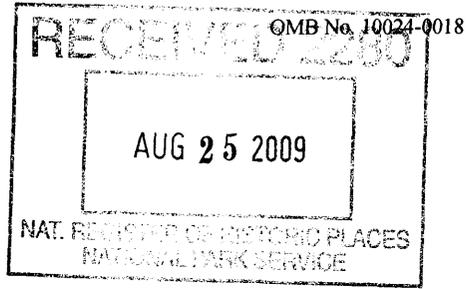


820



**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

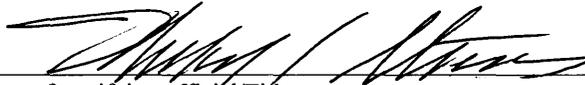
historic name *Wisconsin Shipwreck*
other names/site number KN-0255

2. Location

street & number	6 miles Southeast of Kenosha, Wisconsin, in Lake Michigan	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Kenosha	X	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI county Kenosha	code 059	zip code 53140

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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


Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date 8/3/09

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 _____

Wisconsin Shipwreck

Kenosha 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 H. Beall

10.7.09

bar

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

1

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

total

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

Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

TRANSPORTATION/ Water-Related

Current Functions

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Iron-hulled Propeller

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.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHAEOLOGY/ HISTORIC, NON-ABORIGINAL
 MARITIME HISTORY
 COMMERCE
 ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1881-1929

Significant Dates

1881
1909

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Kirby, Frank
Detroit Dry Dock Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Wisconsin Shipwreck
Name of Property

Kenosha County
County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name/title	Steven Miller, Bureau Director, Facilities & Lands	date	02/01/09
organization	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	telephone	608.266.5782
street & number	101 S. Webster Street – LF/6	zip code	53703
city or town	Madison	state	WI

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

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Summary Paragraph

Six miles southeast of Kenosha, Wisconsin, the 204-foot iron package steamer *Wisconsin* lies in 125 feet of water. Built in 1881 at the Detroit Dry Dock Company in Wyandotte, Michigan, the wreck of the *Wisconsin* is one of only a handful of iron steamers that lie in Wisconsin waters. The *Wisconsin* foundered due to an unknown leak during a violent storm in October 1929, and today her lower hull lies upright and mostly intact on the lakebed. The *Wisconsin* allows historians, archaeologists, and divers the rare opportunity to examine early metal ship construction on the Great Lakes, early examples of modern ship design such as double hulls, and a movable water ballast system. In addition to her unique construction features, the *Wisconsin* represents a vessel type that has little representation in Wisconsin's collection of well-preserved shipwrecks – the package steamer. Designed to run regular year-round scheduled routes between Lake Michigan cities, the *Wisconsin* sank with a cargo that represents a cross section of the everyday goods used in the early twentieth-century life that remains well-preserved in her intact hold.

Site Description

The *Wisconsin* lies on a heading of 330 degrees in 125 feet of water six miles southeast of Kenosha, Kenosha County, Wisconsin. The *Wisconsin* site was documented by Wisconsin Historical Society archaeologists and volunteers over two weeks in 2007. The *Wisconsin* lies upright on the lakebed with its lower hull almost completely intact with only the superstructure not extant. Overall, the site exhibits an excellent level of preservation of not only the hull and ship's machinery, but also of its cargo of automobiles and sundries that remains somewhat disheveled in the cargo holds. Additionally, a large debris field of the ship's equipment and structure lies widely scattered on the lakebed surrounding the hull.

As the *Wisconsin* sank stern first, her bow rose high into the air and her pilot house and cabins were blown off by the building air pressure as she descended. Today, the *Wisconsin*'s gunwale lies at a depth of approximately 104 feet of water, with her higher bow structure rising to a depth of 90 feet. The average depth of the lakebed around the hull is 125 feet and consists of a heavy layer of silt covering a clay bottom. The bottom temperature rarely exceeds 42 degrees Fahrenheit, and heavy currents occasionally sweep the area.

The port anchor chain is readily visible extending from the port hawse pipe, bending around the stem, and stretched taught as it extends off to the northeast where the anchor is deeply embedded in the lakebed. The anchor was deployed with the aid of a davit that is fastened at the forepeak and is capable of swinging to port or starboard in order to deploy either anchor. The davit now hangs over the port side hawse pipe with a length of chain and possibly a block hanging from the davit – the object is now a heavily encrusted with a mass of zebra mussels that completely obliterates whatever they are covering.

For the archaeological survey, divers installed a temporary measured baseline along the vessel's centerline that began at the inside of the stem and extended to the transom. All hull measurements were referenced to this baseline. The vessel had a raised forecastle deck that extended 40.0 feet aft of the stem and had an overhead height of 7.6 feet. The forecastle deck beams were fashioned from angle iron and spaced at an average of 5.5 feet with wooden planks riveted to the deck beams; most of the forecastle deck planks are no longer extant. A

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Continuation Sheet

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

steam-powered windlass is located on the centerline of the forecastle deck at 11.25 feet on the baseline. The capstan has a drive shaft .35 feet in diameter that extends to a steam engine on the weather deck directly beneath the windlass.

The steering engine room is located on the main deck beneath the forecastle deck, aft of the windlass within a small compartment on the vessel's centerline. The steering chain runs around a wildcat on the steering engine, up to a pulley fastened to the underside of the weather deck, and then outboard to a second pulley fastened to the underside of the weather deck located 7.5 feet on either side of the vessel's centerline. From this pulley the chains run towards the stern and passes through the forecastle bulkhead just beneath the weather deck. As the chains exit the bulkhead, each chain enters a wooden trough that is also fastened to the underside of the weather deck, and within this trough the steering chains are spliced to a large wire rope that ran the entire length of the ship to the steering quadrant at the stern. Both of the steering cables have parted near the end of the wooden troughs.

The weather deck has largely collapsed between the forecastle and amidships. Most of the weather deck beams remain attached to the outer hull but have fallen onto the main deck in many places. At approximately amidships, the weather deck becomes more intact as it nears the stern, and is completely intact above all of the engineering spaces. Where the weather deck has collapsed it exposes a gantry crane that penetrates the main deck and was used to move cargo between deck levels. The crane is located on the vessel's centerline between 80.0 and 95.0 feet on the baseline. Just aft of the crane, the radiator of a small tractor, apparently used to move cargo around the decks, protrudes from beneath the collapsed weather deck. One of the bridge wing railings lies on the collapsed weather deck near the gantry crane.

