NPS Form 10-900
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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

466

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 *Australasia* Shipwreck (Wooden Bulk Carrier)
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number	820 feet southeast of Whitefish Dunes State Park in Lake Michigan					N/A	**not for publication**
city or town	Town of Sevastopol					X	**vicinity**
state Wisconsin	**code** WI	**county** Door		**code** 029		**zip code** 54235	

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.)

Jim Draeger 5/9/13

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

Australalasia Shipwreck (Wooden Bulk Carrier)	Door County	Wisconsin
Name of Property	County and State	

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:)

Edson N. Beall — 7-3-13

for

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as 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	
		buildings
1		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 previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
TRANSPORTATION/ Water-Related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
LANDSCAPE/ Underwater

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
OTHER- Wooden bulk carrier/ freighter

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.)

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.

X 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
ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1884-1896

Significant Dates

1884

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Davidson, James

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

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

Acreage of Property 2.64 Acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	485247	4974238
2			
3			
4			

☐ 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 Tamara Thomsen and Keith Meverden
organization Wisconsin Historical Society **date** 09/25/2012
street & number 816 State Street **telephone** 608.221.5909
city or town Madison **state** WI **zip** 53705

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, Director, Bureau of Facilities & Lands				
organization	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources			**date**	09/25/2012
street & number	101 S Webster Street – LF/6			**telephone**	608.266.5782
city or town	Madison	**state**	WI	**zip code**	53703

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

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

Introduction

The remains of the *Australasia* are located approximately 800 feet southeast of the Whitefish Dunes State Park beach in Door County. At the time of her launch in 1884, she was the largest wooden vessel built on the Great Lakes. The *Australasia* is the product of master shipbuilder and successful maritime entrepreneur, Captain James Davidson, of Bay City, Michigan. Designed to tow one or more schooner barges, the *Australasia* moved immense bulk cargoes across the Great Lakes so efficiently that she successfully competed with larger, more modern steel ships at a time when wooden vessels were quickly becoming obsolete. On 17 October 1896, the *Australasia* caught fire near Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin, and was scuttled in 15 feet of water south of Cave Point in Whitefish Bay. Declared a total loss, the vessel's cargo and machinery were salvaged, but the rest of the hull was abandoned and forgotten until its recent rediscovery. Mostly buried in sand, the *Australasia* wreck site has remained lightly visited by divers and very little site disturbance has occurred. Today, visible portions of the *Australasia*'s hull retain excellent integrity, and with the majority of the hull still buried beneath the sand bottom, there are vast opportunities for further documentation and discovery on how one of the Great Lakes' greatest shipbuilders pushed the known limits of wooden vessel construction.

Site Description

The *Australasia* lies 350 yards off the Whitefish Dunes State Park beach in Door County, Wisconsin (44° 55.263' N, 087° 11.205' W). The lower hull lies on a sand bottom in 20 feet of water on a heading of 345 degrees. It is probable that the entire lower hull is intact beneath the lakebed, but only the ends of the vessel visibly protrude from the sand bottom. Due to its shallow nature and proximity to shore, the *Australasia* site is subject to longshore sand transport. Significantly more hull structure was visible during the 2012 archaeological survey than during reconnaissance dives conducted in the fall of 2009. Wreck site components that are recently exposed are readily identified by a notable absence of aquatic mussels and algae growth, whereas wreck components that have been exposed for longer periods of time are heavily covered with mussels and algae. Additionally, gill and trawl nets are entangled on the wreck in various locations, along with several large tangles of stainless steel downrigger cable.

No evidence of the coal cargo is extant on site. It is possible that remnants of the cargo remain buried beneath the sand, but much of the cargo was commercially salvaged or washed ashore in the years following the vessel's abandonment. Even today, it is not uncommon to find coal intermixed with the sand on the State Park beach.

A Phase II archaeological survey was conducted over 21-27 June 2012 to identify and record in plan view the overall underwater site while recording wreckage details for archaeological interpretation. Due to poor visibility at the time of the survey and the great distance between the bow and stern sections, two separate, temporary baselines were installed over either hull section to which all hull measurements were referenced. The two baselines were then referenced to one another in order to

place each hull section on the overall site plan with proper placement and orientation.

Just over 40 feet of the vessel's bow is exposed from the stem aft. The bow section possesses the greatest relief of all the site's features, as the stem rises to within 5 feet of the water's surface. A little over one foot of sand had vacated the bow section prior to the archaeological survey, which exposed the myriad of pipes, cables, and burned or melted ship parts lying within the hull structure.

Aft of the stem, several deck stanchions remain intact and rise to varying heights, the tallest of which rises 4.0 feet above the keelson. The forward deck stanchions are variably spaced at between 3.75 feet and 4.4 feet between stanchions. The deck stanchions are constructed from two vertical timbers that are each 0.7 feet square and are fastened to one another fore and aft. The stanchions are fastened between two longitudinal stringers that are each 0.4 feet wi de, and wooden chocks fill the space between the stringers and the stanchions.

On the bow section, the outer hull planks are 0.3 feet thick but vary in width between 0.55 and 0.65 feet. The bow planking was protected by iron sheathing that consists of plates one quarter inch thick that are fastened to the outer hull to just above the waterline. The bow is double framed, with each frame futtock measuring 1.0 foot molded by 0. 5 feet sided. Ceiling planks vary in width between 0.75 and 1.0 feet wide and 0.35 feet thick. All hull components, with the exception of the sheathing, are fastened together with iron bolts that pass through all hull timbers and fastened on either end with roves. A large amount of melted brass is dispersed throughout the bow structure.

