

ABSTRACT

Richard Neil Mannesto. SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY OF WHITEFISH POINT, MICHIGAN. (Under the direction of Gordon Watts) Department of History, Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, April 1993.

This multi-disciplinary study incorporates history, anthropology and archaeology to interpret the submerged cultural resources of Whitefish Point, Michigan. Since the author used several different methods of interpretation, the total knowledge about Whitefish Point and its submerged sites is greater than the data gained by each discipline separately.

Confirmed occupation of Whitefish Point dates to the Woodland period. In 1968, Donald Janzen published *The Naomikong Point Site and the Dimensions of Laurel in the Lake Superior in the Lake Superior Region*. The submerged site revealed artifacts indicating Middle to Late Woodland occupation.

Historically, vessels confront the point before heading out into the main body of Lake Superior. Over the centuries beaver, fish, copper, iron, grain, coal and lumber supported a variety of maritime based cultures. Profits from iron ore production caused increases in shipping, and Whitefish Point's lee side became a refuge for ships when storms raged on Lake Superior. Shipwrecks occurred in increasing numbers

around Whitefish Point, hence its name Graveyard of the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (hereafter GLSHS) was formed by a group of divers in 1978 and is dedicated to locating, documenting, and preserving those shipwrecks. Unfortunately, artifacts associated with the wrecks are being removed by divers before documentation can be accomplished. Laws enacted by the state of Michigan are difficult to enforce due to a limited state budget. This thesis represents an effort to support the GLSHS's objectives through historical and archaeological research.

A preliminary survey of shipwrecks conducted during the summer of 1992 in the Whitefish Point vicinity facilitated the effort. The GLSHS employed side-scan sonar, along with a magnetometer to locate significant shipwrecks. Historical and literature research has been used to develop a historical background that can be used to interpret the archaeological record.

SUBMERGED CULTURAL RESOURCE
SURVEY OF WHITEFISH POINT, MICHIGAN

A Site Report
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Master of Arts in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology

by
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Whitefish Point on the southeastern shore of Lake Superior has been described for decades as the graveyard of the Great Lakes. Jutting out into Lake Superior, the point forms an almost separate body of water, creating an obstacle that vessels continue to evade. Whitefish Point's significance relates directly to the area's maritime activities.

The first Native American paddling a birch bark canoe along the lee shore, away from prevailing northwest winds, established the relationship between Whitefish Point and maritime risk. Inevitably, the combined forces of nature, human error and increased commercial activity produced shipwrecks. There are numerous shipwrecks in the Whitefish Point area. These are important nonrenewable cultural resources. They need to be identified and assessed so that they can be effectively managed for conservation and use. The aim of this project is to locate and evaluate sites within two selected areas of the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve.

This is the first preliminary systematic survey for cultural resources in this area. Conducting a reconnaissance survey entails a broad range of techniques. The region needs to be defined, the history needs to be

examined, time and resources available have to be considered. A survey strategy has to be flexible. A decision whether to collect material or merely examine for its associations and context must be made.¹

Underwater archaeological investigation is generally defined by three levels of research intensity. The first level of research has been identified as a Phase I reconnaissance. A Phase II investigation consists of a more detailed investigation generally designed to assess the nature and scope of the archaeological record and assess site significance.

The most complex level of research is Phase III investigation. That involves data recovery by comprehensive excavation. This investigation of submerged cultural resources associated with Whitefish Point can be characterized as Phase I reconnaissance and Phase II site assessment activities.

The main focus of an underwater survey is to locate sites. For the purpose of this research, underwater archaeological sites were considered to be the underwater locations of past human activities. Sites were identified by the presence of material and features created as a consequence of human activity. Historical and literature

¹Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology Theories Methods and Practice* (New York, 1991), 64.

research carried out in conjunction with the survey confirmed that archaeological sites in the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve could include both inundated prehistoric and historic sites, randomly deposited debris and shipwreck remains.

After location, the next step is assessing size, type and layout of the site. "These are crucial factors for archaeologists, not only for those trying to decide whether, where, and how to excavate, but also for those whose main focus may be the study of settlement patterns, site systems, and landscape archaeology without recourse to excavation."²

Some sites are more significant than others. Regarding vessels it is essential to link international, national, regional or local historic contexts. It is necessary to establish and define the vessel's participation in historical events. Changes in design, alterations to the hull or propulsion systems have to be addressed in the evaluation of historic integrity.

If applicable, a vessel's association with significant individuals, including builders, masters, officers, crew, owners, or passengers should be discussed. An assessment of the vessel's relation to similar properties is needed. Is she a sole survivor? Is she representative of a type? Is she the best example of a type? Statements of significance should be derived from

²Ibid., 74.

primary sources and scholarly secondary historical assessments.³

For the purpose of this research shipwreck and vessel significance was determined by the criterion established to assess eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. According to the guidelines for Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places identified in National Register Bulletin #20, significant is a factor of four major considerations.

The site must:

- A. be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. embody the distinctive characteristic of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.⁴

This study explores the use of history, anthropology and archaeology in interpreting the archaeological resources of Whitefish Point, Michigan. A holistic or synergistic approach to understanding shipwrecks in the Great Lakes

³James P. Delgado, "Nominating Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places" *National Register Bulletin* (Washington D. C., n. d.), 12.

⁴*Ibid.*, 5-6.

provides an opportunity to develop a "data base for solving broader social questions about the past."⁵ By using several similar methods simultaneously to study a particular data base, "the total knowledge about that data set is greater than the knowledge gained by each procedure separately."⁶

Europeans explored the area around Whitefish Point in the early seventeenth century. European demand for spices and valuable metals encouraged explorers to seek alternative routes to the Far East. Navigation around the Cape of Good Hope was expensive and time consuming. The Great Lakes appeared to offer Europeans a passage that conceivably could link eastern markets to European consumers. Traffic on the lakes increased dramatically as Europeans searched for a western route to the Far East.

Although European explorers failed to discover a Northwest Passage to the Far East, they found seemingly inexhaustible natural resources. One of the most important resources proved to be the region's fur bearing mammals. The popularity of fur garments in Europe, especially beaver, dominated commercial interests in the Great Lakes' basin.

⁵Charles Allen Hulse, *A Spatial Analysis of Lake Superior Shipwrecks: A Study in the Formative Process of the Archaeological Record* (East Lansing, 1981), 215.

⁶Adams, William H. Silcott, *Washington: Ethnoarchaeology of a Rural American Community* (Pullman, Washington, 1976), 127.

Participation in the fur trade escalated during the late-seventeenth century. The competition for the lucrative fur trade intensified rivalries between the colonial powers France and England and led to a century of strained relations and war. The development of Britain's American colonies also intensified fur trade competition.

Eventually, commercial fishing replaced beaver as the region's chief marketable resource. Whitefish Point's maritime activities were further expanded with the discovery of usable metals. Immense deposits of copper and iron ore were discovered along the shoreline of Lake Superior in the 1840s. The growth of the iron ore industry produced a dramatic increase in local populations.

The loss of ships is directly affected by the same factors that have historically affected how commodities are produced, transported, and distributed. Therefore, one must consider history when examining the shipping industry.⁷ In the late-nineteenth century, maritime trade on Lake Superior expanded again. The completion of the St. Mary's Falls Canal changed the economic picture of Great Lakes maritime navigation. Before the construction of the canal, costs for transporting cargo around St. Mary's rapids were so

⁷Ibid., 30.

excessive that regular service was financially prohibitive.⁸ The canal dramatically decreased the cost of transportation and new markets began to develop. Increased markets for iron ore, lumber, coal and agricultural products created new demands on shipping. The variety and number of vessels increased as ports, canals and railroad links led to the development of new transportation centers.

The study of the submerged cultural resources of Whitefish Point provides an opportunity to document Great Lakes's ship development and trade patterns. A multi-disciplinary approach allows researchers to compare historical analysis with anthropological theory in an effort to discover patterns concerning maritime lifeways and shipping evident in the archaeological record.

The research design of this project was intended to provide a historical, anthropological and archaeological literature search and a Phase 1 cultural resource survey with consideration of both prehistoric and historic sites. The primary goal of the survey was to locate and identify underwater archaeological sites in two study areas in the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve. The first area consisted of seven square miles and was identified as the anchorage area used by vessels seeking protection from the

⁸Ibid., 36.

Lake Superior elements (Figure 25). The second area consisted of fourteen square miles and was located north of Whitefish Point. That area was identified through historical research as the general location of the loss of the schooner *Frank Perew*. The specific objectives of research were:

- A. To locate and identify shipwrecks sites in the Whitefish Point anchorage.
- B. To locate and identify the remains of the schooner *Frank Perew*.
- C. To locate and identify inundated prehistoric and historic sites.
- D. To locate and identify randomly deposited cultural material.
- E. To identify primary considerations for a submerged cultural resource management plan.
- F. To attempt to use remote-sensing data as a tool for middle-range theory building associated with the submerged cultural resources in the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve.

"Constructing a correlation of remote-sensing signatures should be viewed as middle-range theory building in archaeology, which is another way of assigning meaning to our empirical observations."⁹

Literature and background investigation began in 1991 and included the use of archival sources at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., East Carolina University and Bayliss Library in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Dr. Julius F. Wolff, Jr.'s *Lake Superior Shipwrecks* and Fred

⁹Richard J. Anuskiewicz, *A Study of Maritime and Nautical Sites Associated with St. Catherines Island, Georgia* (Knoxville, 1989), 7.

Stonehouse's *Lake Superior's "Shipwreck Coast"* provided historical accounts for several sites. Diving on the sites provided the author with firsthand experience in Phase 1 survey techniques. The resultant data will aid the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society in the development of a cultural resource management program.

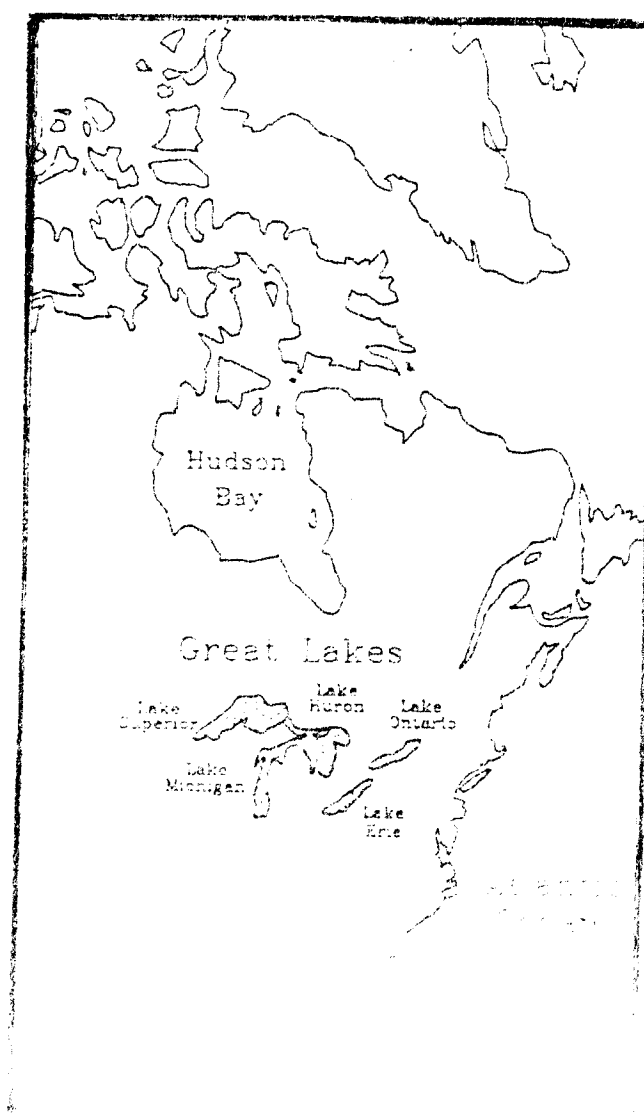


Figure 1. Great Lakes. GLSHS Archives.

Chapter 2

Location and Native Inhabitants of Lake Superior

Often, the first feature recognized by orbiting astronauts when passing over North American is the Great Lakes basin (See Figure 1).¹⁰ Lake Superior is not only the largest of the lakes, but also the largest body of fresh water in the United States with a surface area of nearly 32,000 square miles. The lake is 350 miles long and 150 miles across at its widest part. Lake Superior is 600 feet above sea level and the depth reaches 1,333 feet. Temperatures in the lake range from approximately 67 degrees Fahrenheit in late summer to 34 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter.¹¹

Whitefish Point extends out into Lake Superior almost far enough to make Whitefish Bay a separate lake (See Figure 2). The peninsula is a turning point for any vessel entering or leaving Lake Superior. The point provides protection for vessels from prevailing northwest winds. In the past, travelers seeking shelter from the weather often stayed at the point until conditions improved.¹²

¹⁰Excerpt from Edmund Fitzgerald documentary. Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society. 1993.

¹¹Hulse, *Spatial Analysis*, 16-17.

¹²William Johnston, *Letters on the Fur Trade*, ed. John Sharples Fox. *Historical Collections and Researches Made by the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society* Vol. XXXVII (Lansing, 1909-

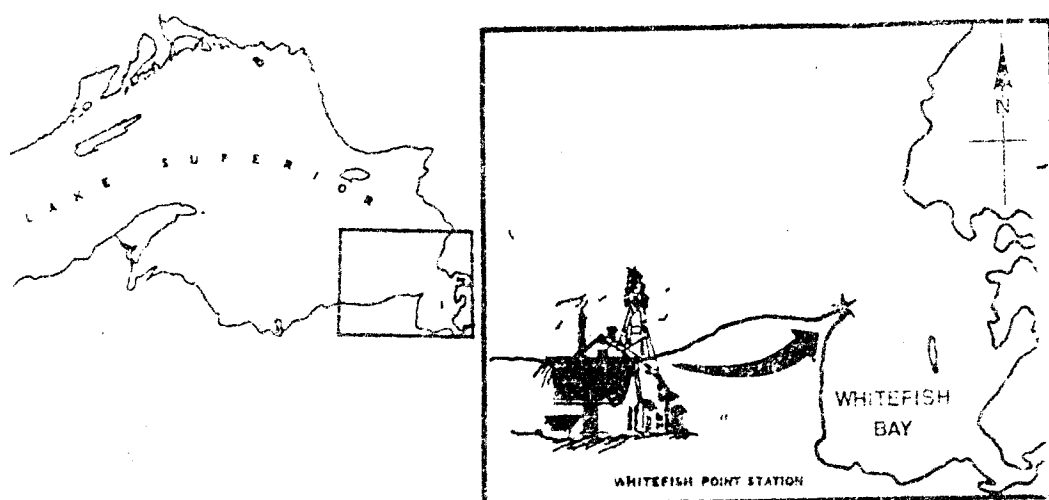


Figure 2. Lake Superior and Whitefish Point. GLSHS Archives.

Prehistory

The natives referred to the waters of Lake Superior as "Kitchigami, superior to all other bodies of water, the source, fountainhead of the other lakes, the widest and deepest of them, the only home of the choicest fish, the Atikameg, or Whitefish."¹³ The point was named for the abundant whitefish (*coregonus clupeaformis*) population.

There are few prehistoric sites on Whitefish Point. Most have been washed away by the turbulent waves and drifting sand of a dynamic coastline. Analysis of the earliest artifacts (Laurel ceramics) from Naomikong Point indicates Middle Woodland occupation.¹⁴ The Naomikong Point site, excavated in 1966-67, proved to be "one of the most significant sites in the upper Great Lakes of the Middle Woodland culture (200 B. C. to A. D. 800)."¹⁵ The assemblage of Laurel ceramics along the southern shore of Lake Superior represents the northern limits of Laurel

¹³William F. Gagnieur, S. J., "Indian Place Names in the Upper Peninsula, and Their Interpretation." *Michigan History* Vol. II, (July 1918), 548.

¹⁴Kathryn C. Egan, *An Archaeological Survey of the Proposed Great Lakes Shipwreck Memorial Museum Whitefish Point*. Michigan (East Lansing, Michigan, 1983), 21; James E. Fitting, *The Archaeology of Michigan* (Garden City, New York, 1970), 12-13, 62-63, 138-140.

¹⁵Sprague Taylor, *Tahquamenon Country* (Ann Arbor, 1991), 11.

culture and demonstrates a greater range of occupation than once thought (See Figure 3).¹⁶



Figure 3. Rim fragments of Woodland Period pottery from Whitefish Bay.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., 12-14.

¹⁷Taylor, *Tahquamenon*, 14.

Native Americans occupied seasonal hunting and fishing grounds along the southern shore of Lake Superior.

The Late Woodland period in this region represented a shift toward a more coastal oriented settlement and subsistence scheme. It is hypothesized that the shift in subsistence pattern occurred with the development of the new fishing technology (gillnetting) and a concomitant change in the social organization and settlement pattern.¹⁸

Chippewa, the first documented inhabitants of the region, were highly adapted to water.¹⁹ Chippewa impressed early fur traders. Peter Grant, a trader for the North West Fur Company, drafted a portrait of the Chippewa in 1804:

Well proportioned, though inclining to a slender make which would indicate more agility than strength. Their complexion is a whitish cast of the copper colour, their hair black, long, straight and of a very strong texture, the point of the nose rather flat, and certain fullness in the lips, but not sufficient to spoil the appearance of the mouth. The teeth, of a beautiful ivory white, are regular, well set and seldom fail them even in the most advanced period of life; their cheeks are high and rather prominent, their eyes black and lively, their countenance is generally pleasant, and the symmetry of their features is such as to constitute what can be called handsome faces.²⁰

¹⁸Ibid, 12.

¹⁹Larry Massie, *Guardian of the Great Lakes' Graveyard: A History of Whitefish Point and its Lighthouse* (Allegan Forest, Michigan, 1991), 2.

²⁰L. R. Masson, ed., *Les Bourgeois De La Compagnie du Nord-Quest Recits De Voyages, Lettres et Rapports Inedits Relatifs au Nord-Quest Canadien*, vol.II (New York, 1960), 315.