The weather deck beams are fashioned from vertical iron U-channels whose orientation varies somewhat with their location on the hull. Deck beams in the forecastle area are fastened with the open end of the channel facing the bow, while the weather deck beams aft of the forecastle deck are fastened with their open ends facing the stern. All of the deck beams are of the same dimension, .6 feet in height and .2 feet in width with a space of 2.5 feet between frames.

Commercial salvage of the ship's equipment and cargo occurred for a brief period following the vessel's loss, and recreational salvage of the site began in the 1960s and continued on a large scale until the late 1980s. A small amount of illegal looting is still occurring on the site, but the vast majority of visitors to the site are respectful of the site and looting laws. Today, the effects of both the commercial and recreational salvage are readily apparent. During the commercial salvage operations in the 1930s a large hole was dynamited into the starboard side of the forward cargo hold between the forepeak and the first bulkhead to gain easy access to the cargo. This hole, 9 feet tall by 13 feet wide, allows visitors unrestricted access to much of the vessel's cargo, and has contributed to divers removing and displacing much of the cargo that is stacked in the lower hold. Despite much looting, a vast amount of cargo remains in the hold for visitors to examine. Through the blast hole, the entire lower cargo hold is easily accessible from the forepeak to the coal bunker's forward bulkhead. The inside of the hull in this area is very well-preserved, with much of the area retaining its original white paint. The inside of the outer hull is not planked or obscured in any manner in the lower hold, allowing ready examination of the outer hull construction.

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

The outer hull is constructed of overlapping longitudinal iron strakes that are riveted together along their overlap. The strakes are not overlapped in clinker fashion, but rather alternate with one stake on the outside, the next on the inside, and the next after that again on the outside. Two rows of rivets fasten the overlap of the strakes. The two rows of rivets are staggered to produce an offset pattern. The rivets are spaced at 3.5 inches on center with 2.5 inches between the rows. The rivet heads that fasten the strakes together are not visible from outside the hull as their heads fit flush to the strakes and are covered by a light layer of corrosion and mussels. The peened ends of the rivets are easily discernable inside the hull, however, and have a diameter of 1.25 inches. The hull strakes are 3.5 feet wide by .5 inches thick and overlap adjacent strakes by .45 feet. The ends of the hull strakes are butt-joined. Where the butt ends of two strakes meet an .5 inch iron backing plate is riveted to the inside of the butt joint as a reinforcement.

In the lower cargo hold the inside of the outer hull is not insulated or covered in any manner, allowing the outer hull construction techniques to be easily examined. The hull strakes are supported by both vertical frames and a horizontal brace that is fastened to the outer hull strakes 5.2 feet below the underside of the main deck. This horizontal brace is constructed from two pieces of angle iron riveted back to back to form a T-shaped piece. The angle irons are each .2 feet in width where they are riveted to the hull strakes and extend .4 feet out from the hull side. The vertical frames are also constructed from two pieces of angle iron that are riveted together to form either a U-shaped or S-shaped channel. From the horizontal brace downward the frames are riveted to produce U-shaped channel that is riveted to the hull strakes with the channel's opening facing the stern. From the horizontal brace upward the angle irons are riveted together in a reverse pattern that forms an S-shape. The frames both above and below the brace are constructed from .25 inch angle iron that is 3.25 inches wide. The frames are fastened to the hull strakes with a series of rivets down the center of each angle spaced 7.5 inches apart on center. Each frame is spaced at 1.7 feet. Where the overlapping hull strakes produce a gap between the strake and the frames (i.e. the outermost overlapping strakes when viewed from the outside), iron spacers are fastened between the hull strake and the frames. These spacers are the same width as the frames beneath which they are fastened.

Stanchions are fastened along the vessel's centerline to support the main deck. The stanchions are iron I-beams that are fastened with their openings of the beam facing fore and aft. Each stanchion is .5 feet in length along the vessel's centerline and .3 feet in width. The stanchions are spaced at 3.3 feet on center. An iron pipe, .15 feet in circumference, runs through a hole cut through the middle of the I-beams and is welded to the stanchions to provide additional structural support.

There are two non-watertight bulkheads in the lower cargo hold between the forepeak and the coal bunker. These bulkheads have a large open doorway on each side of the vessel to permit the passage of cargo, and no hatches were visible that would have sealed the doorway. These bulkheads are fastened to the outer hull via a large vertical I-beam constructed from an iron plate with two angle irons riveted to each side to form the I-beam. The bulkhead itself is constructed from an iron plate that is approximately .5 inch thick. These two bulkheads divide the forward lower cargo hold into two compartments – the forwardmost compartment is 39.7 feet in length and the aft most compartment is 30.1 feet in length. The first watertight bulkhead aft of the forepeak appears to be the coalbunker bulkhead.

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

The floor of the lower cargo hold is constructed of iron and is largely obscured by a heavy layer of silt and is strewn with a large amount of miscellaneous cargo that is all loaded on small push carts with four caster wheels. The carts are small enough to easily fit through the gangways and it appears the carts were used to move the cargo on, off, and around the vessel. Visible cargo includes bolts of cloth, stoves, radiators, radios, furniture, shoes, clear glass jars of an unknown white substance, rolls of hose, barrels of flour, and ceramic tile.

The cargo and passengers were loaded and unloaded via eight gangways that are located on the main deck level with four gangways on either side of the hull. Each gangway is eight-foot square with the forward edge of each gangway, measured to the baseline, located as follows: 74.5 feet to the first pair of gangways, 115.5 feet to the second pair, 144.5 feet to the third pair, and 190.0 feet to the aft most pair at either quarter. Both the first and second gangways are open on the port side, but all other gangways are intact and secured with their rubber waterproof gasketing intact. The second gangway on the starboard side had two portholes in it that have been removed by divers. The remaining holes are .8 feet in diameter.