Approximately 75 feet of the stern is exposed from the sternpost forward, with portions of both the port and starboard sides visible. To port, the hull side is extant to nearly the weather deck, but has broken at the turn of the bilge and fallen outward. The starboard side remains attached and upright, but is burned away to approximately the waterline. None of the keelson assembly is visible on the stern section, and only the shaft log, main bearing, and engine mounts protrude from the lakebed. The vessel's propulsion machinery was thoroughly salvaged, including the engine, thrust bearing, propeller shaft and wheel, pumps, condensers, and associated plumbing of the engine room. The machinery spaces are now filled with sand and various parts including small pipes, fittings, and fasteners that fell loose as the surrounding wood was burned away. The former location of the boiler room is readily identified by sections of iron plate that lined the boiler room and protected the hull from the heat of the boilers. Forward of the boiler area, very little of the hull is visible with the exception of a very small section of the starboard side and a few feet of the port side deck shelf.

Both the sternpost and the inner sternpost are extant below where the propeller shaft formerly passed through them, and both timbers are 1.6 feet molded. A lead packing is extant between the sternpost and inner sternpost. The bottom half of the shaft log is extant forward of the inner sternpost and is 5.9 feet

long and 1.9 feet wide. The shaft log was constructed from two horizontal timbers, an upper and lower, that were fastened together. The upper timber was removed from the lower half, but it remains within the hull and lies next to lower half of the shaft log on the port side. The shaft log was lined with a bronze bearing, and fragments of bearing remain in and around the shaft log. The lower half of the shaft log is bolted to the timber below it with iron bolts and clinch rings on either side of the shaft bearing. The main bearing is extant forward of the shaft long and is 1.0 foot in length and secured to the hull by four threaded bolts that are each 1-3/8 inches in diameter and fastened with octagonal nuts that are 2.5 inches between lands. The upper half of the main bearing was unbolted by salvors in order to remove the propeller shaft, and neither the upper half of the bearing nor the propeller shaft is extant. Measured from the main bearing, the propeller shaft was 0.9 feet in diameter.

Forward of main bearing, the engine mounts protrude from the bottom. The engine and thrust bearing was simply unbolted and removed by salvors, as the bolt threads are intact and exhibit no evidence of cutting. Forward of the engine mounting bolts is evidence of the boiler room. Although the boilers were salvaged, the boiler mounts remain attached to a 3/16-inch thick iron plate that lined the floor of the boiler room. A second, larger piece of twisted iron plate lies forward of the floor plate. This second iron plate is ¼-inch thick and has a 90 degree edge riveted to its perimeter that rises 0.8 feet above the steel plate. This plate is likely the remains of an iron bulkhead or overhead from the boiler room that protected the wooden hull from the boilers' heat and flame.

Few frames are intact on either side of the shaft log, but several outer hull planks are extant to where they once fitted into the sternpost rabbet. These outer hull planks are 0.3 feet thick and vary in width between 0.6 and 0.85 feet wide. Frames are more intact further forward, and frames on the port side hull sections are double frames constructed of futtocks that are 0.8 feet molded by 0.45 feet sided with a space of 1.0 foot between frames sets.

The hull sides were 2.0 feet thick and were a layered construction utilizing traditional wooden hull construction techniques reinforced with iron hogging arches and an iron basket truss. Three iron hogging trusses are visible on the port side hull section - two are fastened inside the outer hull planks and the third is fasted to the inside of the ceiling planks. From the outside in, the layered hull construction consists of outer hull planks, iron hogging truss, iron basket truss, frames, ceiling planks, and another iron hogging truss fastened to the inside of the ceiling planks. This layered construction is held together with 2.0 foot-long, 7/8-inch diameter iron bolts that pass through the entire hull and are secured both inside and out with roves. The hogging trusses are constructed from iron plate that is 0.85 feet wide by 0.06 feet thick. Individual strakes of the hogging trusses are fastened together by lap joints that overlap 1.05 feet and are riveted together. The hogging truss is then fastened to each frame futtock with two bolts, or four bolts for each frame set.

The basket truss is constructed from iron flat stock that is 0.43 feet wide by 0.04 feet thick. The basket trusses cross one another at 90 degree angles, and every crossing is fastened with one of the iron through bolts hold the hull sides together. There is a space of 5.35 feet between each individual truss of the basket, and wherever the basket truss crosses a hogging arch the two are fastened to one another with a single rivet.

In most places on the port side hull section, the inner surface of the ceiling planks have burned away to leave only a very thin remnant of the original plank. This reduction in thickness leaves a large number of iron bolts protruding several inches from the hull side.

A deck shelf protrudes vertically from the sand forward of the port side section, and is most likely the main deck shelf. The shelf is constructed from two planks 0.7 feet wide by 0.4 feet thick and edge-bolted together with ¾ inch iron bolts. Adjoining shelf planks are fastened together with hook scarphs. The shelf was supported by large hanging knees that have mostly eroded away, but were spaced at 3.4 feet on center. There are no extant fasteners for deck beams.

The starboard side section has also burned away to a large degree, but remains upright on the bottom. The fire consumed the starboard side from the top down exposing the basket trusses, which curled downward into the hull as they were heated by the fire. Ceiling planks on the starboard side also exhibit burning, but not nearly as much as on the port side. The starboard ceiling planks have, however, burned away enough to reveal the iron edge-bolts that fastened the ceiling planks together. These edge bolts are aligned vertically – one directly atop another - to create vertical lines of edge bolts that nearly touch end to end. These vertical lines of edge bolts are variably spaced at 1.75, 2.3, and 1.75 feet between. A few of the lower ceiling planks that escaped the flames are 0.6 feet wide by 0.43 feet thick. The inner hogging truss on the starboard side terminates immediately forward of the engine's main bearing.