Chippewa utilized the canoe to hunt the shores and to catch their primary food, whitefish.²¹ Their canoes were built using cedar ribs covered with birch bark. They sealed the seams with pine gum and split root threads known as "wattap." This was an art at which the Chippewa excelled.²²

Whitefish, herring, lake trout, sturgeon, pike and perch were abundant. Chippewa used hook and line, spearing, weirs (fences set in a stream) and gill nets to catch fish.²³ Chippewa supplemented their diet of whitefish by hunting and gardening. Deer, bear, beaver, squirrels, partridge, ducks, geese and other animals were sources of meat and fur. Chippewa also picked berries, herbal plants, wild rice and tapped maple trees for syrup. Small gardens included corn, pumpkins and potatoes.²⁴

Seasonal settlement patterns were nomadic. Spring brought maple sap and spawning fish.²⁵ Maple syrup was collected by drilling holes into maple trees and catching syrup in buckets made of birch bark. Henry Rowe

²¹Massie, *Whitefish Point* 2.

²²Ellen B. Green, "Fur Trade," *Roots, Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. X, No.1 (Fall 1981), 17.

²³Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 3.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

Schoolcraft, a mineralogist, toured Lake Superior and observed a Chippewa sturgeon fishery in 1820. The natives built a weir extending from bank to bank with a small opening for fish and canoes to move upstream.

This weir is constructed of saplings and small trees, sharpened and drove into the clayey bottom of the river, with an inclination down stream, and supported by crotched stakes bracing against the current. The sturgeons are caught with an iron hook, fixed at the end of a long slender pole, The number of sturgeons caught at this place is astonishing, and the Indians rely almost entirely upon this fishery for a subsistence.²⁶

Summer camps were located on well-drained soil. This allowed gardening near hunting and fishing grounds. Winter was usually spent hunting, trapping and ice fishing.²⁷

Ethnographic evidence suggests that Chippewa were self-sufficient and family-centered people tied to the rhythms of changing seasons. Chippewa religion was based on animism, reflecting their close ties with nature. The Jesuit Father Allouez characterized their religion:

The Savages of these regions recognize no sovereign master of Heaven and Earth, but believe there are many spirits - some of whom are beneficent, as the Sun, the Moon, the Lake, Rivers, and Woods; others malevolent, as the adder, the dragon, cold, and storms. And, in

²⁶Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels, Through the Northwestern Regions of the United States Extending from Detroit through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River* (Albany, 1821), 172-173.

²⁷Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, Okla., 1938), 10.

general, whatever seems to them either helpful or hurtful, they call a Manitou, and pay it the worship and veneration which we render only to the true God.²⁸

Chippewa offered gifts to the spirits in hopes of a successful hunt. After death, the Chippewa believed that the individual spirit followed a path leading westward. Fulfillment of all desires awaited at journey's end.²⁹

Chippewa lived in dome-shaped wigwams built with peeled ironwood poles placed in the ground in circular fashion. Poles were tied together with green basswood fibers and bark strips were laced to the structure. A deer or bear hide covered the doorway; hides were also used for sleeping blankets. An open fireplace heated and lit the wigwam. The covering was rolled and carried to new campsites with the changing seasons.³⁰

During the winter months, women wove fishnets and mats or made clothing from tanned hides or skins. Men, when not hunting, made snowshoes, traps, or tools. Parents shared the responsibility of raising children. Men provided family leadership, but women controlled life within the wigwam.³¹

²⁸Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents. Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791* (New York 1959), 164.

²⁹Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 6.

³⁰Danziger, *The Chippewas*, 9.

³¹Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 6.

Storytelling and singing were favorite pastimes. Schoolcraft's recollections of Chippewa culture provides a rare look at Chippewa lifeways. Schoolcraft's work formed the basis for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic tale "The Song of Hiawatha."³² "Chippewa songs [were] alive with the warm red blood of human nature. Music is one of the greatest pleasures of the Chippewa. Every phase of life is expressed in music."³³

Historical and anthropological data provides a clearer understanding of Chippewa culture. The Chippewa still live around the eastern end of Lake Superior. Fishing remains the livelihood for many Chippewa. Ethnographic research into canoe construction or oral traditions will advance our knowledge of Chippewa maritime activity. "All sherds--ceramic, literary and religious--are only remnants, pieces of torn cloth, broken vessels, mere shadows of whole culture. They can only be given new life when they are interpreted as related parts of a larger puzzle."³⁴

³²Ibid.

³³Frances Densmore, *Chippewa Music*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 45 (Washington, 1910), Introduction.

³⁴Robert Blair St. George, ed. *Material Life in America, 1600-1850* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 9.

Chapter 3

European Settlement

Recent History

Lake Superior was discovered by Europeans in their quest to find alternative routes to China. Chippewa life was inevitably changed as European trade and settlement altered the cultural landscape of northeast Michigan. The Chippewa eagerly bartered furs for European wares.

Entiène Brule (ca. 1620), a translator working for Samuel de Champlain, governor of New France, was the first European to reach Lake Superior and Whitefish Point. Brule left no written record of his own, but related his travels to the Jesuit missionary Sagard. "The interpreter, Brule," wrote Sagard, "assured us that beyond the Freshwater Sea [Lake Huron] there was another very large lake which empties into it by a waterfall, which has been called 'Saut de Gaston' [Gaston Falls], of a width of almost two leagues; which lake and the Freshwater Sea have almost thirty days' journey by canoe in length."¹¹

In 1659, Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law, Médart Chouart Sieur des Groseilliers, became the first travelers to leave written records about Lake Superior. While traversing the southern shore of Whitefish Point,

¹¹Consul Willshire Butterfield, *History of Brule's Discoveries and Explorations 1610 - 1626* (Cleveland, 1898), 107.

Radisson wrote: "we went along the coasts, which are most delightful and wondrous, for it's nature that made it so pleasant to the eye, the spirit and the belly."³⁶ The two traders returned to New France with an enormous quantity of furs from the Lake Superior region. Their cargo, however, was confiscated by the French governor.³⁷

Radisson and Groseilliers defected from France to England. They helped set up the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. The two traders' success encouraged other traders, explorers and missionaries to emigrate to the shores of Lake Superior.³⁸

Father Jean Claude Allouez reached Lake Superior in 1665 and sailed the southern shore to Chequamegon Bay. In the *Jesuit Relations* (missionary reports) of 1666-7, Allouez described Lake Tracy (Superior), which he renamed in honor of the Marquis de Tracy:

The form of this lake is nearly that of a bow, the southern shore being much curved, and the northern nearly straight. Fish are abundant there, and of excellent quality; while the water is so clear and

³⁶Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 8.; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., "Radisson and Groseilliers in Wisconsin," quoted in Edmund J. Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman, OK. 1978), 28. *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 11 (1888):64-96.

³⁷Danziger, *The Chippewas*, 28.

³⁸Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 8.

pure that objects at the bottom can be seen to a depth of six fathoms [about 30 feet].³⁹

The pursuit of gold, spices and precious gems brought thousands of Europeans to North America. They found their wealth in the fur trade, which dominated the economy of New France and changed the life of the Chippewa.⁴⁰

The beaver pelt was used as money and could be traded for knives, kettles, axes, blankets, firearms and other European goods. The beaver's dense, soft fur made exquisite felt hats which became a status symbol of the wealthy.⁴¹

The French were the first to dominate the beaver trade.

"From its inception, the French policy of trade was monopolistic in character."⁴²

³⁹Thwaites, *Jesuits Relations*, 163.

⁴⁰Green, *Fur Trade*, 4.

⁴¹Ibid., 27. The beaver is an important animal in nature's restoration of the land. The beavers' dams make ponds which store water and support wildlife. "Descended from giant prehistoric rodents weighing 700 pounds, beavers are three to four feet long and about 50 pounds. ...beavers breathe air, but their large lungs allow them to stay underwater for up to 15 minutes. Ear and nose valves close when the beavers dive. Their short powerful hind legs and webbed feet make them fast swimmers. And their broad, scale-covered flat tails act as rudders." They have extremely sharp teeth and their tail is a defensive weapon. Clearly a majestic, industrious and yet mystifying creature, the importance of the beaver cannot be over emphasized. Ibid.

⁴²Ida Amanda Johnson, *The Michigan Fur Trade* (Lansing, 1919), 4.

In 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company received English rights to trade in Hudson Bay's drainage basin.⁴³ Pressing south and east, English fur traders soon crossed paths with the French.⁴⁴

Rivalry between France and Britain over the fur trading empire and control of their respective Indian allies would spark a century long conflict culminating with the French loss of the Great Lakes region in 1760.⁴⁵

Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, profits increased greatly for British traders.⁴⁶ Alexander Henry purchased trade goods worth ten thousand pounds of "good and merchantable beaver." Henry departed Fort Michilimackinac, at the northern end of Lake Huron, on July 14, 1775. Henry paddled around Whitefish Point about the twenty-eighth. Reaching the Churchill River, Henry traded his goods for beaver pelts (See Figure 4).

⁴³Green, *Fur Trade*, 10.

⁴⁴G.B Mansfield, *History of the Great Lakes* (Chicago, 1899), 75.

⁴⁵Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 10.

⁴⁶Danziger, *The Chippewas*, 58-59.

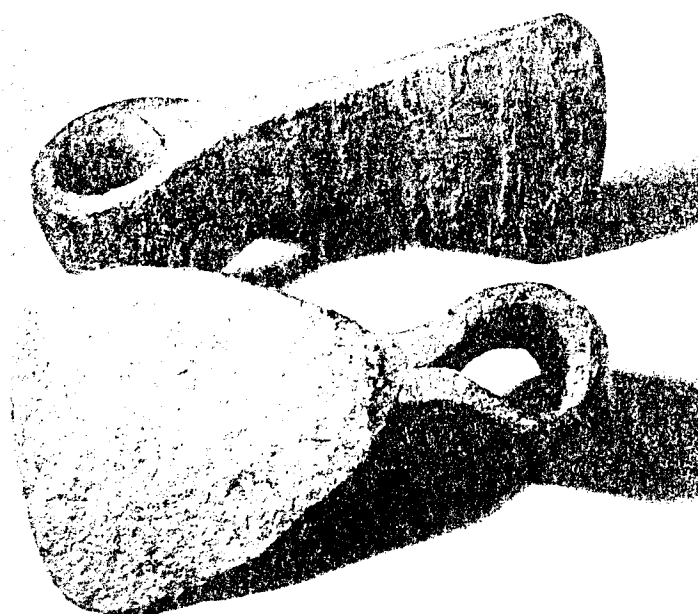


Figure 4. Trade axe and hoe from the Whitefish Point area."

"Taylor, Tahquamenon, 15.

Table 1

Trade Goods	Indian's Cost in Pelts
Stroud blanket	10
White blanket	8
Pound of powder	2
Pound of shot or ball	1
Gun	20
One pound ax	2
Knife	1

When accounts were settled, Henry netted 150 packs of beaver weighing one hundred pounds each and twenty-five pounds of otter and marten. Henry's profit of 7,500 pounds of "merchantable beaver" determined the path of Lake Superior fur trading.⁴⁸

The conclusion of the American Revolution led to the signing of the second Treaty of Paris in 1783. The treaty granted the upper peninsula of Michigan to the United States, but the Northwest Company maintained control over the fur trade for the next thirty years. In August 1810, Jean Baptiste Perrault, a North West Fur Company voyageur, traveled across Lake Superior with a group of traders. They camped at the mouth of a stream that Perrault identified as "la riviere aux Brochets" which is either the Tahquamenon or

⁴⁸Danziger, *The Chippewas*, 58-59. Gordon Charles Davidson, *The North West Company* (Berkeley, 1918), 39. "Hearne went to Prince of Wales Fort as governor in 1775. The same year Alexander Henry the elder came up from Sault Ste. Marie by way of Grand Portage, Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg River, and the Saskatchewan, reaching Cumberland House October 26, 1775."

Shelldrake River.⁴⁹ The name of the river is important because it appears in Perrault's narrative about the *Invincible* which sank in 1816 and was the first recorded shipwreck at Whitefish Point.

The region's abundant fish and beaver populations attracted the attention of European traders, creating competition among Sioux-Chippewa tribes and Europeans. The conflict made it difficult for the Americans to gain control of the fur trade. Not until 1820, when Congress sent Lewis Cass to negotiate a treaty with the Chippewa, did Americans gain complete authority over the territory.⁵⁰ Unfortunately the Sioux-Chippewa struggle over hunting grounds escalated, disrupting the fur trade. In 1826, Congress again sent Michigan's Territorial Governor Cass to resolve the conflict.⁵¹

Historically, Sioux and Chippewa relations were violent. Chief Flat Mouth, a Chippewa, described the feelings that existed between the two tribes: "It was decreed by the Great Spirit that hatred and war should ever exist between

⁴⁹Perrault, *Travels*, 615.

⁵⁰Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 18.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 20-21.

the Sioux and themselves; that this decree could never be changed; and the Chippewa must act accordingly."⁵²

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and a military escort, headed by Lieutenant James Allen, were dispatched in 1831 to restore peace between the two foes. Allen's detailed account of the expedition includes valuable information on commercial fishing operations conducted by the American Fur Company at Whitefish Point.⁵³ Allen states:

This point is remarkable and important as a fishery of whitefish as affording more, and a better quality, of that excellent fish, than any other fishery of the southern shore of the lake yet explored. . . . The fishery, as at present developed, commences at Shelldrake river, nine miles from the end of the point, on its eastern shore, and extends round the point and along the southern shore of the lake as far as the Grand Marais, or the commencement of the Grand Sable, a distance of fifty-four miles.⁵⁴

The American Fur Company caught whitefish, lake trout, herring and pike. The fish were salted, barreled and shipped to large cities. Fish were so plentiful that the market became saturated in the 1830s. The financial panic of 1837 exacerbated a glut in the fish market and in 1842

⁵²Danziger, *The Chippewas*, 73.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴James Allen, *Journal of an "Expedition into the Indian country," to the source of the Mississippi, made under the authority of the War Department, in 1832.*, quoted in Schoolcraft's *Expedition To Lake Itasca, The discovery of the source of the Mississippi*, ed. Philip P. Mason (Lansing, 1958), 165-166.

the company folded, ending the first recorded commercial fishing venture on Lake Superior.⁵⁵

Other Natural Resources

The decline of the fur trade and a saturated fishing industry, led the people living around Whitefish Point to seek out other sources of income.⁵⁶ Geological surveys sponsored by the state of Michigan prompted an expedition by geologist, Douglas Houghton. Houghton led a small expedition to Lake Superior's copper-laden shores in 1840.⁵⁷

Houghton started west from Whitefish Point and ran into a high wind eleven miles down the beach. Bela Hubbard, assistant geologist on the expedition, described the storm.

I was awoke by the sound of dashing rain & the roar of surf. The wind had shifted to the N. & now blows from the N. & N. W. across the whole expansive breadth of the lake. The effect of the sea rolling up onto these shoals is sublime beyond description. Far abroad the 'white caps' are seen enlivening the dark blue surface, but as the gale sweeps the waters of the broad expanse over onto the southern shore the force of the immensely deep lake seems compressed into the narrow depth now allowed it & rises into mad breakers which roll

⁵⁵Ibid., 232.

⁵⁶Danziger, *The Chippewa*, 66.

⁵⁷Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 71-72.

huge volumes, tumbling impetuously towards the beach.⁵⁸

Houghton's reports of vast copper deposits stimulated a copper boom in the 1840s.⁵⁹

William Austin Burt, a government surveyor, discovered iron ore near Marquette on Lake Superior's southern shore in 1844. Philo Everett made another discovery of iron ore while searching for copper in the region. He produced the first iron on the shores of Lake Superior in 1848.⁶⁰

In mid-century the region also became a valuable source of timber. The discovery of vast white pine forests led to the development of sawmills in the 1850s. Timber was shipped in millions of feet. A typical sawmill in 1859 produced thirty to forty thousand feet of lumber every twenty four hours. In 1880, the largest lumber mill produced ten million feet of pine a year.⁶¹ Iron drew more settlers to the area. Freight and iron ore tonnage increased from five million tons in 1890 to forty million in

⁵⁸Ibid., 73.

⁵⁹Houghton drowned near Eagle River in 1845. Ibid., 75.

⁶⁰Ibid., 76.

⁶¹Dixie Franklin, "The Way It Was In U.P.'s Early Days Of Logging," *The Timber Producer* (Tomahawk, Wisconsin, 1983), 38-39.

1905 (See Table 2).⁶² Iron ore remains the area's chief commodity.

Patterns of commerce changed as eastern transportation routes opened with new canal networks. The grain market developed in the 1870s. New transportation systems allowed the direct movement of grain commodities from the Great Lakes to eastern markets.⁶³ Major railroad links, such as the St. Paul to Pacific and the Northern Pacific's connection between Duluth and Moorehead, made Duluth a major grain center. Predictably, railroad expansion spurred more western settlements and consequently more grain producers. Between 1870 and 1880, the production of wheat doubled.⁶⁴

Steam power that fueled the timber and mining industry heightens the demand for coal in the 1880s.⁶⁵ Increased shipments of coal during the 1870s corresponded with the development of the railroad.⁶⁶ "The development of coal traffic on Lake Superior was closely linked to the economic and demographic development of the region."⁶⁷

⁶²C. Patrick Labadie, *Submerged Cultural Resources Study Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* (Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1989), 9.

⁶³Hulse, *Spatial Analysis*, 63.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 67.

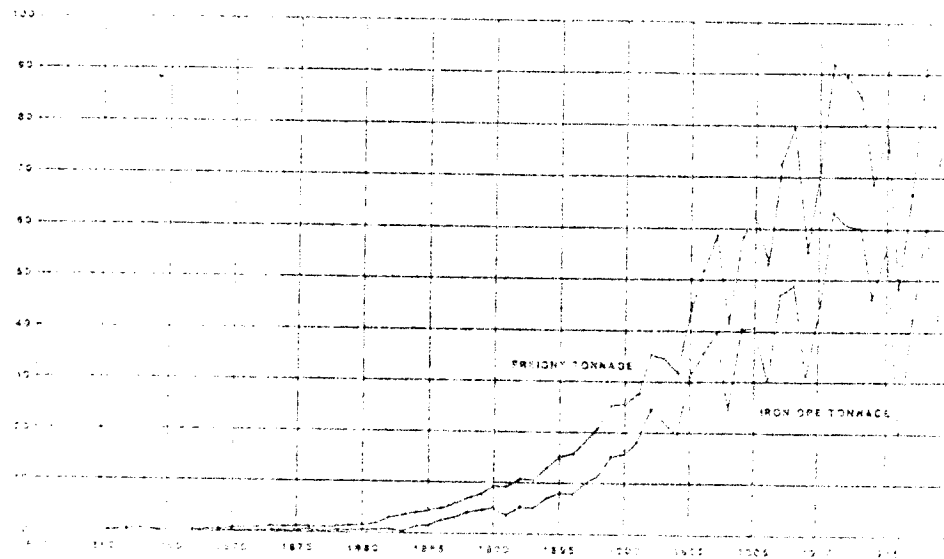
⁶⁵Hulse, *Spatial Analysis*, 72.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 73-74.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 75.

