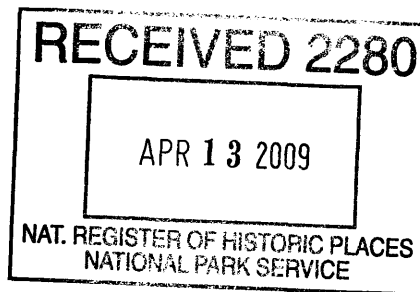


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

368



**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 Byron Shipwreck
other names/site number ASI # 025504

2. Location

street & number four miles southeast of Kohler-Andrae State Park in Lake Michigan N/A **not for publication**
city or town Town of Oostburg X **vicinity**
state Wisconsin code WI county Sheboygan code 117 zip code 53070

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] Date 4/13/09
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

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

Byron Shipwreck
Name of Property

Sheboygan 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:)

for Erik K. Martingebert
Signature of the Keeper

5/20/09
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private
public-local
X public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
district
structure
X site
object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	total

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

Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

TRANSPORTATION/Water-Related

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Schooner

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.)

Byron Shipwreck
Name of Property

Sheboygan 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
MARITIME HISTORY
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1849-1867

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Byron Shipwreck
Name of Property

Sheboygan 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:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

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

1 16 0444492 4828250
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
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	Keith Meverden and Tamara Thomsen	date	11/07/08
organization	Wisconsin Historical Society	telephone	608.221.5909
street & number	816 State Street	zip code	53706
city or town	Madison	state	WI

Byron Shipwreck
Name of Property

Sheboygan County
County and State

Wisconsin

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.)

name/title	Steven Miller, Bureau Director, Facilities & Lands	date	11/07/08
organization	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	telephone	608.266.5782
street&number	101 S. Webster Street – LF/6	zip code	53707
city or town	Madison	state	WI

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**

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

Summary

Four miles offshore in 135 feet of water, off the south end of Kohler-Andrea State Park, in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, lay the remains of the 36-foot schooner *Byron*. The small, undocumented, commercial vessel was constructed around 1849 and sailed under the command of Captain William Burmeister of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The *Byron* was run down and sunk by the schooner *Canton* in 1867. Representative of a relatively undocumented vessel type and trade, the *Byron* allows historians and archaeologists the rare chance to study Great Lakes lakeshoring schooner construction. Once a common class of vessels on Lake Michigan, the small lakeshoring schooners provided economic and cultural links between Wisconsin's developing coastal communities. Throughout the nineteenth century these small schooners occupied a special niche in the Lake Michigan regional economy.

Site Description

Today the *Byron* lies in 135 feet of water 12 miles southeast of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. It was discovered in May 1977 when commercial fisherman Danny Burnette snagged the wreck with a trawl net from the fish tug *Art Swaer 7* and brought up one of the wreck's anchors in their net. Word got out of a new shipwreck site and divers quickly relocated the site. The first divers to visit site were John Steele, Steve Radovan, Jim Brotz, and Bill Coors; John Steel captured three minutes of video on one of the first dives in 1977. In the years following the wreck's discovery, much of the vessel's cargo and equipment were recovered by recreational divers. Some of the items that were salvaged include a second anchor, the compass, yellow ware bowls, porcelain plates, and a small porcelain cup on which was written "A Present for a Good Girl" (James Brotz 2008, pers. comm.).

The video captured by John Steele details much of what the wreck looked like when it was first discovered (Steele 1977). In the video, the vessel does not have a bowsprit, but a single bobstay plate is visible fastened to the stem, indicating that she had a bowsprit that was either carried away in the sinking or during its encounter with the trawl net. There is no evidence of a windlass or capstan, but the vessel's deck is completely intact. The hatch cover is missing, but its coaming remains intact. Through the hatch the intact centerboard trunk is clearly visible, and a wooden barrel of nails lies in the hold. The staves of the barrel are no longer intact; the corroded mass of nails retains the barrel's former shape.

Moving aft, the camera records an unidentified spar lying across the deck that hangs into the cabin. A bilge pump shaft protrudes from the deck immediately forward of the cabin. The single pump shaft is square, framed by wooden planks. As the camera pans over the cabin, the port and stern cabin bulkheads are still standing, constructed of horizontal planks fastened to vertical frames. The cabin roof is dislodged and lies over the starboard quarter, where the starboard cabin bulkhead has collapsed. Within the cabin a small stove is visible in the forward port corner as well as what appears to be the stove's chimney. Several porcelain plates lie about the cabin aft of the stove.

Next the camera pans over the stern, showing the rudder post and tiller, which is put over hard to starboard. The cabin roof is dislodged and lies over the starboard quarter. The vessel appears to have had a very low transom, which is now largely absent, but a section of trawl net is draped over the stern. Swimming up the side, a very

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 2

low bulwark is visible that appears to be less than one foot tall, and an iron lifeline runs along the beam above the bulwark. The iron lifeline rises approximately 18 inches above the bulwark and is suspended between iron stanchions. A rubbing strake runs the length of the vessel that also serves as a chain wale.

