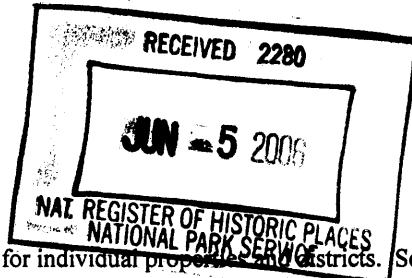


**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**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** "Iris" Shipwreck  
**other names/site number** ASI # 025312

**2. Location**

**street & number** Adjacent to Rock Island Ferry Dock, Jackson Harbor **N/A** **not for publication**  
**city or town** Town of Washington **N/A** **vicinity**  
**state** Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Door **code** 029 **zip code** 54246

**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 X statewide \_ locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] SHPO June 3, 2006  
Signature of certifying official/Title 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

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Name of Property

Door 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):

*Ethan H. Beall*

7.19.00

*[Signature]*  
Signature of the Keeper

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	0 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**

N/A

**Materials**

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.)

**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

**Period of Significance**

1866-1913

**Significant Dates**

1866

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

Euro-American

**Architect/Builder**

Bedford, Lorenzo S.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Name of Property

Door 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 0433042 5027806  
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

<b>name/title</b>	Keith Meverden, Tamara Thomsen	<b>date</b>	8/9/06
<b>organization</b>	Wisconsin Historical Society, Maritime Preservation	<b>telephone</b>	608.221.5909
<b>street &amp; number</b>	816 State Street	<b>zip code</b>	53706
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	WI

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Name of Property

Door 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.)

<b>name/title</b>	Bureau of Facilities and Lands	<b>date</b>	2/9/06
<b>organization</b>	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	<b>telephone</b>	608.267.2764
<b>street&amp;number</b>	PO Box 7921	<b>zip code</b>	53707
<b>city or town</b>	Madison	<b>state</b>	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**

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

---

**Summary Paragraph**

Between the Rock Island ferry dock and the Ellefson fishing pier in Jackson Harbor, Door County, Wisconsin, lies the remains of the 74-foot schooner *Iris*. Built in 1866 at Port Huron, Michigan, the wreck of the schooner *Iris* was run aground and abandoned in 1913 after 47 years of Great Lakes service. Mostly buried beneath dredge spoil from an adjacent pier, much of the *Iris*' lower hull remains intact. Representative of a poorly documented vessel type and trade, the *Iris* allows non-diving historians and archaeologists the rare chance to study Great Lakes lakeshoring schooner construction first hand. Once a common class of vessels on Lake Michigan, the small lakeshoring schooners provided economic and cultural links between Lake Michigan's hinterland communities. Throughout the nineteenth century these small schooners occupied a special niche in the Lake Michigan economy. While once a common vessel on Lake Michigan, the *Iris* is a rare documented example of the type.

**Site Description and Investigation**

The *Iris* lies in less than 4 feet of water between the Rock Island ferry dock and the Ellefson commercial fishing piers in Jackson Harbor, Washington Island. The site was documented by Wisconsin Historical Society archaeologists and trained volunteers over one week in June 2005 as part of a Phase II predisturbance survey. The vessel lies upright, embedded in the bottom, with portions of the stern structure protruding above the water's surface. Much of the vessel's lower hull has been buried beneath dredge spoil from dredging around an adjacent pier that lies immediately off the *Iris*' port side. Significant portions of the *Iris*' bow and stern remain exposed, as well as the centerboard trunk along the vessel's centerline. Exposed hull structure provided significant documentation opportunities.

Locals state that "without a doubt" the vessel at Jackson Harbor is the schooner *Iris*. Jacob Ellefson Jr., a commercial fisherman whose family has owned the adjacent property since 1907, corroborated a story uncovered at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum regarding the *Iris*' loss. An undocumented amount of salvage occurred following the *Iris*' abandonment by the owners and local residents, including rigging, wood trim, and vessel timbers. The *Iris*' hull provided a playground for local children until it became too treacherous to board in the 1920s (Jacob Ellefson 2005, pers. comm.).

Much of the vessel lies beneath dredge spoil from an adjacent slip that conceals much of the lower hull with the exception of a portion of the centerboard and centerboard trunk, a 23 foot section of the forward hull from the stempost aft, and a 25 foot section of the after hull from the rudder shoe forward. Visible construction details are those of a small sailing vessel with a keel length of 72 feet from the center of the rudder shoe to the forward edge of the keelson, comparable with the *Iris*' registered length of 72 feet. Beam was difficult to determine due to heavy overburden. The widest visible breadth was 24 feet forward of the rudder shoe where the port side frames, broken just below the turn of the bilge, extend 8 ft. 3-5/8 in. from the center of the keelson. Starboard side frames at this location were broken much closer to the keelson than on the port side. Compared with historic photographs and the relative position of the centerboard trunk, this location was just aft of the mainmast, and likely not the widest part of the hull. Doubling the port side measurement gives an estimated beam of 16 ft. 7 in., within the *Iris*' registered beam of 19.2 ft. Depth of hold could not be determined.

The stern is the most exposed hull section, from the rudder shoe forward 24 feet, where the hull disappears into overburden. The rudder shoe is an iron plate 5 inches square, fastened with a nail in each corner. The shoe rides atop a timber 3 feet in length that is hook-scarphed into the underside of the keel, a repair from either damage or wear. A 4 in. by 1/2 in. iron reinforcing strap wraps around the end of the shoe timber. The sternpost is missing, but two deadwood timbers are extant to where they abutted the sternpost 1 ft. 11-1/2 in. forward of the rudder shoe. The deadwood timbers are fastened to the keel with 3/4 in. iron through bolts. The deadwood rises above the water's surface and is badly weathered, making accurate dimensional measurements problematic. All cant frames are missing, and no cant frame pockets are visible. The first floor

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

Section 7 Page 2

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

timber is located 14 ft. 5 in. forward of rudder shoe. Few intact frames are visible; those that are measure 4 in. molded by 7 in. sided, with 11 in. spacing. The vessel appears to be single framed; however, remnants of a second timber are fastened to the after side of the third and fourth floors from the stern. These timbers are significantly more deteriorated than the floor timbers, suggesting they were constructed of a different wood than the floor timbers and later added as a repair to reinforce the floors. Limber holes are cut into the starboard side floors only, 5 in. from edge of the keel, measuring 2 in. wide by 1 in. high. The keelson begins 12 ft. 10-3/4 in. forward of the rudder shoe and is 12 in. sided by 7 in. molded. A weathered rider keelson begins 3 ft. 2-3/8 in. forward of the keelson's after end, measuring 12 in. sided by 4 in. molded. Through bolts that fasten the keel assembly protrude 5 in. above the rider's upper face. Keelson assembly through bolts are both 1/2 in. and 3/4 in. diameter with no evidence of clinch rings.