Fishing, mining, agriculture, lumber and trading-good industries required enormous fleets of cargo carriers. Vessels of all kinds, sizes and shapes shipped coal, iron, grain and lumber in and out of the lakes. Fierce winds, fog, storms and human error, left hundreds of vessels on the bottom of Lake Superior.

Table 2. Comparison of iron ore to total freight shipped through the Soo Locks, 1855-1925, in millions of tons. From *Transportation on the Great Lakes*, U. S. Engineers Department, 1930.⁶⁸



⁶⁸Ibid.

Chapter 4

Shipwrecks

Vessel congestion created a considerable hazard and caused numerous collisions in close proximity to Whitefish Point. Despite early implementation of shipping lanes in 1870, upbound and downbound ships often veered from their designated routes.⁶⁹ Smoke from forest fires, snow squalls and dense fog heightened the danger of navigation. Strong winds created massive waves. On November 17, 1975, 90 mile-per-hour winds and rough seas caused the 729-foot *Edmund Fitzgerald* to sink 17 miles northwest of Whitefish Point. The seas offshore were recorded at approximately thirty feet.⁷⁰

Even lesser gales generated weather conditions that adversely affected navigation. Prevailing northwest winds pushed vessels directly toward the point. If problems occurred, "the ship (could) either go aground, sink off Whitefish Point or limp around the point and sink."⁷¹ Hence, Whitefish Point became known as the "Graveyard of the Great Lakes" (See Figure 5).

⁶⁹Ibid., 27.

⁷⁰Frederick Stonehouse, *Lake Superior's "Shipwreck Coast"* (Au Train, Michigan, 1985), 12.

⁷¹Halsey, *Beneath*, 23.

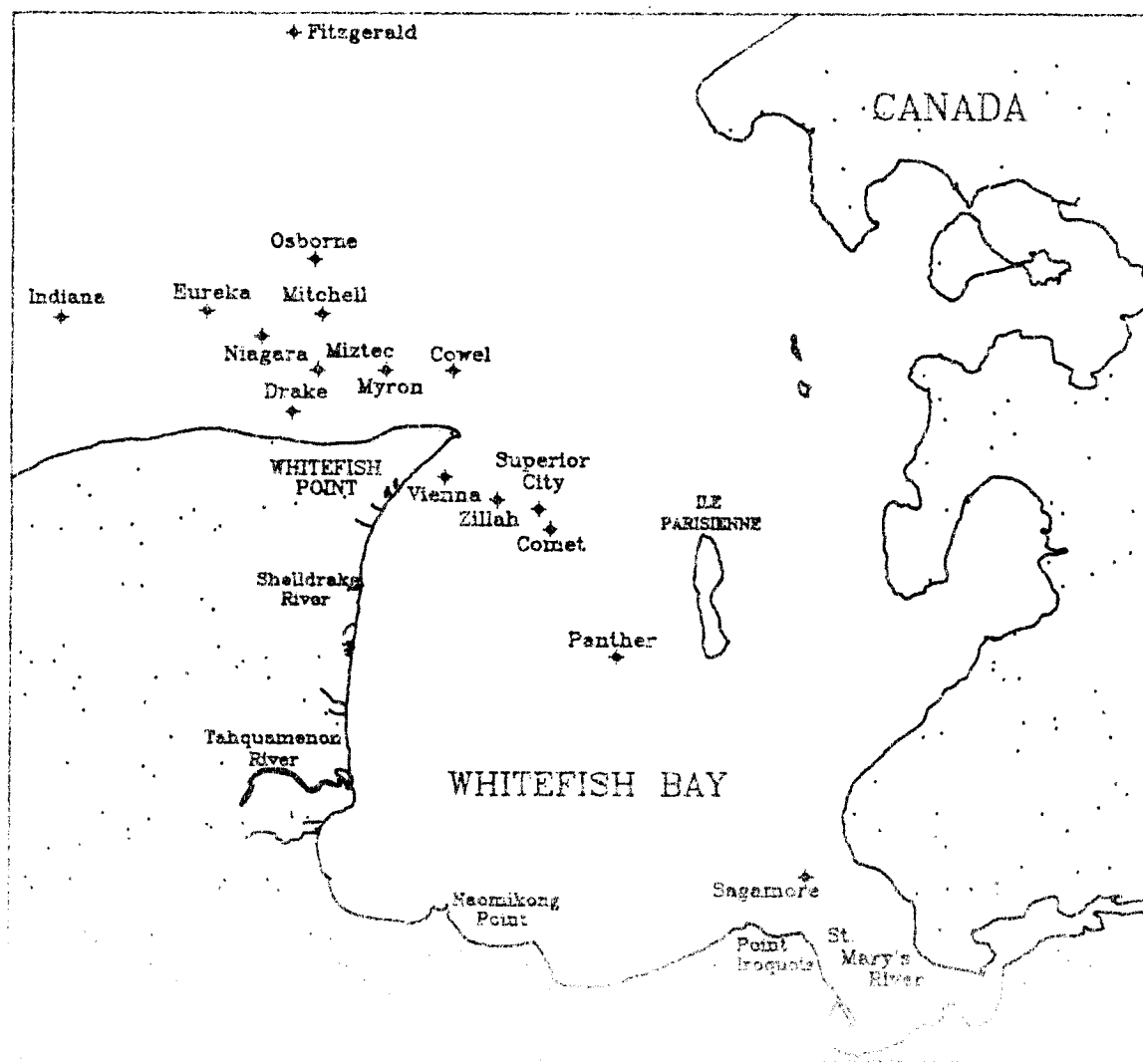


Figure 5. Located Whitefish Point Shipwrecks. Map by author.

Discovered Wrecks

The *Indiana* was a 350-ton package freighter characterized as a propeller because of the Ericsson screw propeller used in its construction. Built in 1848 by Joseph Keating, the vessel carried a single forward mast with a listed capacity of 500-tons. The *Indiana* was 146.4 feet in length with a twenty-three-foot beam. Three years after its launch, it had a minor collision with the schooner *Cambria*. Within a year, the *Indiana* rammed into a pier in Cleveland, Ohio. In October 1854, the vessel ran aground in the St. Mary's River.⁷²

On a stormy June 6, 1858, the *Indiana* departed Marquette carrying 280 tons of iron ore, several tons over its limit. While under rough seas, waves cracked its sternpost, which in turn ruptured a seal on the propeller shaft. Twenty miles northwest of Whitefish Point, it took on water. Hampered by the extra ore, the crew could not reach the damaged area to make temporary repairs. Water rushed in faster than the pumps could handle. Twenty-one people, including its owner Frank Ferew, crawled into the ship's yawl and abandoned ship. The *Indiana* sank 9 miles northwest of Whitefish Point in 118 feet of water. In 1972, John Steel and Tom Farnquist discovered a nearly intact

⁷²Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 19,

vessel.⁷³ The divers filmed the wreck extensively. The author dove on the *Indiana* during the summer of 1979.

The significance of the *Indiana* is twofold. First, the vessel steamed the lakes for a short period--ten years. The relatively short span is significant since the vessel may not have required major repairs. Perhaps, "The engine of the *Indiana* represents the earliest marine steam plant still in existence in North America which had an actual working history."⁷⁴ Second, the fresh water preserved the wood and metal parts of the engine (See Figure 6). "The importance of the *Indiana* can't be over emphasized," a member from the Smithsonian Institution stated.

On July 29, 1979, the U. S. Navy, the State of Michigan, the National Trust for Historical Preservation, the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U. S. Coast Guard, together raised the boiler, the steam chest, the cylinder drive mechanism, the Ericsson propeller (See Figure 7) and the steering quadrant.

⁷³Julius F. Wolff Jr., *Lake Superior Shipwrecks* (Duluth, 1979), 8. (Personal Communication)

⁷⁴Linda Richardson, "By The Rapids," *The Sault Star*, Saturday, June 7, 1980.

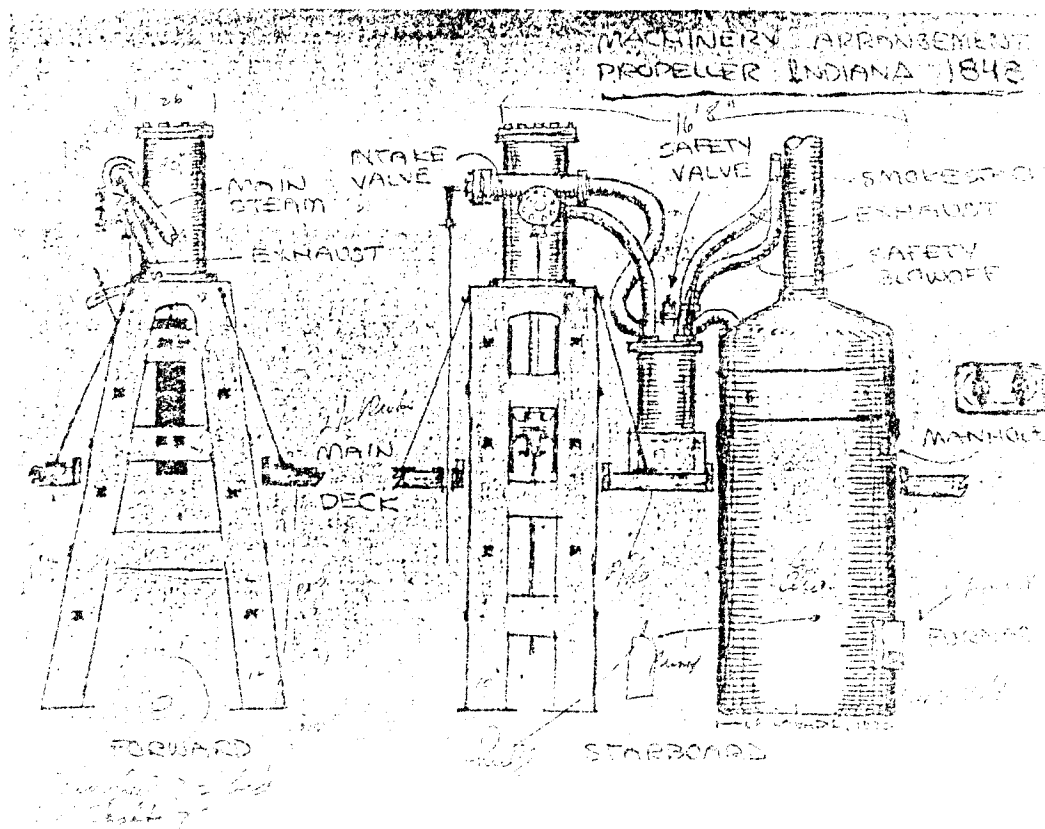


Figure 6. Drawing by C. P. Labadie, 1976. GLSHS Archives.



Figure 7. Ericsson Screw Propeller.

Ibid.

The engine, including a large oak frame, stood eighteen feet high. The boiler weighed approximately four tons. "The ship itself isn't unusual what is unusual is the fact that it was propeller-driven and not a sidewheeler or a sternwheeler," said Martin Burke, a preservation expert with the Smithsonian Institution.⁷⁶ Although the extra cargo contributed to the *Indiana* accident, owners and operators of the shipping industry continued to push vessels beyond their capabilities.

Shipwreck incidents continued to occur as the volume of shipping from the west increased. The completion of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad at Duluth in 1870 introduced another period of trade and transportation growth.⁷⁷ A transportation link now existed to move agricultural produce from the Great Plains and Minnesota to eastern markets. The new surge in commercial activity coincided with the emergence of a variety of new vessels.⁷⁸ Sail and steam powered ships congested the inland seas and collisions became commonplace.

The *Comet* had departed Duluth carrying seventy tons of silver ore, five hundred tons of pig iron and a shipment of

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 15.

⁷⁸Ibid., 33.

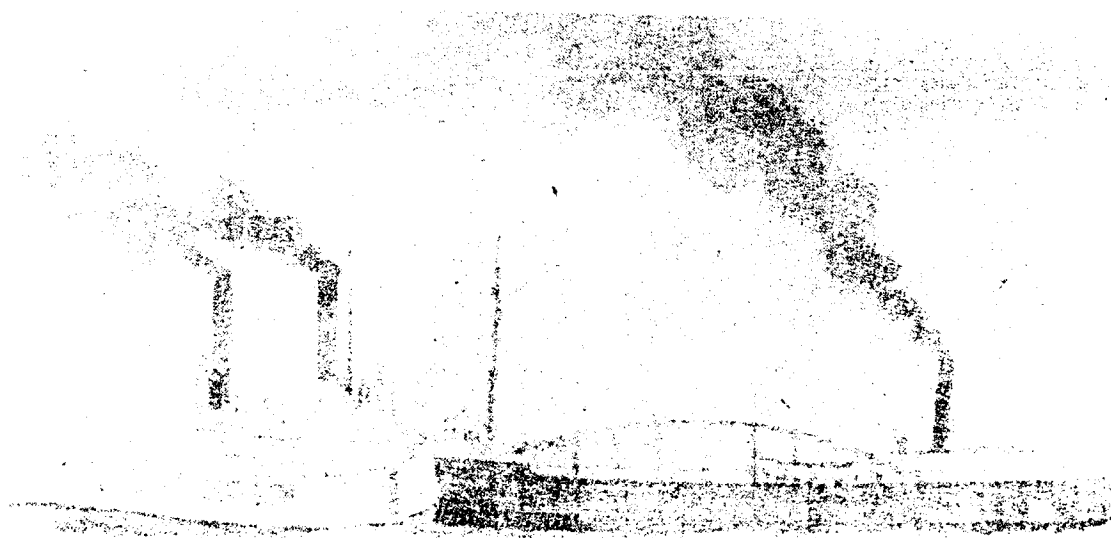
wool. On August 26, 1875, at 8:30 P. M., a loud crash echoed around Whitefish Bay, as the Canadian steamer *Manitoba* sliced into the port bow of the propeller *Comet* (See Figure 8). A gaping fifteen-foot hole crippled the *Comet*. Ten crew members drowned when the ship sank.⁷⁹ The cargo of Montana silver ore distinguished the *Comet* as the only "treasure" ship to sink on Lake Superior.

Kent Bellrichard located the *Comet* in 240 feet of water in 1970s. In June of 1980, members of the GLSHS relocated the site and documented the wreck on film. The author dove on the wreck during the summer of 1980 and verified it as the *Comet*.⁸⁰

On July 27, 1884, the 178-foot, 891 ton, wooden steam barge *John M. Osborne* left Marquette towing two schooner-barges, the *George W. Davis* and *Thomas Gawn*. Hampered by dense fog, the crew periodically blew the ship's whistle to warn other vessels of its approach. The answering blast of another whistle reached the *Osborne's* pilothouse crew seconds before the oncoming *Alberta* rammed into the starboard side between the main and mizzen masts.

⁷⁹Toronto Globe, Thursday, September 2, 1875, Toronto, Ontario.

⁸⁰Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society's Archives, Accessions #4, *Comet* (Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, 1989).



The watercolor painting by the Rev. Edward J. Dowling, S.J., illustrates the collision of the *St. Manitoba* with the *St. John* in Whitefish Bay on Aug. 22, 1879, in which the *Comet*

was wrecked. (The *Comet* was the first ship to be wrecked in the bay.)

Figure 3. Comet. GLSHS Archives.

The vessels remained locked together, allowing time for most of the *Osborne* crew to climb aboard the *Alberta*. One courageous passenger from the *Alberta* jumped aboard the *Osborne* in an attempt to rescue engine room personnel. The vessels parted and the heavily-laden *Osborne* plunged beneath the waters with the passenger and three crew members.⁸¹ After returning the survivors to the Soo, the *Alberta* returned to port for repairs. The *Osborne*'s two barges were picked up by a steamer bound for the Soo Locks.⁸²

The Oddessey Foundation, a divers' group from Lansing, Michigan, and the GLSHS located the *Osborne* in 1984. The intact *Osborne* lies in 185 feet of water 6 miles north-west of Whitefish Point. A gaping hole on her starboard side is easily recognized.⁸³ The name board is located in the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum.

Bad weather played a significant role in a similar accident in 1886. A fall storm caught the steamer *Prentice*, with three schooner-barges (old schooners towed by steam powered vessels) in tow, on October 20, 1886. Twelve miles northwest of Whitefish Point the tow-line parted. Normally able to navigate intense seas, the 138-foot, 330-ton

⁸¹Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 40.

⁸²*Ibid.*

⁸³Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 41.

schooner-barge *Eureka* foundered. The ship sank with six crew members.⁸⁴ The following morning, Captain Smith of the upbound propeller *Winslow*, sighted three feet of main mast and a white yawl protruding from the waters six miles off Vermillion Point. Although United States Life Saving Service personnel combed the shoreline, there were no survivors.⁸⁵

The site of the *Eureka* remains unverified. In 1990, GLSHS located a wreck in forty-five feet of water, scattered in two distinct sections. Documentary accounts tell of the ship sinking in the vicinity of this wreck but the initial investigation could not provide positive identity of the wreck.⁸⁶

In a similar nautical mishap, the downbound schooner-barge *Niagara* in tow of the steamer *Australasia* sank during a strong gale on September 6, 1887. Around 1:00 A. M., twenty miles from Whitefish Point, the *Australasia* and *Niagara* separated. When the towline parted, the captain of the *Niagara* ordered the sails set. Going wing and wing, the

⁸⁴Ibid., 46.

⁸⁵Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 46.

⁸⁶GLSHS Archives. Accessions files.

slashing winds tore the old canvas to ribbons in minutes.⁸⁷ Unable to maneuver, it fell into the trough and capsized. The crew reached the ship's yawl, but it capsized and they perished. The captain of the steam barge *W. L. Wetmore* witnessed the disaster: "the vessel gave several almost convulsive wings and then sank, her spars carried away." The *Wetmore* passed through the floating refuge of the ill fated vessel a few moments later, but found no survivors.⁸⁸

Built in Tonawanda, New York, in 1873, the schooner *Niagara* was rigged with 3 masts, had a length of 204 feet and a beam of 34 feet. The *Niagara* handled a net tonnage of 726 tons, a heavy load for a schooner. James Corrigan of Cleveland, Ohio, owned the ship when she wrecked in 1887.⁸⁹

In 1972 John Steele discovered the *Niagara* in 110 feet of water, 9 miles northwest of Whitefish Point.