A small section of the hull protrudes from the sand forward of the boiler room bulkhead. Sections of basket truss that are visible indicate this is a section of the starboard side hull that has fallen inward. There is no evidence of burning on the outer hull planks that are visible.

Summary Paragraph

The remains of the wooden bulk carrier *Australasia* lie in 15 to 20 feet of water off Whitefish Dunes State Park in Lake Michigan, mostly buried beneath a sand bottom. Built in 1884 by the well-known shipbuilder Captain James Davidson in West Bay City, Michigan, the 285-foot long *Australasia* was the largest wooden vessel ever built at the time of her launch. During her twelve year career, the *Australasia* carried bulk cargoes across the Great Lakes so efficiently she earned a fortune for her owners at a time when wooden vessels were quickly becoming obsolete. The *Australasia* embodies the industrial revolution on the Great Lakes, an era when maximizing profits drove technological innovations and pushed the accepted limits of wooden hulls. The *Australasia* meets the registration requirements of criterion D of the property type bulk freighter as described in the Multiple Property Documentation *Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin* (Cooper and Kriesa 1992). The Great Lakes wooden steam bulk cargo vessel *Australasia*, a work of an acknowledged master shipbuilder, has yielded important information on nineteenth-century wood bulk carrier construction. As much of the site remains buried, it holds the potential to yield significantly more information as different hull sections may be uncovered and is therefore eligible at the state level under Criterion D. The period of significance begins with the date of construction in 1884 and ends with the *Australasia's* loss in 1896.

Vessel History

The *Australasia* was launched on 17 September 1884 from the James Davidson shipyard in West Bay City, Michigan. She was the ninth hull launched from the yard, and her construction was accomplished with a crew of 150 men at a cost of $150,000. At that time, she was the largest wooden ship ever built, and her launch was accompanied by much fanfare (BGSU 2003; *British Whig* 1884; *Detroit Tribune* 1886; *Marine Record* 1884b).

Built for Captain James Corrigan of Cleveland, Ohio, the *Australasia*'s keel was laid on 1 November 1883. Her official length was 285 feet with a 40-foot beam. She carried two decks with a 22-foot depth of hold divided between a 12-foot deep lower hold and 10 feet between decks. Seven hatchways provided access to her cargo hold, which had a capacity of 3,000 net tons; this capacity allowed a cargo of 600,000 bushels of corn or 2,000,000 feet of lumber. Captain James Davidson took command of his newest vessel for her inaugural trip to Milwaukee loaded with 3,150 tons of salt - the largest cargo ever carried to that date by a Great Lakes vessel (ADGNFPL 2005; *British Whig* 1884; Bureau of Navigation 1891).

Due to the flexibility of wooden hulls, it was impossible to construct a seaworthy hull of the *Australasia*'s size from wood alone. In order to attain the longitudinal strength necessary for a vessel of her size, a skeleton of iron - hidden within the vessel's planking - was employed. The *Australasia*'s iron reinforcements were described in the local newsprint:

> A belt or girt of iron ten inches wide extends from stem to stern on the outside near the top of frames, and on the inside is another band of the same dimensions. To this the outside cord is thoroughly riveted. The latter are riveted straps five inches wide and half an inch thick, which take a diagonal course to the turn of the bilge, where they take hold of the long floor timbers. These diagonal straps commence at every opening of the frame cross twice, and are firmly riveted at each crossing (*British Whig* 1884; *The Evening Press* 1884).

The *Australasia* was powered by the largest engine on the lakes - a fore-and-aft compound engine with a 30-inch high-pressure cylinder, 54-inch low pressure cylinder, and a 45-inch stroke. The engine was powered by two Otis steel boilers that measured 8 feet tall and 27 feet long that were fastened to the lower deck. An 11-inch propeller shaft turned a propeller that was 12.5 feet in diameter and had a 14-foot pitch (*British Whig* 1884). The vessel's ground tackle was handled by an improved bead plate steam windlass and capstan built by the American Ship Windlass Company of Providence, Rhode Island. Additionally, a second steam windlass and capstan were installed at the vessel's stern, an innovation that was new to lake steamers. This windlass was described as capable of "doing the work of twenty men in heaving around the docks". The windlasses also had automatic lubricators, also an innovation for lake steamers (*Marine Record* 1884a; 1884b). The pilothouse, captain's quarters, and officers' quarters were located forward. The crew's quarters were between decks aft, and the engineers' and steward's quarters were aft. All accommodations were "large and commodious, conveniently arranged and handsomely furnished" (*British Whig* 1884).

The *Australasia*'s salt record on her maiden trip was the first of several records set during her first season. At Duluth, she broke the record for wheat that was previously held by the steamer *Adams* at 74,040 bushels. After unloading 1,500 tons of coal at South Duluth on 27 October 1884, she loaded 80,000 bushels of wheat to set the new record before departing for the lower lakes (*Marine Record* 1884c).

