created specifically for historical preservation. It is the culmination of almost a decade of work to convince local businesses and politicians of the value of a state-and-federal co-operative venture. The State of Michigan and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), co-administrators of the sanctuary, will now begin a complete archeological survey of all underwater sites, most of which have been known and heavily dived for many years. Although Michigan's share of operating costs is estimated to be about \$1 million per year, no user fee will be charged to visiting divers.

In other preservation activities, the State of Michigan approved two more shipwreck preserves during the year 2000. The State's smallest unit is now at DeTour Passage and contains

only about 14 square miles of the Upper Peninsula, sandwiched between the mainland and Drummond Island. A number of interesting shipwrecks have been found in this area during the past decade. The DeTour Reef Lighthouse is also being conserved by a private organization which has conducted an underwater archeological survey of the bottomlands adjacent to the light. The second preserve, Southwest Michigan, encompasses an area from the Indiana border to Holland, Michigan, and out to a depth of 120 feet. The sanctuary contains a number of important shipwrecks, including the schooner *Rockaway* on which a prominent archeological study was conducted during the 1980's.

It is a well known fact that many unique commercial boats were created to transport cargo on the inland river systems of the Midwest. A number of these boats are known only from historical descriptions and drawings; no actual samples have ever been found. Recently, low water near Michigan's Harvey Marina at Sault Ste. Marie has exposed the remains of a rare double-ended, Mackinaw-style craft. Vessels of this type, about 80 feet in length, were constructed in the eastern Upper Peninsula and used to move cargo on the St. Mary's and other northern river systems. Plans are currently underway to survey and protect this special find.

On Lake Superior in May of 1953, the ore freighter *Henry Steinbrenner* sank off Isle Royale with heavy loss of life. For years, speculation has occurred on her final deep water resting place, usually cited as about 20 miles south of Point Houghton on Isle Royale. Lake Superior Magazine

(August / September 2000) reports in a "letter to the editor", that this is incorrect and that the wreck is really five miles off Saginaw Point on a track of 150 degrees. Whereas Houghton Point is situated on the south end of Siskiwit Bay near Fisherman's Home, Saginaw Point is miles further up the island between Chippewa Harbor and Middle Islands Passage. Thomas R. Thornton of Dollar Bay, Michigan, reported witnessing the sinking along with four other people back in '53. He further claims to have located the hull on his fishfinding sonar during visits to the island in 1995, although he did not take LORAN numbers at the site. Hopefully, some enterprising wreck divers will check this out during the summer months, although the vessel will likely be too deep for any practical diving excursions.

As reported in the last review article, The Great lakes Shipwreck Historical Society at Whitefish Point has undertaken a search for the World War I French minesweepers which disappeared on Lake Superior in November of 1918. Their planned sonar search of Superior Shoals during the year 2000 was postponed due to bad weather. This year their equipment arsenal will include a new ROV which incorporates sonar, still and video cameras, and a robotic grapple. The apparatus can operate to depths of 1,000 feet.

Under the discipline of underwater geology, a giant native copper boulder has been found in Lake Superior near Eagle River. The Keweenaw Peninsula is geologically unique in many respects, one of these being the presence of pure native metal deposits which were formed before Earth had an oxygen atmosphere. Nearly pure nuggets of copper, silver, and even gold have been mined along the Lake and also found underwater. A diver from the geology department of Michigan Tech University (MTU) at

Houghton / Hancock has located a huge submerged copper mass, measuring 18-feet across and weighing over 20 tons! The boulder may be raised this summer and displayed at the Seaman Mineral Museum at MTU. Other huge native copper deposits have been discovered over the years, but rarely underwater!

On Lake Erie, the State of Ohio is in the process of establishing its first underwater preserve at Kelley's Island. The State Historical Society and DNR are working with the local island council which has given final approval to the project. The preserve would contain at least five shipwrecks, including the 104-foot steamer *Adventure* which burned and sank in shallow water near an island dock in 1903. The steamer has been a popular wreck dive for decades, and some artifacts removed by divers in the 1960's have now been returned to the site. Like Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, Kelley's Island was once a leading producer of limestone and the wrecks lost near the island were part of its "stone fleet".