⁸⁷Kenneth Pott, "Hauling Wind and Heaving Short Language of the Lakemen," *Michigan History*, 1992, 18. More than likely the *Niagara* sails were lofted to starboard. Wing and wing - special positioning of a schooner's sails when the wind is blowing directly from behind the vessel. The main sails are angled outward to catch the maximum wind, giving the appearance of wings when viewed from afar.

⁸⁸*Evening News*, Report September 8, 1887, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

⁸⁹Milwaukee Public Library, *Ship Information and Data*, Record No. 18787, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

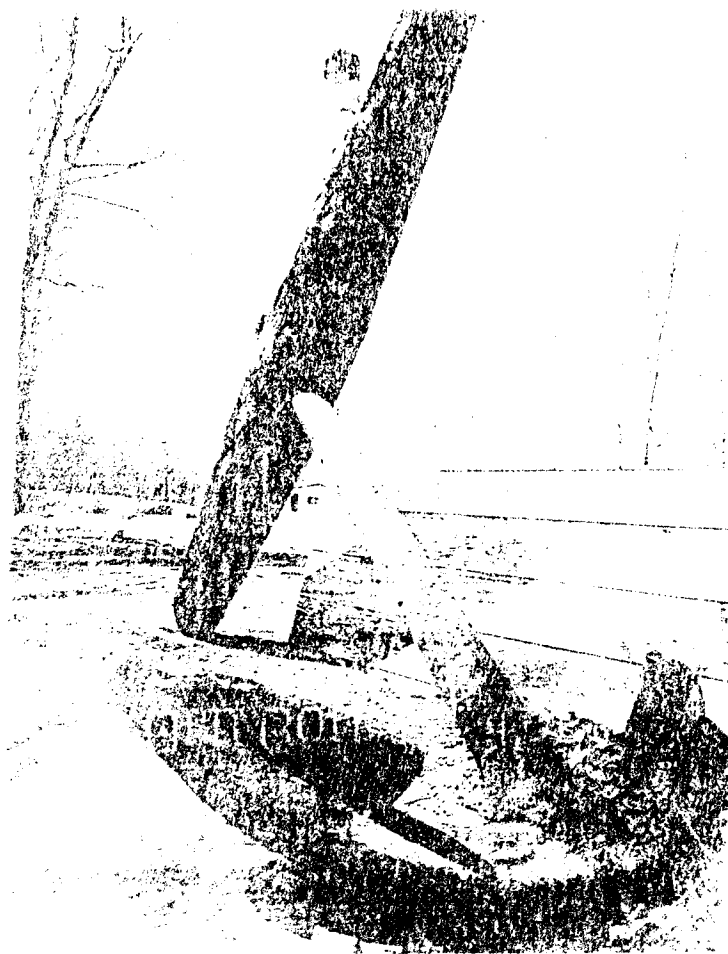


Figure 9. Niagara, Photograph by W. T. Rabe. GLSHS Archives.

Tom Farnquist and Jim Cooper recovered a large wooden-stocked anchor from the site and donated it to Lake Superior State University in 1972 (See Figure 9).⁹⁰ GLSHS relocated the site in 1978 and salvaged specific artifacts for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point. The name board of the *Niagara* is in the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum.

During the 1890s, the number of ships on Lake Superior doubled and tonnage tripled with total freight vaulting three and half times. Steel-hulled vessels were produced in increasing numbers and by 1900, 500-foot ships were a reality.⁹¹ Additionally, the Industrial Revolution created an urgent demand for iron ore. Transporting ore from Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin mines across the Great Lakes resulted in construction of locks and steel ships. As a result, the region experienced new prosperity.⁹²

Despite the expansion in shipping and subsequent increased lake traffic, the number of wrecks did not rise in proportion during the 1890s.⁹³ Maritime mortality rates declined compared to earlier decades. This was due in large part to the effectiveness of the United States Life Saving

⁹⁰Stonohouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 49. GLSHS Archives Accessions Files.

⁹¹Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 61.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Ibid.*, 61.

Service, established in 1837 "when an Act of Congress directed the old Revenue Cutter Service to make seasonal cruises along the coast for the relief of distressed mariners."⁹⁴ Despite the efforts of the Life Saving Service, shipwrecks continued to happen.

Lack of visibility caused a collision between the wooden-steamer *Samuel Mather* and steel-package freighter *Brazil* on November 21, 1891. Twelve miles east of Whitefish Point, the *Brazil* sliced out of the fog and struck the downbound *Mather* on its starboard side, forward of the stern cabins. With the *Mather* slowly sinking, 20 crew members leapt to safety aboard the *Brazil* and watched their vessel disappear in 185 feet of water.⁹⁵

Built in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1887, for Pickands, Mather and Company, the *Mather* measured 246 feet in length, 40 feet in beam. It carried three masts rigged for sails with a compound steam engine with two firebox boilers and dual stacks. The *Mather* represents a vessel constructed during the transition from sail to steam (vessels had sails as well as steam power).⁹⁶

⁹⁴Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 226.

⁹⁵Duluth Daily Tribune, November 23, 1891; Marquette Mining Journal, November 23, 1891. Duluth, Minnesota; Marquette, Michigan.

⁹⁶Milwaukee Public Library, *Ship Information and Data*, Record, 1978.

The GLSHS located the *Mather* on June 6, 1978, aboard the R. V. *Antiquarian* using side-scan sonar (See Figure 10). This was the first documented underwater investigation of the site. The dive team filmed the wreck extensively during separate surveys in 1978 and 1979 and produced a short film documentary on the ship.⁹⁷

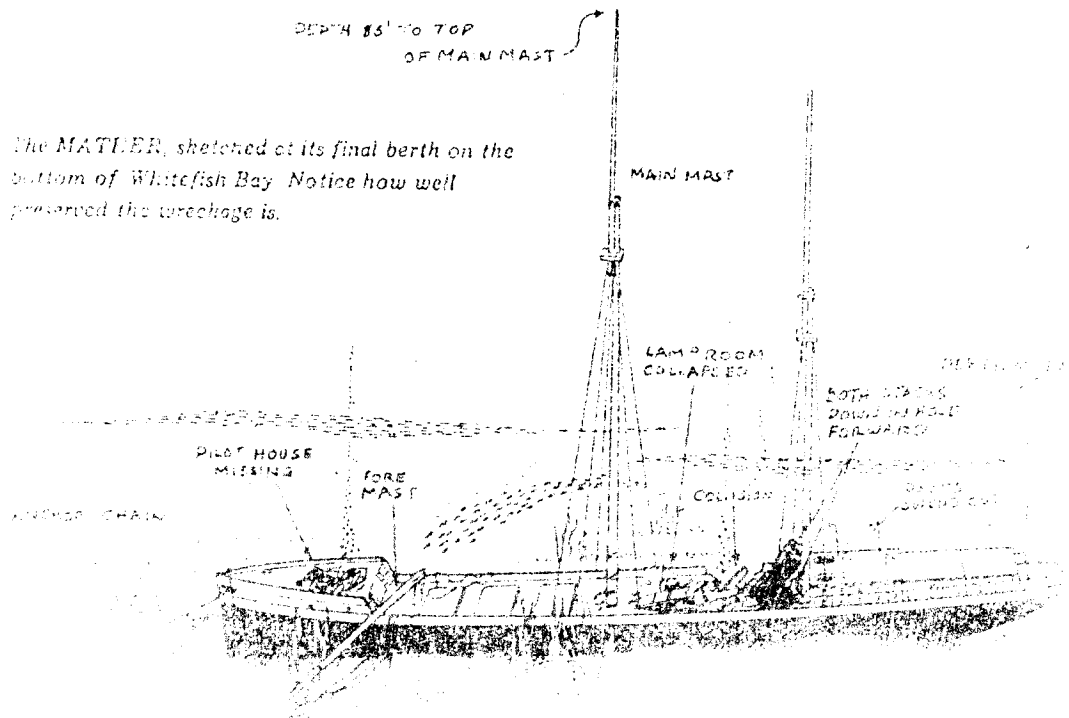


Figure 10. Samuel Mather Drawing by Tom Farnquist.

⁹⁷Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society's Archives, Accessions #1, *Samuel Mather* (Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, 1989).

On September 16, 1892, the *Vienna* rounded Whitefish Point with the schooner *Mattie C. Bell* in tow. The upbound-steamer *Nipigon* approached with the schooners *Melbourne* and *Delaware* in tow. Both vessel operators issued port-to-port passing signals, but the 191-foot, 626-ton *Nipigon* veered and crashed into the 191-foot, 1,006-ton *Vienna's*, port side. Tow lines were severed. The *Nipigon* tried to drag the *Vienna* to shallow water, but it sank in 140 feet of water (See Figure 11). The crew of the *R. V. Kaho* discovered the *Vienna* while conducting fish sampling studies for the U.S. Fisheries in 1975. The wreck in the relatively calm waters of Whitefish Point's lee shore remains popular with sport divers.⁹⁸ GLSHS surveyed the site in 1978.

The shipping industries witnessed unparalleled growth in the first decade of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1910, tonnage tripled.⁹⁹ Population growth around the Great Lakes increased, generating markets for iron ore, agricultural and timber products. To meet consumer demand, shipping corporations developed larger steel vessels.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸GLSHS Archives, Accession #3, *Vienna*.

⁹⁹Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 89.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 89.

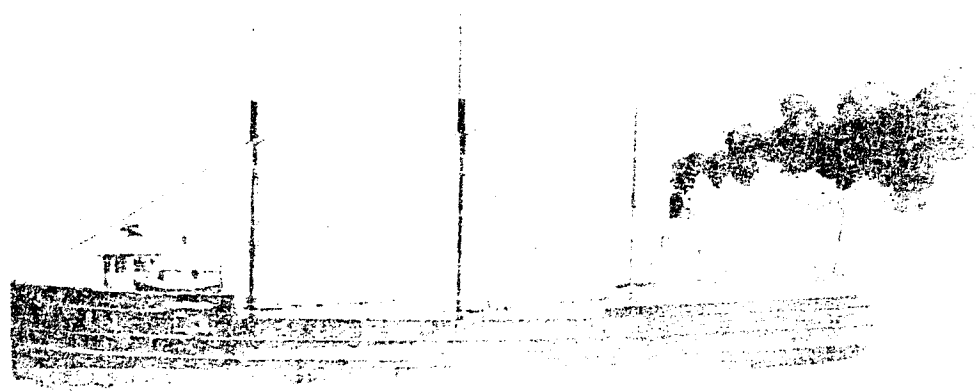


Figure 11. Vienna.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

On July 29, 1901 the whaleback steamer *Pathfinder* with the whaleback barge *Sagamore* (See Figure 12) in tow, anchored in dense fog. A whaleback is a cigar-shaped, steel hulled vessel. At nine in the morning, the captain of the 300-foot steamer *Northern Queen* steamed out of the fog and sliced deeply into the starboard side of the *Sagamore*. Five crewmen safely reached the *Northern Queen*, but the captain and the steward drowned. The *Sagamore* sits on the bottom of Whitefish Bay in seventy-two feet of water.¹⁰²

Built in 1892 in West Superior, Wisconsin, by the American Steel Barge Company, the *Sagamore* steamed for almost ten years. The disaster cost the Huron Barge Company \$90,000.¹⁰³ The *Sagamore* represents a unique vessel type because of its submarine appearance.

An initial survey in 1962, by Jack Brosco and Robert McCormick, resulted in the discovery and confirmation of the *Sagamore*. An underwater team attempted to salvage the propeller, but failed. Intact and in shallow water, the *Sagamore* attracts many recreational divers.¹⁰⁴ GLSHS surveyed the site in 1978.

¹⁰²Ibid., 93.

¹⁰³Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 91.

¹⁰⁴GLSHS Archives. (Personal communication)

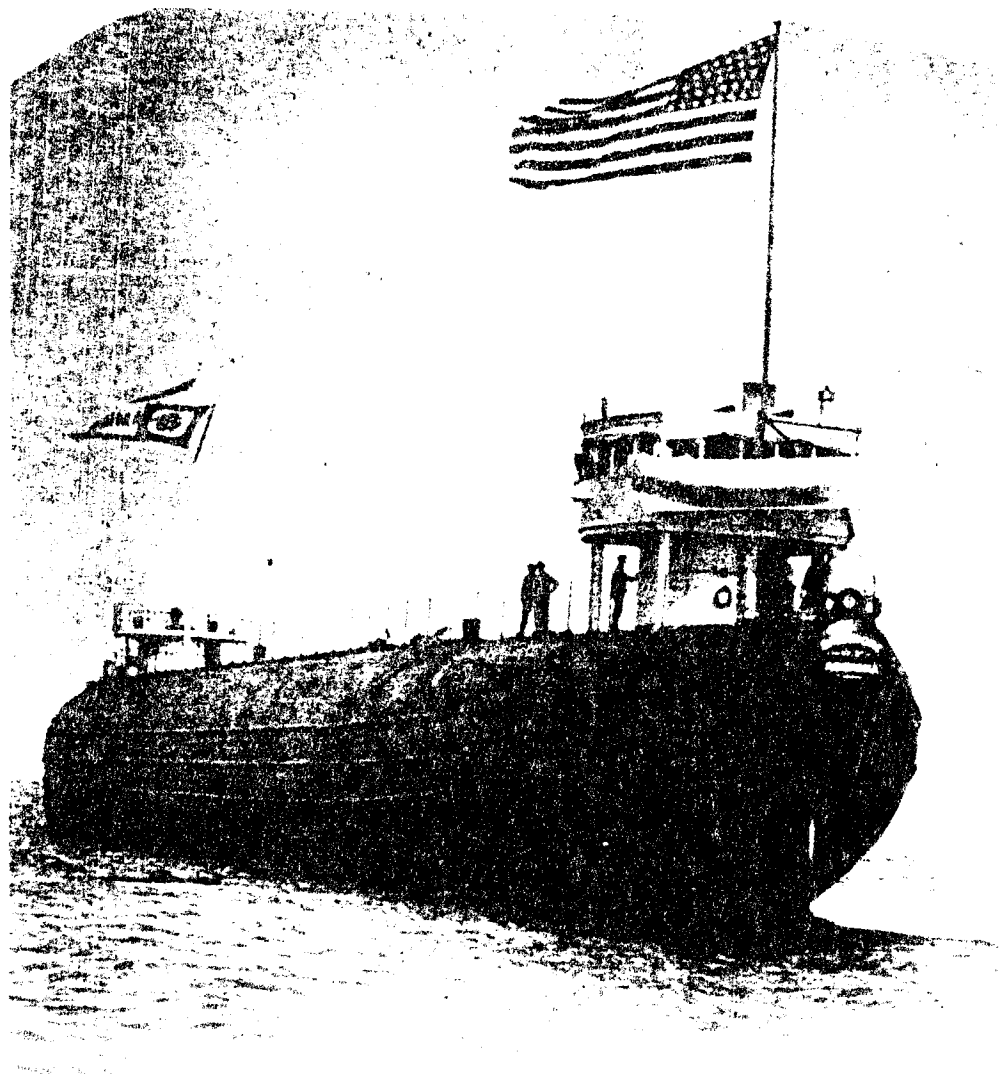


Figure 12. Sagamore GLSHS Archives, 13-13.

On October 2, 1901, the steamer *M. M. Drake*, with the schooner-barge *Michigan* in tow, experienced stormy weather. The *Michigan* took on water. The crew signaled Captain T. W. Nicholson of the *Drake* for help. The *Drake* turned and the two vessels collided. The crew of the *Michigan* jumped aboard the *Drake* and watched as the *Michigan* disappeared. The *Drake's* crew signaled in distress. The *Northern Wave* and the *Crescent City* answered their plea and rescued the crews of both vessels except for the cook, Henry Brown, who drowned. Built in 1882, by the Union Dry Dock Company in Buffalo, New York, the *M. M. Drake* measured 201-feet in length with 34.5-foot beam. Classed as a bulk freighter it carried a gross tonnage of 1,102 tons. James Corrigan of Cleveland, Ohio owned it at the time of its demise.¹⁰⁵

The GLSHS surveyed what was believed to be the *M. M. Drake* site on May, 26, 1980 (See Figure 13-14). The wreck lies in fifty feet of water on a sandy bottom near Whitefish Point.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Milwaukee Public Library, Ship Information and Data, Record. Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