Each gangway door is divided into upper and lower halves. The upper half of the gangway is a single door that is attached on top via two large hinges. To open the upper gangway, the door was swung inward and upward and fastened to the underside of the weather deck to hold it open. When closed, a heavy rubber gasket was fastened between the upper and lower halves to form a watertight seal. The lower half of the gangway door was further divided into two halves with each half attached to the hull via two hinges on each end. This allowed the two lower doors to swing inward onto the main deck. When closed, a heavy rubber gasket approximately 1 inch thick was fitted between the halves to provide a watertight seal. Once closed, the lower doors were reinforced against waves and water pressure by a large wooden strongback that was inserted on the inside of the doors. The strongback slid behind an angle iron on the forward end of the gangway doors and then slid back into a pocket on the aft side of the gangway. Once the gaskets were in place and the strongback was installed, the entire perimeter of the gangway (with the exception of the bottom) was secured with iron dogs spaced at 1 foot intervals. The dogs were tightened with a nut on a threaded bolt that extended from the hull side. According to historic images, during periods of warm, calm weather the upper half of the gangway would occasionally be left open for ventilation.

It could not be determined if the two open gangways on the port side had given way during the sinking or were removed after the sinking by salvage divers. Both of the open gangways are missing several dogs and securing nuts. The doors to the first gangway on the port side could not be located, but they may be hidden by the large amount of debris lying in the hull near this gangway. The doors to the second gangway on the port side are visible lying inside the wreck. The upper door is lying on the main deck with two missing portholes and the forward lower door is also visible on the main deck. A second iron plate is present that may be the aft lower door, but it was unable to be positively identified due to a large amount of corrosion.

The bustle, where the hull was widened by six feet (three feet on either side), is readily visible outside the hull beneath the main deck level. The hull was only widened from the main deck upwards – from just beneath the main downward, the hull remains at its original width. The bustle begins three feet below the main deck level where the outer hull begins to flare outward sharply to accommodate the wider main deck. The radius for the

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

bustle is not visible from inside the hull – viewed from inside, the outer hull strakes rise vertically to the underside of the main deck. The bustle is attached to the outside of the hull strakes and appears to simply provide a smooth transition between the wider main deck and the narrower hull below, but it apparently did provide some sort of watertight integrity due to the repairs that were needed to repair leaks in the bustle area (Elliot 1967). The bustle is protected by a heavy wood rubbing strake that is fastened to the widest part of the hull just above the bustle, outboard of the main deck.

A vertical and horizontal crack has developed in the starboard side hull just above the bustle that is causing the starboard side to collapse inward. The vertical crack is located at 86.5 feet on the baseline and extends from the gunnel downward to the horizontal crack, which is located just above the main deck level. At the starboard gunnel, the vertical crack is 2.4 feet wide and the side hull forward of the crack leans inward at more of an angle than does the side hull aft of the crack. The horizontal crack begins at 56.8 feet on the baseline and extends aft to the second gangway, where it terminates.

The height between the main deck and the underside of the weather deck is 10.0 feet. The weather deck is constructed entirely of iron, but the main deck is planked with wood. The main deck cargo hold extends somewhat farther aft than the lower cargo hold - the main deck cargo hold extends overtop the coal bunker and terminates at the boiler room bulkhead. Two large-diameter scuttles located in the main deck forward of the boiler room were used to load the bunker with coal from the main deck. The scuttles are located just inward of the number three gangways. One of the scuttle covers is not extant and coal can be seen in the bunker beneath the main deck. The boiler room bulkhead is largely intact and the boilers are somewhat visible through the bulkhead in a few locations. A passageway extends aft along either side of the boiler room on the main deck, but the passageways on both the port and starboard sides are strewn with too much cargo and debris to allow easy access to the engineering spaces and cabins farther aft.

On the main deck forward of the boiler room, four automobiles are parked abreast across the deck. The first three automobiles on the port side are parked facing the bow, but the starboard-most automobile is parked facing the stern. The bodies of the two autos closest to the port side have largely corroded away and a large section of the weather deck is beginning to collapse on top of them. The two autos on the starboard side, however, are much more intact and complete. The auto farthest to starboard still retains an intact windshield. Two more automobiles are parked forward of the row of four autos. The two autos in the forward row are parked in front of the number two and three cars from the port side, and both autos in the forward row are parked facing the stern. The autos in the forward row are difficult to access due to a collapse of the weather deck in this area.

From the boiler room aft the hull remains almost entirely intact. Access to areas beneath the weather deck from the boiler room aft is difficult without squeezing through dense tangles of debris and silt. On the weather deck, a section of a wooden cabin bulkhead lies overtop the engine room that is consistent with the superstructure passenger cabins visible in historic images. This section of bulkhead has a series of rectangular windows that are 3.1 feet in height and 1.7 feet wide with a distance of 4.45 feet between windows. The windows are open at the top, indicating the header at the top of the window was carried away with the cabin roof. The bulkhead is supported by frames that are .12 feet by .2 feet and vary in length from 4.9 feet to 6.8 feet. This bulkhead section is 44.2 feet in length and varies somewhat in width up to 13.5 feet at its widest point. It is unlikely that any of

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

the cabins were over 13 feet tall, and this suggests the bulkhead transcends two deck levels at this point. The bulkhead is planked with thin wooden strips approximately 6 inches wide. The bulwarks around the hull rise 3.0 feet above the weather deck, and the bulwarks are topped with a wooden cap rail. The passageway between the bulwarks and the cabin bulkheads was 2.2 feet.

The base of the boiler's smoke stack protrudes from the weather deck with its center located at 155.1 feet on the baseline with a diameter of 6.0 feet. The upper 25 feet of the stack has collapsed onto the deck and lies flattened on the weather deck to port of the engine. The stack is constructed of sheet iron that is just under .05 feet in thickness. The stack is horizontally seamed 8.8 feet from the top of the stack. No rivets or rolled edge is visible at the seam, which appears to be either a lap or butt joint. The top of the stack lies nearest the stern with its top edge rolled slightly outward to provide structural rigidity.