Like other Davidson steamers, the *Australasia* generally towed a large wooden schooner barge as a consort, which gave the wooden vessels a competitive edge over the larger steel bulk carriers that were appearing on the Great Lakes. Working in tandem, a wooden steamer towing a consort could carry between 7,500 and 8,000 tons - significantly more cargo than the larger steel bulk carriers, but without a significant increase in operating costs. Continuing advances in boiler and engine technology gave the bulk carriers enough power to efficiently tow one or more consorts, effectively doubling or tripling the amount of cargo per trip (Devendorf 1995). The consort system also had an advantage in initial construction costs. The cost of constructing a wooden steamer and consort was 50 - 70% of the cost of constructing a single steel vessel with a cargo capacity comparable to the two wooden vessels (Jensen

1994; Oldham 1897). The consort system did have one significant drawback, however. The ability to safely maneuver two vessels connected by a single tow line often proved challenging— and sometimes impossible (Jensen 1994; Oldham 1897). It was not uncommon to lose a consort in a storm.

On 29 May 1885, the *Australasia* took in tow the newly launched schooner *Homer D. Alverson* at Port Huron, Michigan. The 195-foot *Alverson* carried 50,200 bushels of wheat for her maiden voyage. The pair proceeded downbound and at 5:00 PM, as they approached Southeast Bend on the St. Clair River, the *Alverson* was struck on her starboard side by the steamer *A. L Hopkins*. The *Alverson*'s cathead was carried away, her main and monkey rails were split, two tinker-heads were twisted off; and her large stock anchor was badly wrenched with one of the flukes nearly torn off. The weather was clear when the accident occurred, and although the consort had limited maneuverability in the channel it was determined that the *A. L. Hopkins* was at fault. The *Australasia* and *Alverson* continued on their way, and repairs were made at Buffalo (Bureau of Navigation 1886; 1911; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1885).

In April 1885, James Corrigan contracted with Northwestern Fuel Company to carry 75,000 tons of coal from Buffalo, Erie, and Ashtabula to Lake Superior ports - primarily Duluth. For these trips the *Australasia* towed two consorts, the schooner *David Vance* and the *Homer D. Alverson*. Together, the trio would load up to 180,000 bushels of wheat at Duluth for each downbound trip (ADGNFPL 2005; *Marine Record* 1885).

The *Alverson* continued as the *Australasia*'s regular consort for the 1886 season. In mid-June 1886, while in the Chicago River, the *Australasia* damaged her propeller by shearing off all but one of the blades. The captain telegraphed the Union Dry Dock Company in Buffalo to arrange for an immediate repair upon arrival at that city, and amazingly, the *Australasia* limped all the way back to Buffalo with the *Alverson* in tow. A new propeller was installed at Buffalo, and the two vessels loaded coal before departing for Lake Superior (*Marine Record* 1886). In September 1886, the owners of the *Homer D. Alverson* sold the year-old schooner to the Gilchrist Company of Cleveland. James Corrigan remained managing owner of the *Australasia*, but took on a partner, N.P. Huntington, in its ownership. Despite these ownership changes, the *Alverson* remained in tow of the *Australasia* through the end of the 1886 season (ADGNFPL 2005; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1886).

At the end of the 1886 season, Captain Reed departed the *Australasia* to take command of the newly built Davidson steamer *Roumania* (*Marine Record* 1887a). An unknown captain took command of the *Australasia* for the 1887 season, and bad luck seemed to accompany the change. In April that year, with early season ice persisting in the Straits, the *Australasia* was beached near Mackinaw City while attempting to avoid an ice floe (ADGNFPL 2005). Fortunately, the vessel received little damage in the grounding and was released unscathed.

On 19 May 1887, the *Australasia* and her consorts were passing the Grosse Point Lightship on Lake St. Clair when the schooner *Minnehaha*, in tow of the steamer *Hiawatha*, veered off course and struck the *Australasia* just aft of the steamer's mainmast. The collision carried away eighty-five feet of rail and bulwarks, thirty-four stanchions, and broke the covering board and some of the outer hull planks. The *Minnehaha* lost her headgear and bulwarks, and broke her stem. The *Australasia* stopped at Marine City, Michigan, to acquire oak planks before continuing on to Duluth where they made repairs. Damage to the *Australasia* was estimated at $3,000 (*Marine Record* 1887b).

On 5 September 1887, the *Australasia* departed Ashland, Wisconsin, bound for Ashtabula, Ohio, loaded with iron ore and with the 726-ton schooner *Niagara* in tow. From the time they passed Keweenaw Point at midday on 6 September until 11:00 AM on 7 September, the wind steadily increased into a ferocious northwest gale. The storm swept down Lake Superior and caught the *Australasia* and the *Niagara* along the exposed shore west of Whitefish Point. The *Niagara* was laboring heavily in the seas with her load of 1,400 tons of ore - a bit overloaded for a vessel of her size – when her towline parted ten miles from Whitefish Point. Adrift, the *Niagara*'s crew attempted to raise her canvas in order to steady the vessel but the strong wind carried the mainsail and foresail overboard. Without canvas, the *Niagara* was helpless and began wallowing in the wave troughs, rolling farther and farther over onto her starboard side until her lee rail was submerged. She slowly righted herself, but a large wave toppled her spars, which crushed her deck and bulwarks. The *Australasia*'s crew was unable to render any assistance in the heavy seas. They helplessly watched as the *Niagara* broke up and Captain Clements and his crew tried to chop away rigging and ready the yawl aboard the *Niagara*. The *Niagara*'s crew managed to board the small boat, but as soon as it was launched it capsized and the entire crew drowned, including Captain Clements, First Mate John McBeath, Second Mate William Quinn, Steward Thomas Prince, and crewmembers A.L. Hishler, J. Conners, John Martin, Charles Anderson, Steven McMannkins, Robert Rayne, and John Martin (who was said to have been a cousin of Captain Clements). At the time of her loss, the *Niagara* was valued at $30,000 and her cargo at $9,000. She was insured for $25,000, and was owned by Captain James Corrigan. The *Australasia* reported the *Niagara*'s loss at the Sault before continuing on to Ashtabula (*British Whig* 1887; *Marine Record* 1887c; 1887d; 1887e; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1887).