Ceiling and outer hull planking are present on both port and starboard sides. Ceiling plank thickness averages 3/4 in. on the port side and 1-1/4 in. on starboard. Ceiling plank width on the port side varies from 4-1/4 in. to 7-1/4 in., and from 6 in. to 7-3/4 in. on starboard. Outer hull planks average 2-1/4 in. thick, and vary in width from 2-3/8 in. to 9-5/8 in. on the port side, and from 7-1/4 in. to 9-5/8 in. on starboard. Planking is fastened by two sizes of chisel point, rose-head nails 5 in. long by 3/8 in. square, and 7 in. long by 1/2 in. square.

A cross-section detail was taken 20 feet forward of the rudder shoe. At this location the port side hull extended 8 ft. 3-5/8 in from the vessel's centerline, and 3 ft. 6 in. to starboard of centerline. The measured deadrise was unequal between sides. The starboard side exhibited a deadrise of 5-1/4 in. over a 3 ft. 5 in. span. The port side has less deadrise, with a flat floor that extends 4 ft. 4 in. from the vessel's centerline before beginning a gradual angle towards the turn of the bilge, rising 8-3/4 in. over the last 45 in. of frame. All visible framing is athwartships, typical of conventional schooners. Frames at the turn of the bilge exhibit a soft chine with no evidence of a chine log, king posts, or cross-planked hull.

A fragment of the centerboard trunk is visible amidships where it protrudes a few inches above the overburden. Nine feet of the trunk is visible from the forward edge aft to where it disappears into the bottom, leaning slightly to starboard. Overburden did not allow inspection of the centerboard trunk / lower hull interface, but the trunk's location relative to visible fore and aft sections of the keelson indicate the trunk is aligned with the vessel's centerline. Trunk planking was 3-5/8 in. thick, edge-bolted with 3/4 in. iron bolts

The centerboard itself lies near the bow and migrates about the site from year to year. The centerboard retains four planks for an overall dimension of 13 ft. in length and 3 ft. 4-3/4 in. tall. Several upper planks are missing, but measurements from the remaining through bolts indicate the centerboard was originally 3 ft. 6 in. tall. Existing planks are 6-1/2 in. wide and 1-3/4 in. thick, edge-bolted with 1 in. iron bolts that run through several planks. The leading edge of the centerboard has a 2-1/2 in. wide by 1/2 in. thick iron shoe along its entire length. The shoe's width compared with centerboard plank thickness indicates each plank has lost 3/4 in. of thickness due to weathering.

The centerboard rests atop the rider keelson, which also migrates about the site. During a site visit the previous fall the rider keelson was replaced atop the keelson from several feet away, aligned on the keel bolts. When WHS archaeologists returned in June 2005, the rider keelson had again moved to its present location to port of the keelson. The rider keelson measures 9 in. sided by 7 in. molded and 22 ft. 8 in. in length. A step is visible on the forward end, measuring 1 ft. 4 in. long by 4-1/2 in. wide and 3 in. deep. The step's inner mortise measures 6 in. long by 2 in. wide and passes completely through the rider. This step is 5 ft. 2 in. from the rider keelson's forward edge. Compared with historic photographs, this step is for the sampson post rather than the foremast. Historic images place the foremast approximately 10 feet aft of the stempost, with sampson post approximately equidistant between the two. No other steps were visible. The keelson is buried in rock and

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

mud, but a 5 in. wide by 2 ft. 6 in. long section of stem iron protrudes from the keel's underside. A 3 ft. 6 in. long disarticulated stempost fragment lies near the end of the rider keelson. Eight inches sided by 9 in. molded, rabbets are visible on either side of the post. Off the starboard bow is a sail boom 25 ft. 8 in. long and 6 in. in diameter. The boom jaws are absent, but its shelf extends 5 feet from the boom's forward end. Compared with historic photographs, the boom's length suggests it was the foremast boom.

Various other wreckage and debris lies about the site, but consists of mostly small, indistinguishable fragments. Several large pieces of wreckage lay off the *Iris*' port quarter, but these sections exhibit construction details very different than wooden commercial sail. This is likely the remains of the *Sadie*, a smaller, more modern gas boat abandoned off the *Iris*' stern. Several pieces of 3/8 in., 7-strand wire rope were present around the site, possible wire rigging.

No artifacts were discovered that conclusively identify the Jackson Harbor vessel as the *Iris*. Based on historical records, local informants, and archaeological evidence, however, it likely is the *Iris*. The Ellefson family has owned the adjacent property since 1909, and would have been familiar with the *Iris* while she was actively trading at Jackson Harbor, adding validity to the identification. Vessel dimensions are consistent with those of the *Iris*, and documented construction is consistent with the *Iris*' historic image.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

**"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin**

**Summary Paragraph**

Between the Rock Island ferry dock and the Ellefson piers in Jackson Harbor, Door County, lie the remains of the schooner *Iris*. Built in 1866 and run aground and abandoned in 1913, the schooner *Iris* may represent a little-understood transition between two once-common vessel types: the scow and conventional schooners. Historical records are unclear regarding conventional and scow schooner differentiation. The *Iris* is no exception, as she was listed as both a scow and conventional vessel at various points in her career. For 32 of her 47 years of service, the *Iris* was registered as scow schooner. Archaeological data suggests she was a conventional schooner, but significant portions of her hull are obscured by overburden and were unavailable for documentation at the time of survey. Embedded portions of the *Iris*' hull are likely well-preserved and may hold an important key to understanding the often blurred line between these two vessel types. The *Iris* 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). Information gathered from the *Iris* site has increased our understanding of lakeshoring vessel construction, and is likely to yield further information essential to understanding nineteenth century maritime commerce and vessel construction.

**Vessel History**

The *Iris*, official number 12096, was built in Port Huron, Michigan, in 1866 by Lornezo S. Bedford and first enrolled on 15 May 1866. She was registered as a two-masted schooner 74 feet in length, 19.2 feet in beam, and 6.6 feet in depth of hold, with a registered tonnage of 62.14 gross and 56.9 net. Captain L.S. Bedford was the sole owner and sailed the *Iris* as master for her inaugural season out of Port Huron (Bureau of Navigation 1866). Bedford had been a Port Huron resident since at least 1850, but little else is known of her builder or the Bedford shipyard (United States Genealogy Network 2005). Port Huron and the Bedford yard did not fare the Panic of 1873 very well. Following the Panic, new vessel construction ceased at Port Huron, with nothing but repair facilities remaining (Hall 1884:172).