On the far western end of Lake Erie, low water has exposed a very interesting, non-shipwreck archeological entity last seen in 1930. A log causeway from the War of 1812, known as Hull's Road, was uncovered by receding water. On his way to defend Detroit from the British, American General William Hull encountered a swampy region which impeded his forced march. Hull had his troops construct a log roadway capable of handling the infantry and wagons. Although the wooden road allowed Hull to reach Detroit in three days, he was eventually ousted by the British. Over the years his road was inundated by a rising Lake Erie, not to be exposed again until 1930 and once more in 1999. Michigan may nominate the site for placement on the Register of Historic Places.

Out on Lake Ontario, a single shipwreck preserve was established in spring of the year 2000 by a joint effort of the Oswego Maritime Foundation, Sea Grant and the state of New York. The steamer *David W. Mills*, which ran aground on Ford Shoal near Oswego in 1919, has been buoyed and designated as a cultural sanctuary dive site, the first on Lake Ontario. Today the vessel rests in about 20 feet of water with many parts of the hull and machinery still in fair shape. This preserve is the first of several planned for Lakes Erie and Ontario plus the St. Lawrence Seaway.

As WUAA members heard several years ago in a special program given by Art Cohn, a gunship from Benedict Arnold's Revolutionary War fleet has been found in Lake Champlain. Actually, Arnold scuttled most of his boats in the lake after a defeat by the British in 1776. Over the years, artifacts from this fleet have unexpectedly come to light. For example, a bronze cannon "swivel gun" found in the lake in 1932 recently appeared on E-Bay, posted to sell for \$2,000. Inscribed on the gun was manufacturing data which convinced Art Cohn that the weapon was indeed from Arnold's fleet. Negotiations by New York's U.S. Attorney, the Navy and the General Services Administration with the possessor of the cannon resulted in an amiable return of the artifact to the Lake Champlain Museum.

In an unprecedented move, the State of Rhode Island has used the legal technique of declaring salvage rights to protect important Revolutionary War wrecks from treasure hunters and looters. Underwater archeologists in Rhode Island have sought the exact location of 13 vessels sunk by the British in 1778 when Newport was under siege by

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## Shipwrecks in Review

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American and French forces. Some of the wrecks had been located previously by vandals and seriously pilfered. Among the undiscovered wrecks was the famous *Endeavour*, the "science ship" used by Captain James Cook to explore the Pacific. When lost near Rhode Island, the vessel was under private ownership and had been renamed the *Lord Sandwich*.

State explorers had found two sunken vessels, but were aware that artifact hunters were closing in on the others. Furthermore, state authorities were uncertain whether current antiquity laws would cover and protect all the sites involved. Thus, in a move often used by salvagers themselves, Rhode Island invoked admiralty law and were legally awarded custody of all wooden, non-motorized vessels resting within a two-square mile sector of Narragansett Bay. The grant, called a preferred maritime lien, protects the site from salvage by domestic or international companies and from other claims of ownership.

Up in Alaska, a rare and interesting, non-maritime, underwater artifact was discovered by accident. A group of archeologists were conducting a tour of previously excavated habitation sites when several participants noticed the remains of a wooden fish trap in a creek, apparently exposed by erosion of the stream bank. The structure, composed of spruce strips tied together with cord, was in remarkable condition. Samples of the wood were carbon-dated to around AD 1500, about the same time when the nearby camp sites were last occupied. Excavation and preservation of the fish trap is currently underway.

## The Wreck of the Luxury Yacht *Rosinco*, Part 2

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formed by the acquisition and amalgamation of diverse manufacturers. The original E. & T. Fairbanks Company, begun in 1830, was a fabricator of platform scales. These highly successful products were widely employed in industry, agriculture and postal services throughout the eastern United States and Europe. By 1860, an extensive Fairbanks sales network had been developed and distributors were allowed to use the company name. Charles H. Morse, an E. & T. Fairbanks apprentice in 1850, eventually created Fairbanks-Morse, a distribution company that introduced Fairbanks scales to the American Midwest.