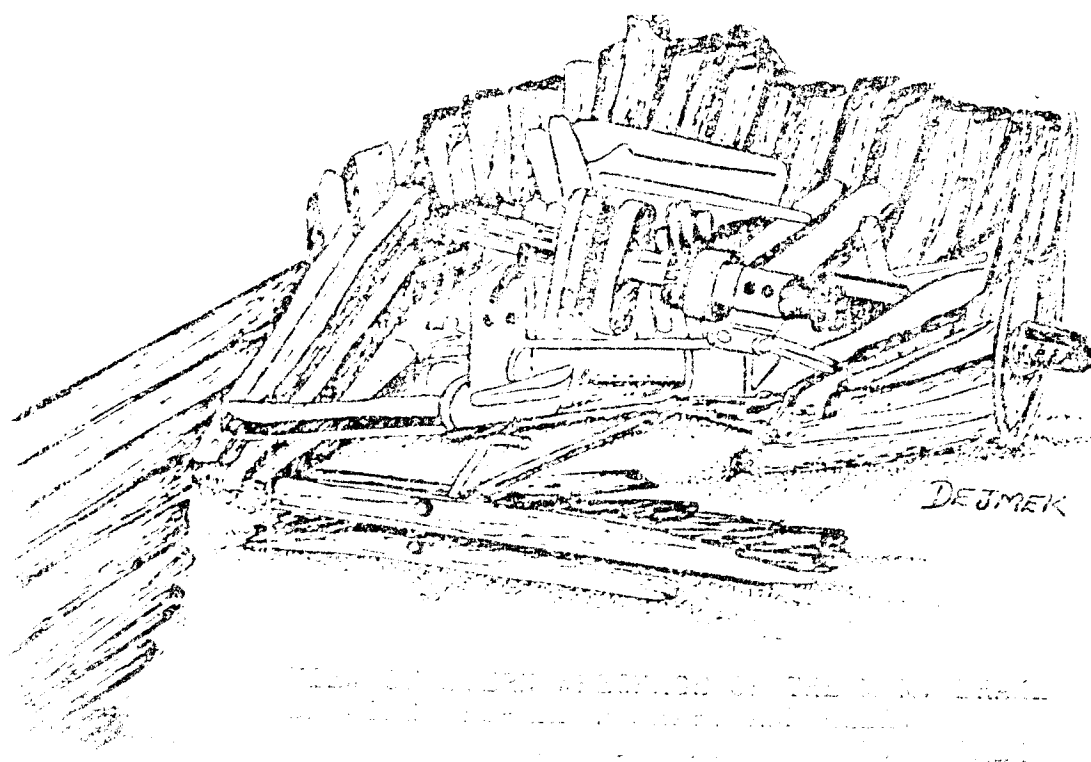


Figure 13. M. M. Drake

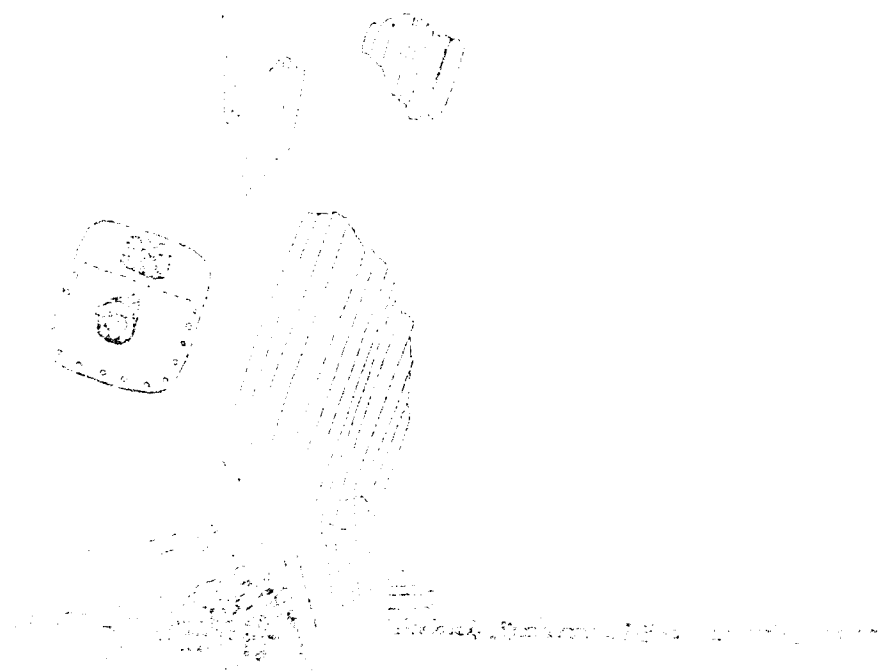


Figure 14. M. M. Drake

The *John B. Cowle* (See Figure 15) steamed out of Two Harbors carrying 7,024 tons of iron ore. At midnight on July 11th, it encountered dense fog seventy miles from Whitefish Point. At 5:30 A. M. on July 12, 1909, the *Issac M. Scott* rammed into the *Cowle's* port side. Ten men survived, but fourteen crew members drowned as the heavily laden *Cowle* sank within three minutes.¹⁰⁷ A survivor recalled:

When the ship sank, I was stuck in a whirlpool, wrenched and whirled till I thought my legs would be pulled off. I saw a body alongside me. It was Will Thomas, my assistant. I tried to revive him when a broken hatch cover came up and struck the lad on the head, crushing it. My life preserver came off and while I was floundering in the water, another hatch cover came up. I grabbed the ring and pulled myself up on it. I saw a foot sticking up from beneath it and pulling it, found it to be Thomas Mckernan, the son of the chief engineer. I pulled him up and he revived after awhile. The lake was covered with wreckage and all around in the fog could be hear cries of "Help" but it was three quarters of an hour before the yawls of the *Scott* had been loosened and put into the water.¹⁰⁸

Divers in the summer of 1972 located the *Cowle* in 220 feet of water, 2 miles north of the point.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ University of Detroit, *Marine Historical Collections, Record of Great Lakes Ships*, GLSHS Archives, Accession #2, *John B. Cowle*.

¹⁰⁸ GLSHS Archives, Accession #2, *Cowle*.

¹⁰⁹ GLSHS Archives Accessions Files.



"A survey of the wreck was conducted and revealed that the pilot house was in good condition, the wheel still turned, the ship's bell was clearly visible, the clock was in good condition, and the log was still intact. Divers retrieved the name plate."¹¹⁰

The Jenks Shipbuilding Company of Port Huron, Michigan built the *John B. Cowle* in 1902 for the Cowle Transit Company of Cleveland. Its length was 420 feet with a beam of 50.2 feet and it had a gross tonnage of 4,731. Insured for \$275,000, but valued at \$285,000 with a cargo worth \$25,000 the owner's loss of the *Cowle* was estimated at \$35,000.¹¹¹

The next major nautical accident near Whitefish Point occurred on July 10, 1911. The 420-foot steel steamer *John Mitchell* (See Figure 16) departed Duluth with a load of coal. On its way to Sault Ste. Marie (Soo) it encountered fog close to Whitefish Point. Shortly after midnight, the downbound *William Henry Mack* steamed through the mist and rammed the *Mitchell* on its port side. With the two vessels temporarily locked together, the crews lashed a ladder between the carriers. Twenty-five people crossed over to

¹¹⁰Janice H. Gerred, *The Sinking of the Cowle, Inland Seas*, Spring 1983. Ibid.

¹¹¹University of Detroit, *Marine Historical Collections, Record of Great Lakes Ships*, GLSHS Archives.



Figure 16. John Mitchell, GLSHS Archives, 03-44.

the *Mack* in seven minutes and six more boarded the yawl before the *Mitchell* broke free and sank.

Built in 1907 at St. Clair, Michigan, the *Mitchell* was like a new ship and was a property loss of \$350,000 including cargo. Located in 1972 by John Steele, the steamer lies upside down in 110 feet of water.¹¹² GLSHS surveyed the site in the summer of 1978.

On June 27, 1916, the *Panther* was added to the roster of shipwrecks caused by fog in the "graveyard" of the lakes. Six miles southeast of Whitefish Point the downbound 237-foot, 1,373-ton wooden steamer *Panther* met the upbound 478-foot, 6,025-ton steel *James J. Hill*. The *Hill* knifed into the wooden vessel amidships. The captain of the steel boat held his bow in the *Panther* long enough for the crew to reach the *Hill*. The *Hill* slowly backed off and the *Panther* slipped beneath the surface of the lake.¹¹³

Built in 1890 by James Davidson at West Bay City, the *Panther* could carry 2,100 tons. The American Steamship Company sold the vessel to the Massey Steamship Company of Fort William. The steamer sank near Garden Island, Lake Michigan, in November of 1910, but was salvaged and remained

¹¹²Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 142.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, 157.

in service until the fatal accident of 1916.¹¹⁴ The *Panther* was discovered in 1975 in 103 feet of water by the United States Fisheries. GLSHS surveyed the wreck in the summer of 1978.¹¹⁵

Three years after the *Panther* mishap, another tragic wreck occurred one mile north of Whitefish Point. The wooden steamer *Myron* (See Figure 17) steamed pass Pictured Rocks out of Munising, Michigan, on November 22, 1919, enroute to Buffalo. In tow was the schooner-barge *Miztec*. Both vessels were loaded with lumber. Twelve miles northwest of Whitefish Bay, an intense gale engulfed both ships. The *Myron* captain deliberately cut the tow line to the *Miztec* and attempted to reach the lee side of Whitefish Point. The steamer's crew labored on the pumps but the weight of incoming water caused the *Myron* to sink rapidly. A series of massive waves eventually submerged the "lumber hooker" and left cargo strewn over an area of several miles. Harsh weather conditions and heavy flotsam stymied rescue attempts by Vermilion Life-Savers and passing steamer crews of the *Adriatic* and *H. P. McIntosh*. The *Myron* crew launched yawls but the lifeboats became entangled with tossing lumber, overturning the lifeboats with the crew members.

¹¹⁴Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 163.

¹¹⁵GLSHS Archives Accession Files.

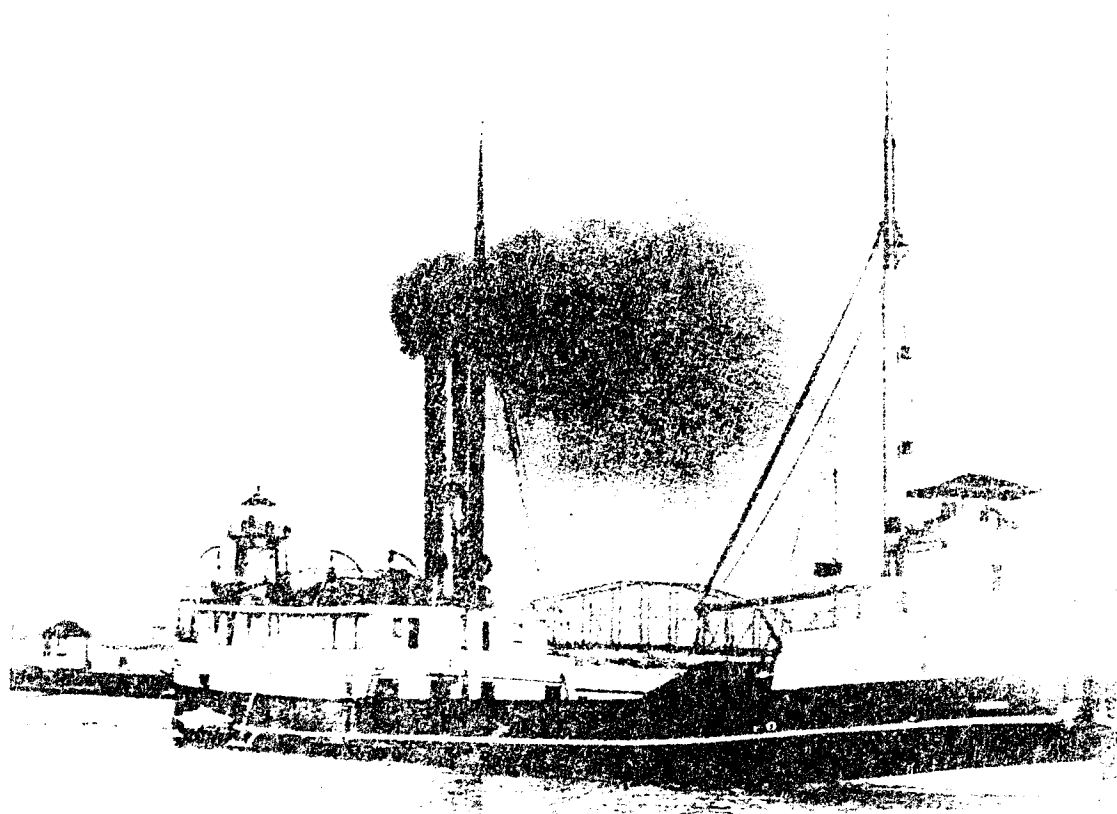


Figure 17. Lumber Hooker (Myron) GLSHS Archives 04-3.

The captain elected to stay with his vessel in the pilothouse which broke away before the *Myron* sank. He was rescued the following day by the crew of the steamer *W. C. Franz*.¹¹⁶

The *Myron*, built in 1888, was originally known as the *Mark Hopkins*. Owned by the S. F. Hodge Company, the *Myron* was constructed for the express purpose of transporting lumber. It had the carrying capacity of 950 tons.

An initial survey of the wreck was conducted in 1972 by John Steele and Tom Farnquist. Members of GLSHS reevaluated the *Myron* wreckage in 1979. They salvaged the builders plate, positively identifying the wreck.¹¹⁷

A seven percent increase in total tonnage occurred during the 1920s. Despite the expansion, safety records improved. Fatalities at sea decreased.¹¹⁸ However, the mercurial nature of Lake Superior's weather conditions continued to victimize sailors.

On August 20, 1920, in the dimming light, a crash echoed around Whitefish Bay. Four miles southeast of Whitefish Point, the upbound 580-foot steel steamer *Willis L. King* struck the port side of the downbound *Superior City*. The

¹¹⁶Ibid., 175-177.

¹¹⁷Milwaukee Public Library, *Shipwreck Information and Data*, Record. GLSHS Archives, Accession #4, *Myron*.

¹¹⁸Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 167.

Superior City (See Figure 18), which had departed from Two Harbors, was a 429-foot, 4,795-ton steel-steamer fully loaded with iron ore. As water flooded the engine room of the *Superior City* the boilers blew up; the explosion ripped off the stern section. The vessel sank and twenty-eight crew members perished in the disaster. The loss of the *Superior City* represented the worst loss of life in the history of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company.¹¹⁹

Wreckage of the *Superior City* was first surveyed by John Steele in 1972. Eight years later, members of GLSHS re-examined the site and produced a short documentary film on the wreck.¹²⁰ The author dove on the site extensively in 1983.

On the night of May 13, 1921, the wooden steamer *Zillah*, with two schooner-barges in tow, locked through the Soo, upbound toward Duluth. The 202-foot *Zillah* and the 194-foot, 777-ton schooner-barge *Miztec* carried salt cargos. Ten miles past Whitefish Point, the *Zillah's* captain realized that a spring squall threatened safe passage. After attempting to return to the lee side of the point, the tow lines broke.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 168.

¹²⁰GLSHS Archives, Accession #10, *Superior City*.

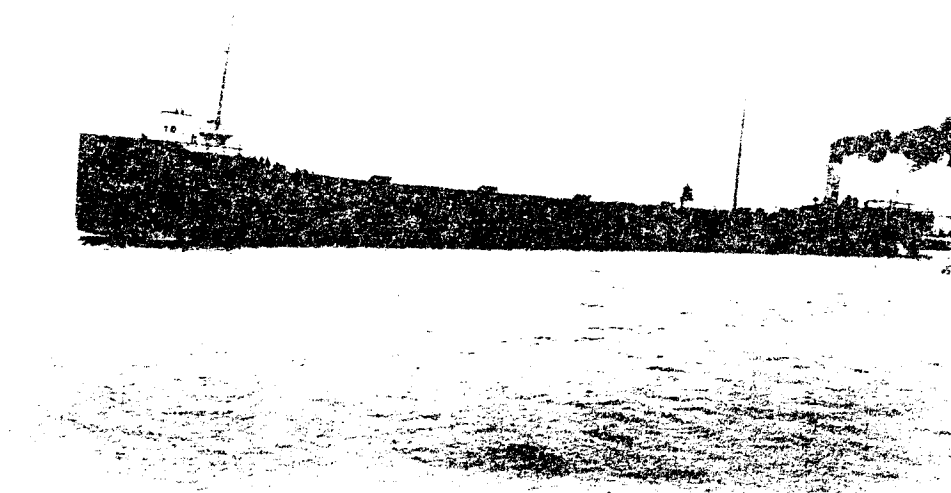


Figure 18. Superior City, GLSHS Accession #10.

The two schooner-barges were forced to weather the storm as the *Zillah* steamed to safety beyond the point. One of the schooners, the *Peshtigo*, dropped anchor in the storm. Crew members attempted to repair shredded sails without success. The *Peshtigo* weathered the storm. The *Miztec* foundered and sank within ten minutes drowning the entire crew, including the captain's wife. The *Peshtigo* and *Zillah* returned to the Soo the following day for repairs.¹²¹

The owner of the *Miztec*, O. W. Blodgett, reported an estimated loss of \$10,000. Built in 1890 by J. H. Jenken, the Marine City Transit Company operated the *Miztec*. The *Miztec* normally transported iron ore and lumber.

The Oddessey Foundation members discovered the *Miztec* in 1983. The divers located the wreck with depth recorder equipment in fifty feet of water. The wreck serves as a training site for novice divers.¹²²

Ironically, the next major vessel lost near Whitefish point was the *Zillah* (See Figure 19) on August 29, 1926. The veteran wooden steamer encountered an unusual summer gale. Four miles southeast of Whitefish Point, the *Zillah* asked for immediate assistance from the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard rescued the crew but the ship sank.

¹²¹Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 170.

¹²²Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 183.

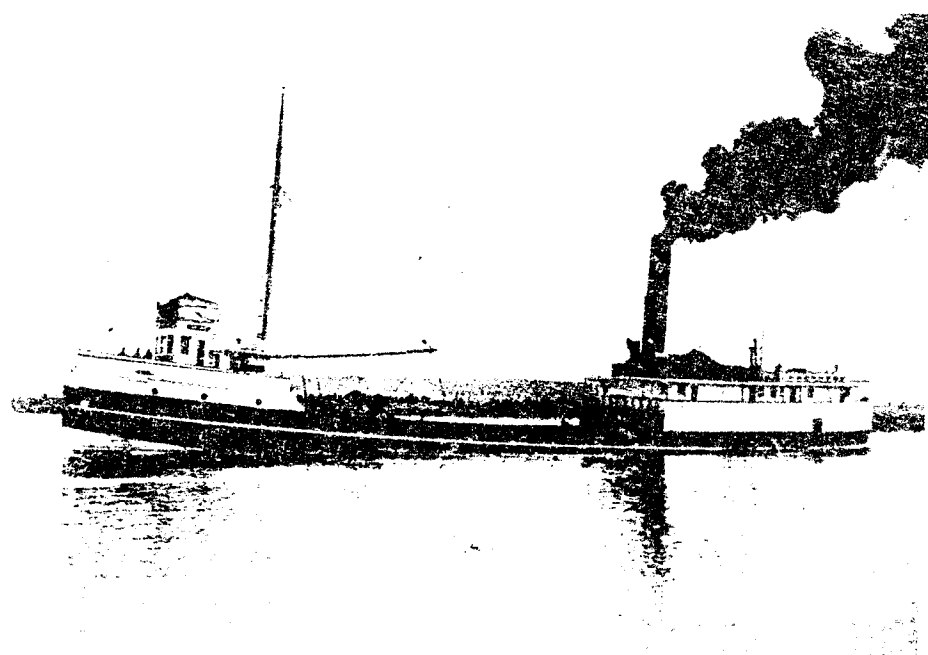


Figure 19. Zillah. GLSHS, 03-40.

Kent Bellrichard discovered the wreck in 1975 in 252 feet of water. Largely intact, the *Zillah* is avoided by most recreational divers because of depth.¹²³ GLSHS surveyed the site in 1980 and identified the wreck.