The *Iris* hailed from Port Huron for only one season. Less than a year from her original enrollment she was sold to Captain S. Burrell of Detroit for \$4,200, and began the 1867 season under his sole ownership and command (Bureau of Navigation 1867a; *Detroit Free Press* 1867:2). Capt. Burrell sailed the *Iris* for six years before he sold her to other Detroit interests at the beginning of the 1873 season, just prior to the Panic of 1873. On 15 April 1873, B. Cole and L. A. Lebot filed a new enrollment that listed each as equal owners and Cole as master (Bureau of Navigation 1873). Cole and Lebot owned the *Iris* for the duration of the Panic of 1873, caused by the collapse of the railroad boom and which did not lift until the spring of 1879. The *Iris*' operation during the recession is largely unknown, but one year into the Panic the *Iris* was valued at \$2,200 with a B2 insurance rating (Board of Lake Underwriters 1874:57). During the spring of 1879, about the same time the Panic of 1873's recession lifted, M. J. Cousino purchased Lebot's half share of the *Iris*. Cole retained his share as well as his position as master (Bureau of Navigation 1879).

The Cole / Cousino partnership lasted only one season. Early in 1880, the *Iris* returned to Port Huron where Cole and Cousino sold their shares to Horatio N. Jex, who became the *Iris*' sole owner and master. Captain Jex was a lifelong Port Huron resident, born there on 18 June 1851. Jex entered the lake trade at age of thirteen on the schooner *Idaho*; by the age of twenty he was captain of the *Hanson* (Andreas 1883). It is uncertain whether the *Iris* was Capt. Jex's first foray into vessel ownership, with sixteen years experience as a lake sailor when he purchased her. Mysteriously, when Jex filed his new enrollment at the Huron customs house on 17 June 1880, the *Iris* was registered as a scow, having been registered as a schooner on all previous enrollments (Bureau of Navigation 1880). Capt. Jex sailed the *Iris* for only one season, which turned out to be her last season in Michigan. In May 1881 he sold the *Iris* to purchase the scow *W.R. Hanna*, which was nine years older than the *Iris* (Labadie and Herdendorf 2004:30). It is curious that Capt. Jex sold the *Iris* for a vessel nearly a decade older, which may indicate the *Iris* was in a deteriorating condition. The *Hannah*, however, was 24.02 tons larger

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

than the *Iris*, and Capt. Jex resold the *Hannah* one year after her purchase in May 1882, which may be indicative of revolving ownership patterns rather than the *Iris*' poor condition.

Captain Arthur E. Dow of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, purchased the *Iris* from Jex, bringing her to Manitowoc in May 1881. Capt. Dow was born in 1858 in South Danvers, Massachusetts. His father, Richard P. Dow, was a courier until he moved his family to Manitowoc during the 1860s, where both father and son became lake sailors. Arthur Dow was twenty-three years old when he purchased the *Iris* in 1881, becoming the *Iris*' sole owner and master (Bureau of Navigation 1881a, 1881b; United State Census Bureau 1860:99, 1870:6, 1880:1, 1910:10A). Capt. Dow's tenure aboard the *Iris* was an exciting one. In early September 1881 the *Iris* was more than two weeks overdue at Sturgeon Bay and given up for lost. On 22 September, however, the *Iris* arrived at Sturgeon Bay, and Capt. Dow went immediately to the newspaper office to telegraph his family in Manitowoc that he was indeed "still in the land of the living" (*Door County Advocate* 1881:3). The following December Capt. Dow again encountered late season heavy weather, and again was feared lost. A load of Christmas trees awaited the *Iris* at a Sturgeon Bay pier, consigned for Chicago, but the *Iris* was overdue (*Door County Advocate* 1882a:3). She eventually arrived, however, and carried the load of holiday cheer to Chicago, arriving just in time for Christmas and the close of the 1882 navigation season on 13 December 1882 (*Door County Advocate* 1882b:3). The *Iris*' first two seasons in Wisconsin were typical of how she would spend her next thirty-one years, connecting northeastern Wisconsin communities with the Milwaukee and Chicago markets.

Two years after coming to Wisconsin, the *Iris* moved to Milwaukee when she was purchased by Captain B. A. Anderson on 29 August 1883 (Bureau of Navigation 1883). Capt. Anderson served as sole owner and master until 23 June 1886, when half of the vessel was purchased by B. Leopold Anderson, with Capt. B. A. Anderson remaining as master (Bureau of Navigation 1886). Three years following their partnership, the Andersons moved the *Iris* to Detroit Harbor on Washington Island, and B. L. Anderson replaced B. A. Anderson as master (Bureau of Navigation 1889). Under command of Capt. B. L. Anderson, the *Iris* continued in the lakeshoring trade, often carrying Washington Island wood products to Milwaukee and returning with merchandise for Jon Gislason's island store. Winter lay-ups were spent in Detroit Harbor (*Door County Advocate* 1891:5, 1891:8). Under command of the Andersons, the *Iris* spent nine trouble-free years sailing Lake Michigan, but tragedy struck on 15 July 1892. Moored in the Milwaukee River, B. A. Anderson fell overboard. His cries for help quickly brought assistance, but not quickly enough. Pulled from the river and transported to the local hospital, Capt. Anderson died a few hours later. His body was returned to Washington Island for burial (*Door County Advocate* 1892:5).

The surviving B.L. Anderson put the *Iris* up for sale the following spring. In March 1893, Peter Hanson Pederson of Washington Island purchased the *Iris* for \$1,000, just under half of what she was worth nineteen years earlier (*Door County Advocate* 1893a:8, 1893c:5). It took a bit of work to get the *Iris* ready for the 1893 season, as she was not ready to sail until early June (*Door County Advocate* 1893b:8). This suggests the *Iris* did not finish the 1892 season following Capt. Anderson's death, and required extra time to recommission her the following season. A new enrollment was entered at Milwaukee on 12 July 1893 that listed Capt. Pederson as sole owner and master, with the *Iris*' hailing port returned to Milwaukee (Bureau of Navigation 1893). Much of the Capt. Pederson's first season aboard the *Iris* was uneventful, but as with Capt. Dow, heavy winter weather provided exciting times.

On one late November run, Capt. Pederson was carrying several thousand dollars worth of merchandise consigned to Washington Island. As he approached the island a strong westerly gale kicked up and overpowered the small schooner. Blown clear across Lake Michigan, the *Iris* was about to go ashore on North Manitou Island when the island's life-saving station managed to get a line on her and tow her to safety inside the harbor. This incident was a blow to Capt. Pederson's pride, and went unmentioned when he finally arrived at Washington Island. When a *Door County Advocate* reporter saw an

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

**Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin**

Section 8 Page 3

---

article in a Leelenaw newspaper describing the event, however, he could not leave well enough alone. Rubbing salt in Capt. Pederson's wounds, the reporter not only described the incident in the *Door County Advocate*, but also stated that it was "queer that the crew don't remember such things when they got [sic] home" (*Door County Advocate* 1893d:8). On the very next trip she lost her raffee sail and had to run all night under bare poles through a blinding snow storm (*Door County Advocate* 1893d:8).

