

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 01000737

**Date Listed:** 7/18/01

Rosinco  
**Property Name**

Kenosha  
**County**

WI  
**State**

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
**Signature of the Keeper**

8/6/01  
**Date of Action**

=====

**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The nomination had an incorrect resource count and architectural classification, left off a historic function, and did not have the most accurate areas of significance. The correct information (verified with replacement nomination pages, dated 7/30/01) is: Count = 1 contributing site. Historic functions = "Transportation/water-related" and "Recreation and Culture." Architectural classification = "Other--steel-hulled diesel yacht." Areas of significance = "Archeology/Historic--non-aboriginal," "Entertainment/Recreation," "Engineering," and "Maritime History."

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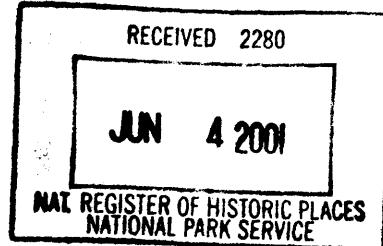
**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

*SUB  
RECEIVED  
RECORDED*

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Rosinco  
other names/site number 47KN254

**2. Location**

street & number	12 miles east of Kenosha	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Lake Michigan	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	059
	code WI	county	Kenosha
		zip code	53140

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Alicia J. Gore*  
Signature of certifying official>Title

*May 31, 2001*  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official>Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

JUN 4 2001

Rosinco  
Name of Property

Kenosha County  
County and State

Wisconsin

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*15th Boland**7/18/01*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)		Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)		
	private	building(s)		contributing	noncontributing
	public-local	district	1		buildings
X	public-State	structure			sites
	public-Federal	X site			structures
		object	1	0	objects
					total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources  
is previously listed in the National Register

0

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Transportation/ship

Recreation and culture

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Vacant/not in use

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
N/A

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Foundation N/A  
walls N/A

roof N/A  
other N/A

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

JUL 30 2001

JUL 30 2001

Rosinco

Name of Property

Kenosha County

County and State

Wisconsin

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. removed from the National Register. other, (explain):

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**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(check as many boxes as as apply)

 private public-local public-State public-Federal**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

 building(s) district structure site object**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

 contributing noncontributing buildings sites structures objects 1 0

total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**

(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources**

is previously listed in the National Register

0

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Transportation/water-related Recreation and culture**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Vacant/not in use**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Other - steel-hulled diesel yacht**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

 Foundation N/A walls N/A roof N/A other**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

JUL 30 2001

JUL 30 2001

Rosinco

Name of Property

Kenosha County

County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Archaeology/Historic-non-aboriginal

Entertainment/recreation

Engineering

Maritime History

### Period of Significance

1916-1928

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

### Architect/Builder

Harlan and Hollingsworth

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Rosinco  
Name of Property

Kenosha County  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
Other State Agency  
Federal Agency  
Local government  
University  
Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1    16    447746    4719155  
Zone    Easting              Northing

2    \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone    Easting              Northing

3    \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone    Easting              Northing

4    \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone    Easting              Northing  
See Continuation Sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Jefferson Gray, Dr. Richard Boyd, Dr. John Jensen and Russ Green		
organization	State Historical Society of Wisconsin		
street & number	816 State Street	date	2/02/01
city or town	Madison	telephone	608/271-1382
	state	Wisconsin	zip code
			53706

*Rosinco*

Name of Property

Kenosha, WI

Wisconsin

County and State

### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### **Continuation Sheets**

- Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
- Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### **Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Bureau of Property Management	<b>date</b>
<b>organization</b>	Department of Natural Resources	<b>telephone</b>
<b>street&amp;number</b>	101 S. Webster	<b>zip code</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	53703

<b>name/title</b>	Board of Commissioners of Public Lands	<b>date</b>
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>
<b>street&amp;number</b>	125 S. Webster	<b>zip code</b>
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	53703

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**Site Description**

Below 185 feet of Lake Michigan water, 12 miles east of Kenosha, Wisconsin, the wreck of the steel yacht *Rosinco* (47Kn254), the first diesel yacht on Lake Michigan, rests upright and imbedded in the lakebed. It is intact and extremely well-preserved.

Regarded as extravagant, indeed revered as one of the most palatial motor yachts to ply Lake Michigan during the first quarter of the twentieth-century, the *Rosinco* remains an object of interest and speculation for archaeologists, historians, and recreational divers. A significant cultural resource, the wreck of the *Rosinco* is a tangible monument to several milestones in ship construction, including early diesel technology and the use of steel as a primary building material for yachts. At the time of its loss, prominent industrialist, Colonel Robert H. Morse (Figure 1) owned the yacht. In an era of tremendous prosperity for America's social elite, Morse's *Rosinco* was a well-recognized symbol of this emerging American opulence and desire for leisure. This vessel, and others like it, marked the personal achievement of their entrepreneurial owners. The *Rosinco* and other vessels of her time embodied the growing wealth of the industrial elite and their desire for new forms of leisure.

**Vessel Description**

Trained divers of the Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association have been investigating and photographing the *Rosinco* wreck since 1998. Due to Lake Michigan's cold fresh water, the *Rosinco*'s hull, deck, and deckhouse are structurally intact and exceptionally well preserved. The vessel is resting upright on the lake bottom in 185 feet of water. The wreck is imbedded, with the bow rising approximately 8-9 feet above the clay bottom and the stern rising roughly 5 feet. A review of historic photographs and underwater video footage, combined with the knowledge that the *Rosinco* was built with a 5 foot draft, suggests that perhaps 5-6 feet of the wreck is imbedded below the lake bottom. Consequently, with much of the vessel exposed and accessible, the wreck will yield substantial archaeological information relating to the engineering and construction characteristics described in Criteria A and C. Moreover, the buried portion of the wreck is presumably better preserved than that which is exposed, offering even greater archaeological potential (Criterion D).