In March 1888, the *Australasia* received a No. 117 steam steerer from the Williamson Brothers Company of Philadelphia. The device cost $1,600 and was said to allow one man to guide a ship the size of the *Australasia* with "quickness and precision, and with less effort than would be required to steer a sloop yacht" (ADGNFPL 2005; McQuill; Weiss).

The 1889 season started badly for the *Australasia*. On 26 April 1889, she stranded on Gull Rock in the Apostle Islands on Lake Superior. She was pulled free by the tug *Record* from the Great Lakes Towing Company in Duluth, but her bottom sustained severe damage. Temporary repairs were made and on

8 May the tug *Mocking Bird* towed the *Australasia* to Cleveland for repairs. Following three weeks in dry dock and $11,000 in repairs, the *Australasia* returned to service and sailed without incident through the 1890 season (ADGNFPL 2005; BGSU 2003).

On 23 March 1891, all three of her spars were replaced at Toledo, Ohio, prior to entering the 1891 shipping season (ADGNFPL 2005). It was not until late 1891 that the *Australasia* was again mentioned in the newspapers.

On 31 October 1891, the *Australasia* was downbound on Lake Michigan for Escanaba, Michigan. A brisk westerly wind was blowing, and the *Australasia* kept close to the shoreline for protection from the wind. She kept a bit too close, however, and ran aground near Clay Banks, Wisconsin. Unable to free herself, she lay grounded until the following morning when she hailed assistance from a passing steamer, which happened to be another of Captain Corrigan's vessels, the *Bulgaria*. As no good deed goes unpunished, the *Bulgaria* also became grounded while trying to assist the *Australasia*. The two steamers lay helpless on the reef until the steamer *Huron City* and the tug *Spalding* were summoned to help free them. This time both steamers were pulled free, and neither vessel had sustained damage (*Door County Advocate* 1891).

It is uncertain if the 1891 grounding resulted in the dismissal of the *Australasia*'s captain, but a new Master, Captain A.H. Gains, was appointed for the 1892 season (*Detroit Free Press* 1892). The *Australasia* continued sailing without incident until 15 November 1892, when her steering gear gave out near Duluth (ADGNFPL 2005).

In 1893, the Corrigan Transit Company was organized and ownership of all Captain Corrigan's vessels was transferred to the new company, including the *Australasia* on 1 August 1893(ADGNFPL 2005). Under the new corporation, James Corrigan operated the steamers *Australasia, Bulgaria, Caledonia*, and *Italia*, in addition to the schooner *Northwest* during the 1894 season. Captain J. W. Morgan took command of the *Australasia* (*Marine Record* 1894; Ohio Secretary of State).

The 1894 season proved difficult for the Corrigan Transit Company. The *Australasia*, *Bulgaria*, *Northwest*, and *Tasmania* never left the pier at Cleveland during what should have been the height of the shipping season. Corrigan refused to move his vessels due to a dispute over freight rates. The *Marine Record* (1894) quoted Captain Corrigan: "I have ore contracts for those boats at 85 cents [per ton]–not 60 cents, but if other vessel owners are willing to carry the stuff at 60 cents and allow me to make 25 cents a ton of it. I am satisfied that they should do so. I have figured the thing pretty fine, however, and I am at a loss to understand how they can do it". Corrigan eventually did resolve the dispute and released his vessels, but following the slow start and less than profitable season, the *Australasia* collided with the steamer *Majestic* in the Chicago River on 1 November 1894. In the

collision the *Australasia*'s deck was shoved up, her cabin pushed over, and many strakes of outer hull planking were broken. Estimates for repair exceeded $2,000, and a lengthy investigation and ensued (*Cleveland Leader* 1894). It was not until 16 March 1896 that the Illinois Northern District Court in Chicago reached a ruling that the *Majestic* was at fault in the collision. Both vessels sustained significant damage in the accident, but since the damages had already been paid to the vessel owners, and the fact that both vessels were underwritten by the same insurance companies, the libel claim for the collision was dismissed (*Marine Record* 1896a).

Prior to the opening of the 1895 season, E. S. Ludlow, the Cleveland agent for the Buffalo Forge Company, contracted with James Corrigan to equip his four steamers *Australasia*, *Bulgaria*, *Caledonia,* and *Italia*, with their new forced draft blower system (*Marine Record* 1895a). The vessels were outfitted in early March, and Captain William Patterson took command of the *Australasia* for the 1895 season (*Marine Record* 1895b). The *Australasia*'s engine received a new crankshaft in August 1895 at the Cleveland Shipbuilding Company (*Marine Record* 1895c).

Soon after the engine repair in Cleveland, Captain J. Dunn, formerly of the Menominee Transit Company, relived Captain Patterson of command of the *Australasia* (*Marine Record* 1895c). Captain Patterson's relief of duty resulted from an incident in mid-July with a U.S. Revenue Cutter that happened to have the U.S. Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont aboard at the time of the incident. As the *Australasia* and the Revenue Cutter were meeting in a narrow channel on Lake Erie, Captain Patterson failed to return passing signals with the Revenue Cutter and was observed to operate the *Australasia* too fast through narrow channels, ignoring navigation regulations and impeding the rights of other vessels (*Marine Record* 1895d).