Today, the *Byron* is almost completely covered with a layer of zebra and quagga mussels, lying on heading of 075 degrees with an 11 degree list to port. The vessel's bow is pitched slightly downward at an angle of 2 degrees. Most of the outer hull planks are intact with the exception of the starboard turn of the bilge where a few planks are missing. Few deck planks are extant except for two small areas immediately around either mast, but all of the deck beams, hatch coamings, and cabin coamings remain intact. Although the vessel was reportedly filled with cargo when it was discovered (James Brotz 2008, pers. comm.), today there is no visible cargo or artifacts of any kind remaining on site. The hull is very lightly built - much lighter than expected for a commercial freight vessel. Due to its light construction, combined with over 140 years of lying on the lake bottom, the hull is extremely fragile. Many of the extant deck planks are of such a thin nature that accurate measurements proved difficult.

The vessel's overall length is 36.3 feet, measured from the stem's leading edge to the aft edge of the stern post, which is external to the transom. The vessel's beam is 12.0 feet at its widest point, which is located 17 feet aft of the bow. The stem measures .5 feet molded by .3 feet sided, and is raked forward at 28 degrees. The stern post is .35 feet molded by .45 feet sided and rakes aft at 3 degrees. The stern post is fastened externally to the transom, which measures 9.3 feet wide and .25 feet thick. Above deck level the transom is not extant. The rudder was fastened to the aft end of the stern post, but is not extant.

There are no visible remains of a windlass, ground tackle, or catheads, and it is reported that the vessel had no windlass or capstan at the time of its discovery (Steve Radovan 2008, pers. comm.). A vertical post is located in the areas where a samson post would be expected, but it terminates at deck level. It cannot be determined if this post originally extended above the deck and was broken off, or if it terminated at deck level.

The vessel's hull is filled with a dense layer of silt approximately 1 foot in depth that makes accessing the keelson assembly impossible without excavation. Hand probing of the silt failed to locate a keelson, but probing with a wooden rule recorded a depth of hold of 4.0 feet, measured between the deepest point along the vessel's centerline and the underside of the deck beams.

The vessel's single frames are .13 feet square, surprisingly light for a carvel-planked vessel. The frame spacing varies somewhat, but the frames measured near the starboard beam had a space of .95 feet between frames. The hull is ceiled, but several ceiling planks are missing on the starboard side. Extant ceiling planks on the starboard side are .6 feet wide and .08 feet thick. The outer hull planks remain intact with the exception of a few missing planks on the starboard beam at the turn of the bilge. Intact planks still have caulking visible in the seams. Outer hull plank widths vary: the sheer strake is .33 feet wide, the next lower is .35 feet wide, and the remaining planks to just below the turn of the bilge vary between .5 and .7 feet wide. Outer hull plank thickness is .08 feet. There are no wale strakes, but there is a small rubbing strake fastened to the outside edge of the covering board.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Byron Shipwreck

Section 7 Page 3

Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Extant deck planks are .48 feet wide and .05 feet thick, but most are in a very poor condition that makes accurate measurements difficult. Deck beams vary in dimension between .20 and .23 feet square, and their spacing varies between 1.5 to 1.7 feet between beams. The deck beams are fastened atop a deck shelf that is .8 feet wide by .15 feet thick. A covering board, .8 feet wide and approximately .05 feet thick, is fastened to the top of the deck beams. The covering board is mortised for bulwark stanchions that are spaced 1.7 feet on center. All of the bulwark stanchions are broken off just above deck level, but many of the stanchions on either side of the hull rise several inches above the covering board. The stanchions are .1 foot square and extend .25 feet below the covering board with a tapered foot that is fastened to the inside of the sheer strake. The bulwark stanchion's spacing differs from the deck beam spacing, causing some of the stanchions to be also fastened to the sides of the frames while other are simply fastened to the sheer strake. A disarticulated section of the iron lifeline lies on the deck near the bow. It is uncertain whether the lifeline completely encircled the vessel's deck; it is possible the lifeline only protected areas where the crew worked on deck and were in danger of falling overboard, such as near the bow.

The centerboard and trunk are upright and intact within the hull, and both are constructed of light timber consistent with the rest of the vessel. The trunk is located on the vessel's centerline. The trunk's covering board is no longer extant, exposing the centerboard which is fully retracted within the trunk and measures .15 feet thick. The centerboard trunk begins 12.8 feet from the bow and terminates 21.8 feet from the bow, giving a length of 9.0 feet and a width of .55 feet. The trunk is planked with horizontal planks that are .15 feet thick. Three feet of the trunk is visible between the deck beams and the silt that fills the hold. The trunk obstructs the vessel's only cargo hatch, whose forward headledge is located directly atop the front of the centerboard trunk at 12.8 feet. The cargo hatch's aft headledge is located 17.1 feet, giving a length of 4.3 feet and a width of 6.8 feet.