At the bow, the vessel's deck remains virtually unchanged. The windlass and associated fittings are well preserved and are the largest artifacts among a collection of intact deck cleats, chocks, scuppers, two hawse pipes, and an exposed chain locker. The wooden deck, presumably laid in teak, is intact and its seams are clearly visible beneath a light sheen of silt. At the cutwater, a copper emblem depicting a pair of wings is easily

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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discernable and indicative of the yacht's elaborate design. Two forward facing portholes are missing from the deckhouse, and a heavy, small mesh commercial fishing net is tangled in the wreck's starboard side deck rail and has collapsed several feet of railing.

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

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

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

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

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**Vessel Construction and History**

Built in 1916 by well-known Wilmington, Delaware shipbuilders Harlan and Hollingsworth, *Rosinco* (U.S. #214160) was put to sea as *Georgiana III* (Figure 2). The vessel would, in fact, change hands twice before becoming the *Rosinco*. Harlan and Hollingsworth, one of the first iron shipbuilding firms on the Delaware River, was founded in 1836. By 1889, the company employed 1,500 workers, paid \$1,000,000 in wages, and its 50 buildings occupied 43 acres.<sup>1</sup>

Wilmington, Delaware had the distinction of being the “cradle” of iron shipbuilding, and Harlan and Hollingsworth became pioneer builders of iron and, later, steel ships in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, competition in the region was intense. Noting similarities with the unsurpassed iron ship production along Scotland’s Clyde River in the latter nineteenth-century, maritime historian David Tyler once referred to the Delaware River as the “American Clyde.”

Built for William G. Coxe, president of Harlan and Hollingsworth, and designed chiefly by Harlan and Hollingsworth’s naval architect A.M. Main, *Georgiana III*’s overall length was 95 feet 2 ½ inches. Incorporating the “desirable and practical features of the commercial vessel, the destroyer, and the old steam yacht,” the vessel marked a decided transition from traditional motor yacht construction.<sup>3</sup> In December 1916, *The Motor Boat* magazine reviewed the vessel and enthusiastically announced that “*Georgiana III* is a real boat.”<sup>4</sup> Lloyd’s Register of American Yachts reported the remainder of the vessel’s principal dimensions as: length waterline, 93 feet; beam, 15 feet 3 inches; draft, 5 feet 6 inches; gross tonnage, 82 tons; net tonnage, 44 tons.<sup>5</sup> A cursory glance at these dimensions reveals that *Georgiana III* possessed a high length to beam ratio, the purpose of which was to increase the vessel’s speed. Credited with collaborating on the vessel’s design, Coxe expressly desired maximum strength and safety, with a minimum of ballast, to achieve “necessary speed, stability, comfort, etc.”<sup>6</sup> Her owner’s desire for a substantially built vessel helped usher in a new era for American power boating.

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<sup>1</sup> David Tyler, *American Clyde* (Newark, Delaware, 1958), 76.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>3</sup> “*Georgiana III* – A Sea-going Motor Yacht.” *The Motor Boat*, vol. 23, no. 24 (1916), 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Lloyd’s Register of American Yachts-1917* (New York, 1917), 110.

<sup>6</sup> “A 95-Foot Steel Diesel Yacht.” *Motor Boating* (December 1916), 17.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 4

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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Several features of the vessel's hull make it unique from most of those that preceded it. Steel was chosen for the primary building material. This allowed the vessel to be both lighter and stronger than older wood and iron yachts. The frames, spaced on 20-inch centers, were fashioned from bulb angle steel and supported a hull that was built flush and smooth, with straps fitted at the edges and butts. Joints below the waterline were overlapped for additional strength.<sup>7</sup> Ten-pound steel was used in areas that might encounter exceptional stress, particularly the garboard streak, where the hull met the keel. Lighter, seven-pound steel was used elsewhere. Unusual features for the time were the hull's seven watertight compartments, with a steel bulkhead dividing each. Four of the six bulkheads were fitted with watertight doors similar to those used on contemporary torpedo boats.<sup>8</sup>

At least a portion of the vessel was double bottomed and designed to carry fresh water, for both consumption and to provide ballast. Further examples of the vessel's stout construction are found in the upper, quarter, and forecastle decks, which were plated with steel stringers. Indeed, as discussed in the following section, the *Rosinco* was indicative of the type of vessel built by American yachtsmen who wanted their boats to serve as naval auxiliaries. Built in 1916, this yacht could have been quickly retrofitted for coastal patrol service during World War I.

Strongly constructed for possible wartime use, the *Georgiana III* was also noteworthy for its diesel power plant. Nearly all yachts of this and earlier periods had steam engines but diesel allowed for efficient operation with much smaller crews. Powered by a 240 hp Southwark-Harris Diesel sporting four, 9-inch diameter cylinders with a 13-inch stroke, *Georgiana III*'s engine could be fully reversed in only five seconds. Moreover, the engine could be brought to full power, from a cold start, in just ten seconds—a considerable improvement over the time required to bring a contemporary steam engine to full power.<sup>9</sup> Compressed air started the engine, a process that could be carried out fifty times on a single charge of the air bottles. Steaming at 15 mph, *Georgiana III* consumed eight gallons of fuel an hour and had a cruising range of 2,000 miles. This is excellent fuel economy, even by current standards. The vessel's fuel tanks held 1,070 gallons of diesel oil.<sup>10</sup> Colonel Morse would later install a diesel engine from his own company, a Fairbanks-Morse Model 35.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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Well appointed above and below decks, the casual observer would have been equally impressed with the vessel's refined accommodations. The main salon, with watertight doors at both ends, was paneled in quartered oak. Over head were brown oak deck beams and cream white ceiling panels. Furniture upholstery and wall panels consisted of English tapestry, and *The Motor Boat* magazine noted that the carpet possessed "...a design and color harmonizing with the brown oak."<sup>11</sup> Three built-in sofa beds, a Pullman bed, quartered oak furniture, an eight-person dining table, and two sideboards could accommodate several guests (Figure 3). Cabinet and sideboard doors were glazed with leaded glass.