It is uncertain how long Captain Dunn was in command of the *Australasia*, as newspaper reports indicated that in October 1895 Captain Robert Pringle was now the *Australasia*'s Master. By the end of October, however, Captain Pringle resigned to take command of the steamer *P. P. Pratt*. His father, Captain John Pringle, took command of the *Australasia* (*Oswego Daily Times* 1895).

Captain Robert Pringle returned to the *Australasia* for the 1896 season. On the night of 22 June 1896, while in the Canadian canal at Sault Ste. Marie, the *Australasia* was down bound with a load of ore when she was struck by the *Helvetia*, who was up bound and light. The collision tore a hole twelve feet long by four feet wide in the *Australasia*'s side, stove in her bulwarks, and tore away half her bridge (*Oswego Daily Times* 1896a).

Early on the morning of 17 October 1896, the *Australasia* passed through the Straits of Mackinac on her way from Cleveland to Milwaukee with 2,200 tons of soft coal. After clearing the Manitou Islands, she headed across the lake to seek shelter along Wisconsin's shoreline from a strong northwest wind.

The steamer was running alone and not towing a consort (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b).

At 6:00 PM that evening, the *Australasia*'s crew spotted the Wisconsin shoreline near Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin. The vessel, in turn, was spotted by the lookout at the Baileys Harbor Life Saving Station, including the flames that were coming from the vessel. The lifesavers quickly launched their boat, raised canvas, and began pursuit of the burning vessel. Aboard the *Australasia*, a portion of the crew was sitting down for dinner when the fire was discovered. The fire alarm was sounded, but only one fire hose was deployed and, according to one of the crewmen, there was a rather long delay before that fire hose was used to begin dousing the flames. The half-hearted effort to extinguish the fire allowed the flames to climb up the bulkhead that separated the cargo hold from the engineering spaces, and the flames eventually made their way forward to the Texas deck and down into the coal bunkers (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Milwaukee Journal* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1896). The engineer threw the engine throttle wide open, and the fireman filled the furnaces of the two boilers with coal in hopes of holding a good head of steam as long as possible. It was not long, however, before the steam and heat from the flames made the fire hold uninhabitable and the boiler furnaces had to be abandoned (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Milwaukee Journal* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b).

Captain Pringle steered the burning vessel for shore in an attempt to beach her, and the *Australasia* soon struck bottom south of Jacksonport near Cave Point. The seventeen men aboard the vessel gathered forward and prepared to abandoned ship. Before giving the order to abandon ship, however, Captain Pringle ordered the crew to bore holes through the forward hull to fill the vessel with water, causing it to settle deeper into the water and potentially save the bulk of the cargo. The crew then lowered the jollyboat and took whatever they had time to save, including the turkey that had been prepared for dinner. The captain prohibited the crew from taking any baggage ashore, although several of the men managed to save their belongings by smuggling it aboard the jollyboat. The ship was finally abandoned about 8:00 PM, and the crew rowed to Jacksonport where a local farmer had started a fire on the beach to receive the shipwrecked sailors (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b). When the shipwrecked sailors landed their jollyboat at Jacksonport, they were greeted with food and spirits from the local farmers. Several of the men drank until they were "three sheets to the wind" while watching their steamer ablaze in the distance (*Door County Advocate* 1896a).

While the crew was abandoning the *Australasia*, Captain James Tufts was summoned from Sturgeon Bay via telephone, and he and his tug, *John Leathem,* arrived on the scene around 10:30 PM. When the *John Leathem* arrived, Captain Pringle and the mate rowed out from Jacksonport to meet the tug. The *John Leathem* arrived at the *Australasia* four miles off Jacksonport with no one aboard. The *John Leathem*'s crew boarded the abandoned steamer and promptly found the galley with the dinner table

still set. Not wanting good food to go to waste, they ate a quick meal before inspecting the fire damage. The fire extended aft of the stem to the mizzenmast, consuming much of the forward deck and part of the aft cabin. The foremast had toppled overboard. The tug's crew then inspected the boilers to find they still held a large amount of pressure, and so determined the best action was to pull away from the burning wreck in case of explosion (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Milwaukee Journal* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b).

Around midnight, a line was fastened to the *Australasia* in order to tow her towards the Sturgeon Bay Canal. With her rudder hard to port the vessel did not tow well, and the tow line burned through or broke eight times. With the vessel still burning, a line of water was directed at the steamer from the tug to keep the fire away from the tow line. Around 1:00 AM, the steamer's mizzenmast fell and carried the two smokestacks with it. The mainmast fell between 5:00 and 6:00 AM (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Milwaukee Journal* 1896a; *Oswego Daily Times* 1896b).

Captain James Tufts feared the *Australasia* would founder before they could reach port, so he instead dragged the hulk onto the beach south of Cave Point around 9:00 AM on 18 October. The *Australasia* was left in fifteen feet of water an eighth mile from shore, and two miles below the north point of Whitefish Bay, laying on a northwest by west heading (*Door County Advocate* 1896a; *Marine Review* 1896b).

After abandoning the recovery effort, the *John Leathem* returned to Jacksonport to pick up the *Australasia*'s crew and take them to Sturgeon Bay. Several of the men were so drunk that a fistfight broke out on the tug during the trip, and a second fight broke out on the wharf in Sturgeon Bay. On Monday, 19 October 1896, the men were taken to Escanaba where they transferred to another vessel bound for Cleveland (*Door County Advocate* 1896a).