Capt. Pederson's 1894 season didn't begin much better than the previous one ended. A heavy storm blew across the lake on 18 May 1894. Despite being anchored inside the Milwaukee breakwall, large waves continuously broke over the *Iris*' bow, rolled along her deck, and entered the ship through her cargo hatches and any other opening. The crew manned the pumps continuously to keep her from flooding. The lengthy exposure to cold water and weather caused Capt. Pederson to fall so ill he was bedridden. Captain J.C. Jessen took temporary command of the *Iris* while Capt. Pederson recovered (*Door County Advocate* 1894a:8). The rest of the season was uneventful, with the exception of 20 November 1894. Carrying a load of Washington Island potatoes and cordwood to Milwaukee, the *Iris* encountered a southeast gale and anchored in the shelter of the Sturgeon Bay Canal near the head of the bay. The *Iris* was not anchored far enough from the channel, however, since the passing steamer *Minnesota*, coming in for shelter from the heavy weather, collided with her and carried away her jib boom (*Door County Advocate* 1894b:5). The *Iris* finished out the season without her jib boom, which was not refitted until the following spring (*Door County Advocate* 1895a:5).

The 1895 season was much less eventful for Capt. Pederson and the *Iris*. Early that year the *Door County Advocate* reported that George Moe made his first venture into vessel ownership and purchased a half share of the *Iris* from Capt. Pederson for between \$450 and \$500. This transaction was under the table, for it is not reflected in the official enrollments. George Moe's first venture into vessel ownership was not exactly a legal one (*Door County Advocate* 1895a:5). The rest of season found the *Iris* in her local trade between Washington Island and Milwaukee with very little excitement. Her most notable experience came in November when she was wind bound in Sturgeon Bay for four days while bound for Milwaukee with a load of Washington Island potatoes (*Door County Advocate* 1895b:5).

Capt. Pederson put the *Iris* up for sale the following season. After investing nearly \$1,000 over the last four years in maintenance, the *Iris* was described as in "excellent condition and considered about the fastest of her size on the lake" and a "bargain" for someone (*Door County Advocate* 1897a:1). A few weeks later Captain Peder Knudsen purchased the *Iris* for \$1,100 and moved her to Newport, Wisconsin (*Door County Advocate* 1897:1, 1897b:8). The official enrollment was entered on 26 April 1897 with Capt. Knudsen listed as sole owner and master (Bureau of Navigation 1897). Capt. Knudsen kept the *Iris* in her comfortable role of hauling Door Peninsula products to Milwaukee, and the first half of his inaugural season was uneventful.

As with previous owners, however, the gales of November brought some challenges. After carrying a load of lumber from Newport to Milwaukee on 18 November 1897, Capt. Knudsen was returning light when a northerly gale began blowing as he was abreast of Cana Island. Unable to make headway, Capt. Knudsen turned the *Iris* and made for the shelter of the Sturgeon Bay Canal, where he laid at anchor for two days until the winds subsided. Capt. Knudsen told the *Advocate* he still hoped to make two more runs before laying up for the season (*Door County Advocate* 1897c:1).

Capt. Knudsen took on two partners the following spring when he sold half the *Iris* to John C. Jessen and Anton M. Jessen, who each purchased one-quarter shares on 18 April 1898. The *Iris*' hailing port was returned to Washington Island, and John C. Jessen became master (Bureau of Navigation 1898). Capt. Jessen was a conservative captain, not pressing his luck aboard the thirty-two year old *Iris*. On 18 September 1898 Capt. Jessen was enroute to Milwaukee with Martin Jorgeson and

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

**Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin**

Section 8 Page 4

---

Christian Jacobsen as crew. Exiting the Sturgeon Bay canal to find a heavy sea running, Capt. Jessen came about to return to Sturgeon Bay to await calmer waters. With little sea room inside the harbor of refuge and a west-southwest wind blowing off shore, the *Iris* became stuck upon a shoal. The Sturgeon Bay Life-Saving station, immediately to the north, quickly launched a small boat. The station's crew carried lines to the nearby pier and the *Iris* was quickly pulled free. The momentum of pulling her free, coupled with the strong wind and waves, began propelling the *Iris* towards the pier at a frightening rate, threatening damage to both her hull and the pier. Quick-thinking, the crew dropped one of the *Iris*' anchors, checking her speed just in time to avoid impact. Now under control, lines were made fast to the pier and the anchor recovered. Capt. Jessen heartily thanked the Life-Saving Station crew for their help. The entire episode lasted less than one and a half hours. Of interest, the Life-Saving Station reported the *Iris*' value at \$900. This was \$200 less than her purchase price one and a half years prior. The *Iris*' load of cordwood was valued at \$80, and neither the vessel nor her cargo were insured (Unites States Life-Saving Service 1898).

The following spring the Jessens bought out Peter Knudsen's half share, becoming each equal owners with Capt. John Jessen retaining his position as master (Bureau of Navigation 1899). Not far into the season, the *Iris* lost her jib boom for a second time to a larger vessel. On 28 June 1899 the *Iris* and the three-master *Pride* were anchored in the lee of Plum Island in Death's Door, riding out a northeasterly gale. The *Pride* dragged her anchors and ran afoul of the *Iris*, carrying away her jib boom and one of her catheads. The Plum Island Life-Saving crew helped disentangle the vessels and provided the *Iris* a replacement spar (*Door County Advocate* 1899:1).

Early in 1901 the *Iris* departed from her usual Washington Island – Milwaukee route to participate in a cargo salvage on Fisherman's Shoal east of Washington Island. A coal shortage on the Door Peninsula left local steam tugs scrounging for fuel. On 17 May 1901 the *Iris* arrived at Sturgeon Bay with sixty tons of coal salvaged from Fisherman's Shoal after a larger vessel ran aground and had to jettison its load to free herself. The *Iris* received \$3.20 per ton for the load, for a total of \$192, far more than she could earn hauling wood (*Door County Advocate* 1901:1).

The Jessen partnership lasted until October 1902, when John Jessen purchased Anton Jessen's share to become the *Iris*' sole owner and master (Bureau of Navigation 1902). Anton Jessen's experience with the Life-Saving Service while aboard the *Iris* influenced him to join the service, and he worked his way up to rank of Number One at the Plum Island Station. In 1913 Anton Jessen was appointed Captain of the Kewaunee Station (Vickery 2005). At the close of the 1902 season, the *Iris* had survived thirty-six years on the Great Lakes, a grand feat for any wooden sailor. An increasing anomaly on Lake Michigan, sailing vessels were being squeezed out of the lake trade. In the 1890s, scores of schooners were abandoned in Lake Michigan harbors (Karamanski 2000:209). Those that survived were usually reduced to tow barges, shorn of much of their rigging and towed behind steam vessels. By 1903, the *Iris* was one of only a handful of self-propelled schooners actively working the lake, but she was beginning to show her age. Early in June 1903, Capt. Jessen arrived at the Sturgeon Bay shipyard to have the *Iris* dry-docked to stop a leak. With no dry-docks available, Capt. Jessen elected to make another trip with a leaking hull rather than wait for an open dock (*Door County Advocate* 1903a:1). The November gales of 1903 dealt a serious blow to the *Iris*, who limped into Milwaukee the second week of November with a broken and spliced mainmast (*Door County Advocate* 1903b:1).