The owner's grand stateroom featured a built-in three-quarters bed with drawers under it, a Pullman bed, two dressing tables with drawers and mirrors, and a cheval mirror in the bathroom door. The owner's tub and washbowl, piped for hot and cold fresh or salt water, were located above the waterline in order to drain easily overboard. All rooms, including one for children, were well ventilated and lighted by both natural and electrical light (Figure 4). Mahogany trim, carpet, plate glass, and tile were used liberally throughout the vessel.

Refinement was not limited to the living quarters. Paneled in mahogany, the roomy deckhouse contained a large davenport, card table, and movable chairs. Green carpeting, upholstery, and Pullman shades accented the white mahogany finish, while two 15-inch ports and seven large plate glass windows provided ample lighting and panoramic views. The state of the art galley also featured novel amenities. The area was enclosed with steel bulkheads to prevent the spread of a potential fire, and equipped with metal dish racks and lockers. Fresh or seawater could be pumped into the sink, and the range, fitted with a hot water tank, sat on top a metal coal box. Ice could be delivered directly to the vessel's built in icebox via a watertight scuttle in the upper deck.<sup>12</sup> Finally, for convenience and safety, the yacht was equipped with a 16-foot Luders motor launch and a 14-foot tender.

In 1918, the vessel was purchased by Commodore W.L. Baum of the Chicago Yacht Club and renamed *Whitemarsh* (Figure 5). Commodore Baum's *Whitemarsh* was

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<sup>11</sup> "Georgiana III- A Sea-going Motor Yacht," 20. This description of the vessel's interior has been taken chiefly from the cited *Motor Boat* magazine article.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 6

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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Chicago's first diesel engine yacht.<sup>13</sup> Baum's heralded *Whitemarsh* subsequently became *Rosinco* when Colonel Robert Hosmer Morse acquired the vessel in 1925. Colonel Robert H. Morse was an avid mariner. In 1922 he joined the Chicago Yacht Club, and three years later spent \$30,000 refitting the newly acquired *Rosinco*. Several years later Morse became the club's fleet commander.<sup>14</sup> Already a luxurious and powerful pleasure boat, Morse's improvements reflected his financial position and pride he had for his company's marine engines. In 1927 the yacht received a new Fairbanks-Morse Model 35 electro-diesel engine with six, 10-inch diameter cylinders, each having a 12.5-inch stroke (Figure 6). Introduced that year, the Model 35 engine remained in production until 1946. The engines were produced chiefly as marine power plants, and came in three sizes: the 8.5 x 10.5 (cylinder diameter and stroke respectively); 10 x 12.5; and the 14 x 17 inch version.<sup>15</sup> Truly a symbol of American prosperity, the *Rosinco*'s various improvements raised her value to about \$150,000--a considerable sum during the "Roaring Twenties."

*Rosinco*'s final voyage began in September of 1928 when Morse and a small entourage cruised from Chicago to Milwaukee. Aboard were Morse, his son and three friends, and George Lay Weed, a prestigious Chicago banker. After a short layover in Milwaukee on Tuesday, 18 September, the elder Morse decided to visit the Fairbanks-Morse plant in Beloit. An ardent aviation enthusiast, Morse's son John subsequently persuaded his father to charter a flight from Beloit back to Chicago. The *Rosinco*, then flagship of the Chicago Yacht Club, was to return to Chicago with only Weed and the ship's crew aboard.<sup>16</sup>

With its seven passengers embarked and Captain Edward Ellison in command, *Rosinco* departed Milwaukee harbor late Tuesday evening. The five-man crew consisted of Harry Marumrud (chief engineer), G. L. Beatty (steward), John Larson (lookout), and able seamen W. H. Cerben and Lars Rorick.<sup>17</sup> Ten miles off Kenosha at 2:45 a.m. on Wednesday, 19 September, the vessel reportedly struck some floating "box timber" that apparently ruptured the steel hull. The duty crew quickly awakened those who were sleeping below decks and everyone hurried topside. Within minutes it was plainly evident that *Rosinco* had been mortally damaged and was sinking rapidly. Everyone

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<sup>13</sup> Richard and Wendy Van Mell, *The First Hundred Years: A History of the Chicago Yacht Club, 1875-1975* (Chicago, 1975), 97.

<sup>14</sup> *Kenosha Evening News*, 19 September 1928.

<sup>15</sup> C. H. Wendel, *Fairbanks-Morse: 100 Years of Engine Technology* (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1993), 106.

<sup>16</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 September 1928.

<sup>17</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, 19 September 1928.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 7

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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promptly jumped ship and swam to the small motor launch towed behind the yacht in tandem with a tiny rowboat. No sooner had the crew and their guest cast the line off that tethered the launch to *Rosinco*, when the yacht's stern lifted into the air and the grand vessel slid, bow first, beneath 185 feet of water. Only one casualty was incurred: the ship's canary mascot.

The escapees fired up the launch's motor and headed west for shore, but after less than a mile the craft began leaking. The excited castaways bailed vigorously, while Captain Ellison signaled for help with a small flashlight. After two hours of motoring and bailing, and still two miles offshore, the launch was spotted by Coast Guard Surfman Paul Berg who was patrolling the beach near Kenosha when he noticed Ellison's S.O.S. signal.<sup>18</sup> Berg notified station commander William McGraw, a lifesaving boat was dispatched, and soon the shipwrecked men of the *Rosinco* found themselves safely ashore. The following day, all were on their way back to Chicago.

During the ensuing days, considerable conjecture arose as to what sank the *Rosinco*. What could cause a robust steel vessel to founder so quickly? Originally, reports circulated that the vessel had been struck by "box timber," that is, a raft of sawed wooden beams. This appeared consistent with the fact that many docks in the Racine-Kenosha area were undergoing renovation and much debris from these projects was floating in the lake.<sup>19</sup> Another theory centered on a pile-driving barge that was lost and adrift in northern Lake Michigan.<sup>20</sup> Some speculated that this craft might have been blown southward where it eventually collided with Morse's yacht. A thorough search of the area, carried out by the Coast Guard, failed to produce evidence of a rogue barge. As for the *Rosinco*, only a few floating cushions, life preservers, a captain's hat, and some neckties remained. Days later the *Kenosha Evening News* reported that a Racine fishing tug had hauled up a small boat from the wreck of the *Rosinco*.<sup>21</sup> Beyond this, however, the vessel was a complete loss and the Coast Guard considered the incident closed.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Kenosha Evening News*, 19 September 1928.