Success, and capital, came quickly, enabling Morse to acquire new industrial products for his growing company, including a unique windmill that became an enormous marketing success and a very popular railroad water pumping station. By 1890, Fairbanks-Morse expanded into an astonishing array of mechanical and electrical products including farm tractors, air compressors, steam pumps, bridge machinery, small boats, magnetos, generators, marine engines, feed grinders, railway motor cars and locomotives. Charles H. Morse died in 1921 at the age of 88; he had successfully guided his company into a position of leadership in American engine technology. During the 1920s, his sons, Charles H. Jr. and Robert H. Morse, assumed the roles of president and vice-president respectively. Colonel Robert Morse became vice-chairman of the board in 1927 and was president and general manager by 1931. Gas and diesel engines, including a line of smaller, well-respected marine diesel engines, eventually became a mainstay of the

business. The *Rosinco* was, in fact, fitted with a Fairbanks-Morse Model 35 marine diesel engine in 1927.

### Final Voyage

*Rosinco's* final voyage began in September of 1928 when Morse and a small entourage cruised from Chicago to Milwaukee. Aboard were Morse, his son and three friends, and George Lay Weed, a prestigious Chicago banker. After a short layover in Milwaukee on Tuesday, 18 September, the elder Morse decided to visit the Fairbanks-Morse plant in Beloit. An ardent aviation enthusiast, Morse's son John subsequently persuaded his father to charter a flight from Beloit back to Chicago. The *Rosinco*, then flagship of the Chicago Yacht Club, was to return to Chicago with only Weed and the ship's crew aboard.

With its seven passengers embarked and Captain Edward Ellison in command, *Rosinco* departed Milwaukee harbor late Tuesday evening. The five-man crew consisted of Harry Marumrud (chief engineer), G. L. Beatty (steward), John Larson (lookout), and able seamen W. H. Cerben and Lars Rorick. Ten miles off Kenosha at 2:45 a.m. on Wednesday, 19 September, the vessel reportedly struck some floating "box timber" that apparently ruptured the steel hull. The duty crew quickly awakened those who were sleeping below decks and everyone hurried topside. Within minutes it was plainly evident that *Rosinco* had been mortally damaged and was sinking rapidly. Everyone promptly jumped ship and swam to the small motor launch towed behind the yacht in tandem with a tiny rowboat. No sooner had the crew and their guest cast the line off that teth-



ered the launch to *Rosinco*, when the yacht's stern lifted into the air and the grand vessel slid, bow first, beneath 185 feet of water. Only one casualty was incurred: the ship's canary mascot.

The escapees fired up the launch's motor and headed west for shore, but after less than a mile the craft began leaking. The excited castaways bailed vigorously, while Captain Ellison signaled for help with a small flashlight. After two hours of motoring and bailing, and still two miles offshore, the launch was spotted by Coast Guard Surfman Paul Berg who was patrolling the beach near Kenosha when he noticed Ellison's S.O.S. signal. Berg notified station commander William McGraw, a lifesaving boat was dispatched, and soon the shipwrecked men of the *Rosinco* found themselves safely ashore. The following day, all were on their way back to Chicago.

During the ensuing days, considerable conjecture arose as to what sank the *Rosinco*. What could cause a robust steel vessel to founder so quickly? Originally, reports circulated that the vessel had been struck by "box timber," that is, a raft of sawed wooden beams. This appeared consistent with the fact that many docks in the Racine-Kenosha area were undergoing renovation and much debris from these projects was floating in

the lake. Another theory centered on a pile-driving barge that was lost and adrift in northern Lake Michigan. Some speculated that this craft might have been blown southward where it eventually collided with Morse's yacht. A thorough search of the area, carried out by the Coast Guard, failed to produce evidence of a rogue barge. As for the *Rosinco*, only a few floating cushions, life preservers, a captain's hat, and some neckties remained. Days later the *Kenosha Evening News* reported that a Racine fishing tug had hauled up a small boat from the wreck of the *Rosinco*. Beyond this, however, the vessel was a complete loss and the Coast Guard considered the incident closed.