The forward edge of the compound steam engine is located at 173.5 feet on the baseline and extends to 184.8 feet on the baseline. The engine's high pressure cylinder is located on the engine's forward end and the low pressure cylinder is aft. The wooden slats that serve as insulation for the cylinders are painted white, and the valve chests on either end of the engine are painted gold. The engineering spaces surrounding the engine are accessible through hatch in the weather deck aft of the engine, but the hatch is partially obscured by the section of wooden bulkhead that lies on the deck. The engineering spaces and engineer's quarters were compartmentalized by wooden bulkheads, some of which remain intact while others have partially collapsed. The intact bulkheads still retain a coat of white paint, and some of the compartments still have electric fans and porcelain sinks attached to their bulkheads. The lower half of the engine is visible through a hatch in the main deck aft of the engine, but the area below the main deck is filled halfway to the main deck level with a deep layer of silt. Aft of the engine on the main deck level, the rudder shaft, and the steering quadrant are visible behind a wooden bulkhead; the rudder is turned hard to starboard.

The transom is located at 221.5 feet from the stem, measured on the baseline. Directly above where the rudder shaft exits the hull the transom is caved in, likely from the vessel's impact with the bottom as she sank stern first. The rudder is not extant, apparently salvaged by divers as evidenced by a 45 degree cut in the rudder shaft between the outer hull and where the rudder formerly stood. The propeller is still present, its upper blades protruding from the lakebed. To the port side of the propeller a large ventilation funnel lies on the bottom. A large debris field surrounds the vessel on the lakebed. The largest concentration of debris extends off to the southwest, carried away from the ship during the sinking by the heavy northeast wind and waves that prevailed the day the *Wisconsin* was lost. A handcart lies next to the hull beneath the number three gangway on the port side. The most dominant artifact in the debris field is one of the ship's iron lifeboats. The lifeboat is 22.9 feet in length and clinker built of iron strakes .4 feet in width. The lifeboat lies on approximately a 45 degree list with the inside of the hull filled with mud. Gentle probing indicated that much of the hull side that is buried in the lakebed has largely corroded away. Either end of the lifeboat has a floatation / storage compartment that extends 4.0 feet from either end. A section of railing lies inside the lifeboat. A lifeboat davit lies on the bottom south of the lifeboat. Other items in the southwest debris field include sections of the vessel's superstructure and many other unidentified items. Additional artifacts lay off other areas of the hull, including an engine order telegraph that lies approximately 150 feet off the starboard bow, still attached to a fragment of a deck plank.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Summary Paragraph

Located 6 miles southeast of Kenosha, Wisconsin, in Lake Michigan, the iron-hulled propeller *Wisconsin* lies upright and intact in 125 feet of water. Built in 1881 and lost in 1929, the *Wisconsin* is representative of an early iron hulled vessel, the first known with a double hull and a movable water ballast system. *Wisconsin* was constructed with an iron forefoot capable of riding up on the ice, breaking it to allow year round navigation on Lake Michigan. Much of our understanding of this vessel type and construction features, which the *Wisconsin* possesses, lies on the lakebed and comes from archaeological data recovered from wreck sites like the *Wisconsin*. The loss of the *Wisconsin* led to regulations requiring lights on all life saving devices, a safety standard that is required on all vessels to this day. The *Wisconsin* meets the registration requirements for Criteria C and 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). The *Wisconsin* has produced a wealth of archaeological knowledge on iron-hulled propeller construction and use, and it will continue to produce important archaeological data.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Summary Paragraph

Built in 1881, the iron-hulled propeller *Wisconsin* rests six miles southeast of Kenosha, Wisconsin, in Lake Michigan, upright and intact in 125 feet of water. Lost in a storm in 1929, the *Wisconsin* is representative of early iron hulled ship construction. She was the first iron vessel on the Great Lakes constructed with a double bottom and a movable water ballast system, and an iron forefoot capable of riding up on and crushing ice to allow year round navigation on Lake Michigan. During her 48 years of service, the *Wisconsin* served Lake Michigan's cross lake freight trade under many names- *Wisconsin*, *Naomi*, *E.G. Crosby*, and *Pilgrim*, before returning to the name *Wisconsin*. She also briefly served as a convalescent hospital ship named *General Robert M. O'Reilly* during WWI. Much of our understanding of this vessel type and her unique construction features lies on the lakebed and comes from archaeological data recovered from the wreck site.

Vessel History

Early in 1881, Captain Albert E. Goodrich of the Goodrich Transportation Company decided to bring his Great Lakes fleet into the modern age. After more than ten years of contracting the construction of wooden-hulled vessels in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, Captain Goodrich looked eastward to more modern shipyards capable of building with a more modern material - iron. An order was placed with Detroit Dry Dock Company in Wyandotte, Michigan, for the construction of three iron-hulled vessels. These three vessels were not only the first in the Goodrich line made of a material other than wood, but they were also the first contracted by Goodrich at a shipyard outside of Manitowoc.

The first of the iron hulls to be built was the side-wheel steamer *City of Milwaukee*. Two identical steam propellers followed shortly thereafter, the *Michigan* and *Wisconsin*. Designed by Frank E. Kirby, a graduate of New York's prestigious Cooper Union Institute, the *Michigan* and *Wisconsin* were innovative vessels designed for year-round service on Lake Michigan that were to be constructed at a cost of \$159,212 each, (Cleveland Herald 1881b; Leake 1912; Olson 1963). The innovative features incorporated into the *Michigan* and *Wisconsin* included a reinforced bow with a rounded forefoot that allowed the hull to ride up on, and break through, the heavy ice that often accompanied the cold Lake Michigan winters, an innovative double bottom for a movable water ballast system that could be used to trim the vessel, and a weather deck that was constructed entirely of iron (Cleveland Herald 1881a, 1881b; Elliott 1967). The *City of Milwaukee* was the first of the three to be launched, followed by the *Michigan* on 20 August 1881 and the *Wisconsin* on 11 October 1881.

The forty-nine year old Captain J.F. Smallman took charge of the *Wisconsin* shortly after her launch. Smallman had worked for the Goodrich line for ten years as the captain of the *Muskegon* when he left that vessel to first take command of the *City of Milwaukee* and then the *Wisconsin* shortly thereafter (Hall 1881; United States Census Bureau 1880a; St. Joseph Herald 1878). Smallman was not only a well-known mariner around the Great Lakes, but he was also well-known nationally for his service during the Civil War, where he had served aboard *Picket Boat Number One* along with Lieutenant William B. Cushing. On the night of 27 October 1864, *Picket Boat Number One*, with fifteen men aboard, sailed to Plymouth, North Carolina, where they attacked and destroyed the Confederate ironclad *Albemarle* with a spar torpedo in one of the most daring naval attacks of the war. Lieutenant Cushing and Smallman were the only survivors of the attack, but they succeeded in freeing the

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North Carolina sounds from the threat of the Confederate ironclad. This achievement won Smallman appreciation from Congress as well as the rank of Lieutenant Commander at the age of twenty-one, making him the youngest vessel captain in the volunteer navy (Detroit Free Press 1893; United States Department of the Navy 2009a).