<sup>19</sup> *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 September 1928.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Kenosha Evening News*, 24 September, 1928.

<sup>22</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, 20 September 1928.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**Statement of Significance**

The *Rosinco*, the first diesel powered yacht on Lake Michigan, is a unique submerged cultural resource with direct links to Midwestern America's early twentieth-century economic, social, and maritime history. The vessel is considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, C and D at the local level. Although there is a multiple property documentation for Great Lakes shipwrecks of Wisconsin, this document does not yet include an historic context for recreational vessels.

Under Criterion A, it is significant for its association with the rising wealth and leisure class of early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. At the time of its loss in 1928, the *Rosinco* was owned by industrialist Colonel Robert H. Morse. In an era of unprecedented prosperity and leisure activity, Morse's elaborate yacht was a well-recognized symbol of emerging American opulence. Specifically, Morse's yacht, and others like it, reflected the prosperity of a new class of entrepreneur: the wealthy industrialist. As the twentieth century unfolded, many successful and famous industrialists cruised the Great Lakes in majestic boats. These individuals included the Dodge brothers (automotive), James J. Hill (transportation), William Harkness (Standard Oil financier), Arthur Shattuck (Kimberly-Clark paper), Russell Alger (lumber), Thomas Cole (mining), and Andrew Carnegie (steel), among others. The vessels they constructed or purchased for private use marked an era when prestige and power afloat were embodied in singular boats. However, their magnificent motor yachts plied the Great Lakes for only a short time. None are known to have survived to modern times, and only a few are represented in the Great Lakes archaeological record. It is possible that only two vessels comprise this exclusive latter group: W.L. Harkness (Standard Oil) yacht *Gunilda*, which rests below 300 feet of icy Canadian water in Lake Superior, and Colonel Robert H. Morse's *Rosinco*. These two splendid vessels may be the last examples of an era when prestige and power on land were embodied in extraordinary boats.

When Colonel Morse purchased the *Rosinco*, he was vice-president and part owner of Fairbanks-Morse and Company in Beloit, Wisconsin. The transfer of ownership assigned new significance to the already remarkable craft, for it is indeed difficult to mention Morse without making reference to Fairbanks-Morse, in the same manner that one associates John D. Rockefeller with the Standard Oil conglomerate, or George Westinghouse with the Westinghouse Electric empire. Fairbanks-Morse and Company was without question an important contributor to the industrial development of Wisconsin and the nation in general. During the nineteenth-century, Fairbanks-Morse

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

---

was formed by the acquisition and amalgamation of diverse manufacturers. The original E. & T. Fairbanks Company, begun in 1830, was a fabricator of platform scales.<sup>1</sup> These highly successful products were widely employed in industry, agriculture, and postal services throughout the eastern United States and Europe. By 1860, an extensive Fairbanks sales network had been developed and distributors were allowed to use the company name. Charles H. Morse, an E. & T. Fairbanks apprentice in 1850, eventually created Fairbanks-Morse, a distribution company that introduced Fairbanks scales to the American Midwest.<sup>2</sup>

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

The wreck of the *Rosinco* is also eligible under Criterion C. Built in 1916 by well-known Wilmington, Delaware shipbuilders Harlan and Hollingsworth, it is a tangible monument to several milestones in ship construction, including early diesel technology and the use of steel as a building material. The choice of steel as the primary building material made this vessel unique from most of those that had preceded it. Steel allowed the vessel to be both lighter and stronger than older wood and iron yachts. The *Rosinco* was also the first diesel yacht on Lake Michigan.<sup>3</sup> The diesel engine that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century was the product of a "compression ignition" theory first advanced by French physicist Sadi Carnot in 1824. The theory was further developed by Frenchman Alphonse Beau de Rochas in 1862, applied in a practical engine by German engineer Nikolaus Otto, and finally practically demonstrated by German engineer Rudolph Diesel in 1897. Rather than requiring an electrical spark to ignite the air-fuel mixture, as in

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<sup>1</sup> C.H. Wendel, *Fairbanks-Morse*, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Richard and Wendy Van Mell, *A History of the Chicago Yacht Club*, 97.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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other internal combustion engines such as gasoline engines, the diesel engine does not utilize an ignition device. The air-fuel mixture is compressed within the piston cylinder, thereby generating heat, until it ignites and drives the piston. Rudolph Diesel believed that any fuel might be suitable for such an engine and went to work first on a model that burned coal powder, the cheapest conceivable fuel. This type of fuel was soon abandoned, however, and an oil-burning engine was perfected in 1897.

Writing for the *Lake Michigan Yachting News* in 1924, W. E. Spofford revealed the implications of the American yachtsman's preference for diesel power when he opined, "There is one significant fact which is obvious to all who have even followed yachting casually; the steam yacht is becoming obsolete."<sup>4</sup> The chief advantage of the diesel engine was fuel economy, for it was capable of burning low-grade fuel at a comparatively low rate of consumption per horsepower per hour. With a better fuel to power ratio, a vessel outfitted with a diesel engine significantly increased its cruising range. The absence of a boiler and condenser also meant more room below decks, and diesel oil was cleaner to handle, easier to store, and took up less space than coal. Diesel engines were also lighter than steam engines, and this also increased efficiency and speed. Finally, smaller crews were needed to operate a diesel engine than were needed to work a steam engine. By the second decade of the twentieth century, diesel marine engines were available to mariners wealthy enough to use this new technology. The Fairbanks-Morse Company was a premier manufacturer of marine diesel engines, and a well-preserved example of their Model 35 engine is found on the *Rosinco* today.