### The *Rosinco* Today

Due to Lake Michigan's cold fresh water, the *Rosinco's* hull, deck and deckhouse are structurally intact and exceptionally well preserved. The vessel is resting upright on the lake bottom in 185 feet of water. The wreck is imbedded, with the bow rising approximately 8-9 feet above the clay bottom and the stern rising roughly 5 feet. A review of historic photographs and underwater video footage, combined with the knowledge that the *Rosinco* was built with a 5 foot draft, suggests that perhaps 5-6 feet of the wreck is imbedded below the lake bottom. Consequently, with much of the vessel exposed and accessible, the wreck possesses considerable archeological potential. Moreover, the buried portion of the wreck is presumably better preserved than that which is exposed, offering even greater archeological potential. In light of the *Rosinco's* role as a naval auxiliary vessel, information relating to the vessel's engineering and construction characteristics would be particularly interesting.



*Engine hatch of the Rosinco.  
Photograph by Brad Friend*

At the bow, the vessel's deck remains virtually unchanged. The windlass and associated fittings are well preserved and are the largest artifacts among a collection of intact deck cleats, chocks, scuppers, two hawse pipes and an exposed chain locker. The wooden deck, presumably laid in teak, is intact and its seams are clearly visible beneath a light sheen of silt. At the cutwater, a copper emblem depicting a pair of wings is easily discernable and indicative of the yacht's elaborate design. Two forward facing portholes are missing from the deckhouse, and a heavy, small mesh commercial fishing net is tangled in the wreck's starboard side deck rail and has collapsed several feet of railing.

Amidships, the deck rails remain standing. On the starboard side, a steel gangway, once lifted and secured to the side of the yacht while underway, is now deployed and leads down to the lake bottom. Wooden framed storm and screen doors remain securely hinged on the aft and port side doorways of the deckhouse. Despite the efforts of looters, some china, cutlery and furniture remains in the deckhouse, as do the cupboards and counter tops. A number of chairs have been removed from the vessel and now lay in a twisted pile beneath the extended gangway.



*Fan on the Rosinco.  
Photograph by Brad Friend*

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## The Wreck of the *Rosinco*, Part 2

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Aft of the sizable deckhouse, three of the four skylights above the engine room are intact. An impressive bank of approximately 15 storage batteries, still hooked in series and to the engine, are housed in an on-deck locker that surrounds the engine room skylight. When not under diesel power, these substantial batteries supplied power to the vessel's many electrical conveniences, including fans, elegant light fixtures and telegraph for communication between the engine room and navigation bridge.

In the stern, fittings for the life boat davits are visible, as is a small section of missing deck. On the starboard side an unobstructed companionway provides access to below deck areas. A deposit of clay on deck, a foot thick and approximately 4 feet in circumference, suggests that the *Rosinco* landed on the bottom stern first. This may have produced a "shovel effect" that resulted in clay from the lake bottom being deposited on deck. Structural damage from the impact appears inconsequential, how-

ever, and the yacht's rudder and propeller may be intact, but hidden beneath the sediment.

Below decks, the yacht's interior is likely in good state of preservation, and should yield excellent information relating to the vessel's elaborate accommodations, shipboard decoration and workmanship. Due to its sudden catastrophic sinking, the *Rosinco* affords a rare glimpse into life on one of the most luxurious Great Lakes yachts of the early twentieth century. Historic documents reveal that when the yacht was launched, the salon, dining area and staterooms were finely appointed with oak and mahogany paneling, beams and furniture; the wreck's cold freshwater environment is ideal for preserving waterlogged wood. Notably, the vessel's Fairbanks-Morse diesel power plant and associated machinery are presently intact.

As mentioned in the previous issue of *Underwater Heritage*, the *Rosinco* has been found eligible for

the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Service is currently processing the vessel's nomination; it should be officially listed later this year. As can be seen by this brief two-part chronicle, the *Rosinco* possesses significant historical and archeological value. Built by Harlan and Hollingsworth as a finely appointed pleasure craft and WW I naval auxiliary vessel, the *Rosinco* survives as a well-preserved example of the relative handful of vessels intended to serve that dual purpose. Additionally, this national significance is paralleled with tremendous regional and local historical importance. The vessel's reported claim as the first diesel yacht on Lake Michigan, as well as its Fairbanks-Morse connection, brings the *Rosinco's* history closer to home. Finally, the yacht's remarkable state of preservation ensures that at least some of the lingering historical questions may still, despite years of looting, be answered archeologically.