The cabin bulkheads are no longer extant, but its forward bulkhead was located 27.4 feet from the bow with the aft bulkhead at 32.0 feet, giving cabin dimensions of 4.6 feet in length and a width of 5.8 feet. There is 1.9 feet between where the cabin's side bulkheads stood and the bulwarks on either side. The cabin roof now lies on the lakebed off the vessel's starboard quarter, somewhat buried in the bottom but identified by the hole for the stove pipe. This roof section is 4.95 feet in length by 2.4 feet wide and is constructed of planks over frames. The planks are .5 feet wide and .25 feet thick, fastened to frames that are .15 feet molded, .1 feet sided, and spaced 1.4 and 1.6 feet between beams. The stove pipe hole is .7 feet in diameter and is located .45 feet from the nearest edge.

In the Steele video, there is no visible evidence of a bowsprit with the exception of the bobstay plate. With the exception of the chainplates and the base of the mainmast, there is no evidence of standing or running rigging anywhere on the site. The deck hole for the foremast is located 10.0 feet from the bow and has a diameter of 1.0 foot. The mainmast is located 22.9 feet from the bow and is broken at deck level with the base of the mast still stepped in the hull. The mainmast diameter is .7 feet. Both the foremast and mainmast were supported by four chainplates each, two on either side. One of the starboard foremast chainplates is missing, but all other chainplates are extant. The chainplates are fastened to the hull with a single bolt that penetrates the hull below the sheer plank. The shrouds were made from natural fibers and were fastened to the chainplates with eyes spliced around iron thimbles. The thimbles are still attached to the chainplate eyes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

There are no signs of collision damage on the hull. Without official registration documents by which to compare hull dimensions it is difficult to provide a positive identification of the vessel, but vessel's identification as the *Byron* is reasonably certain. There are no historic records of similar vessels having been lost in the vicinity, and the identification as the *Byron* is the most plausible given research conducted to date (Brendon Baillod, Steve Radovan, pers. comm. 2008).

Summary Paragraph

Located four miles southeast of Kohler-Andrea State Park in Lake Michigan, the schooner *Byron* lies upright and intact in 135 feet of water. Built around 1849 and run down by the schooner *Canton* in 1867, the *Byron* represents a relatively undocumented class of sailing vessel on the Great Lakes, the lakeshoring schooner. The *Byron* meets the registration requirements for Criteria D at the state level for the property type sailing vessel as described in the Multiple Property Documentation *Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin* (Cooper and Kriesa 1992). Archaeological information gathered from the *Byron* site has significantly increased our understanding of lakeshoring vessel construction, and holds the potential to yield additional significant information essential to understanding nineteenth century maritime commerce and lakeshoring vessel construction.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Vessel History

Resting in 135 feet of water, four miles offshore at the south end of Kohler-Andrea State Park in Lake Michigan, the schooner *Byron* represents a rare example of a once common vessel type on the Great Lakes, the trading schooner. The 36-foot schooner, thought to have been built in 1849, was lost in a collision in 1867 when she was run down by the schooner *Canton* off the now lost community of Amsterdam, Wisconsin. The dates correspond with its period of significance. Representative of a relatively undocumented vessel type and trade, the *Bryon* allows historians and archaeologists the rare opportunity to study Great Lakes lakeshoring schooner construction. Once a common class of vessels on Lake Michigan, the small lakeshoring schooner provided economic and cultural links between Lake Michigan's hinterland communities. Throughout the nineteenth century these small schooners occupied a niche trade in the Lake Michigan economy but today there is a virtual absence of documentation of this vessel-type and trade on the Great Lakes. Because of the rarity of the resource and because of the information that can be learned from the site, the *Byron* is nominated at the state level of significance under criterion D.

The *Byron* and the Burmeisters

Researching nineteenth-century Great Lakes sailing craft can be a challenging endeavor. Researchers are often limited to registration documents and searching historic newspapers for the occasional mention of a vessel in an attempt to piece together its history. Tracing a small vessel's history is exponentially more difficult, as Great Lakes small craft frequently were undocumented, eliminating one of the best historic resources available – the registration documents. For undocumented vessels, patience and luck are the rule as a researcher may spend countless hours scouring historic newspapers in vain. Because of this, small undocumented commercial sailing craft on the Great Lakes are one of the least understood vessel classes today. They rarely made mention in contemporary newspapers except for the occasional accident; documentation concerning their construction and use is virtually nonexistent.

The *Byron* is one of these elusive vessels. At 36 feet in length, she was dwarfed by most other Great Lakes craft, yet she and many vessels like her provided a vital, but economical, mode of transportation and income. Small craft like the *Byron* were frequently employed in supplying the specific transportation needs that were local to their owners' communities, and sometimes were only a component of a larger business plan – such as supplying an owner's store with goods and merchandise from around the Great Lakes region.