The *Rosinco*'s design also reflects a unique aesthetic moment in the history of American yacht design, when American yachtsmen wanted to serve as naval auxiliaries. In 1916 America looked on with trepidation, and with more than a little anticipation at the terrible war waging in Europe. The advent of unrestricted submarine warfare that resulted in disasters such as the torpedoing of the *Lusitania* made America's waterways seem vulnerable to attacks from abroad in ways that the country had never known. Once a moat that protected the New World from the excesses of the old, the Atlantic Ocean suddenly became a bridge bringing enemies close to American soil, or at least, American waters. In the January 1916 issue of *Power Boating* magazine Dr. Joseph K. Van Dernberg, a yachtsman and advocate of preparedness, exhorted readers to consider the "almost neglected, but still extremely powerful weapon of defense against a foreign invader—the small powerboats of our coasts, lakes, and rivers."<sup>5</sup> Citing the more than

<sup>4</sup> W. E. Spofford, "The Progress of Yachting." *Lake Michigan Yachting News* (December 1924), 156.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Joseph K Van Dernberg, "The Colonial Idea." *Power Boating* (January 1916), 25.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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10,000 motorboats on the Atlantic Seaboard, Van Dernberg and others advocated the creation of an auxiliary fleet of patrol vessels. The nation's yachts would, they hoped, become the eyes, ears, and first line of defense of the American coast.

The federal government did not enthusiastically embrace the plan to enlist the nation's yachts and yachtsmen in military planning. Ultimately the Navy department created an office whose purpose was acquiring vessels for public service. Most private vessels lacked the strength and sea keeping ability that even light duty patrolling could require. Guns, even light deck mounted machine guns, required that yachts have substantial structural reinforcement. Within a short space of time, specialized designs for yachts with an auxiliary military function began appearing in boating magazines.

The *Rosinco* is indicative of a type of vessel built by American yachtsmen who wanted their boats to serve as naval auxiliaries. Built in 1916, the steel yacht could have been quickly retrofitted for coastal patrol service during World War I. Significantly, the vessel had seven watertight compartments, with a steel bulkhead dividing each. Four of the six bulkheads were fitted with watertight doors similar to those used on contemporary torpedo boats. Additionally, the yacht's upper, quarter, and forecastle decks, were plated with steel stringers.

The military period in yacht design was short. During the 1920s, the nation turned away from foreign entanglements and from the military functionality of wartime yachts. The wreck of the *Rosinco* provides an unusual but important linkage between the expanding wealth of the leisure class, and the expanding military role of the United States in world affairs. Much like their British cousins' miraculous rescue of the men at Dunkirk during World War II, America's yachtsman stood ready to cruise in harms way, and in a yacht like the *Rosinco* they had created suitable vessels in which to do it.

Finally, the vessel is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D, for its potential to reveal important historical and archaeological information. The *Rosinco* is structurally intact and well preserved. The vessel is accessible and will yield substantial archaeological information relating to the construction characteristics described in Criteria A and C. Due to the cold and fresh water environment, the yacht's interior is in good state of preservation, and should yield excellent information relating to the vessel's elaborate accommodations, shipboard decoration, and workmanship. Because of its sudden catastrophic sinking, the *Rosinco* also affords a rare glimpse into life on one of the most luxurious Great Lakes yachts of the era. From the deck to the still

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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furnished compartments beneath, *Rosinco* is a treasure-trove for historians and archaeologists alike. The deck remains virtually unchanged. The windlass and associated fittings are the largest artifacts among a collection of many deck cleats, scuppers, and standing rails. Many doors remain on their hinges leading into after compartments. The lazarette contains an impressive bank of storage batteries still hooked in series and to the engine. The living quarters contain carved wooden furniture and great amounts of cabinetry. In the corner of one of these cabins a small area fan endures, plugged in, yet forever still. The necessities of a fine dining table also remain onboard, as does china, cutlery, and other fine effects. Even the galley sink survives in this underwater preserve. Finally, an archaeological investigation could reveal important information about the circumstances that lead to the sinking of the *Rosinco*. The cool, fresh water of Lake Michigan has indeed helped to preserve this remarkable vessel.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

*Rosinco*  
Kenosha County, WI

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The area included in the site is a circle with a 150 foot diameter centered on the coordinates: 42 degrees 37 minutes 30 seconds N latitude, -87 degrees 37 minutes 74 seconds W longitude. (LORAN coordinates: 33088.9/49586.3; UTM coordinates: 16 447746 / 4719155).

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary was drawn to encompass this relatively intact vessel and was based on diver assessments and videotape evidence of the site.

**NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

## Section PHOTOS Page *Rosinco* Kenosha County, WI

### Photograph 1

Bow of the *Rosinco*, taken by Bradley Friend on May 29, 1999.