Following her launch, Smallman sailed the *Wisconsin* from Detroit to Milwaukee in November 1881 to have her cabins installed and her final fitting out (Hall 1881). A temporary enrollment was entered for the trip at Detroit on 18 November 1881 that listed Captain Smallman of Grand Haven, Michigan, as the ship's husband, the Goodrich Transportation Company as the owner, and Kenosha, Wisconsin as the vessel's home port (Bureau of Navigation 1881a). The hull was surveyed by D.E. Morgan, special surveyor at Detroit, who described the vessel as having a plain head, round stern, one deck, and one mast with a registered length of 203.9 feet, a beam of 35.1 feet, and a depth of 11.7 feet; her registered tonnage was 1,181.66. Her capacity under the tonnage deck was 420.49 tons, and her capacity between decks above the tonnage deck was 461.17 tons. She did not have an official number at the time of the enrollment, but it was noted as "applied for" (Bureau of Navigation 1881a).

The *Wisconsin* and *Michigan* were the first iron steamers on the Great Lakes to incorporate a double iron bottom with a moveable water ballast system (Cleveland Herald 1881b; Hall 1881). The vessels had a molded depth of 15.5 feet, but a depth of hold of only 11.7 feet. The 3.8-foot difference was due to the water space located between her bottom and floor, both of which were constructed of iron. Via steam pumps, this space could be filled with water to ballast the ship when she was running light or when she had a large deck load with little cargo in the hold. The ballast system was constructed so that the vessels could draw the least possible amount of water when fully loaded, making them well-adapted to shallow harbors such as Grand Haven (Cleveland Herald 1881b). The *Wisconsin's* water bottom began at the forepeak bulkhead and extended aft beneath the No. 3 water-tight bulkhead and about two feet into the firehold (United States Department of Commerce 1929b). She was fitted with a steam pump that was capable of removing the ballast water in short order when it was not needed (Cleveland Herald 1881d). The water bottom was subdivided into five watertight compartments. The forepeak compartment was served by a four-inch filling and suction pipe and all other compartments were served by eight-inch suction and filling pipes. Control of all compartments was from a manifold within the engine room (United States Department of Commerce 1929b).

The hold was also divided by four watertight iron bulkheads that were purported to make the vessel virtually unsinkable (Cleveland Herald 1881d). Bulkhead number 1, the collision bulkhead, was located on frame number 14. The number 2 watertight bulkhead was located on frame number 38. The number 3 watertight bulkhead, located on frame number 84, formed the division between the cargo hold and the coal bunkers, with the cargo hold extending from frame number 38 to frame number 84. Within the forward cargo hold on frame number 62, a non-watertight bulkhead was fitted that included door openings. Another non-watertight bulkhead was located on frame number 90, but there were no watertight bulkheads between the engine and boiler spaces. The number 4 watertight bulkhead was at the afterpeak, located on frame number 115 (United States Department of Commerce 1929b).

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The *Wisconsin* was outfitted with a Providence capstan windlass and was powered by a single boiler 10 feet in diameter and 16 feet in length. The boiler fed a compound steam engine built by the Detroit Dry Docks Engine Works with cylinder diameters of 27 and 44 inches and a stroke of 40 inches. A single screw 10 feet, 3 inches in diameter moved the vessel through the water (Cleveland Herald 1881b, 1881d; Maritime Review Print 1894).

While the *Wisconsin* was being constructed, a young Henry Ford was working as an apprentice machinist at the Detroit Dry Dock Engine Works. Eighteen years-old at the time, Ford had come to work at Detroit Dry Dock in the fall of 1880 and he remained working there through the late summer of 1882. Ford worked under the direct supervision of Frank Kirby and earned \$2.00 a week. Kirby had considerable influence on Ford during his apprenticeship, and in 1918 Ford hired Kirby to work for him at Ford's Dearborn Engineering Laboratory. Ford held Kirby in such high regard that he had the name "KIRBY" engraved above the doors to engineering lab for inspiration alongside the names of great scientists such as Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, and Edison. While it has not been confirmed that Henry Ford played a role in the *Wisconsin's* construction, it is probable that he was involved in some capacity as his time of employment at Detroit Dry Dock overlapped that of the *Wisconsin's* construction (Olson 1963).

The *Wisconsin's* first permanent enrollment was entered at Milwaukee on 5 December 1881 by G. Hurson, Secretary of the Goodrich Transportation Company in Kenosha, Wisconsin. She was given the official number 80861, and her net tonnage was reduced by 161.47 tons according to the Act of 5 August 1880, giving the *Wisconsin* a net tonnage of 1,020.19. All other information remained unchanged from the temporary enrollment, including Captain Smallman serving as the vessel's Master (Bureau of Navigation 1881b).

The *Wisconsin*, along with her sister ship *Michigan*, began serving the Goodrich Line just as winter set in on Lake Michigan in 1881. She was assigned to run between Grand Haven and Milwaukee under contract to the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad, a Grand Trunk Railroad Company (Cleveland Herald 1881b, 1881c; Port Huron Daily Times 1881). The vessels carried break bulk rail freight between the two ports, cutting down on freight time and expense by moving cargo directly across Lake Michigan and avoiding the bottleneck of rail yards in Chicago. Despite foul weather during the winter of 1881-82, both the *Michigan* and *Wisconsin* continued making uninterrupted daily trips between Milwaukee and Grand Haven until 14 February 1882 (Door County Advocate 1882a). While entering Grand Haven at 4:00 AM that morning, Captain Smallman experienced the first accident in his twenty-five year career of sailing the Great Lakes when he struck the north end of the pier. The collision tore a hole twenty feet long and five feet wide into the *Wisconsin's* port side about twelve feet abaft of the stem. Water quickly flooded the vessel and she was barely able to make the remaining 3,500 feet to her dock before she sank. Fortunately, the water wasn't deep at the pier and much of her deck remained above water as she lay on the bottom, allowing most of her cargo to be unloaded. The hold was largely filled with sacks of flour, and the accident resulted in \$3,000- \$4,000 worth of damage, or ten percent loss of her total value of cargo. The entire loss was covered by insurance that insured the hull for \$75,000 and the cargo for \$50,000. The propeller *Menominee*, which had been sitting idle due to a shortage of cargo, was dispatched to Grand Haven where she loaded cargo consigned to the *Wisconsin*, resulting in little delay in the fulfillment of Goodrich's delivery contracts (Milwaukee Daily Sentinel 1882). The damaged freight was sold by bids and a Buffalo firm took the flour (Door County Advocate 1882b). By 16 March 1882, the *Wisconsin* was repaired and