In the absence of official vessel documents, the context in which these small craft operated can be fleshed out by researching the lives and businesses of the people who owned and worked them. Learning about the role these vessels played in small business goes far in elucidating their use in the nineteenth century and how they helped shape Wisconsin's communities. In the *Byron*'s case, there is so little documentation regarding this vessel that in order gain any understanding of how she was utilized it is necessary to look to similar vessels that served in the same role – other vessels utilized by the Burmeister family to supply their small grocery businesses. The *Byron* was one of the first vessels that helped establish the Burmeisters' business. By studying how they used subsequent vessels – vessels similar in size to the *Byron* – we can learn more about how the *Byron* fit into the maritime landscape of nineteenth-century Lake Michigan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

The *Byron* appears to have been built around 1849, but resources are uncertain regarding the exact build date. Along with the construction year, little is known about how the *Byron* was operated in her early years, other than she spent time sailing lumber products between Manistee, Michigan, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library [ACGNFPL] 2008a).

The *Byron's* construction was likely commissioned by William Burmeister of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. William Burmeister came to the United States from Hamburg, Germany, in 1844 and moved to Manitowoc County in 1846 where he established a farm in the town of Mishicot (Der Nord-Westen 1899). The Burmeister family does not appear in the census records until 1860, when William is listed as a 38 year-old chair maker living with his family in the Second Ward of Two Rivers with his 27 year-old wife Eliza. Eliza had emigrated from Lubeck, Germany, and the two had four children: Byron (8), Emma (7), Charles (5), and Clara (3). The Burmeisters were wealthy enough to have a 19 year-old Prussian servant, Gertrude Pluckman, who lived in their home (United States Census Bureau 1860).

It is uncertain if the *Byron* is named after William Burmeister's first-born son or another family member of the same name, but if named after the son the vessel's build date may be later than 1849 as Byron Burmeister was not born until 1852. Regardless, William Burmeister sailed Lake Michigan as the *Byron's* master and introduced his son Byron to lake sailing at an early age aboard the craft. At thirteen years of age, Byron began accompanying his father, learning the tricks of sailing the Great Lakes (Powers 1912). Throughout this time the *Byron* received surprisingly little mention in the newspapers, and it was not until 1866 that she first made print when the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1866) noted that although the navigation season had not yet closed by 7 December 1866, the *Byron* was amongst several vessels that were already laid up for the winter in Manitowoc Harbor.

The *Byron's* second appearance in the newspapers occurred the following spring when she was run down south of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. On the evening of 8 May 1867, the *Byron* was underway to Manitowoc from Milwaukee when she encountered the up-bound schooner *Canton* four miles off Amsterdam, Wisconsin, about 12 miles south of Sheboygan. Captain Burmeister was running the *Byron* before the wind when he sighted the *Canton* running by the wind. The navigation rules required him to keep clear of the *Canton* while the *Canton* was required to maintain her course and speed until after the vessel passed. As the two vessels closed the *Canton* unexpectedly changed her course and turned directly into the *Byron*, who was dwarfed by the *Canton's* 219-ton hull. The *Canton's* bow struck the tiny *Byron* and began rolling her over under her momentum. Thinking quickly, Captain Burmeister, his son Byron, and passenger W.G. Luvell jumped into the *Canton's* head chains and climbed aboard the *Canton's* deck as the *Byron* capsized (Manitowoc Pilot 1867a; Manitowoc Tribune 1867).

The *Byron* remained inverted for a few minutes before she rolled onto her side. William Burmeister, safely aboard the *Canton*, requested that the crew bring the *Canton* alongside the *Byron* and attempt to right her, which Burmeister claimed could easily have been done. The *Canton's* crew refused to do so and even found it quite funny that they had capsized the little boat. After lying on her side for approximately 15 minutes the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Byron slipped beneath the surface. Adding further insult to injury, the *Canton*'s crew put the Burmeisters and Mr. Luvell into the *Canton*'s yawl and rowed them ashore near where the accident occurred. The three then walked the beach in the dark for over ten miles until they reached Sheboygan. There they boarded a vessel for the remainder of their journey to Manitowoc (Manitowoc Pilot 1867a).

At the time of her loss the *Byron* was valued at about \$1,000 and her cargo at \$400, but Burmeister did not have insurance on either the vessel or its cargo. The cargo was consigned to two stores in Manitowoc – a general merchandise store owned by Charles Korten and Peter J. Blesch, and a dry goods store that carried crockery, boots, and shoes owned by John A. Koehler. Additionally, Burmeister lost 50 barrels of his own salt (Bond & Smithing 1880; Manitowoc Pilot 1867a; Manitowoc Tribune 1867; Richard Edwards & Company 1868).

In commenting on the accident, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1867a) wrote that William Burmeister was “a steady, industrious, clever gentleman”, and they hoped that it would be a short time before he replaced the property so “ruthlessly destroyed” by the *Canton*. Two months later, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1867b) reported that Captain Burmeister was indeed having a new schooner built at DePere. The name of the vessel that Burmeister commissioned at DePere the summer he lost the *Byron* is unknown, but presumably it was another vessel similar to the *Byron* that was too small to document or draw much attention by contemporary newspapers. No other references to the replacement vessel have been located.