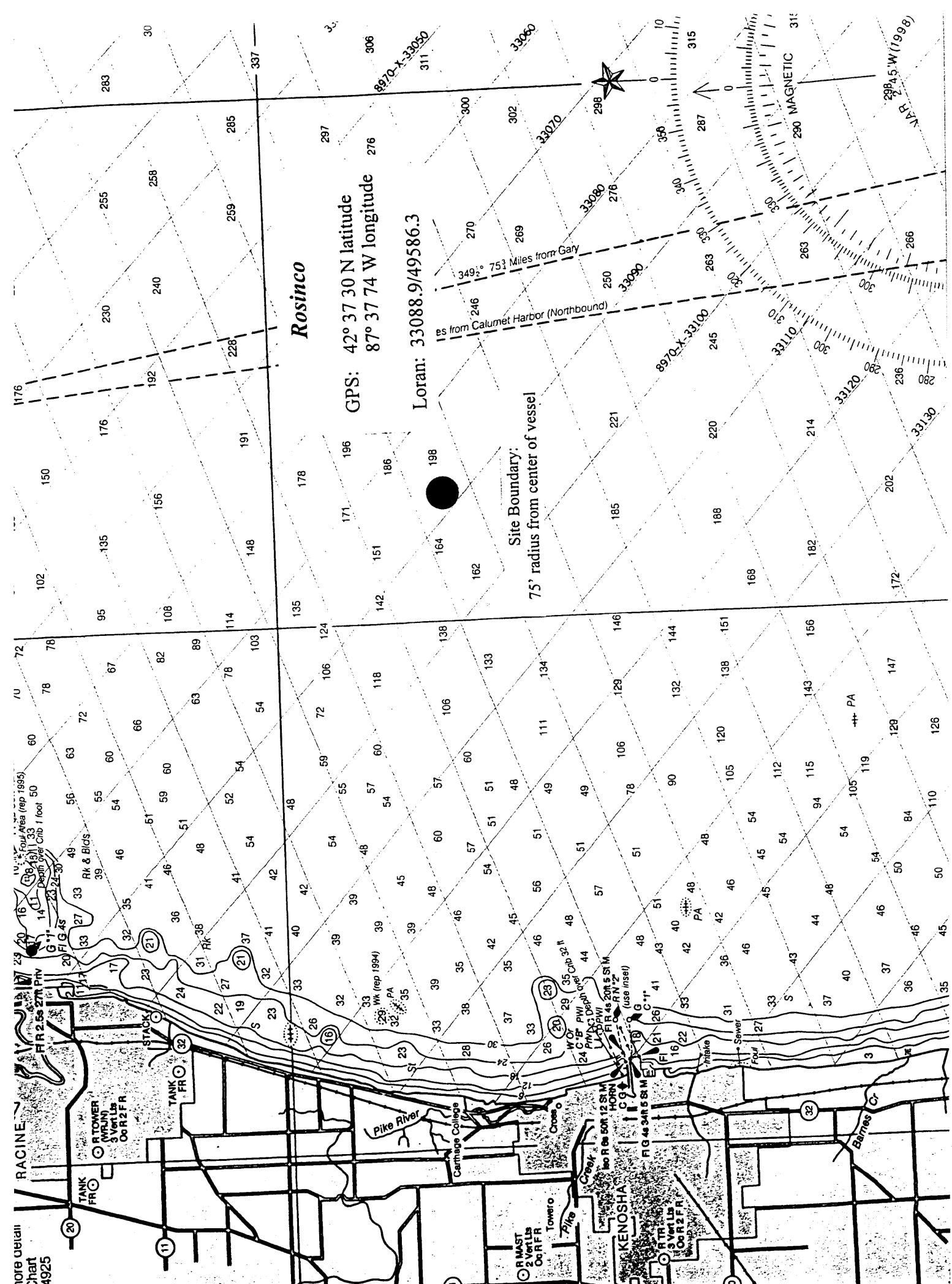
## Photograph 2

Batteries, engine, and skylight of the *Rosinco*, looking aft, taken by Bradley Friend on May 29, 1999.

### Photograph 3

Fan in the deck cabin of the *Rosinco*, starboard side, taken by Bradley Friend on May 29, 1999.

Negatives are on file at the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 816 State Street, Madison WI 53706.



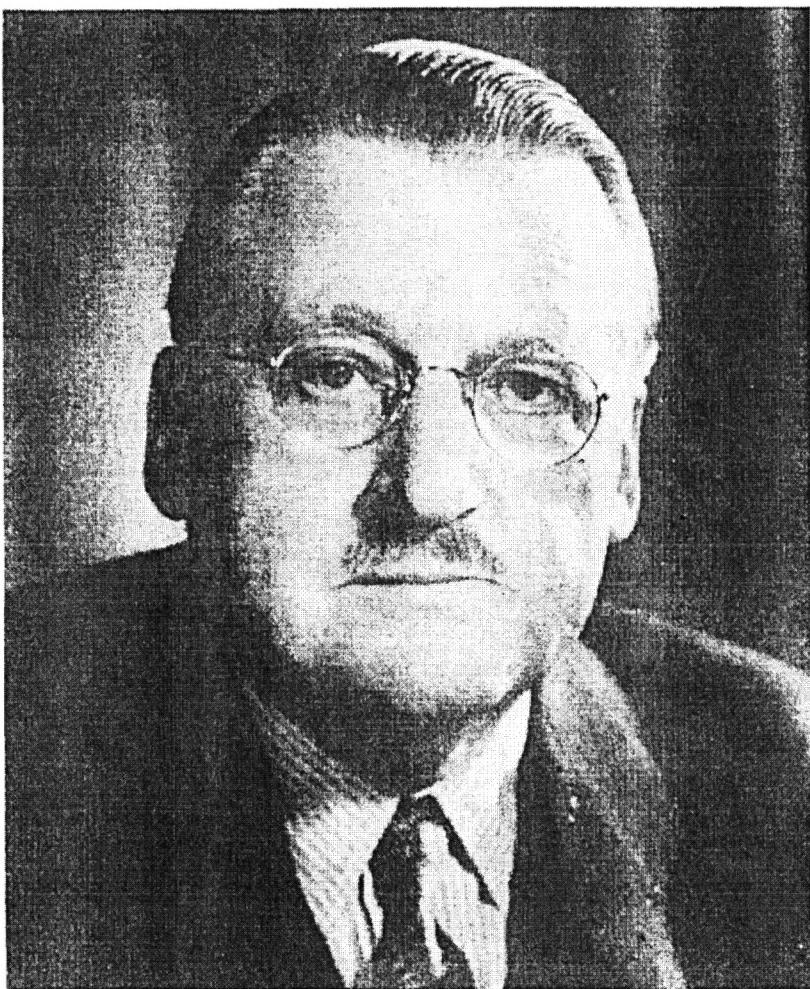


Figure 1 Colonel Robert Hosmer Morse (from C.H. Wendel, Fairbanks-Morse:100 Years of Engine Technology, pg. 25), Rosinco, Kenosha County WI.