One of the more famous shipwrecks occurred on November 10, 1975, when the *Edmund Fitzgerald* (See Figure 20) sank seventeen miles north-northwest of Whitefish Point. The *Fitzgerald*, a 729-foot iron ore-carrier left Superior, Wisconsin, downbound for Detroit on November 9th. The vessel, loaded with approximately 27,000 tons of taconite ore, encountered a severe weather mass at 2:00 A. M. on November 10th. By 7:41 P. M., officials at the Soo clocked wind gusts of seventy-one mph.¹²⁴ Waves were estimated from twenty-five to thirty-five feet high. Throughout the day, the *Fitzgerald's* captain followed an extreme northern route to avoid the storm. This was a common practice and was usually done in anticipation of harsh weather.¹²⁵ By 3:30 P.M., the *Fitzgerald* developed a list. Although the *Fitzgerald* carried equipment capable of pumping 32,000

¹²³GLSHS Archives, File 03-40, *Zillah*.

¹²⁴Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 218.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 219.

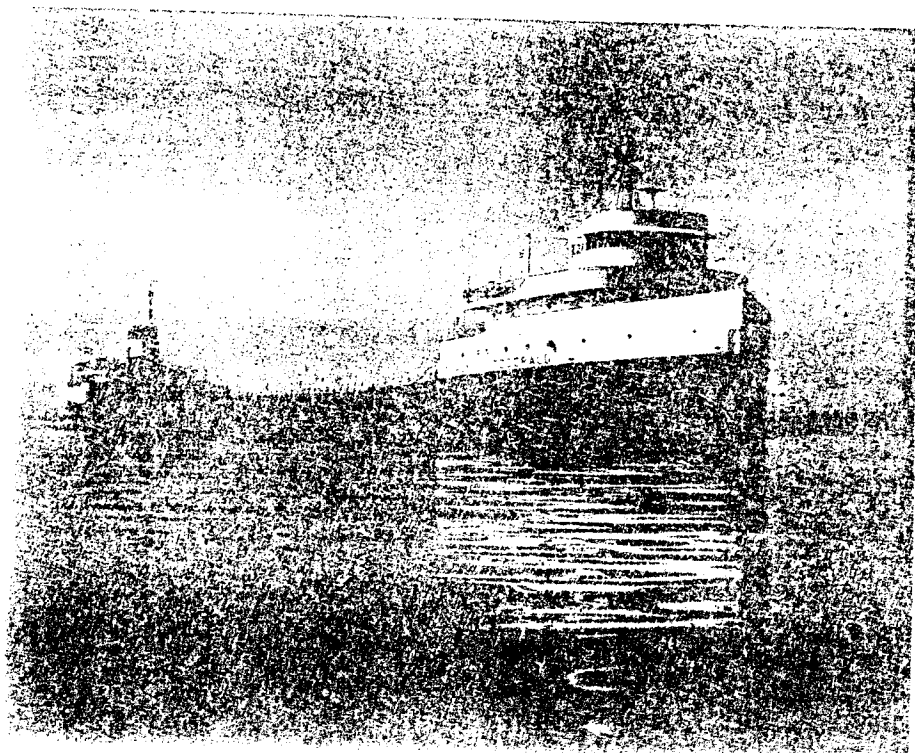


Figure 23. *Edmund Fitzgerald*. GLSHS, 03-36.

gallons-per-minute, the vessel failed to stabilize.¹²⁶

Trailing the *Fitzgerald* was another freighter, the 767-foot *Arthur M. Anderson*.

Throughout the afternoon and early evening of November 10th, Captain Ernest McSorley remained in radio contact with Captain Bernie Copper of the *Anderson*. By 4:00 P. M., McSorley requested information concerning the operational condition of Whitefish Point's light or radio beacon.¹²⁷ The pilot of an upbound Swedish "saltie" named *Avafors* reported that both light and radio were inoperative.

The *Fitzgerald's* captain communicated the following message to the *Avafors* captain: "We're in a big sea. I've never seen anything like it in my life."¹²⁸ Meanwhile, snow squalls intermittently impeded visibility between the *Fitzgerald* and *Anderson*. At 7:10 P.M., McSorley reported to Captain Cooper calmly: "We're holding our own."¹²⁹ Ten minutes later, the *Anderson's* radar showed no image of the *Fitzgerald*. The vessel had vanished.

By 9:25 P. M., on November 10th, the United States Coast Guard officially listed the *Fitzgerald* as lost. American

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Ibid., 221.

¹²⁹Ibid.

and Canadian ships searched the Whitefish Point area at great risk to their own crews. No survivors were found. Four days later, the United States Navy located a large underwater object about seventeen miles north-northwest of Whitefish Point.¹³⁰ The object was identified as the *Fitzgerald*.

GLSHS surveyed the site in August of 1989. The vessel lies in two pieces in 535 feet of water.¹³¹ The loss of the *Fitzgerald* and the entire crew of twenty-nine, represented one of the most tragic shipwrecks on Lake Superior in modern history.

Undiscovered Wrecks

One of the objectives of the underwater cultural resource survey of Whitefish Point in 1990 was the location and verification of the *Invincible* wreck site. The fur trading schooner *Invincible* departed the Soo on November 14, 1816.¹³² Perrault remarked, "that it was dangerous to leave so late in the season." The fate of the *Invincible* is described in his narrative:

. . . toward the middle of the traverse of la
pointe aux poissons Blancs, a violent wind from

¹³⁰ Ibid., 221.

¹³¹ Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 205.

¹³² Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 13.

the North West came up, the weather turned cold, which, in a moment, froze the sails and cables, so that they were powerless to manage the vessel. It was driven between la pointe aux poissons Blanc, and la riviere au Brochets where it was shipwrecked.¹³³

The *Invincible* represented the first documented nautical accident at Whitefish Point.¹³⁴

The schooner was constructed at Point aux Pins, Ontario, from prefabricated material shipped from somewhere below the Soo. Fire destroyed information on the vessel's owner, the North West Company, when Americans burned the company's headquarters at Sault Ste. Marie in 1814.¹³⁵

The North West Company became involved in a bitter rivalry with the Hudson Bay Company after the former committed a brutal atrocity against Scottish colonists. In retaliation, North West representatives murdered twenty-two colonists. In response, the owner of the tract, Lord Selkirk, arrested the guilty North West traders and sent them to Montreal to stand trial.¹³⁶ Three Montreal canoes transported the prisoners but while in route, a southeast gale engulfed the canoes. Nine men were killed.

¹³³Perrault, *Narrative of Travels*, 615.

¹³⁴Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 3.

¹³⁵Davidson, *North West Company*, 140.

¹³⁶John Morgan Gray, *Lord Selkirk of Red River* (East Lansing, 1964, 116-118).

Montreal canoes transported large quantities of goods into the interior and returned with heavy cargoes of fur. A military officer traveled in one of the canoes through the lower lakes and provided a reliable description:

These canoes were exceedingly strong and capacious, they were about thirty-six feet in length, by six feet wide, near the middle; and although the birch bark which formed a thin external coating over their ribs of white cedar, and their longitudinal laths of the same wood, appeared to compose but a flimsy vessel, yet the usually carried a weight of five tons. It may be as well to state that this cargo was very carefully stored, in order to remove any unequal pressure, which would have been fatal to such a vessel. Four poles, three of four inches at their thickest ends, denominated by the Canadians, *grand-perch*, were laid side by side in the middle of the bottom of the canoe. On these poles, the cargo was carefully arranged so that all the weight rested on them, and none allowed to press against the bare and unprotected sides of the canoe. Every package was made up of the weight of ninety pounds and none heavier.

The five tons included the provisions for ten men, sufficient to support them during about twenty-two days. Each canoe was provided with a mast and lug-sail, and also each man had a ten-foot setting pole, of good ash, shod with an iron ferrule at each end, for assisting the men towing with a strong line in ascending the rapids. The paddles were supplied by the canoe-men, each bringing his own. Each canoe had also a camp-kettle, provided by the owners, as also a few Hambro lines, a bundle of watap; roots of the pine tree, for stitching up any seam that might burst, a parcel of gum of a resinous nature, for paying over the seams when leaky; a piece of birch-bark for repairs, hatchet, crooked knife, and a few more indispensable articles.¹⁷

¹⁷Davidson, *North West*, 216-217.

A Montreal canoe of this type was lost preceding the *Invincible* disaster on August 26, 1816.¹³⁸

The North West Company issued a warrant for the arrest of Lord Selkirk, a major Hudson's Bay stockholder and dispatched the *Invincible* to collect Selkirk. The sixty-foot schooner passed through Whitefish Bay on November 14, 1816. A northwest gale forced the vessel south of Whitefish Point where they shipwrecked. No one was killed.¹³⁹ Neither the *Invincible* nor the *Frank Perew* were located during the survey of 1992.

The upbound schooner-barge *Frank Perew* encountered a gale off Grand Island on September 29, 1891. She turned and headed for shelter on the lee side of Whitefish Point.¹⁴⁰ She never made it. The lone survivor's narrative to a reporter from the *Soo Democrat* follows:

The schooner left the canal at 7:45 Sunday morning in tow of the steamer *N.K. Fairbanks*, and continued with the steamer until Whitefish Point was reached...We sailed along with fair weather until about o'clock Monday night, when abreast of Grand Island, the wind came from the West and brought a big sea with it. The schooner did well until Tuesday morning about 4 o'clock when she began to labor heavily and about the same time she filled her decks full of water and all hands stood by the yawl boat...We saw then that she would not live much longer, so we launched the yawl boat and barley had time to get away to keep from going down with her.

¹³⁸Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 3.

¹³⁹Perrault, *Travels*, 614-615.

¹⁴⁰Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 60.

This was about nine o'clock in the morning. . . . It must have taken about six minutes for her to sink.¹⁴¹

Another eyewitness, the captain of a passing steamer, also described the sinking of the *Perew*. The *J. W. Moore* passed Vermilion Point and its captain shrewdly anticipated the strength of the gale. As he turned the vessel toward Whitefish Point, he observed a three-masted schooner about eight miles ahead. The *Perew* sank before help arrived.

The survey also included the schooner-barge *Joseph Paige*, lost during a snow squall on December 1, 1897. The *Paige* departed Marquette on November 30th with its consort, the steamer *H.B. Tuttle*. Later in the day the two vessels encountered a gale. The tow line parted. The *Paige's* crew unfurled the sails and attempted to sail out of the weather, but the sails froze. The vessel sailed dangerously close to shore.¹⁴²

As the snow squalls blew toward the banks of the southern shore, a U. S. Lifesaving Service patrolman from Vermilion Point spotted the schooner. He signaled the vessel with a coston flare, hoping to warn the crew of an impending sand bar. The *Paige* struck the bar. The patrolman requested assistance from other station members,

¹⁴¹The *Soo Democrat*, October 8, 1891, Sault Ste. Marie, Chippewa County, Michigan.

¹⁴²Stonehouse, *Shipwreck Coast*, 84-85.

Several rescue attempts were made by the members. Despite personal risk, the "Storm Warriors" persisted.¹⁴³ Crisp Point Life-Savers joined the effort and continued in the rescue of *Paige* crew members. The heroics of the United States Life Saving Service resulted in the rescue of all of the schooner's crew.¹⁴⁴

The *Joseph Paige*, built in 1872, was a 190-foot, schooner. Designed by the firm of Wolf and Davidson, the *Paige* represented an unusually fine specimen of naval architecture.¹⁴⁵ The location of the *Paige* has not been determined.

Anchored on November 13, 1904 near the lee shore of Whitefish Point, the 198-foot, 683-ton, schooner-barge *W. S. Crosthwaite* was waiting out a northwest storm along with fifty other vessels. During a lull in the storm, a few crew members washed their laundry in the forecastle. The dinner

¹⁴³Ibid., 84-85. "Responding to public outcries over the maritime catastrophes of the 1870s, Congress appropriated funds to build, staff and maintain a series of lifesaving stations on the lakes. In 1876, Michigan's first official U.S. Lifesaving Service stations were established at five different points along Lake Huron's coastline. The following year, stations were placed in service on Lakes Michigan and Superior. By 1914 sixty-two lifesaving stations operated throughout the Great Lakes region." James Williams, "Storm Warriors" *Michigan History* (Lansing, 1992), 38.

¹⁴⁴Annual Report of the Operations of the United States Life-Saving Service (Washington, 1899), 126, 127.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

bell rang. The crew left an unattended fire burning under a pot full of garments. A fire started in the forecastle. The blaze engulfed the ship. The crew launched the yawl. The anchor was cut and the *Crosthwaite* drifted into Whitefish Bay and sank.

The *Crosthwaite* was built in 1873 at Saginaw, Michigan, and owned by the Gilchrist Transportation Company.¹⁴⁶ The search for the *Crosthwaite* began in the summer of 1992 when a survey of the Whitefish Point Preserve first started. The search for the vessel will continue during the summer of 1993.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Wolff, *Shipwrecks*, 104.

¹⁴⁷Whitefish Point Logbook, Jim Cassidy, personal communication, 30 July 1992.

CHAPTER 5

Agencies Affiliated with Whitefish Point Underwater Preserves

Underwater sites, particularly shipwrecks, receive attention from various groups: sport divers, salvors, nautical archaeologists, museum curators and state and federal agencies. Interest has grown as the result of technological advances, increased media attention and growing public awareness concerning the value of cultural resources. Conservation programs were introduced in the 1920s. The Michigan state government attempted to supervise the extensive bottomlands of Michigan. It took sixty years to pass legislation that would work. Currently, Michigan retains legal status in ten state bottomland preserves on the Great Lakes: Superior, Michigan and Huron, totaling 2,052 square miles.¹⁴⁸

Michigan's ten bottomland preserves, located on three of the Great Lakes, represent one of the most innovative preservation programs in the United States.¹⁴⁹ Whitefish Point, one of Michigan's most significant underwater preserves, covers 376 square miles (See Figure 21).

¹⁴⁸John R. Halsey, *Beneath the Inland Seas*, (Lansing: Michigan Department of State, 1990), 37.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 10.

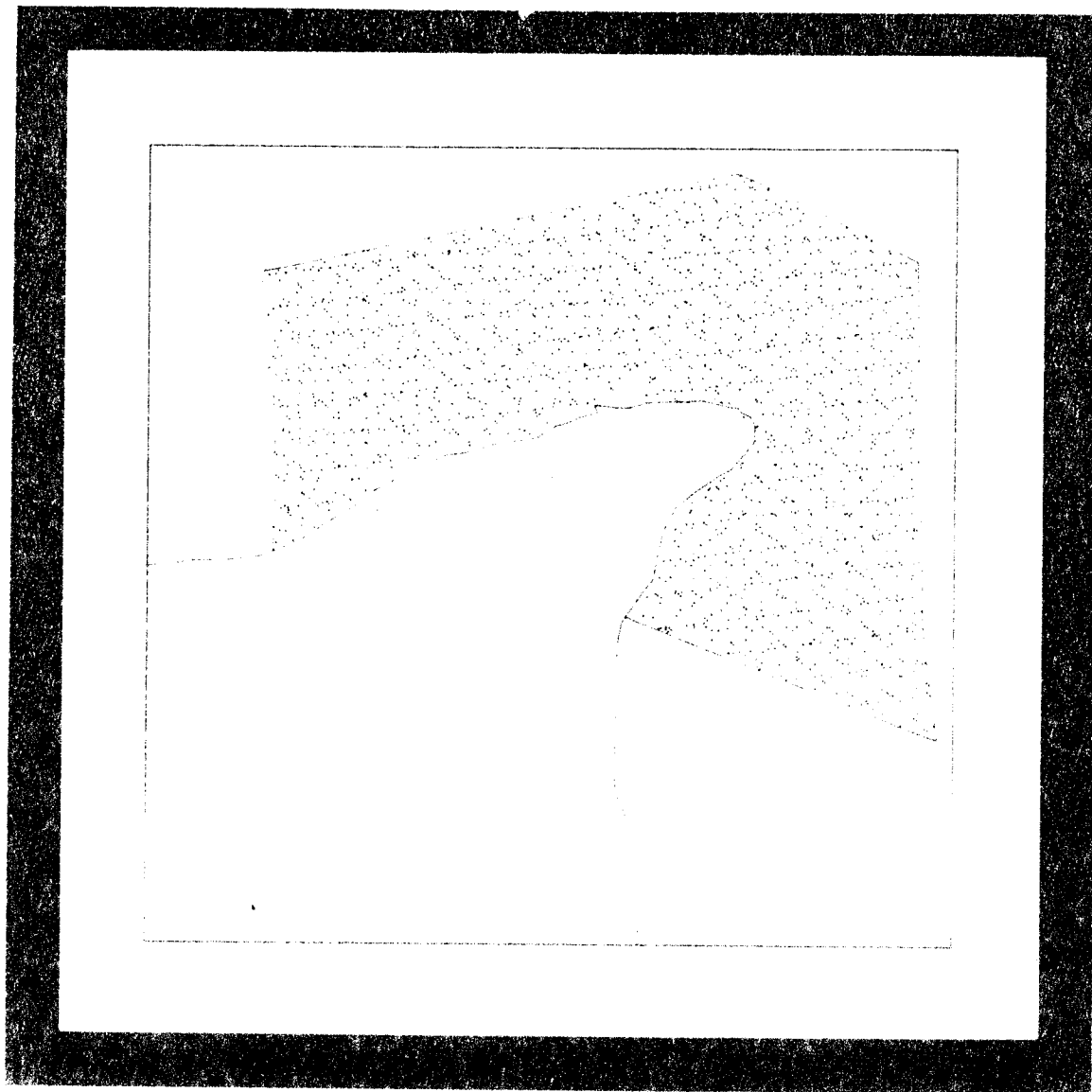


Figure 21. Whitefish Point's Underwater Preserve.²⁰

²⁰Ibid., 37.

Located in eastern Lake Superior west-northwest of Sault Ste. Marie, the preserve is the underwater equivalent of a dry land natural or wilderness area where imaginary boundaries define the perimeter of the bottomlands.¹⁵¹

A long and controversial chronology of public hearings, legislative action and legal interpretation preceded the current preserve program implemented by the state of Michigan. Michigan's title to Great Lakes bottomlands was bestowed on the state when it was admitted to the Union on January 26, 1837. State ownership extends to the bordering states of Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin and the province of Ontario, Canada. The water boundaries specified by law follow along the shoreline to the lake's ordinary highwater mark.¹⁵²

Federal authority established legal boundaries in 1837. State regulation of bottomlands in Lake Superior began in 1921 with the enactment of Public Act 17. The Michigan Department of Conservation (Department of Natural Resources by 1965 and hereafter DNR) was created by legislation and assigned responsibility of overseeing the state's natural resources. The passage of Public Act 173 in 1973 required

¹⁵¹Carrel Cowan-Ricks, ed. "Great Lakes Archaeology: Submerged Sites," *The Michigan Archaeologist* vol. 37, no. 1 (East Lansing: Michigan Archaeological Society, 1991), 11.