In 1868, William Burmeister was listed only as a lake captain in the Manitowoc city directory, but he had bigger plans for himself and his little boat (Richard Edwards & Company 1868). Sometime between 1868 and 1870, he opened a store front in Manitowoc that specialized in fresh fruit from around Lake Michigan, carried to Manitowoc aboard his vessel. Burmeister divided his time between the store and the boat and his wife and children provided help with the store in his absence. Sometime before 1870, however, Eliza Burmeister died from an unknown cause, leaving William to run the business and raise their four children (United States Census Bureau 1870).

Other than the vessel commissioned at DePere to replace the *Byron* in 1867, it is uncertain how many vessels William Burmeister owned in the succeeding years. It is probable that he owned at least one vessel during this time, but this has not yet been confirmed by historic documents. Throughout this time, however, William's son Byron continued learning the trade and on 11 August 1875, at the age of 23, he made his first official foray into vessel ownership when he purchased the two-masted schooner *Alice*. The *Alice* was a 12.69 gross-ton vessel not much larger than the *Byron* at 39 feet in length, 12.4 feet in beam, and 5.0 feet in depth. She was constructed by an unknown builder at Chambers Island in 1869 and was registered with an official number of 105294 (ACGNFPL 2008b; Powers 1912).

Byron quickly outgrew the *Alice*, and the following April he sold her after purchasing a larger schooner named *Eliza*. The *Eliza* was built by H. C. Pierson in Spring Lake, Michigan, in 1868 or 1869. She was 30.03 gross-tons with dimensions of 53.2 feet in length, 14.9 feet in beam, and 6.0 feet in depth. With the purchase of the *Eliza* completed on 5 April 1876, Byron sold the *Alice* to A.N. Anderson of Manitowoc on 19 April 1876

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

(ACGNFPL 2008b). It is noteworthy that the new vessel carried the same name as Byron's late mother, and more research needs to be done to determine if the *Eliza*'s construction was originally commissioned by the Burmeisters and named in her honor.

Under Captain Anderson's ownership, the little *Alice* continued to sail for the Burmeisters, carrying Michigan produce to their Manitowoc store. On 10 December 1876, Charles Burmeister wrote a concerned letter to the Chicago newspaper *Inter Ocean* (1876) regarding the *Alice*'s whereabouts:

Will you please try and find out through your marine columns the whereabouts of the small schooner *Alice* of Manitowoc. She left St. Joseph, Michigan on Nov. 29, bound for this place; since that time nothing has been heard of her. She has a cargo of apples for Messrs. Burmeister & Co. She has a crew of two men, Captain A. N. Anderson and Frank Jakobs. Much anxiety is felt for her safety. It is supposed she has gone down.

The inquiry was followed by a brief explanation that "there need be no further anxiety in regard to the vessel or her crew" as the *Alice* had arrived at Chicago late on Tuesday night and all those aboard were safe (*Inter Ocean* 1876).

Before the close of the 1876 season, Byron sold the *Eliza* to a Mr. Kirk from Waukegan, Illinois. The amount she was sold for is unknown, but at the time of the sale she was rated B1 and valued at \$1500 (ACGNFPL 2008c; Wisconsin Historical Society 2008a). The *Eliza*'s sale follows a poorly-understood pattern that is common to small sailing vessels during the nineteenth century – frequent change of ownership. For reasons unknown, many small Great Lakes sailing craft changed hands frequently, often between relatives or friends. It is not uncommon to find owners purchasing and selling the same craft more than once, and more research is needed to better understand the reasons behind this practice.

The *Alice* continued hauling fruit to the Burmeister store during the 1877 season, but on 9 October 1877, while moored at Manitowoc, she parted her lines during a storm and was badly damaged as she pounded against the dock. The next day she was towed up the Manitowoc River and allowed to sink. This was apparently the *Alice*'s final resting place, as she does not again appear in the newspaper or in enrollments (ACGNFPL 2008b; Manitowoc Tribune 1877). Fortunately for the Burmeisters, other small vessels continued to supply their store with fresh Michigan fruit. On 22 November 1877, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1877) reported that the schooner *Eliza*, captained by one of the Burmeisters – presumably Byron - arrived in port a few days earlier with a cargo of select winter apples. The newspaper commented that "we have experienced them and can testify to their [sic] being top notch."