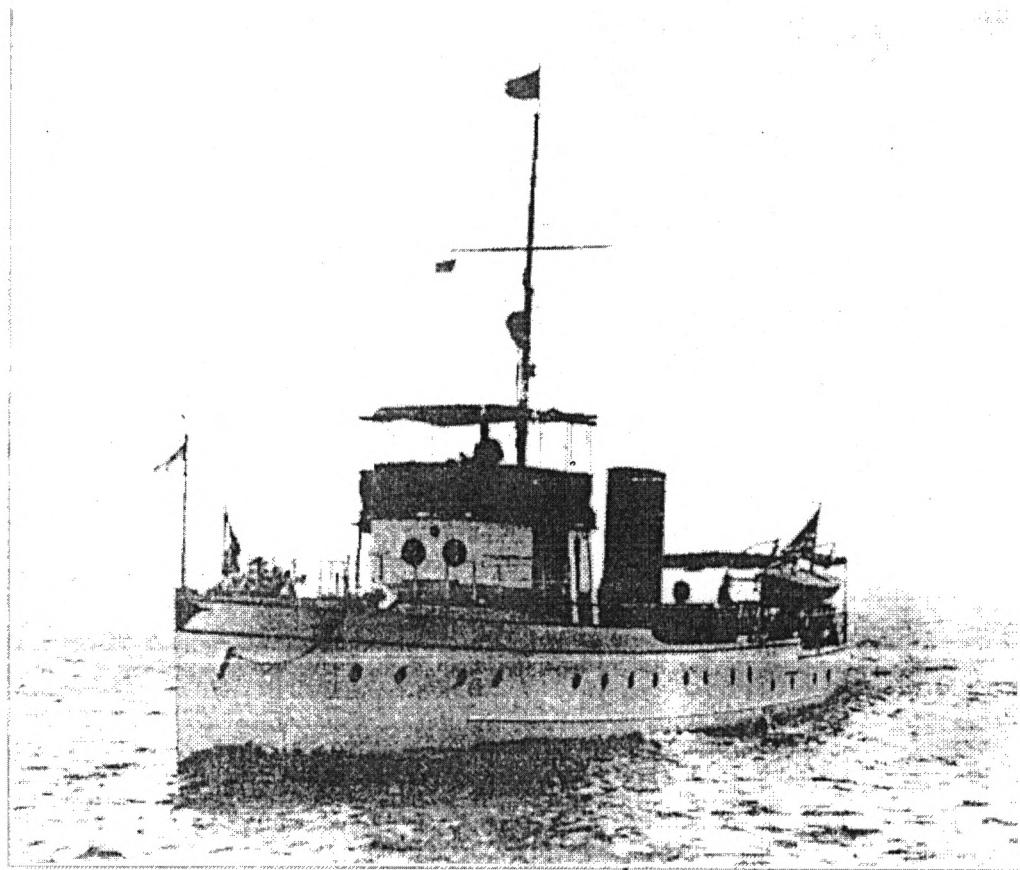


Figure 2 The *Georgiana III* (from Motor Boat, 1916, Vol.23, No.24, pg. 20), Rosinco, Kenosha County WI.

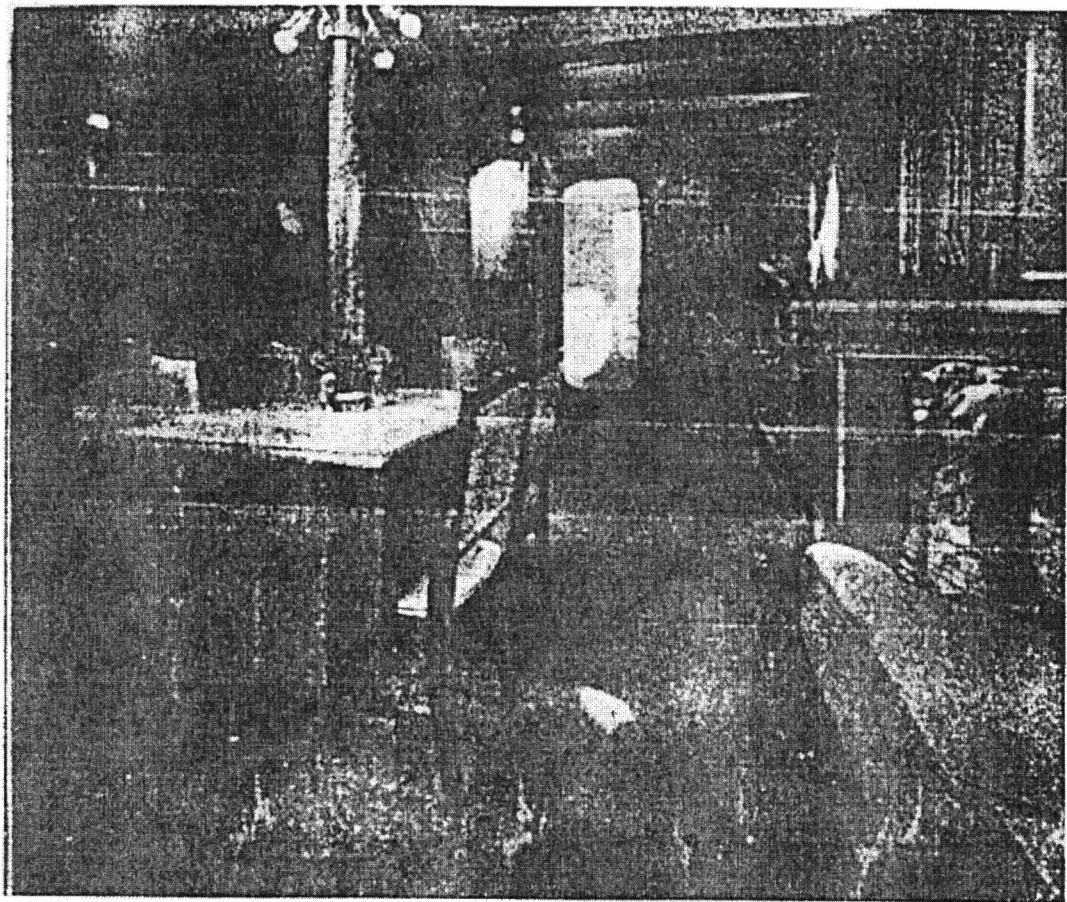


Figure 3 Dining Salon of the *Georgiana III* (from Motor Boat, 1916, Vol.23, No.1, pg. 21), Rosinco, Kenosha County WI.