¹⁵²Halsey, *Beneath*, 29.

salvors to apply for permits before the retrieval of artifacts commenced. DNR supervised the permitting process and any failure to comply was prosecuted vigorously.¹⁵³

The United States Congress' enactment of the Submerged Lands Act in May 1953, reconfirmed Michigan's title to its bottomlands by federal mandate. After the federal affirmation of state ownership, Michigan passed the Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act, also known as Public Act 247. The DNR was assigned new responsibilities including the obligatory protection of state bottomlands from encroachment and modification of function or nature.¹⁵⁴

Despite legislation enacted by the state, most Michigan officials overlooked salvage operations.¹⁵⁵ In 1967, DNR initiated the first steps to supervise salvage of shipwrecks. One year later, the department requested Attorney General Frank J. Kelly to render the state's legal opinion on the issue of whether statutes existed granting DNR authority over salvage operations. Kelly replied in 1969 that current state statutes did not authorize the department to oversee or regulate salvage operations. Three

¹⁵³Cowan-Ricks, *Archaeology*, 10.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*

proposals introduced in Congress by the DNR failed to give them this authority.¹⁵⁶

In 1980, after countless meetings and revisions between divers, salvors and legislators, Public Act 184 passed. The DNR established and defined Great Lakes bottomland preserves and implemented the current permit process. Permits and related guidelines were jointly administered by DNR and Department of State (hereafter DOS).

DOS was formed in 1973 after a reorganization of state bureaus. DNR and DOS share the joint responsibility of shipwreck protection. DNR managed natural resources and recreational interests, while DOS concentrated on state history and archaeology.¹⁵⁷

Public interest in preserves and shipwreck sites has generated the creation of organizations and sponsors. The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society founded in 1978, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of the submerged cultural resources of the Great Lakes. The society currently operates The Great Lake Shipwreck Museum on former United States Lighthouse Service

¹⁵⁶Halsey, *Beneath*, 29.

¹⁵⁷Cowan-Ricks, *Archaeology*, 9.

property (at Whitefish Point), which is currently under lease from the U.S. Coast Guard.¹⁵⁸

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum is an example of an organization whose fundamental goal is to preserve, document, display and interpret significant archaeological and historical artifacts. In turn, these artifacts help illustrate and explicate past lifeways.

The museum is located at the northernmost point of the peninsula.¹⁵⁹ The point serves as a avian migratory habitat.¹⁶⁰ At present, the property is shared by three occupants: the GLSHS, the State of Michigan Audubon Society Whitefish Point Observatory, and United States Coast Guard. Almost 60,000 people visited the museum's facilities in 1991.¹⁶¹ The GLSHS accommodates public visitation from Memorial Day until mid-October.

Whitefish Point reserves the distinction of having the oldest lighthouse on Lake Superior.¹⁶² Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*, traveled the shoreline in

¹⁵⁸EUP Regional Planning and Development Commission, *Whitefish Point Comprehensive Plan* October 1992 (Sault Ste. Marie, 1992), 1.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 1.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 16.

¹⁶²Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 87.

the summer of 1847 and expressed the need for better navigation aids:

All the land on our shore of Lake Superior, with the islands, belongs to the Federal Government, which has set a large price on a good part of it and expects to sell it at that price. But on the whole lake there is not a light house nor any other harbor than such holes in the rock-bound coast as Nature has perforated. Not a dollar has ever been spent on them.¹⁶³

Although Congress appropriated \$5,000 for the construction of Whitefish Point Lighthouse on March 3, 1847, the Federal Land Commissioner delayed purchase of the land until July 1847. Ebenezer Warner, a contractor from Sandusky, Ohio, completed the structure in November 1848.¹⁶⁴ The lighthouse became operational in the spring of 1849.

The original building, a combination of "split stone and hard bricks and laid in good lime mortar" was a sixty-five-foot high tower with a twenty-foot base.¹⁶⁵ The original structure was replaced in 1861 by the current steel frame structure. A Winslow Lewis lamp and reflector provided the first light source on the tower. Invented in 1781 and based on Ami Argand's lamp and parabolic reflector, Lewis's lamp functioned as the Whitefish Point light source

¹⁶³Horace Greeley, New York Tribune, quoted in Massie, Whitefish Point, 84.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 86.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 85.

until 1857 when the Lighthouse Board installed a Fresnel lens (See Figure 22).¹⁶⁶

In 1822, Augustine Fresnel developed a lens that resembled a beehive. It had a series of glass prisms that proved far more effective than the Lewis design. The United States continued to use Lewis lamps because Stephen Pleasonton, General Superintendent of Lights, was a close friend of Lewis. The Fresnel lens was finally introduced in 1852 and replaced all Lewis lamps by 1860.¹⁶⁷

The erection and maintenance of lighthouses and other navigation aids came under federal control by an Act of Congress on August 7, 1789, (1 Stat. L, 53).¹⁶⁸ The act placed the Lighthouse Establishment under the Treasury Department. Section 3 directed the Secretary of the Treasury to supervise and maintain lighthouses and pay salaries to presidential appointments.

Three years later, Congress placed the Lighthouse Establishment under control of the Commissioner of the Revenue. Revenue authority lasted until 1820, except from 1802 to 1813, when Congress abolished the office and

¹⁶⁶Charles K. Hyde, *The Northern Lights Lighthouses of the Upper Great Lakes* (Lansing, Michigan, 1986), 8-30.

¹⁶⁷Frederick Arthur Ambrose Talbot, *Lightships and Lighthouses* (Philadelphia, 1913), 29. Massie, *Whitefish Point*, 85-86.

¹⁶⁸George Weiss, *The Lighthouse Service Its History, Activities and Organization* (Baltimore, 1926), 2. Hyde, *Northern Lights*, 12.

transferred lighthouse management to the Secretary of the Treasury.

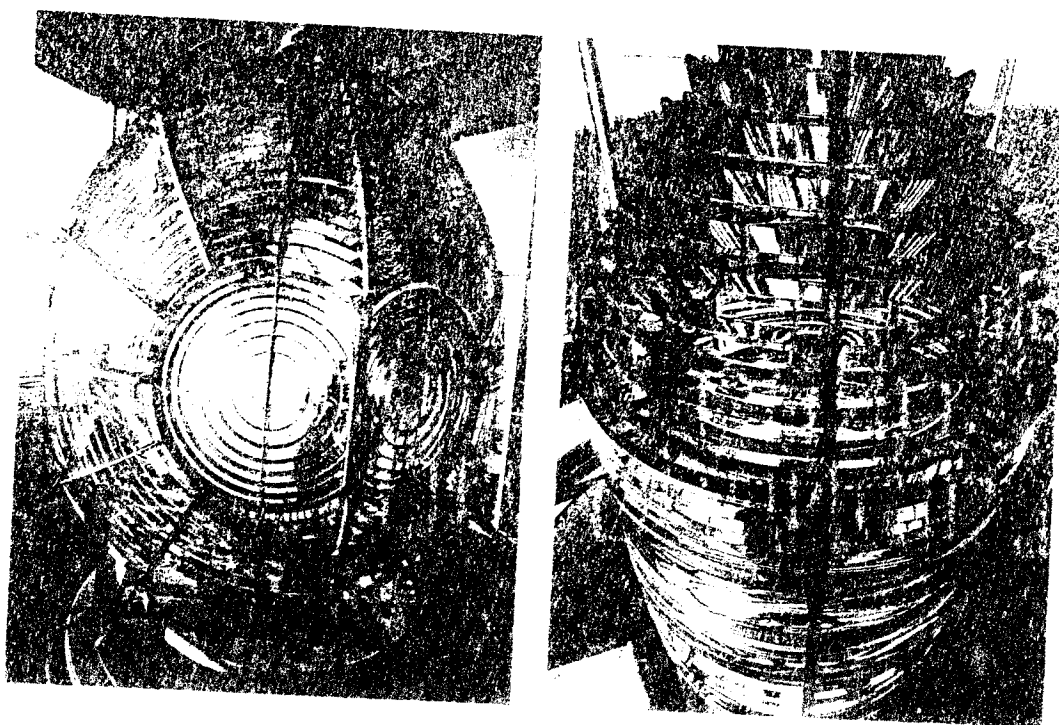


Figure 22. Fresnel Lens.

From 1820 to 1852, the Fifth Auditor of the Treasury, Stephen Pleasonton, assumed administrative supervision of the Lighthouse Establishment. In 1852, Congress created the Lighthouse Board which survived until 1910, when Congress created the Bureau of Lighthouses. On July 7, 1939, Congress delegated authority to the United States Coast Guard and the Bureau of Lighthouses was permanently abolished.¹⁷⁰

The investigation of local navigation history furnishes an opportunity to understand the relationship between Whitefish Point and shipwrecks. The cluster of wrecks (See Figure 23) located in this vicinity represents a pattern of distribution and is directly related to shipping routes (See Figure 24), cargo, navigation guides and weather.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰Statutes at Large, Microfiche U.S. C7508 v.1, v.2, Joyner Library, East Carolina University. Weiss, Lighthouse Service, 1-5.

¹⁷¹Hulse, Spatial Analysis, 216.

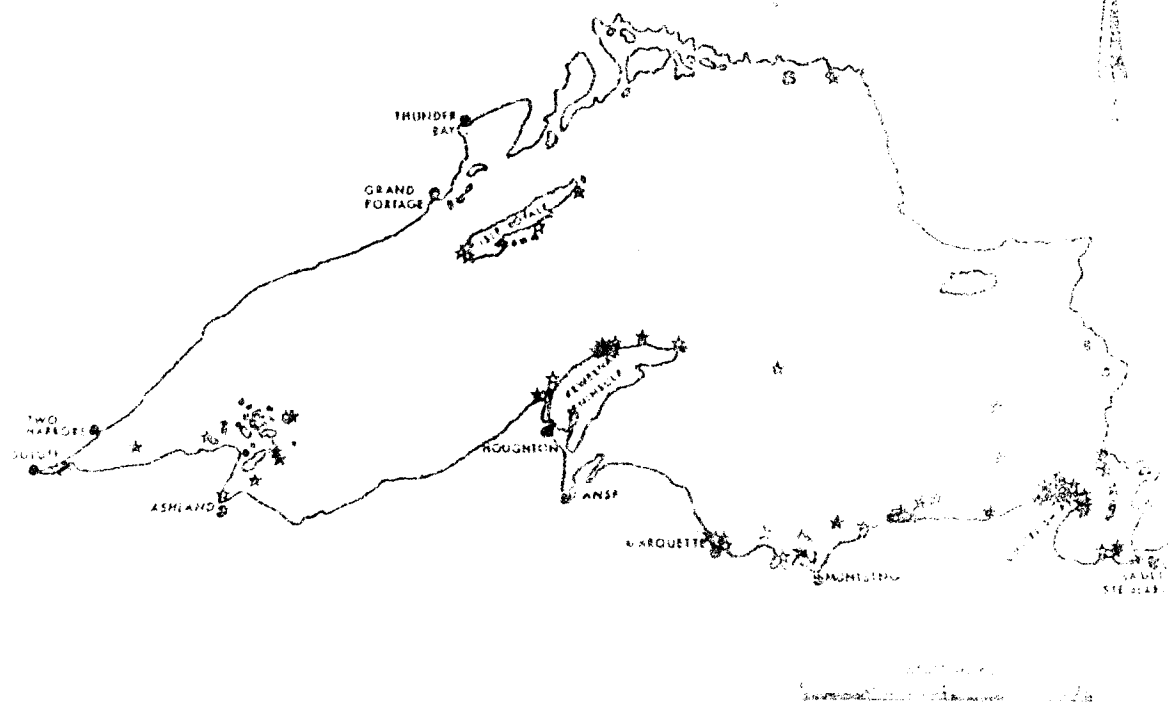


Figure 23. Iron-related shipwreck distribution.

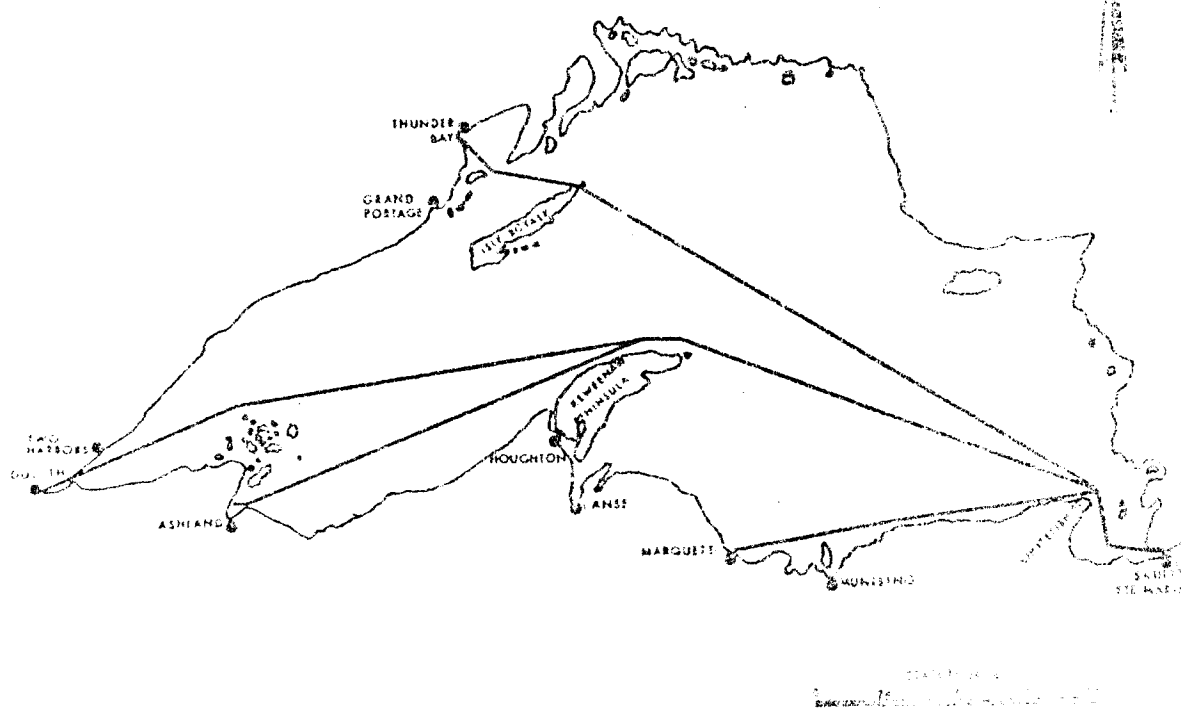


Figure 24. Lake Superior Transportation Routes.¹⁷

¹⁷Ibid., 29.

Chapter 6

Preliminary Survey

Introduction

In 1992, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society initiated a submerged cultural resource survey of Whitefish Point. Preparation for the 1992 survey began during the fall of 1991. GLSHS funded the project.

The survey focused on location, identification and evaluation of potential submerged cultural resources in designated coastal areas. Phase 1 survey began in the summer of 1992. The goal of the survey was to determine the nature, location and condition of individual sites.

Prior archaeological studies by Kathryn C. Egan were land-based. Egan refers to the Naomikong Point Site and a site 1/2 mile south of the Harbor of Refuge. George Quimby, James Fitting and Donald Janzen directed underwater exploration on the Naomikong Point Site in 1965-1968.¹⁷⁴

Methodology

The research presented in this paper follows the approach advocated by Muckelroy. The aim of the study was to generate new knowledge on maritime cultures at Whitefish Point through systematic research. The history of Whitefish

¹⁷⁴Fitting, *Archaeology of Michigan*, 139.

Point reveals a significant relationship between the environment and human industry.

Project constraints limited the scope of survey. Physical limitations, such as funding, time, weather, equipment and personnel, dictated the nature of investigation. The survey concentrated on Whitefish Point's anchorage area (twelve mile stretch along the lee shore) and the suspected site of the *Frank Perew*. NOAA Navigational Chart (St Mary's River to Au Sable Point) #14962 with overprinted Loran C coordinates established geographic parameters.

The chosen methodology called for the use of a side-scan sonar and proton precession magnetometer to locate possible wreck sites. The Side-scan sonar is an acoustical device that produces an image of surface relief.¹⁷⁵ The survey team employed a Klein towfish side-scan sonar during the five-day search for the *W. S. Crosthwaite* and the *Frank Perew* (See Figure 25).

"In underwater archaeology the magnetometer is of particular importance."¹⁷⁶ The survey team employed a

¹⁷⁵Barbara A. Purdy, *Wet Site Archaeology* (Cadwell, New Jersey, 1988), 62.

¹⁷⁶J. Barto Arnold III, *An underwater Archaeological Magnetometer Survey and Site Test Excavation Project off Padre Island, Texas* (Austin, 1976), 3.