Byron Burmeister continued sailing the *Eliza* under Kirk's ownership and eventually bought the boat back in 1879. By this time her insurance rating had been reduced to B2 and her hull value had decreased to \$800. With the *Eliza* back in Burmeister hands she spent a week in Manitowoc where she received a new coat of paint before she resumed hauling fruit across Lake Michigan for the remainder of the 1879 season (*Manitowoc Pilot*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

1879a; 1879b; Wisconsin Historical Society 2008a). Byron continued sailing the *Eliza* until 1882, when he sold her to an unknown party in Muskegon, Michigan. The *Eliza* continued sailing Lake Michigan under a number of different owners until she went missing on 1 July 1890 under the ownership of John Hanson of Chicago, Illinois (ACGNFPL 2008c; Wisconsin Historical Society 2008a).

In the spring of 1878, the Burmeisters expanded their operation to both sides of Lake Michigan when William Burmeister's son Charles opened a store in Frankfort, Michigan, to sell provisions, feed, and confectionaries in a building across from the Frankfort Express newspaper office (Frankfort Express 1878). William and Charles now operated store fronts on either side of the lake, and Byron provided the transportation between them. With the Burmeister business expanding, Byron purchased a second schooner in October 1879, the *Ellen G. Cochrane* from Grand Haven, Michigan. The vessel made her first appearance in Manitowoc with a load of fruit on 15 October 1879 (Manitowoc Pilot 1879c). The *Ellen G. Cochrane* was a 2-masted schooner built in Muskegon, Michigan, in 1878. She was registered at 32.02 gross-tons with dimensions of 55.7 feet in length, 16.1 feet in width, and 5.4 feet in depth (ACGNFPL 2008d). As with earlier vessels, the *Ellen G. Cochrane* was in need of some repair at the time she was purchased, and she received the work over the winter of 1879/1880. In early April 1880, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1880) reported that the *Ellen G. Cochrane* was completed and the vessel was launched on Saturday, 3 April 1880. It is uncertain how long Byron owned the *Ellen G. Cochrane*, as we don't find any mention of the vessel until 29 June 1883 when she is renamed the *Antelope* and in 1885 when her home port was changed to Chicago. She met her fate on 15 November 1894 when she capsized on Lake Michigan near the mouth of Grand River under unknown owners (ACGNFPL 2008d).

By 1880, the 58-year-old William Burmeister had remarried a 38-year-old home maker named Louise from Lubeck, Germany, the same place as William's first wife, Eliza. Byron Burmeister, now 28 years old, still lived with his father and step mother when he was not sailing the lake. Census records note that Byron was unemployed for 5 months of the year, presumably during the winter lay-up when the navigation season was closed. Twenty-two year-old daughter Clara also lived at home, as well as a new daughter Lizzy, who was 5 years old (United States Census Bureau 1880).

In 1880, the Burmeisters added another small schooner to their fleet, the *Gertie Wing*. The *Gertie Wing* was commissioned by William and Byron Burmeister and constructed by Patrick Moran and Jeremiah Daniels in Manistee, Michigan. The little schooner was 16.99 gross tons and measured 41.4 feet in length, 12.8 feet in beam, and 5.6 feet deep. The Burmeisters owned the *Gertie Wing* for her entire career, and sailed her until she was lost near Port Washington in 1887 (ACGNFPL 2008g; Wisconsin Historical Society 2008b).

Although William Burmeister was getting on in years he had not forsaken the call of the deep and continued sailing. In early September 1881, a local German newspaper reported that Captain William Burmeister had his foot crushed in an accident in Chicago on 24 August 1881 and had been taken to St. Lucas Hospital where he reported himself to be "a model patient." His wife Louise went to Chicago to be with him (Der Nord-Westen 1881).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

The next two vessels owned by the Burmeisters appear to be the same boat that was rebuilt, renamed, and issued a new enrollment number, but it has not been confirmed that the scows *W. B. Sloan* and the *Mishicott* were one and the same. On 14 May 1879 William Burmeister entered a new enrollment for the scow *W. B. Sloan*. She was a 2-masted schooner of 72.25 gross tons and measured 74.6 feet in length, 19.2 feet in width, and 4.9 feet in depth. She was built at Oak Harbor, Ohio, in 1871, and was the largest vessel purchased by the Burmeisters to date. Sometime during 1879 the Burmeisters sold the *W. B. Sloan* to a Mr. Crawford of Port Clinton, Michigan, but on 13 April 1881 Charles Burmeister purchased the vessel back from Crawford and sent her to Manitowoc for repairs the following winter. In early May 1882, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1882a) reported that Byron and Charles Burmeister had the *W. B. Sloan* rebuilt over the winter and would launch her with a new name on 13 May 1882, but the newspaper failed to mention what the vessel's new name would be (ACGNFPL 2008e; *Manitowoc Pilot* 1882a). One week later, the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1882b) announced that the "new scow built for Byron Burmeister by Madison Ornes, was launched yesterday and called *Mishicott*. The *Mishicott* was a 2-masted scow schooner built by ship carpenters Madison Ornes and Gunder Jorgenson in Manitowoc, and she was just slightly larger than the *W. B. Sloan* at 76.54 gross tons, 79.2 feet in length, 21.5 feet in width, and 6.1 feet in depth. The *Mishicott*'s first enrollment was entered at Milwaukee on 15 May 1882 with Byron and Charles Burmeister listed as owners, living in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and Frankfort, Michigan, respectively. Her official number was 91439 (ACGNFPL 2008f; Bond & Smithing 1880; Bowling Green State University 2008).