The *Iris* disappears from the records for the 1904 season, not reappearing until February 1905 when Capt. Jessen sold the *Iris* in equal shares to Bo L. Anderson and Julius Jensen for \$400 (*Door County Advocate* 1905a:8). B. L. Anderson had previously owned the *Iris* in the 1890s until B. A. Anderson's death, and now claimed he was "just as much at home on the rolling deep as on terra firma" (*Door County Advocate* 1905c:8). During his time away from the *Iris*, Anderson purchased nearly 500 acres of Washington Island forest with partner Ole Christensen. In 1902 they constructed the Anderson-

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**"Iris" Shipwreck**

Section 8 Page 5

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

Christianson lumber yard and pier at Jackson Harbor, and purchased the *Iris* to haul wood products from their lumberyard pier (*Door County Advocate* 1903a:1, 1905b:8). The official enrollment was entered at Milwaukee on 22 April 1905, the hailing port moved to Detroit Harbor and Julius Jensen became the new master (Bureau of Navigation 1905). The *Iris* spent the 1905 season hauling wood products from the Anderson-Christianson yard to ports throughout Wisconsin, including 300 cords of fuel wood consigned to the N. S. Washburn Co. in Sturgeon Bay, reportedly the first Washington Island wood delivered there (*Door County Advocate* 1905d:1). After delivering her first load of the 300 cords on 7 October 1905, the *Iris* remained in Sturgeon Bay until she could enter dry-dock on 10 October to be recaulked. Taking only one day, the *Iris* was returned to the water on 11 October, but Capt. Jensen was wind bound by strong northwest winds for several days before returning to Washington Island for the remaining cordwood (*Door County Advocate* 1905e:1). As always, the November gales played havoc with the small schooner. On 27 November 1905 the *Iris* departed Washington Island bound for Green Bay with a load of wood, but just after passing the Red River a strong southerly wind began to blow, halting all forward progress and requiring Capt. Jensen to set both anchors. After a long, frigid night in heavy seas, Capt. Jensen had enough. The *Iris* weighed anchor and ran for the shelter of Sturgeon Bay, where Capt. Jensen disposed of his cargo and returned to Detroit Harbor to lay up for the winter, as there was "neither pleasure, nor profit in the business under existing conditions" (*Door County Advocate* 1905f:1).

In August 1906 the *Door County Advocate* reported that Capt. Jensen sold his half-share to Bo Anderson for \$150 (*Door County Advocate* 1906a:1), who in turn sold the *Iris* to Charles E. Swanson on 7 September 1906. Charles Swanson transferred the *Iris*' hailing port to Marinette, Wisconsin, and registered Captain A. A. Bjorkland as master (Bureau of Navigation 1906). Once again, an unremarkable season gained excitement in November, when the *Iris* encountered fierce weather on Green Bay on 18 November 1906. While halfway between Marinette and Sturgeon Bay with a heavy deck load of lumber, the winds shifted to the southwest and increased to gale force. Covered in ice, the *Iris* began to heel heavily in the building seas when the deck load shifted and threatened to capsize the vessel. Capt. Bjorkland had no choice but to cut the lashings, releasing the deck load overboard in order to regain control and make the shelter of Sturgeon Bay (*Door County Advocate* 1906b:1).

The *Iris* spent the winter of 1906-1907 in the Menomonee River (*Door County Advocate* 1907a:1), but did not immediately return to the lakes at the start of the 1907 season. She remained laid up in the river until purchased in early July by Captain Andrew J. Anderson, who spent more than a week recommissioning her for service (*Door County Advocate* 1907b:1, 1907c:1). It was not until 9 August 1907 that Capt. Anderson re-enrolled the *Iris* at Milwaukee as sole owner and master, hailing from Horseshoe Bay (Bureau of Navigation 1907). The 1907 season was otherwise unremarkable.

At forty-two years of age, the *Iris*' career on Lake Michigan was coming full circle. During the 1907-1908 winter lay-up Capt. Anderson sold the *Iris* to her original Wisconsin hailing port, Manitowoc. William Williamson purchased the *Iris* for \$500 as sole owner and master and entered her new enrollment on 21 January 1908 (Bureau of Navigation 1908; *Door County Advocate* 1908a:1). By April 1908, the *Iris* was again carrying Door County cordwood to southern Lake Michigan, making a brief stopover in Sturgeon Bay on her first trip of the season. Of note, the *Advocate* reported Capt. A. Bjorklund as her master (*Door County Advocate* 1908b:1). Later that season the *Iris* was unlucky enough to be struck once again by another vessel, this time while moored in the Manitowoc River. On 11 September 1908, the steamer *Roosevelt* was departing Manitowoc when she collided with a log raft. Attempting to free herself, the *Roosevelt* struck the *Iris*, carried away several stanchions and broke several frames. A claim was filed by Capt. Williamson, who was compensated \$275 (over half the vessel's value) the following week (*Door County Advocate* 1908c:1, 1908b:1).

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

"Iris" Shipwreck

Section 8 Page 6

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

Following the *Roosevelt* collision, the *Iris* disappears from the records until late the following season, when she arrived in Sturgeon Bay with a load of slab wood on 6 August 1909. Capt. Bjorkland was again at the helm, complaining of a very slow season, as this was only his third trip of year (*Door County Advocate* 1909:1). It is unknown how many more trips the *Iris* completed that year, as there is no mention of her until winter lay up in the Manitowoc Harbor. The *Manitowoc Pilot* (1909:1) comments that one of the most striking features of the harbor that winter was the small number of sailing craft in the winter fleet, the *Iris* being one of only four schooners in port that winter, in contrast to the many schooners of years past.

It is unclear whether the *Iris* was recommissioned for the 1910 season. If she was, she encountered some sort of mishap that removed her from service in mid-season, as the *Advocate* reported on 25 August 1910 that Thosten Thompsen of Manitowoc purchased the *Iris* for \$150 with the intent to repair and recommission her the following season on Green Bay (*Door County Advocate* 1910:1, 1911:1). Capt. Thompsen did not re-enroll the *Iris* until 10 June 1911, listing himself as sole owner and master, retaining Manitowoc as hailing port (Bureau of Navigation 1911).

Despite the increasing rarity of commercial sail on the lake during this time, there is little documentation of the *Iris* during her last two seasons. The little documentation we have indicates trying times for the aging vessel as she struggled to maintain a livelihood. Capt. Thompsen sailed the *Iris* with a crew of only two (*Merchant Vessels of the United States* 1912:49). This is one less than her previous compliment of three, and significantly less than the four to five crew members that were common on vessels of *Iris*' size during the latter nineteenth century (Meverden and Jensen 2005). A vessel of *Iris*' size would have been difficult to handle in close quarters or in heavy seas with only two crew members. The aging vessel had ongoing problems with leaking, and if the pumps needed to be manned while underway, the other needed to tend the helm, leaving no opportunities to rest or get out of the weather. With dwindling cargoes and dropping freight rates the only way to keep the *Iris* profitable was to reduce operating costs, most easily done by reducing the payroll.