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was back on the Milwaukee-Grand Haven route (Door County Advocate 1882c). With her return to service, A.E. Goodrich decided to return Captain Smallman to the *City of Milwaukee* and Captain W.F. MacGregor took command of the *Wisconsin* (Door County Advocate 1882d). Rounding out the *Wisconsin's* compliment of officers were Jas. O'Brien as first officer, A. Currie as engineer, H.L. Chamberlain as clerk, and John Robbins as steward (Door County Advocate 1882e).

At the close of 1882, the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad decided to operate their own cross-Lake Michigan fleet and they canceled their contract with the Goodrich Transportation Company. An additional blow was dealt to the Goodrich Line when the Flint and Pere Marquette Railroad also terminated their contract with Goodrich for service between Ludington and Milwaukee (Van der Linden 1984). With three expensive vessels and lacking any cargo, A.E. Goodrich began looking for buyers for his three iron vessels (Manitowoc Pilot 1883a). In early May, a deal was struck with the Grand Trunk Railway Company to purchase all three vessels. The *City of Milwaukee* was sold for \$175,000 and *Michigan* and *Wisconsin* were sold for \$165,000 each – slightly more than the original construction cost (Manitowoc Pilot 1883b, 1883c; Elliott 1967).

On 5 May 1883 the *Wisconsin* was officially sold to George Jerome of Detroit, attorney and Director of the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad Company, a Grand Trunk System-associated line. W.F. MacGregor remained the vessel's Master, but her home port was changed to Detroit. On 21 November of that year, however, James H. Muir, Secretary of the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Transportation Company, entered a new enrollment at Grand Haven that listed the railroad company as the *Wisconsin's* new owner. Her home port was changed to Grand Haven, Michigan, but W.F. MacGregor remained as the vessel's Master (Bureau of Navigation 1883a, 1883b; Door County Advocate 1883; Clark 1863; Michigan Commissioner of Railroads 1879; Poor's Railway Manual Company 1887; United States Census Bureau 1880c).

The winter of 1883-84 proved tough and prophetic for Lake Michigan's year-round fleet. The *Wisconsin* departed Milwaukee Harbor on 2 January 1884 and took forty hours to cross the lake in the extremely cold weather. When she finally arrived in Michigan the entire hull was covered in a three-inch-thick layer of ice. Captain MacGregor reported that it was the worst trip he had ever made (Manitowoc Pilot 1884a). On 21 February, the *Wisconsin* departed Milwaukee only to become trapped in the ice for nineteen days. The *Michigan* also became stranded, and the pair did not make Grand Haven until 11 March 1884 (Manitowoc Pilot 1884b).

The winter of 1884-85 proved to be even more difficult for the two vessels. On 26 February 1885 the *Manitowoc Pilot* (1885a) reported that the steamer *Michigan* had finally broke free of the ice after being locked in for an undetermined amount of time, but that the *Wisconsin* was still held tight in the ice. The paper had mistakenly confused the two steamers, as it was the *Wisconsin* that managed to break free and finally made Milwaukee on 8 March (Door County Advocate 1885a; Manitowoc Pilot 1885b). The *Wisconsin* departed Milwaukee for Grand Haven once again on 10 March 1885 with only 847 tons of freight, 150 tons less than her usual load due to the threat of ice. She carried 240 tons on deck including 10 tons of merchandise shipped by Milwaukee merchants, two car loads of peas, with the remaining cargo consisting of flour. In her hold, she carried 600 tons of flour and feed from mills in Minneapolis and throughout Wisconsin, mostly in sacks but some in barrels. Not long after departing Milwaukee she once again encountered heavy ice and became trapped.

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The *Michigan* continued to be trapped in the ice during the *Wisconsin*'s brief trip to Milwaukee and back, and as the days wore on the *Michigan*'s situation became more precarious as the moving ice flexed and crushed her hull. Finally, after battling the ice for four weeks, the *Michigan* was finally crushed and sank on 20 March 1885. As the *Michigan* slipped out of sight, the *Wisconsin* sent out distress calls that were intercepted by Captain Gilman aboard the propeller *City of Ludington*. The *City of Ludington* departed Milwaukee to render whatever assistance it could, and once the *Wisconsin* was sighted Captain Gilman sent several of his crew over the ice to where the *Wisconsin* was entrapped. They observed that her sides were being pushed in by the ice and a hole was torn in the hull just forward of the boiler, allowing water to enter the hull. In order to keep her afloat, 300 tons of deck cargo and freight, about one-third of her cargo, was jettisoned onto the ice to lighten the *Wisconsin*'s hull and raise her out of the water enough to bring the hole above the water and keep her from flooding. Although the flood of water was abated, the ice continued to crush her hull with such force that it was said to "snap the iron as though it were only a pipe stem" (Manitowoc Pilot 1885c; Milwaukee Sentinel 1885). The *Wisconsin*'s crew carried her heavy oak fenders into the hold and used them to shore up the hull sides against the tremendous pressure (Elliott 1967).