The Burmeisters published an advertisement in the 1884 Manitowoc City Directory for their business, Burmeister & Son (Wright & Hogg 1884). Their storefront, specializing as a wholesale and retail dealer for Michigan fruits and potatoes, was run by William and Byron at 105 South 8th Street in Manitowoc. William's daughter, Clara, worked as a clerk in the store. Clara and Byron, as well as Lizzie, all still lived with their father south of the city limits on South Main.

With stores on both sides of Lake Michigan and their own boats to supply them, business was going well and the Burmeisters expanded into the ice business. On 7 February 1884 they took out an ad in the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1884) that announced the start of the Burmeister's Ice House:

I desire to notify the public that I have leased the large ice houses of Mr. F. Schadewald and will engage permanently, in the business of supplying ice. Orders will be taken for the coming season at Burmeister's Fruit Store near 8th St. Bridge- Byron Burmeister.

The ice business had an uncertain performance, however, as the Burmeister's ice house was not one of the listed ice suppliers in the 1894 city directory (Brandt Printing and Binding 1894).

On 6 September 1885 the Burmeister's schooner *Gertie Wing* arrived at Manitowoc with a cargo of Michigan fruit, and a few days later, on 9 September 1885, Byron Burmeister wed Mary Falge of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Mary was born in Austria, Hungary, on 22 October 1866. She came to America with her mother at the age of three, and at the time of her marriage was a school teacher in Manitowoc. The *Manitowoc Pilot* (1885)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

described Byron as "an industrious enterprising young man who has built up a first class business and knows how to take care of it" and Mary as "a young woman of superior mental powers and unusual force of character," and wished the couple a happy future. For a honeymoon trip, the couple boarded the scow *Mishicott* and sailed to Sturgeon Bay to visit friends (Door County Advocate 1918; Powers 1912; United States Census Bureau 1910).

Following the honeymoon, Byron and Mary followed Charles across Lake Michigan and on 20 November 1885 they established a home in Onekama, Michigan. With the move to Onekama, Byron became the sole owner of the *Gertie Wing* when he bought out his father's share of the vessel and established his own store that sold general merchandise and produce purchased from local farmers. In addition to the storefront, Byron remained heavily involved in lake transportation with the Burmeister fleet, hauling tan bark, cordwood, and agricultural products to ports around the lake, becoming one of the largest shippers of these products from that part of Michigan. It appears, however, that Byron now participated in the shipping trade mostly from the comfort of his store by owning vessels and brokering cargoes rather than sailing the lake himself (ACGNFPL 2008b; Grossnickle 2008; Powers 1912).

On 14 April 1886 Byron transferred his share of the *Mishicott* to his wife Mary. Charles Burmeister retained his share of the vessel in partnership with Mary until 7 September 1889 when Mary became sole owner. Mary remained the *Mishicott's* sole owner until she sold it on 2 May 1892 to Soren Christiansen of Onekama, Michigan. Under Captain Kristiansen's ownership, the *Mishicott* continued to haul occasional cargoes for the Burmeisters, including tan bark and merchandise (ACGNFPL 2008f; Kristiansen 1981).

The Burmeisters lost the *Gertie Wing* to an accident in May 1887. Little is known about the accident other than she stranded with a load of apples one half mile north of Port Washington and was declared a total loss. It is unknown whose command the vessel was under or the circumstances of the accident, but apparently no lives were lost (ACGNFPL 2008g; Wisconsin Historical Society 2008b).

On 7 May 1890 Charles Burmeister suffered a hemorrhage that debilitated him so badly that he was forced to sell his business and move his family back to Manitowoc that fall. He died the following year on 4 July 1891 at his father-in-law's home after a prolonged struggle with pneumonia (Der Nord-Westen 1891). Byron remained in Onekama and became an active member of the community, helping Onekama become incorporated in 1891 and holding many village offices, including village president. On 1 October 1891, however, Byron lost his business in a fire that raged through the village of Onekama and destroyed more than 13 buildings. Captain Soren Kristiansen was sleeping aboard the *Mishicott* in the harbor when he was awakened at 2:00 in the morning. Seeing flames from his cabin, he rushed downtown to find the Burmeister's store and the opera house nearly burned down. A good portion of the Burmeister's merchandise had already been piled on the piers, saved from the flames. Lacking any sort of fire pumps, the village was largely helpless against the flames, but Captain Kristiansen helped pass buckets of water to save what buildings they could. After the fire burned itself out, Captain Kristiansen helped Byron move the goods that survived the fire into the vacant Jenkin's building, and helped the Burmeister family move their possessions into the upstairs, where they lived for the immediate

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 8

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

future. Fortunately, Byron had insurance on his property and quickly began construction on a new building, reopening his business on 10 December that year (Kristiansen 1981; Powers 1912).