The *Iris* was forty-seven years old when Capt. Thompsen recommissioned her in 1913, an age to which very few schooners survived on Lake Michigan. Her last season would not be a long one. Capt. Thompsen arrived at Jackson Harbor on Washington Island early in March 1913, a familiar port to the aging *Iris*. Unable to secure a cargo, Capt. Thompsen struck a deal with a local resident to sell the *Iris* for \$5, but the buyer was unable to produce the money. With an elderly, leaky vessel and little hope for lakeshoring's future, Capt. Thompsen weighed anchor on 5 March 1913 and sailed out of Jackson Harbor. Clear of the harbor, all sails were set and the *Iris* was brought about. With as much headway as she could make, Capt. Thompsen sailed back into Jackson Harbor and ran the *Iris* hard aground (Jacob Ellefson 2005, pers. comm; Wisconsin Maritime Museum n.d.). Three days later her final enrollment was surrendered. For the official record, Capt. Thompsen reported the *Iris* foundered at Jackson Harbor, adding that all three crew aboard reached shore safely (Beesons Marine Directory 1913; Bureau of Navigation 1911; *Merchant Vessels of the United States* 1913).

The *Iris* never moved again. Anything of value was salvaged over succeeding years. Her cabin's wainscoting was removed and used to line local ice boxes, and any other useful timbers were salvaged by locals. The hulk was a local playground for island children, who fished from her decks into the 1920s, until she became too rotten to safely board (Jacob Ellefson 2005, pers. comm.). The *Iris*' ignoble disposal was unsurprising. Capt. Thompsen had a worn out, leaking vessel, and Lake Michigan's age of sail was quickly ending. Expanding rail and highway routes stole increasing amounts of cargo from lake carriers large and small. A few of the small schooners like the *James Hall* and the *Oscar Newhouse* installed gas and oil engines to prolong their usefulness, but these improvements only prolonged the death of the lakeshoring schooner (Barkhausen 1948).

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

“Iris” Shipwreck

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 7

---

**Scows and the Lakeshoring Trade**

The Great Lakes scow schooner first appeared in the mid-1820s on Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and New York’s Finger Lakes. By the 1840s, scows were common throughout the Great Lakes, and survived into the twentieth century and the last days of lake sail (Labadie and Herdendorf 2004:5; Martin 1991:4). The term “scow” refers to hull form rather than the rig type. Despite a wide range of regional variation, the scow is defined as a vessel with a flat bottom, vertical sides, and a hard chine. They more closely resembled a barge than conventional sailing craft. There was wide variation in scow construction techniques, and the term “scow” was used to describe variety of vessels. One of the clearest contemporary definitions is found in Merchant Vessels of the United States (1885):

Scows are built with flat bottoms and square bilges, but some of them have the ordinary schooner bow....The distinctive line between the scow and the regular-built schooner is, in the case of some larger vessels, quite obscure but would seem to be determined by the shape of the bilge, the scow having in all cases the angular bilge instead of the curve (futtock) bilge of the ordinary vessel.

As the above definition points out, there was occasional difficulty in distinguishing conventional craft from scows. Scow construction varied from hull to hull and included obvious features such as sheer lines, transoms, and bows, in addition to less obvious features like cross or diagonal planking and longitudinal framing. Several bow variations are visible in historic photographs (Labadie and Herdendorf 2004:8).

It is open to debate whether the scow’s development and popularity resulted from a need for vessels capable of transiting shallow waters or because their unsophisticated hull form was economical to build and maintain (Labadie and Herdendorf 2004:8; Inches and Partlow 1964:290). It is certain, however, that scows required the simplest construction techniques of any freight-carrying vessels. The great variation in construction and appearance is likely a combination of the builder’s shipbuilding skill, the type and quality of construction materials available, and available funding.

Discussion of Wisconsin’s maritime heritage is difficult without including the eastern Great Lakes of Huron, Erie, and Ontario. Many of Wisconsin’s commodities were shipped beyond Lakes Michigan and Superior to eastern Great Lakes ports such as Buffalo, New York, and Kingston, Ontario. These distant ports returned goods, supplies, and immigrants to Wisconsin, creating a diverse economic universe. Separating Wisconsin from the eastern Great Lakes frequently results in a fragmented understanding of Wisconsin’s maritime heritage as a whole. There is evidence, however, that a more localized maritime trade developed that was confined to Lake Michigan with the lake’s western shoreline at its core. This lakeshoring trade connected communities in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan in a discrete local economy, transporting cargo from one Lake Michigan port to another where it could be sold for profit. While only a fraction of Great Lakes tonnage, this trade was the lifeblood of many smaller communities, one in which the scow schooner played a vital role. Worked in no small part by immigrant Scandinavian sailors, Lake Michigan’s lakeshoring trade was an entry point for many immigrants into Great Lakes maritime commerce, not only as sailors, but also as vessel owners and masters (Hirthe and Hirthe 1986:97; Gjerset 1928:11).

A simple, yet comprehensive, definition of lakeshoring is difficult. Contemporary authors of Great Lakes maritime commerce frequently glossed over sailing vessels, devoting most of their efforts to the new steam technology that it was thought would make sail technology quickly obsolete. Defining lakeshoring today is an even greater challenge, as sail’s role changed dramatically during the nineteenth century. The beginning of the nineteenth century found a wilderness frontier populated by a handful of hardy European fur traders, but by the century’s close Lake Michigan boasted one of the busiest

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 8

**"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin**

---

shipping ports in the world (Karamanski 2000:69). Lake Michigan schooners were subject to rapidly evolving trade patterns, requiring them to be highly adaptable to shifting markets and technologies. The small lake schooner survived this entire period despite increasing pressure from larger vessels, both sail and steam. Given that these small vessels were still sailing into the twentieth century suggests they were one of the most hardy and adaptable vessel types on the lake. This adaptability required these vessels to quickly change routes and cargoes, making a simple description of their trade difficult. As more information is uncovered on this maritime subculture, particularly from archaeological sites such as the *Iris*, it will become easier to explain the scow schooner's role in lakeshoring.

Despite its survival into the twentieth century, lakeshoring was often neglected by maritime authors. These small vessels set no records for the fastest passage, or for the largest tonnage carried. They were not the products of fierce competition between wealthy or powerful men. Typically well-used vessels, they were owned and sailed by common men supporting local economies. If lost, even with all hands, they were soon forgotten. They operated alongside the more glamorous sail and steam vessels, but always in their shadows. This lack of recognition does not make the historian's job an easy one. What we know of these vessels is far from complete. Overlooked and underappreciated, much of how the lakeshorers operated is lost to us today. What little we know comes from occasional newspaper articles and the archaeological record. These bits and pieces are all we have to reconstruct the life and times of the small lakeshorers that were vital to many Wisconsin communities.