The *Australasia* had an A1½ insurance rating and was valued at $85,000 at the time of her loss. She was fully insured by the Chicago agency of C. A. McDonald & Co., who represented the Sea Marine Reliance and Chicago insurance company. The same company also carried insurance on the coal cargo (*Door County Advocate* 1896a).

After delivering the inebriated crew to Sturgeon Bay, the tug *Wright* joined the *John Leathem* and pair returned to the *Australasia* and were finally able to extinguish the fire the afternoon of 18 October. Her sides had burned down to the water, but her steel arches stuck out of the water about five feet amidships. Her boilers had toppled to starboard and her stacks lay crossways of each other. Nothing but the stem stuck out of the water forward, and only the rudderpost and steering quadrant stood aft. On Tuesday, 20 October 1896, Captain C. H. Sinclair took pictures of the wreck for the C. A.

McDonald agency with a Kodak camera obtained especially for the purpose. The *Australasia* was determined to be a total loss (*Door County Advocate* 1896a).

Leathem & Smith Towing & Wrecking Company, owners of the tug *John Leathem*, held a claim on the *Australasia* for assistance rendered, were placed in charge of salvage operations by the underwriters, and wreck and her cargo was eventually sold to them (*Door County Advocate* 1896a). Divers were immediately hired from Sault Ste. Marie, and the salvage work commenced. The smokestacks were recovered first, followed by the engine head, anchors, chains and other ironwork. Most of the coal cargo was sucked from the wreckage with a steam pump and hauled away on barges, but despite this effort, an estimated 140 tons of coal washed ashore during the winter months and was collected by the local farmers. The following spring, the wrecking company repossessed from the farmers what hadn't been used to heat their homes. During the summer if 1897, the boilers and any other remaining equipment were removed. All salvage was completed by September of 1897 (*Buffalo Morning Express* 1896; *Door County Advocate* 1896a; 1896b; 1896c; 1896d; 1896e; 1896f; 1897a; 1897b; 1897c; 1897d; 1897e; 1897f; 1897g; 1897h; 1905; 1906 1907; *Milwaukee Journal* 1896a; 1896b; 1896c).

Significance

Though burned to the waterline, the *Australasia's* bilge is entirely intact, as well as a large section of the hull sides. The architecture appears characteristic of late wooden bulk carriers. Built by Master shipwright James Davidson in 1884, the *Australasia* was the largest wooden steamer built on the Lakes, and embodied some of the most advanced wooden vessel architecture produced in the United States during that time period. Davidson's career straddled the transformation from wooden to steel hull construction on the Lakes, but Davidson continued to push the length limits of wooden ship construction at a time when many of his contemporaries switched to building iron and steel hulled vessels. Davidson refined methods and techniques unique in pushing the engineering window, allowing for the lengthening of wooden vessels. Much of what we know of Davidson's work we have learned from the archaeological record that exists on the lakebed today. Few ship plans and records from James Davidson's shipyard have survived making this site particularly significant. The techniques employed in the *Australasia*'s construction and the economic rationale behind their design and operation are not fully understood today. Archaeological data from the *Australasia*, combined with data from three similar Davidson vessels wrecked in Wisconsin waters, the *Appomattox*, *Pretoria* and *Frank O'Connor*, have the potential to yield vast amounts of information on the zenith of wooden bulk carrier construction. The wreck site, only recently discovered by jet skiers off Whitefish Dunes State Park, remains lightly visited by divers and many items that sank with the ship remain in place, undisturbed on the lakebed. The *Australasia* is eligible at the state level under Criterion D, as her surviving remains have the potential to provide archaeological insights into the final phase of wooden bulk carrier construction on the Great Lakes.

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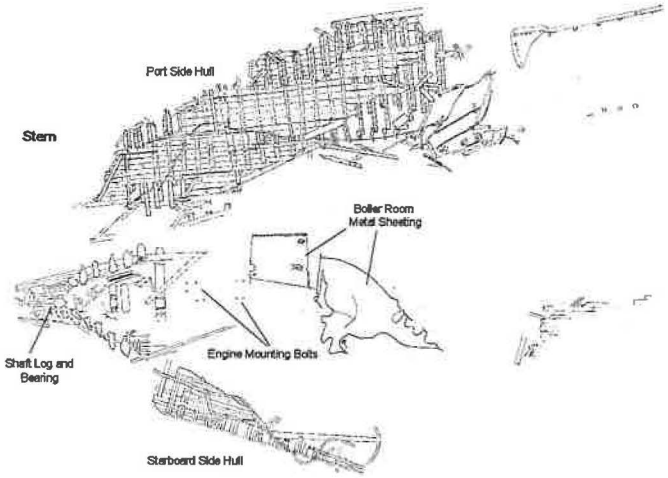
Verbal Boundary Description:
The boundary for the *Australasia* site is marked by a circle with a radius of 192 feet, centered on the UTM coordinates 485247.36 Easting, 4974238.12 Northing, Zone 16.

Boundary Justification:
This site boundary was chosen to encompass the wreck site and associated debris field.