The opening of the Manistee and North Eastern Railroad around 1893 linked Onekama with outlying areas, and the Burmeister's purchasing area was greatly expanded. Byron expanded his business to established branch stores in Tannerville and Nessen City, Michigan, and he began moving larger portions of his goods via the railroad, but he was also still active in the lake trade (Grossnickle 2008). On 12 May 1896, Byron purchased the schooner *Waneetee*. Built in Sodus, New York, in 1871, the vessel was 116.53 gross tons with dimensions of 88.7 feet in length, 22.5 feet in beam, and 8.6 feet in depth. This aged vessel only served the Burmeister store for four years, however, and she was abandoned off Pentwater, Michigan in 1900 (ACGNFPL 2008h). It appears that the abandonment of the *Waneetee* signaled the end of Byron Burmeister's involvement with commercial sail.

The 1897-98 Manitowoc City Directory lists William Burmeister as a dealer in apples and cider at 820 South Main, and he was again listed as a fruit dealer in the 1899-1900 directory (Schmidt & Zorn 1898; Wright 1897). On 11 May 1899, however, William Burmeister died at the age of 77 after a long struggle with illness. The *Der Nord-Westen* (1899) described him as an eminent resident of Manitowoc who left his widow Louise and three children. With William's death it appears that the Burmeister store in Manitowoc closed, as there is no mention of the store in subsequent city directories.

Despite his father's death and the apparent loss of the Wisconsin-based business, Byron Burmeister continued expanding his operation with an increased use of rail transportation by opening buying stations at eight locations along the Manistee and North Eastern Railroad and the Arcadia and Betsy River Railroad (Grossnickle 2008). By 1910, the 57 year-old Byron was still working as a grocery merchant in Onekama, now assisted by his 23 year-old daughter Alberta who had graduated from the University of Michigan two years prior (Powers 1912; United States Census Bureau 1910).

In August 1918, Byron Burmeister was visiting Sturgeon Bay when he took time to talk with the *Door County Advocate* (1918) where he recounted stories of his sailing days. The *Door County Advocate* wrote that there were "few sailing craft that could show their stern to the *Mishicott* when sailed by Capt. Burmeister, who had few equals when it came to sailing." Byron was still operating as a wholesaler of farm products in 1920, but by this time his wife Mary had passed away, but he still lived with all three of his children. His daughter Alberta had left the store for a position at the post office (United States Census Bureau 1920).

The little schooner *Byron* played an important role in William Burmeister establishing himself as a merchant in the Manitowoc area, and with the use of other vessels similar to the *Byron*, the Burmeister business expanded to both sides of Lake Michigan and throughout northwestern Michigan. The *Byron* was instrumental in teaching Byron Burmeister about the lake trade and helped his later businesses succeed due to effective use of the small, inexpensive vessels. Small lake craft's niche market was fruit and produce, with cargoes of general merchandise, tanbark, and other wood products providing income when fruit and vegetables were not in season.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Small sailing craft appear to have dominated the fruit and vegetable trade on Lake Michigan, but this trade was not well-documented in contemporary times and today there is a very poor understanding of how it operated and the vessels that participated in it. Only through researching the scattered information we have on vessels like the *Byron* will we be able to shed more light on this small, but important, component of Great Lakes history. By examining the business practices and movements of other vessels within the trade, a better understanding can be gained of how the *Byron* may have been used and operated.

Archaeological Significance

The *Byron* meets the registration requirements for Criterion D at the state level, as established in the Multiple Property Documentation *Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin* (Cooper and Kriesa 1992). The *Byron* is a rare example of a vessel type that was vital to Wisconsin's economic and transportation infrastructure prior to the development of road and rail networks. Lakeshoring schooners like the *Byron* were an important link for developing Wisconsin communities, connecting them economically and culturally with the wider regional markets. There are only a few archaeological examples of small lakeshoring schooners known in Wisconsin today, and the *Byron*'s hull retains excellent archaeological integrity. No historical record of lakeshoring schooner construction exists today, making archaeological examples particularly significant. Their construction techniques and the economic rationale behind their design and operation are poorly understood. Information gathered from the *Byron* site has broadened our understanding of lakeshoring vessel construction and use, and holds vast potential to yield further significant information essential to understanding nineteenth-century maritime commerce, vessel construction, and the lakeshoring trade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 3

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 4

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Boundary Description

The area included in the site is a circle with a 100-foot radius centered on the UTM coordinates 0444492 Easting, 4828250 Northing, Zone 16.

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to encompass the extent of the shipwreck and associated debris field.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1

Byron Shipwreck
Sheboygan County

Photo #1 of 1

Byron Shipwreck

Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Photographer: Tamara Thomsen, 1 August 2008

Negative: Wisconsin Historical Society

View of bow looking aft