*Working in the Yahara River.  
Photograph by Tom Villand.*

## Lumberman Project

There has been a great deal of concern with respect to the deterioration of the wreck of the schooner *Lumberman*. Lost in the Spring of 1893 off Oak Creek, Wisconsin, the *Lumberman* rests in 60 feet of water and is in a remarkable state of preservation. The wreck represents one of the few relatively intact wooden schooners sunk at a shallow depth in the Great Lakes and is subsequently an important wreck for new divers to learn about wooden ship construction and history. Area divers have noted with concern the collapse of the schooner's bow capstan into the vessel's deck and the theft of some of the vessel's decking. Other damage has been incurred due to dive boats dragging and grappling for the wreck.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation is leading a cooperative effort on the *Lumberman*. Other organizations involved are the Wisconsin Historical Society, the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society and the Underwater Archeology Society of Chicago.

During dives early this summer significant progress was made on a rough survey and sitemap of the wreck and underwater video and stills were shot. GLSRF is working with discoverer Dan Johnson, who has original footage of the wreck's appearance when discovered.

In July divers from the GLSPS, Watermark Productions and the Wisconsin Historical Society performed assessment dives and placed a temporary mooring buoy. Initial assessments indicated that the wreck is still fairly stable and may not be in need of reinforcement at this time. GLSPS members attempted to affix monitoring points to detect any failure of the wreck's structure.

A grant from the Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation has allowed the placement of a permanent mooring on the wreck. In early September, The UW-Milwaukee's research vessel *Neeskay* with some skillful maneuvering from Captain Ron Smith and able assistance from Skip Porter and Greg Stamatelakys, slowly lowered the mooring block to a spot 24 feet off the stern of the *Lumberman*.

Also in early September members of the involved organizations set up a baseline, which provides a point of reference for most measurements. The baseline will remain a permanent fixture on the site until the project is finished. Other tasks included hand fanning sediment away from lower parts of the wreck and removing zebra mussels from areas that will require precise measurement. Offset measurements were taken off the baseline and stainless steel eyebolts were installed at strategic points on the wreck to be used as measuring stations for future monitoring. The GLSRF will frequently come back to monitor the site, re-measuring to see if the shape of the vessel has changed.

The *RV Neeskay* served as the dive platform for the video and audio production, while the Sea Grant's *RV Orion* and the GLSRF's *Explorer* carried divers and news media to and from the site along with conducting diving operations. With the weather cooperating nicely, the dive team not only mapped, but also shot underwater video and tried out some underwater communications gear. The visibility on the wreck was fairly good, at about thirty feet. Combining the video with the audio, reporters asked questions to divers as they mapped the *Lumberman*.

The team mapped more of the wreck and conducted a live radio interview from the deck of the *Lumberman* – 60 feet below the surface. While hovering just above the wreck, Jeff Gray, the state u/w archeologist, spoke with Wisconsin Public Radio's Larry Meiller and answered callers' questions. From a 22-foot boat anchored near the site, Cathy Green used a cell phone to participate in the four-way conversation. The *RV Neeskay*, while moored directly above the wreck, served as the center of communications.

During the mapping process, an alarming discovery was made. Upon measuring distances between fixed eye-bolt monitoring stations on the stern of the wreck, it was discovered that the *Lumberman's* hull was flexing up to two inches in the surge of Lake Michigan. With the surge occurring in only 3-4 foot seas, concern has been expressed that further flexing may be occurring during more inclement weather. Future efforts will revolve around monitoring this area of the wreck and formulating a stabilization plan to help preserve the wreck for years to come.

Plans are now underway to complete an assessment, archeological survey and physical stabilization of the wreck. The Historical Society plans to nominate the wreck to the National Register of Historic Places when the necessary work has been completed.

Please check the website: [www.ghost-ships.org/lumberman](http://www.ghost-ships.org/lumberman) for more information, to volunteer or to sign onto the email list.