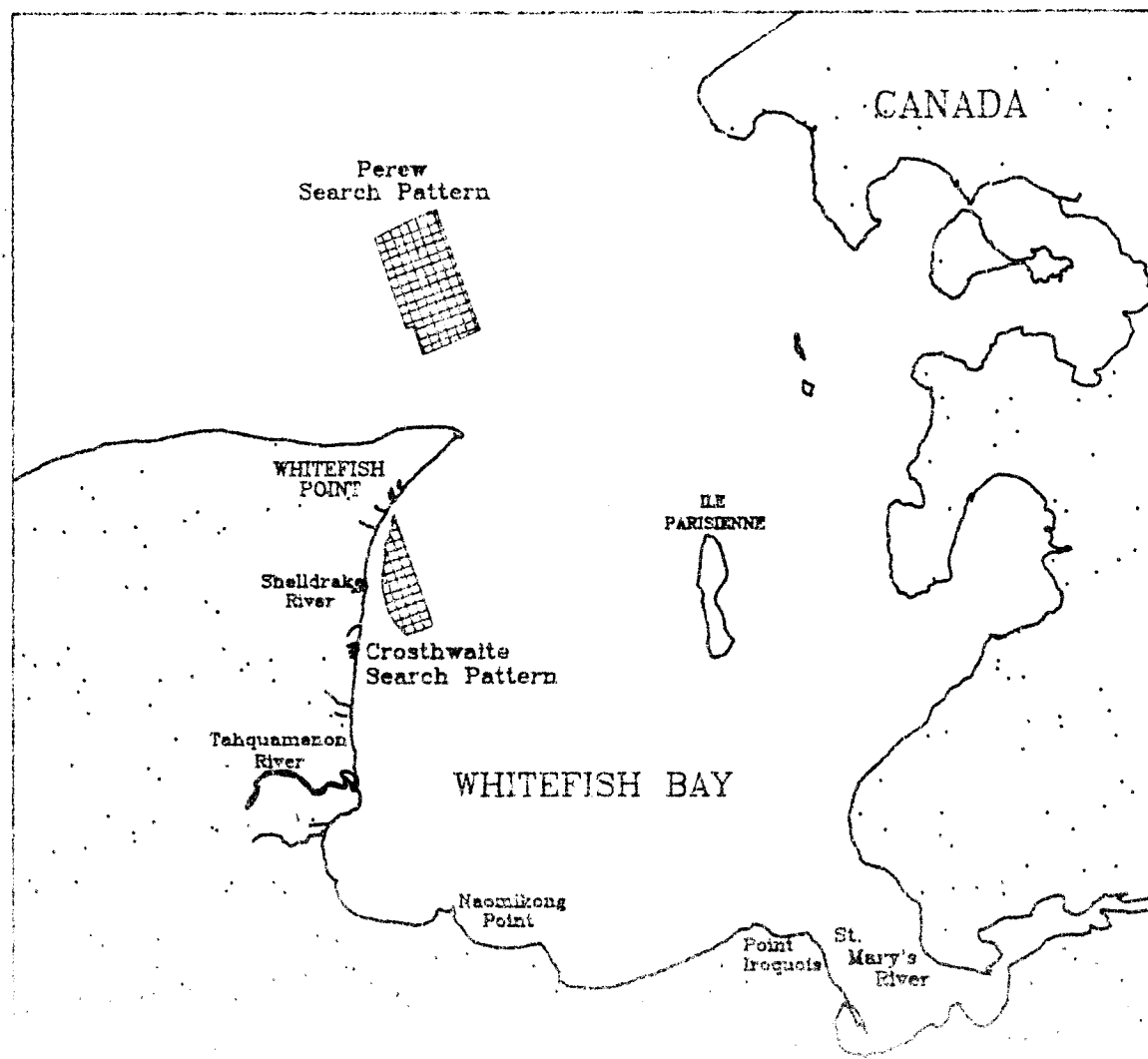


Figure 25. Search Area. Map by author.

Littlemore Scientific Laboratory Type 7702 proton precession magnetometer. The magnetometer consists of a digital readout and a strip chart recorder linked to a towed sensor probe by a hundred feet of protected cable. The Type 7702 magnetometer is similar to a sensitive compass, sampling the ambient magnetic background at two-second intervals. The liquid dipolar molecules in the sensor align themselves to the earth's background magnetism. If an magnetic attraction interferes with the earth's magnetism, the sensor's molecules rotate to a new alignment. This conversion produces a detectable anomaly. "These anomalies are translated by the instrument to a numerical expression measured in gammas."¹⁷⁷

Theoretically, a magnetometer can detect disturbances in the earth's background magnetism.¹⁷⁸ In reality, it is difficult to tell whether a magnetic anomaly or sonar target is of archaeological significance. Divers have to ground-truth anomalies.

The failure of equipment (the engine blew a rod), time and the lack of training limited the use of the

¹⁷⁷David J. Cooper and Bradley A. Rodgers, *Report on Phase I Marine Magnetometer Survey in Death's Door Passage, Door County, Wisconsin, 1989* (Greenville, North Carolina, 1990), 12.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 13.

magnetometer. The team did not run designated transects during this survey. Results were not plotted or recorded.

Fieldwork

Side-scan sonar transects established at 600 feet followed Loran-C coordinates A 31143.03 to B 47614.43. Depths range from 20 feet to 160 feet. Survey lanes insured controlled search patterns. The side scan sonar provided excellent overlap in contiguous data records. Towfish side scan-sonar deployed along side of the boat, six feet below the surface, allowed shallow water surveillance. During the *Perew* search, the towfish was deployed two hundred to three hundred feet behind the boat at different depths.

The *W. S. Crosthwaite* survey began four miles south of the harbor of refuge and ended eleven miles south (143 degrees S) of same. Water depth varied from shoreline to 300-feet within a mile south of the point. North of the point, a long flat sandy bottom extends out several miles before it slumps to depths of 600 feet. Shipwrecks in shallow water are typically buried in sand, while wrecks in deeper water rest on the lake bottom.

Field Results

Target 1

Location Date: 7-26-92

Transect: 92

Provenience: Loran C A 31150.04 B 47619.88 at 110 feet

Verification: yes, Aug 1, 1992

Analysis: Wooden barge and crane. History of the site is
unknown. Documented on film Aug 5, 1992.
(See Figure 26)

Target 2

Location Date: 7-26-92

Transect: 95

Loran C Location: A 31150.76 B 47642.23

Verification: no

Analysis: Small target 5-10 feet off the bottom.

Target 3

Location Date: 7-26-92

Transect: 97

Loran C Location: A 31152.07 B 47621.78

Verification: no

Analysis: Anchor target.

Target 4

Location Date: 7-26-92

Transect: 100

Loran C Location: A 31153.00 B 47625.36

Verification: no

Analysis: Anchor target

Target 5

Location Date: 7-26-92

Transect: 116

Provenience: Loran C Location A 31131.41 B 47604.73 at 100
feet.

Verification: no

Analysis: Debris field in front of Refuge Harbor.

Target 6

Location Date: 7-30-92

Transect: 183

Provenience: Loran C Location A 31120.03 B 4760.08 at 150 feet.

Verification: no

Analysis: N/A

Target 7

Location Date: 7-30-92

Transect: 189

Provenience: Loran C Location A 31120.00 B 47557.64 at 170 feet.

Verification: no

Analysis: Possible boat. Sixty feet long.

Target 8

Location Date: 7-30-92

Transect: 201

Loran C Location: A 31122.03 B 47559.36

Verification: no

Analysis: Hard mound shoal.

Target 9

Location Date: 7-31-92

Transect: 242

Provenience: Loran C Location A 31126.09 B 47551.04 at 225 feet.

Verification: no

Analysis: Possible assemblage of wreckage.

Target 10

Location Date: 7-31-92

Transect: 251

Provenience: Loran C Location A 31126.98 B 47546.99 at 180 feet.

Verification: no

Analysis: Small dark object with tall shadow.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Recommendations

When considering any aspect of the past, several different approaches may be used. The type of evidence investigated determines the method of approach.

The longest established and most highly developed of the disciplines, in the study of seafaring as in the study of most other activities, is the historical one, in which the primary concern is with the uncovering and interpretation of surviving documentary evidence for past events, and by which the researcher seeks to understand not only the precise course of events but also the reasons, causes, or motives behind them.¹⁷⁹

Historical research on Whitefish Point provided useful data concerning commodity affiliation, frequency of traffic, weather, seasonality of shipping, location of lost vessels, port of origin, date of loss, vessel type and type of loss. These factors create a host of variables showing potential statistical significance.¹⁸⁰ The history of Whitefish Point, which includes first person accounts from as early as the 1620s, contributes to the precision of location and verification of submerged culture sites.

Another approach is anthropological. The discipline of anthropology concerns itself with broad areas of human activities. Environment and its impact on behavior,

¹⁷⁹Keith Muckelroy, *Maritime archaeology* (Cambridge, Great Britain, 1978), 4.

¹⁸⁰Hulse, *A Spatial Analysis*, 122.

economic systems and their development and cognitive processes are important areas of study to anthropology. Investigations into the Great Lakes shipping industry show a relationship between regional economic behavior, environment and archaeology sites. "From a broad anthropological approach, the study of shipwrecks can contribute to the understanding of such phenomena as economic change and the industrial process."¹⁸¹

Statistical analyses between environmental conditions and industrial navigation serve as predictive models for assessing the probability of shipwreck sites. Based on Charles Hulse's *Spatial Analysis of Lake Superior Shipwrecks: A Study in the Formative Process of the Archaeological Record*, Whitefish Bay and Whitefish Point have one the highest rates of shipwrecks in Lake Superior.¹⁸²

Archaeology is essentially the study of the objects that have survived from past activities and the subsequent derived insights into the societies that made them. Maritime archaeology is defined as "the scientific study of the material remains of man and his activities on the

¹⁸¹Ibid., 1.

¹⁸²Ibid., 200.

sea."¹⁸³ The data and ideas contributed by history, archaeology and anthropology can sometimes contradict or duplicate one another, "but above all they should be viewed as complementary in the overall field of maritime studies."¹⁸⁴

Native Americans adapted to an area rich in natural resources. Beaver attracted the attention of Europeans by the 1670s. The beaver hat industry fueled a surge of French and English traders into the region. Fish replaced the beaver as the region's chief natural resource and commodity in the late 1830s. The fishing industry remained steady until a glut in the market and financial panic caused the industry to fold by 1842. The discovery of copper in 1840 and iron ore in 1844 and the resulting developments in metallurgy created a massive iron ore industry. By the 1880s, iron ore traffic increased seven fold.¹⁸⁵ By the late 1800s, grain, agricultural and lumber industries were utilizing the lake's shipping lanes.

Historical confirmation of shipwreck sites enables the generation of hypotheses based on quantitative variables. Hulse's research indicates a strong correlation

¹⁸³Muckelroy, *Archaeology*, 4.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 4.

¹⁸⁵Wolff, *Superior Shipwrecks*, 33.

between the distribution of shipwrecks and commodity type. The identification of maritime cultural patterns gives investigators a functional method for locating shipwrecks. From a broad anthropological perspective, all archaeological sites in The Great Lakes can contribute to the knowledge of such cultural phenomena as maritime geostrategy, economic change and evolution of technology.

Location and confirmation is the first step in archaeological investigation. The initial survey of the point in 1992 represents the first documented methodological investigation of the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve. twenty one square miles were surveyed. An additional 355 square miles remain undocumented (See Figure 27).

The study of history, anthropology and archaeology enhances the ability of researchers to verify and confirm archaeological sites and interpret the lifeways of maritime cultures around Whitefish Point. The submerged cultural resources within Michigan's Great Lakes are beneficial to a variety of users. They include historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, sport divers, fishermen, salvors and business people. State legislation formally recognized these resources as public trust resources to be managed for the benefit of present and future Michigan citizens. A management system is needed to guide, monitor and control the use of these resources. "Strategic planning processes

and collaborative decision-making approaches offer some means for designing effective resource management tactics that are consistent with the missions of state agencies."¹⁸⁶

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society is currently working in conjunction with state agencies to develop a viable management model for the submerged cultural resources of Whitefish Point's Underwater Preserve. The Site Report by the author will help develop this model. "Strategic planning processes relevant to shipwreck management include inventory and assessment of resources, citizen participation and community development approaches and the marketing of parks, recreation and tourism."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶Kenneth J. Vrana and John Halsey, "Shipwreck Allocation and Management in Michigan: A Review of Theory and Practice" *Historical Archaeology* Volume 26 1992. 81.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

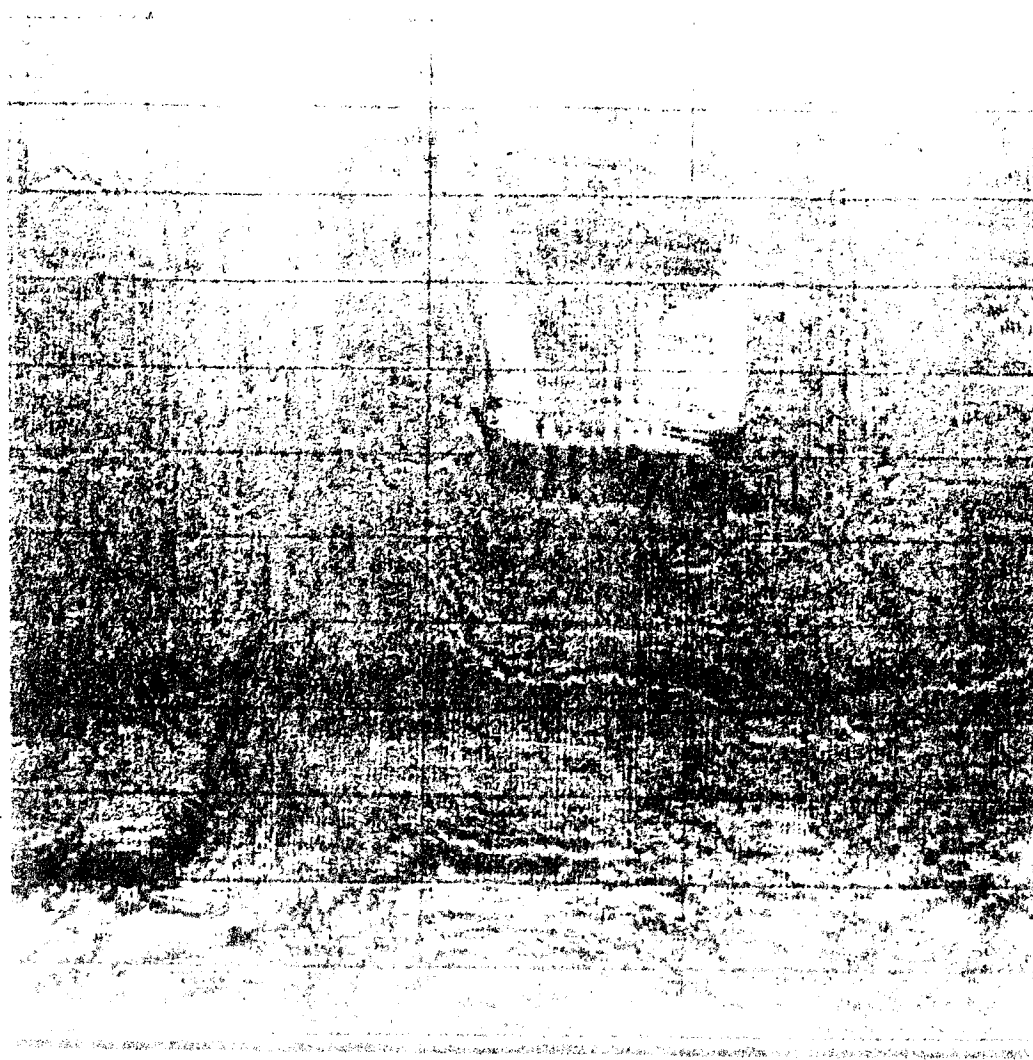


Figure 26. Barge, Side-scan Sonar Image

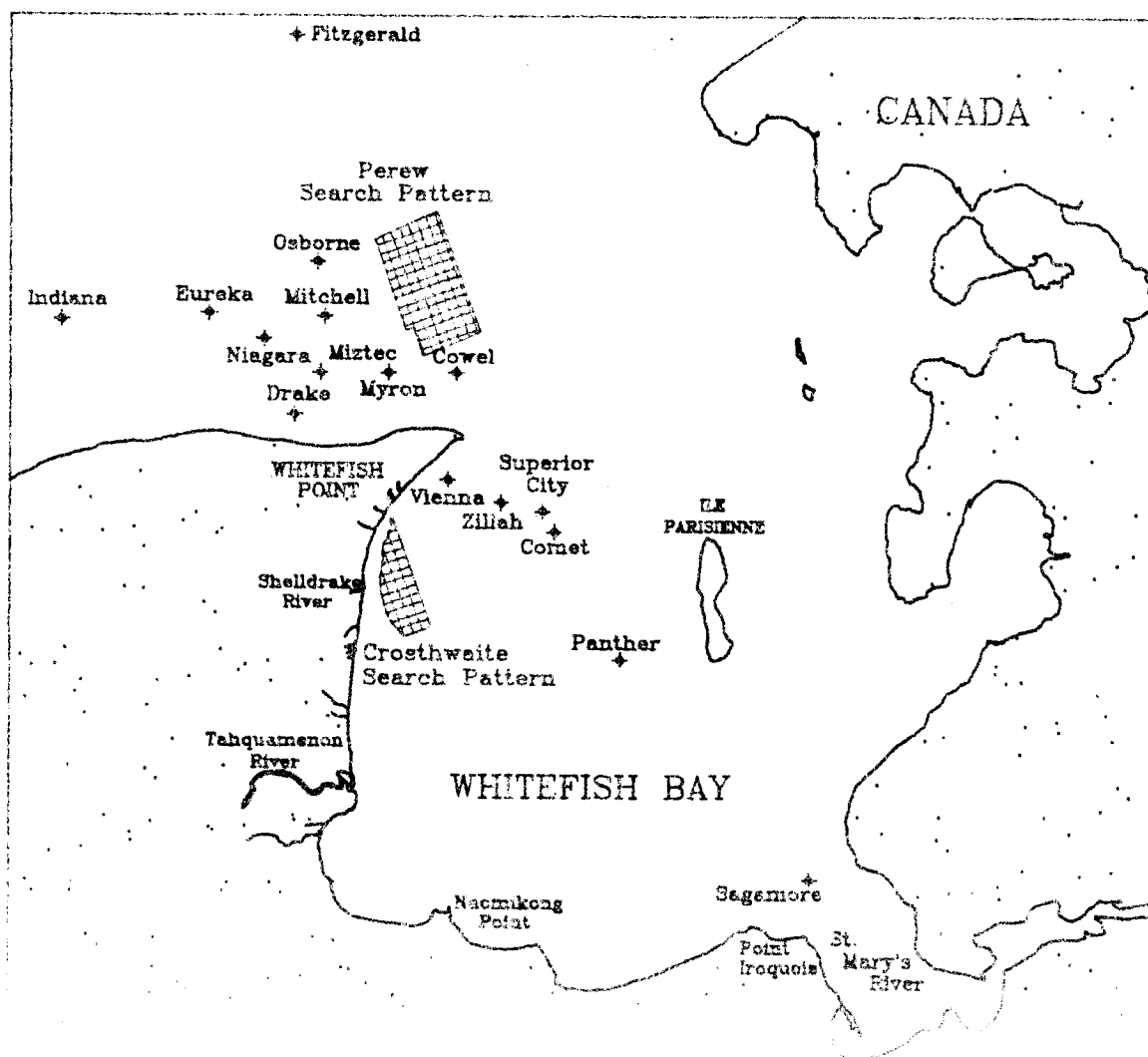


Figure 27. Map of Located Shipwrecks and Area

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