**Archaeological Significance**

Historical documentation is confused as to the *Iris*' typology. The Board of Lake Underwriters lists her as a scow schooner in 1874 (Board of Lake Underwriters 1874), while her enrollment documents at this time list her as a conventional schooner (Bureau of Navigation 1873, 1879). It was not until 1880 that the *Iris* first appeared as a scow on her enrollments, with no explanation to the change in classification. The scow classification continued on all further enrollments. Examination of the *Iris*' historic image suggests that she was a conventional schooner, and archaeological evidence support this conclusion. Due to heavy overburden, however, a complete archaeological survey of a majority of the hull was not possible.

It has been documented that some scows carried a bow and stern similar to that of conventional vessels, such as the flat-iron bow (Martin 1991). Flat floors with a tight bilge radius were also occasionally used historically to classify scows (Merchant Vessels of the United States 1885). A full excavation of the *Iris*' hull is necessary to examine these possibilities, and may provide information essential to understanding the how the *Iris* was documented as both a scow and conventional vessel, as well as provide information necessary to clarify the blurred differentiation between the two vessel types.

It is possible that the term "scow" possessed a vernacular meaning that has since been lost. This could mean the *Iris* was indeed a scow, just not by today's understanding. This question can only be answered through complete archaeological documentation of the *Iris*' site. It is highly likely that areas beneath the spoil are well-preserved and retain much mid-nineteenth century schooner construction detail.

The *Iris* is perhaps Wisconsin's most shallow and accessible nineteenth century schooner that remains *in situ*. In a protected harbor rarely subjected to heavy surf, she lies in less than four feet of water approximately 50 feet from the nearest parking lot. Situated between the Rock Island Ferry dock and the Jackson Harbor fishing museum, she is a prime, yet underappreciated resource. Most visitors to the area do not realize the weathered wood protruding from the water is even a shipwreck. The *Iris* is a prime location to educate visitors on local maritime heritage and allow non-divers to experience an historic Wisconsin shipwreck firsthand.



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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 9

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

**Registration Requirements**

The *Iris* 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 *Iris* 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, the lakeshoring schooner. Lakeshoring schooners like the *Iris* were an important link for small northeastern Wisconsin communities, connecting them economically and culturally with the wider regional markets. The *Iris* served the Great Lakes trade for 47 years, an unusually long time for any type of wooden vessel. Because of her long length of service, the *Iris* has provided significantly more historical documentation on the lakeshoring trade than any Wisconsin vessel to date, making her an invaluable resource in ongoing research into this little known maritime subculture. There are only a few archaeological examples of small lakeshoring schooners known in Wisconsin today, and the *Iris* is only the second conventional lakeshorer to be documented. Though somewhat broken up, the *Iris*' lower hull retains good archaeological integrity, especially those areas covered by dredge spoil and unavailable for documentation without excavation. It is highly likely the *Iris* is a transitional vessel between the scow and conventional schooner vessel types, and is currently the only known example of this transitional vessel type that exists today. Neither of these vessel types was built to any plans, and there was a large amount of variation in construction between hulls. No historical record of their construction exists today, making archaeological examples particularly significant. Their construction techniques and the economic rationale behind their design and operation are not fully understood. Information gathered from the *Iris* site has broadened our understanding of lakeshoring vessel construction, and holds vast potential to yield further information essential to understanding nineteenth-century maritime commerce, vessel construction, and the transition between conventional and scow schooners.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

**REFERENCES**

Andreas, A.T.

1883 *History of St. Clair County, Michigan*. Culver, Page, Foynes and Company, Chicago, IL. <  
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/micounty/>>

Barkhausen, Henry N.

1948 *Great Lakes Sailing Ships. Ships and Sailing Albums, Number 2*. Kalmbach Publishing, Milwaukee, WI.

Beeson, Harvey C.

1913 *Beeson's Inland Marine Directory*. H. C. Beeson, Detroit, MI.

Board of Lake Underwriters

1874 *Lake Vessel Register, System of Classification*. Board of Lake Underwriters, Buffalo, NY.

Bureau of Navigation

1873 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 108, Port of Detroit, Detroit Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1879 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 86 (Permanent), Port of Detroit, Detroit Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1880 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 158 (Permanent), Port of Port Huron, Huron Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1881a *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 131, Port of Port Huron, Huron Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1881b *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 157 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1883 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 16, (Permanent) Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1886a *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 95 (Permanent) Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1889 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 13, Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1893 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 5 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

"Iris" Shipwreck

Section 9 Page 2

Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

1897a *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 107, Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1898 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 52, Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1899a *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 98, Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1902 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 22 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1905 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 59 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1906 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 18 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1907 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 8 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1908 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 32 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

1911 *Iris* Certificate of Enrollment No. 83 (Permanent), Port of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Customs District, Record Group 41, U.S. National Archives, Washington DC.

Cooper, David J. and Paul P. Kriesa

1992 Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin. National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Division of Historic Preservation – Public History, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

Detroit Free Press

1867 *Detroit Free Press*. 21 December.

Door County Advocate [Sturgeon Bay]

1881 *Door County Advocate*. 22 September.

1882a *Door County Advocate*. 14 December.

1882b *Door County Advocate*. 21 December.

1891 *Door County Advocate*. 5 December.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

- 1892 *Door County Advocate*. 23 July.
- 1893a *Door County Advocate*. 11 March.
- 1893b *Door County Advocate*. 3 June.
- 1893c *Door County Advocate*. 21 October.
- 1893d *Door County Advocate*. 16 December.
- 1894a *Door County Advocate*. 9 June.
- 1894b *Door County Advocate*. 24 November.
- 1895a *Door County Advocate*. 23 March.
- 1895b *Door County Advocate*. 23 November.
- 1897a *Door County Advocate*. 13 March.
- 1897b *Door County Advocate*. 10 April.
- 1897c *Door County Advocate*. 24 April.
- 1899 *Door County Advocate*. 8 July.
- 1901 *Door County Advocate*. 18 May.
- 1903a *Door County Advocate*. 28 February.
- 1903b *Door County Advocate*. 13 June.
- 1903c *Door County Advocate*. 14 November.
- 1905a *Door County Advocate*. 4 February.
- 1905c *Door County Advocate*. 15 April.
- 1905d *Door County Advocate*. 13 May.
- 1905e *Door County Advocate*. 14 October.
- 1905f *Door County Advocate*. 2 December.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 9 Page 4

---

- 1906a *Door County Advocate*. 2 August.
- 1906b *Door County Advocate*. 22 November.
- 1907a *Door County Advocate*. 14 February.
- 1907b *Door County Advocate*. 11 July.
- 1907c *Door County Advocate*. 1 August.
- 1908a *Door County Advocate*. 23 January.
- 1908b *Door County Advocate*. 30 April.
- 1908c *Door County Advocate*. 17 September.
- 1908d *Door County Advocate*. 24 September.
- 1909 *Door County Advocate*. 12 August.
- 1910 *Door County Advocate*. 25 August.
- 1911 *Door County Advocate*. 8 June.