Information for this article was provided by Brad Friend and Cathy Green, among others.

## Maritime Databases

### Door County Advocate

Russel Leitz reports that the *Door County Advocate* Marine database is online. It has about 39,000 entries, covering 1862 - 1949 and took about 5 years to complete.

You may go directly to the database at:

<http://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/shipwrecks/dcadvocate/index.html>

You will also find a link on the WUAA web site at: <http://www.mail-bag.com/users/wuaa/>

or go to the Sea Grant web site under What's New at: <http://www.seagrant.wisc.edu/shipwrecks/>

If you have never visited the Sea Grant web site, do so. It has a lot of information on shipwrecks.

The database fields include:

*Object - quarry, pier, dock, shipyard, lighthouse, range light, lightship, Captains' obituary and types of vessels such as barque, schooner, steamer, tug, consort, barge, steambarge, propeller and etc.*

*Name - of vessel, captain, quarry, pier, dock, lighthouse and etc.*

*Date - when in paper*

*Page - in paper*

*Notes - short bit of information of what info is in paper*

*Other Spellings - some that were initially noticed.*

In searching for vessels, Russel says, he cannot over emphasize that many of the vessel names had different spellings. You must use different combinations of parts of the name to come up with all sources. See the help note alongside Name in the program. An example would be when searching for the vessel Jennibel, you will find the name spelled as Jennie

Belle, Jennie Bell, Jenibel, Jennibel, Jennybell and Jennybel. When you type in part of a name, you will also come up with all other vessels with the same combination of letters. You have to guess how the DCA might have spelled a name.

Russel intentionally left out vessel dates if information was repetitious, such as on a weekly route.

In converting from his program to what's online, the apostrophe was dropped. If you are looking for names with an apostrophe, such as Frank O'Connor, you must leave a space where the apostrophe is to go. Happy searching.

If anyone finds missing dates that they feel should be included, please let Russel know at [rleitz@vbe.com](mailto:rleitz@vbe.com). Periodic updates will be made to the database.

Russel would like to thank the State Underwater Archeology department, especially Russ Green, State Historical Department computer personnel and Sea Grant for getting it online.

The Association would also like to thank Russel for the tremendous amount of work he put into this project.

### Manitowoc Pilot

The *Manitowoc Pilot* newspaper was a weekly that ran from 1859 - 1932. Presently the database is completed through 1878 with a goal of completing the rest in one year. The completed part will be online soon, with more added as it is completed.

Russel Leitz would like to thank the State Historical Library for furnishing microfilm copies and the State Underwater Archeological department for getting a microfilm reader. He is now able to work at home instead of the local library

using interlibrary loans and paying for parking.

New fields have been added in addition to those used in the *Door County Advocate* database. They are:

*Column - in paper*

*Size - of info in paper*

*c - complete info is in notes*

*2 - 10 for number of lines of information*

*a - for article over 10 lines*

*Wreck location - Every time it*

*wrecked. It may of left wreckage behind even though it was raised.*

### GLSRF

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation has put four searchable relational maritime history databases online on their website which WUAA members will find extremely useful.

They have built a complex, multi-field search engine for David Swayze's wrecklist and imported it into a relational database.

They also put Kimm Stabelfeldt's 2000-record Great Lakes shipwreck coordinate database online behind a search engine as well as the entire 5000-record wreck index from Mansfield's *History of the Great Lakes* and the the 5000-record unpublished *Directory of Great Lakes Commercial Sail* by Loudon S. Wilson. The last two were done for Save Ontario Shipwrecks.

The databases are online at [www.ghost-ships.org/databases.asp](http://www.ghost-ships.org/databases.asp)

## WHS Activities

The Wisconsin Historical Society has had a busy summer of fieldwork. With three full-time employees this year, the WHS has been able to move forward with a number of initiatives.