Photo #1 of 1
Australasia Shipwreck (Wooden Bulk Carrier)
Door County, Wisconsin
Photographer Tamara Thomsen
September 2009
Bow section looking forward

Australasia Shipwreck (Wooden Bulk Carrier)

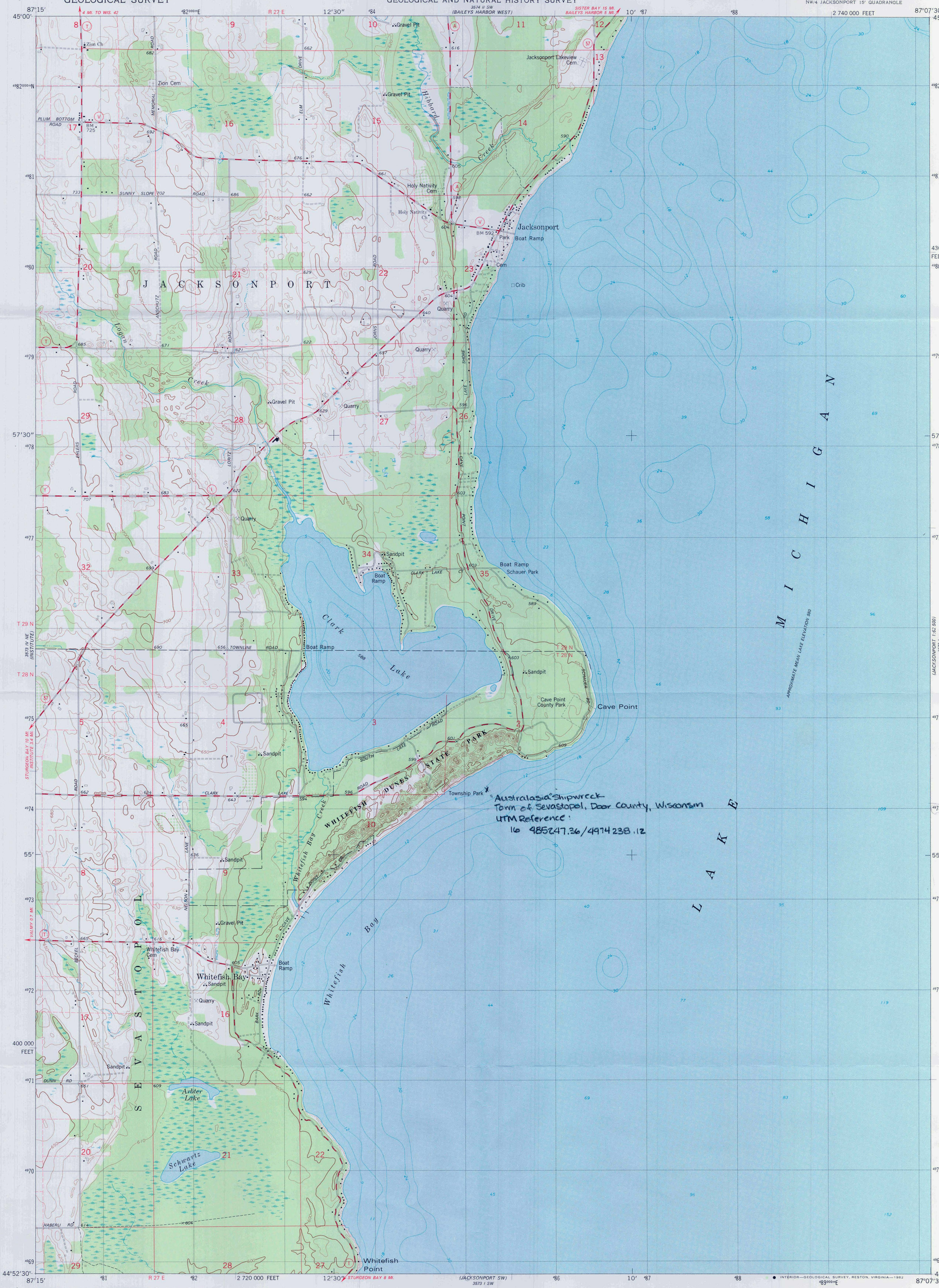
Sevastopol, Door County, Wisconsin



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WISCONSIN
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

JACKSONPORT QUADRANGLE
WISCONSIN–DOOR CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 JACKSONPORT 15' QUADRANGLE



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with the Wisconsin Division of Highways and Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1954. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1978
Field checked 1980. Map edited 1982

Selected hydrographic data in Lake Michigan compiled from NOS chart 14910 (1979). This information is not intended for navigational purposes. Hydrography in Clark Lake compiled from information furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Wisconsin coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 16
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 4 meters north and 5 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

MN GN
2° 36 MILS
0°08' 2 MILS
UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000
1 ½ 0 1 MILE
1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 .5 0 1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET–DATUM IS LOW WATER 576.8 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
AND WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WISCONSIN
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

JACKSONPORT, WIS.
NW/4 JACKSONPORT 15' QUADRANGLE
N4452.5–W8707.5/7.5

1982

DMA 3573 I NW–SERIES V861

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: AUSTRALASIA (wooden bulk carrier) Shipwreck

MULTIPLE NAME: Great Lakes Shipwreck Sites of Wisconsin MPS

STATE & COUNTY: WISCONSIN, Door

DATE RECEIVED: 5/17/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/03/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000466

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT 7.3.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RECEIVED 2280
MAY 17 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Daina Penkiunas

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 9th day of May 2013, for nomination of the *Australasia* Shipwreck (Wooden Bulk Carrier) to the National Register of Historic Places:

1 Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form

____ Multiple Property Nomination form

1 CD with electronic images

1 Photograph(s)

1 Original USGS/NOAA map(s)

1 Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)

____ Piece(s) of correspondence

____ Other ____

COMMENTS:

____ Please insure that this nomination is reviewed

____ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67

____ The enclosed owner objection(s) do ____ do not ____ constitute a majority of property owners.

____ Other: ____