Gjerset, Knut

1928 *Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes: A Study in the History of American Inland Transportation*. The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Northfield, MN. Reprinted 1979 by Arno Press, New York, NY.

Hall, Henry

1880 *Report on Ship-Building Industry of the United States*. Tenth Census, Vol. 8, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

Hirthe, Walter M. and Mary K. Hirthe

1986 *Schooner Days in Door County*. Voyageur Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Inches, H.C., and Chester J. Partlow

1964 Great Lakes Driftwood Schooner-Scows. *Inland Seas* 20(4):289-294. Cleveland, OH.

Karamanski, Theodore J.

2000 *Schooner Passage: Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier*. Wayne State University Press, Detroit, MI.

Labadie, C. Patrick, and Charles E. Herdendorf

2004 Wreck of the Scow Schooner *W.R. Hannah*: An Archaeological Investigation in Lake Erie at Kelleys Island, Ohio. Great Lakes Historical Society, *Peachman Lake Erie Shipwreck Research Center Technical Report No. 2*. Vermillion,

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 5

"Iris" Shipwreck  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

OH.

Martin, Jay C.

1991 Not for Shallow Water Only: Scow Construction Along the Maumee River, 1825-1859. *Marine History Lines: Journal of the Western Lake Erie Historical Society* 10(1):2-6. Perrysburg, OH.

Merchant Vessels of the United States

1913 Unites States Printing Office, Washington, DC.

1885 United States Printing Office, Washington DC.

Meverden, Keith N. and John O. Jensen

2005 Hetty Taylor. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. Division of Historic Preservation – Public History, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

United States Genealogy Network, Inc.

2005 1850 St. Clair, MI, Census Index by Township and Village, Port Huron Village A-D.  
<<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/mi/county/stclair/1850cen/pthurvila-d.htm>>.

United States Life-Saving Service

1898 Wreck Report, Sturgeon Bay Canal Life-Saving Station, 18 September. U.S. Treasury Department, U.S. Life Saving Service. Government Printing Office, Washington DC.

Vikery, Tina

2005 Kewaunee County Genealogy and History, USGenWeb Project.  
<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~wikewaun/maritime.htm>>

Wisconsin Maritime Museum

n.d. *Iris* Historic Vessel Records. Manitowoc, WI.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

**"Iris" Shipwreck**  
Town of Washington, Door County, Wisconsin

---

**Boundary Description**

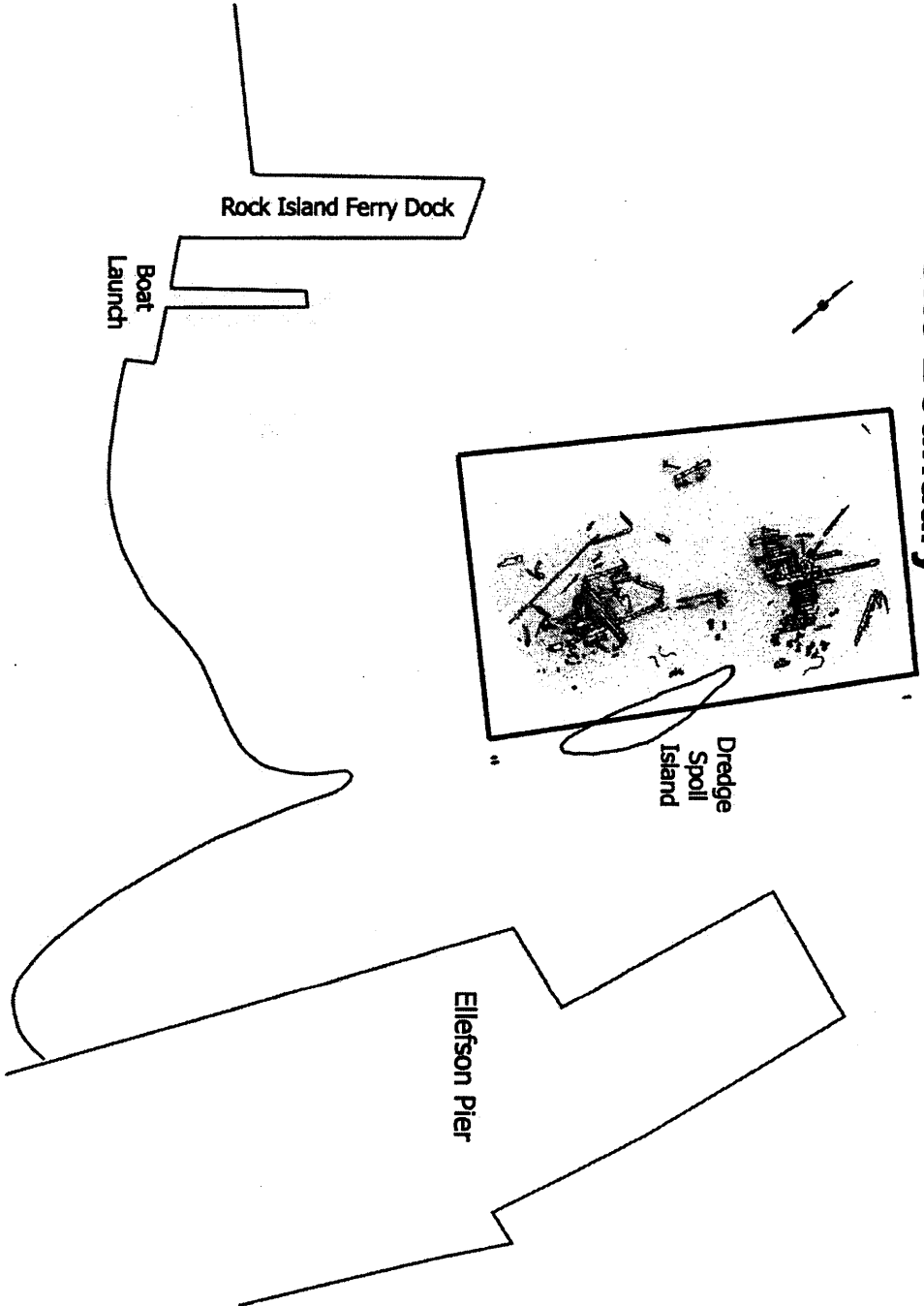
The site boundary is a rectangle whose longitudinal axis is centered on the keelson and is 100 feet in length and 60 feet in width - offset 10 feet to the wreck's starboard side (see Site Boundary illustration). The boundary is centered on the UTM coordinates 0511320 Easting, 5027222 Northing, Zone 16. As with any archaeological site, significant, but not yet located, site features may be buried outside the site boundary.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary was drawn to encompass the best known extent of the shipwreck and associated debris field, but excludes adjacent pier and wharf structures.

End of Boundary Description

# Site Boundary



"IRIS" SHIPWRECK  
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN



# Schooner Iris

June 2005