### Moorings

In May and June, the WHS placed moorings on six of the state's most popular shipwrecks. That brings the total number of historic shipwreck moorings in Wisconsin to twelve. The new moorings off Door County include markers on the *Meridian*, *Carrington* and Pilot Island wrecks. Additionally, the schooner *Lumberman*, which lies just southeast of Milwaukee, received a mooring this September. Previously established moorings in Lake Michigan are on the historic ships *Frank O'Conner*, *Hetty Taylor*, *Niagara* and *Selah Chamberlain*. In the Apostle Islands area of Lake Superior, the vessels *Pretoria* and *Sevona* now are marked with mooring buoys. These ships join the *Lucerne* and *Noquebay* as buoyed shipwrecks in the Apostles.

We would like to thank all of those who help set and maintain the buoys. The moorings program continues to be a group effort.

Having doubled the number of moorings in one summer, the WHS is taking early steps for the Wisconsin Maritime Trails initiative. Currently under development by the WHS, the Trails are designed to wind above and below the waves highlighting Wisconsin's maritime cultural resources, including lighthouses, maritime museums, historic and archeological areas, as well as shipwrecks.

### Pretoria Boiler

Another project was the returning of the ship *Pretoria's* salvaged boiler. Lake Superior's Apostle Islands have claimed many ships, though few as immense as the 338-foot *Pretoria*, one of the largest wooden ships ever to sail the Great Lakes. Resting in 50 feet

of water, the wooden schooner-barge wrecked a mile off Outer Island during a violent storm in September of 1905. It was, in fact, the same storm that sank the steamer *Sevona*. During the early 1960s many artifacts were recovered – including the ship's 5-foot by 7-foot boiler. On 8 June 2001, after almost 40 years above water, the boiler from the wreck of the *Pretoria* was returned to the site.

This unique story began in July of 1963, when Captain Edward Erickson, using his barge the *Outer Island*, salvaged the wreck's boiler. Notably, Erickson's *Outer Island*, a WW II era LTC (Landing Craft Tank), was itself a historic vessel and saw action during the D-Day invasion. The boiler was brought back to the Erickson property where it rested until earlier this summer. A few years ago, Erickson, local divers and others decided the boiler could be best interpreted and preserved alongside the wreck of the *Pretoria*. Over the next two years, the WHS worked with the group to arrange for the boiler's return.

During the early morning hours of 8 June 2001, Rob Erickson, Edward's son, and the crew of the *Outer Island* made the four-hour trip from Bayfield, Wisconsin, to the *Pretoria* site. Underwater archeologists from the Wisconsin Historical Society were already on site and had marked off an area where the boiler was to be dropped. Erickson skillfully maneuvered the former landing craft over a marker buoy, and the *Outer Island* crew rolled the boiler over the side with the help of a small front-loader. The drop was perfect. The boiler now rests about 25 feet from the wreck.

The successful project was possible due to the efforts of several individuals and organizations, most notably Ed Erickson and the Erickson's family. WHS would also like to give thanks to: Pat Labadie, Jim Reagan, Bruce

Bowers, Rob Erickson and the crew of the *Outer Island*, Tony and Bobbie Ripple, Ken Dobson of SER Inc., Al Brown of Watermark Pictures, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation.

The return of the *Pretoria's* boiler sends a strong message to divers and salvors across the Great Lakes region. Historic artifacts associated with wrecked vessels should remain together at the wreck site. Salvaging artifacts deprives others of the privilege of experiencing history first-hand and destroys the artifacts' inherent value by detaching them from their historic context. By taking only pictures and leaving only bubbles, divers can help preserve Wisconsin's maritime heritage for this and future generations.

### ECU and Notes from the Field

East Carolina University again takes to the waters of Sturgeon Bay to train graduate students in nautical archeology by documenting a number of sunken vessels from the local stone trade. A joint effort of the WHS and ECU, this annual field school benefits the students and the state of Wisconsin by increasing the information known about this little studied area of maritime history. Be sure to checkout the article on page 3 of this newsletter for more information on how you can participate. Come out to Sturgeon Bay to improve your mapping skills, and to get on the Web!

The ECU field school and the *Lumberman* Project can be seen online at the Notes from the Field Web site: [www.shsw.wisc.edu/shipwrecks/notes](http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/shipwrecks/notes). Follow along or review past projects as archeologists from the WHS, divers from the Great Lakes Shipwreck Research Foundation, ECU students, and WUAA volunteers, post daily updates and photographs throughout the field season.