Figure 4 Stateroom in the *Georgiana III* (from Motor Boat, 1916, Vol.23, No.1, pg.21),  
*Rosinco*, Kenosha County WI.

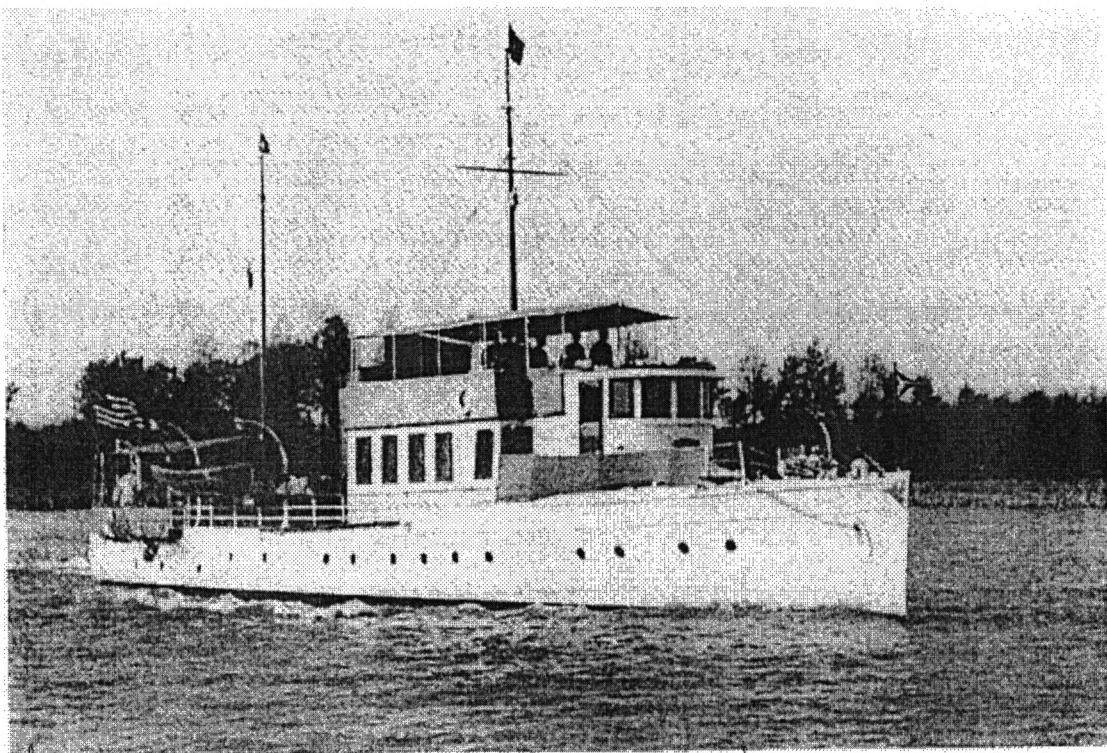


Figure 5 The *Whitemarsh* (from Lake Michigan Yachting News, December 1924, pg. 24), Rosinco, Kenosha County WI.

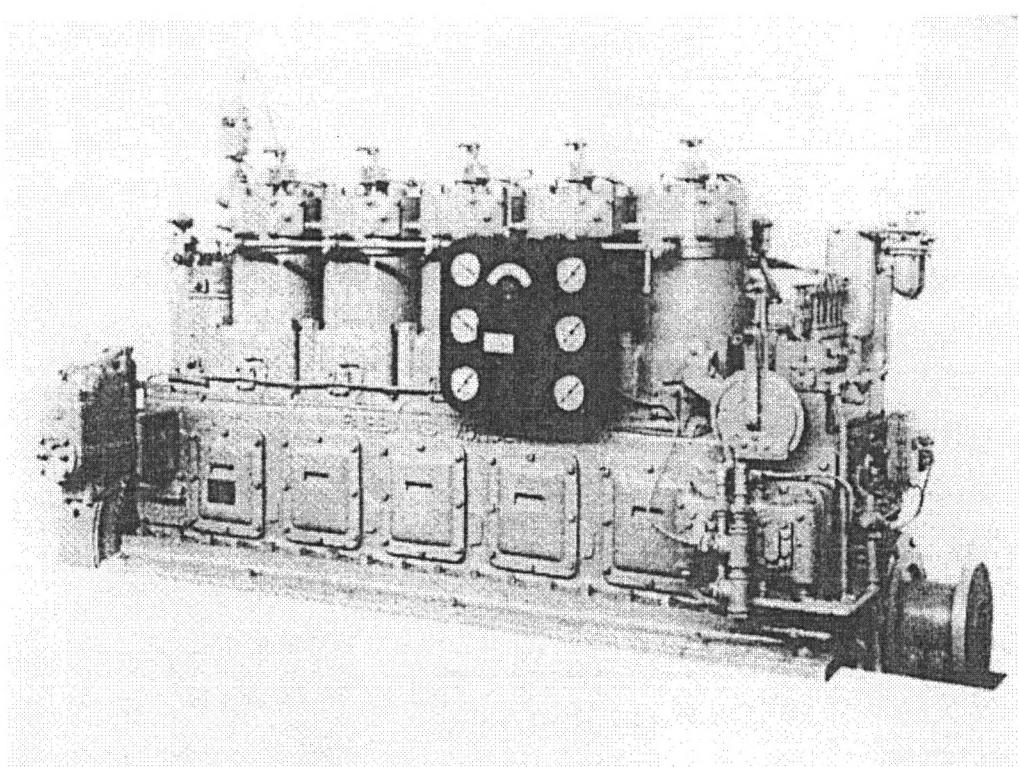


Figure 6 Fairbanks-Morse Model 35 Marine Diesel Engine (from C.H. Wendel, Fairbanks-Morse:100 Years of Engine Technology, pg. 25). Rosinco, Kenosha County WI.