The *Wisconsin* was fifteen miles from shore and the heavy ice floe continued to move in on the stricken vessel, placing further pressure on the hull, threatening to enlarge the hole already torn in her hull. It looked as though she would soon join her sister ship on the bottom of the lake when a fortuitous change in the wind began to loosen the ice pack and the *Wisconsin* was able to break free and limp her way back to Milwaukee (Door County Advocate 1885b; Manitowoc Pilot 1885c; Milwaukee Sentinel 1885). Needing extensive repairs to her battered hull, she remained in Milwaukee until the Straits of Mackinac were clear of ice the following spring and then returned to the Detroit Dry Dock Company for repairs that totaled \$50,000 (Door County Advocate 1885c). With the *Michigan* lost, the *Wisconsin* out of service, and the *City of Milwaukee* unable to operate in the ice as she was a side wheeler, the Grand Trunk Railroad was left with only the steamer *Oneida* to carry its rail freight across Lake Michigan (Milwaukee Sentinel 1885). It is uncertain how long the *Wisconsin* was out of service, but a new enrollment was entered on 8 September 1885 due to a change of rig as the *Wisconsin* had received the addition of a second mast (Bureau of Navigation 1885).

The *Wisconsin*'s cross-lake service was largely uneventful for the next five years. At the close of 1891, the *Wisconsin* was servicing the Grand Haven Line's cross-lake freight running opposite the steamer *Roanoke*, transporting mostly flour and provisions. Stormy weather that winter limited her schedule to only one round trip per week and resulted in a large back-up of eastbound freight. Shoals and westerly winds that pushed large amounts of ice onto the Michigan shoreline also interfered with the vessels' schedules (Door County Advocate 1891; Marine Review 1891).

Problems with ice returned in 1893, however. On 21 January 1893 the *Wisconsin* found herself once again stranded in ice off Muskegon, where she remained trapped for a little over a week (Manitowoc Pilot 1893a). Two weeks later, she spent another week trapped in the ice off Grand Haven, but finally succeeded in making Grand Haven Harbor on 14 February 1893 (Manitowoc Pilot 1893b). After a short turn around she returned to Milwaukee with little problem, but on 19 February she was again caught by ice, this time within the Milwaukee Harbor (Manitowoc Pilot 1893c).

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In 1896, the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad sold the *City of Milwaukee* to the Graham & Morton Line of Benton Harbor, Michigan, and the fifteen year-old *Wisconsin* was also put up for sale:

Price Asked for the Steamer Wisconsin

Parties who have made inquiries state that the price asked for the iron passenger and freight steamer *Wisconsin* by the Grand Trunk Railway Company is \$75,000. That was the valuation of the steamer in the Inland Lloyds register for 1895, but is so no longer, the board of review having scratched the figures and left the valuation to be determined by survey after needed repairs are made. The latest rumor regarding the *Wisconsin* is that in the event no purchaser can be found she will come back to Lake Michigan from Detroit and again run upon the Grand Haven route in her present condition. (Door County Democrat 1896)

On 1 May 1896 the *Wisconsin* was purchased by the 54 year-old Edward Gifford Crosby on behalf of a group of Muskegon, Michigan, businessmen (Bureau of Navigation 1896b; Rick 1999, United State Census Bureau 1880d). A new enrollment was entered at Detroit that listed Edward Crosby as 1/3 owner, Robert B. Rice as 1/6 owner, and Gotlieb Minnemann, Edward G. Humphrey, Orville M. Field, and William G. Watson each as 1/8 owners (Bureau of Navigation 1896b, United State Census Bureau 1880e, 1880f). The partnerships represented a range of business interests from Muskegon that joined to form the Crosby Transportation Company to operate the steamers *Nyack* and *Wisconsin* on opposite routes between Muskegon, Grand Haven, and Milwaukee, and ironically, the *Wisconsin* was once again carrying freight for the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad in addition to freight for the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad (Van Der Linden 1984). The *Wisconsin's* home port was changed to Muskegon, Michigan, and Thomas Honner, of Grand Haven, Michigan, became the vessel's new Master (Bureau of Navigation 1896a; Mansfield 1899). Born in 1845 on the shores of Lake Ontario at Cobourg, Ontario, Honner went to sea at the age of fifteen where he learned to sail on the waters of the Atlantic Ocean. In his early twenties Honner returned to the Great Lakes and first began commanding tugs boats on the Detroit River before he moved up to steam barges. He spent the five years prior to his employment aboard the *Wisconsin* as the master of the McMillin & Company's steam barges *Iron Age* and *Iron Duke* in the iron ore trade (Mansfield 1899). Temporary enrollment number 123 was issued at Detroit in order to get the *Wisconsin* back to her new home port of Muskegon, and this enrollment is the first to identify the *Wisconsin's* hull as built of iron. A permanent enrollment was issued on 6 May 1896 with no other changes from the temporary enrollment (Bureau of Navigation 1896a; 1896b).

In mid-September 1898 the Crosby Transportation Company decided to establish new steam routes between Sheboygan and Grand Haven, and Manitowoc and Muskegon, to connect the Grand Trunk System with the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad and the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad. The *Wisconsin* and *Nyack* were pulled from the Milwaukee - Muskegon route and starting on 1 October 1889, along with the *Minnie M.* chartered from Captain George Arnold of Mackinaw, the three vessels began their new routes (Marine Review 1898).

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With the start of the new steam route, Gotlieb Minnemann sold his 1/8 share to Adolph Minnemann, and a new enrollment was issued on 29 September 1898 at Grand Haven. Although Edward Crosby and his wife Catherine had moved to Milwaukee in 1897, all owners were listed on the enrollment as living in Muskegon (Bureau of Navigation 1898; Rick 1999). Shortly after the new enrollment was entered, the Crosby Transportation Company sent the *Wisconsin* to receive an extensive rebuild at Ferrysburg, Michigan (Door County Advocate 1898). Two new steel Scotch boilers rated at 150 pounds per square inch were installed by the Ferrysburg Boiler Works and the Robertson and Company shipyard installed a new steel cabin structure (United States Department of Commerce 1929b; Page 1882).

With the rebuild complete, a new enrollment was entered on 31 January 1899 at Grand Haven, Michigan, which included a name change from *Wisconsin* to *Naomi*, with her home port remaining in Muskegon (Bureau of Navigation 1899a). It has been suggested that the vessel's new name was in honor of Edward Crosby's daughter of the same name, but a search of historic records did not uncover a child born to Crosby or any of his partners in the Crosby Transportation Company of that name (Elliott 1967; United States Census Bureau 1880d; 1880e; 1880f). The sixty-four year-old Captain William Nicholson took command of the newly-christened vessel (Bureau of Navigation 1899a, United States Census Bureau 1880h).

Heavy ice on Lake Michigan during the 1898-99 winter brought grain shipments to a standstill. So much flour and wheat built up in Milwaukee and Manitowoc awaiting shipment that many of the Crosby boats refused to take the wheat and simply concentrated on hauling flour. The *Manitowoc Pilot* (1899a) reported that there was so much flour in the rail yards at Manitowoc awaiting shipment that on Monday, 6 February 1899, 364 train car loads filled the warehouse and the side tracks, but fortunately the *Naomi* was able to carry a load of flour out of Manitowoc that day. Exacerbating the slow movement of grain out of Manitowoc was the fact that the Goodrich Company had moved their tug *Arctic* from Manitowoc to Chicago to assist in ice breaking operations in that port. The *Arctic* was Manitowoc's sole means of breaking ice within the city's harbor, but the tug did not return until late February. In the tug's absence, the ice within the Manitowoc River became so troublesome that the *Naomi* became stranded in the ice after loading at the Wisconsin Central Railway Warehouse. Car ferries and other ships had much difficulty navigating above the Main Street Bridge, and the city had considered securing the service of another tug until the *Arctic* returned (Manitowoc Pilot 1899a).

Although Manitowoc was experiencing its share of troubles with ice, it was considered by most winter lake captains to be the most open harbor on Lake Michigan that winter, with Chicago a great deal more troublesome. All around the lake, the winter ice pack entrapped one vessel after another and caused a great many disasters. On 16 February 1899, the Crosby Line's *John H. Moran* was crushed by ice off Grand Haven after 15 of her crew were rescued by the *Naomi*, who also became trapped in the ice during the rescue (Manitowoc Pilot 1899b). Abandoned, the *John H. Moran* did not immediately sink and was later seen floating partially submerged. The Crosby Line believed Captain Nicholson did not make enough effort to free the *John H. Moran* and was critical of him for abandoning his vessel. After review of the incident, Crosby released Captain Nicholson from service (Door County Advocate 1899a; 1899b).

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Ownership of the *Naomi* changed once again on 9 August 1899. According to reports from Grand Haven, Edward Humphrey sold his interest in the Crosby Line steamers *O.M Field*, *Nyack*, and *Naomi* to the other share holders for the sum of \$1 along with other considerations (Door County Advocate 1899c). The *Wisconsin's* new owners now included Orville M. Field, W. G. Watson, and A. C. Minnemann owning 3/21 shares each, Robert B. Rice owning 4/21 shares, and Edward G. Crosby, now of Milwaukee, owning 8/21 shares (Bureau of Navigation 1899b). The *Naomi's* home port remained in Muskegon, and Captain Charles Thompson became the *Naomi's* new Master (Bureau of Navigation 1899b).

On 29 March 1900 the *Naomi's* home port was changed to Milwaukee. The vessel's ownership remained the same, but Captain Robert Haselbarth took command as Master (Bureau of Navigation 1900). Captain Haselbarth was a fifty-one year old lake captain from Milwaukee who had emigrated from Germany with his family when he was eleven and worked most of his life in the Great Lakes shipping trades (United States Census 1900a). Under Haselbarth's command the *Naomi* experienced her first collision while navigating the Milwaukee River on 17 January 1901, striking the schooner *La Petite* while trying to pass inside the vessel. The *Naomi* received little damage, but the *La Petite* sustained damage to her starboard quarter (Door County Advocate 1901).

On 29 March 1901 the *Naomi's* ownership changed once again when Edward Crosby and Robert Rice bought out their partners. Crosby took ownership of 12/21 shares of the *Naomi* and Rice took ownership of 9/21 shares. All other information on the enrollment remained unchanged (Bureau of Navigation 1901).

A friendly rivalry developed amongst the lake captains that sailed on competing cross-lake lines. Captain Miles Berry of the *Charles H. Hackley* of the Berry Line wagered with Captain Hasselbarth in a race between their steamers across Lake Michigan. Captain Berry offered to take any bet between \$1,000 and \$10,000 that the *Charles H. Hackley* could outrun the *Naomi* (Door County Advocate 1902a). The race commenced in August of 1902, and the *Hackley* beat the *Naomi* into Muskegon by twenty minutes to earn the bragging rights as the "fastest boat across the lake." It is unknown exactly how much money exchanged hands on the wager (Door County Advocate 1902b).

Edward Crosby bought out his partner Robert Rice on 21 March 1903 to become the *Naomi's* sole owner, and Captain Thomas Traill was named as the vessel's new Master (Bureau of Navigation 1903a). The forty-five year old Traill had emigrated from Scotland to Chicago in 1880, where he began working on steamers as a general seaman and soon worked his way up to the rank of Captain (United States Census Bureau 1880h).

On 14 April 1903 Edward Crosby transferred title to the *Naomi* from his name to the Crosby Transportation Company, of which he was President. Traill remained as the vessel's Master (Bureau of Navigation 1903b). The Crosby steamers *Naomi* and *Nyack* remained in commission throughout the winter of 1903-04, running opposite one another on the Milwaukee – Ludington route (Door County Advocate 1903). By mid-January 1904, heavy ice began building up along the Michigan shoreline, and the *Naomi* reported ice twelve feet thick at Grand Haven. On Wednesday, 13 January 1904, it took the *Naomi* fourteen hours to cross from Grand Haven to Milwaukee, seven hours of which were spent breaking through the ice built up by stiff westerly winds (Door County Advocate 1904a). During the last week of February 1904, the Milwaukee Harbor was so congested with

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ice that many boats were ice bound in port for upwards of ten days. The *Naomi* was unable to leave port until Thursday, 3 March 1904, and even then, the trip across the lake to Grand Haven took twenty-seven hours (Door County Advocate 1904b).

Breaking through the ice that winter took its toll on the *Naomi*'s hull, and on 17 September 1904 she entered the south shipyard in Milwaukee to repair the damage from the previous winter. Eight hull plates were replaced near the waterline at the bow that had been crushed while breaking ice. Additionally, her shaft was replaced and her boilers repaired. During her lay-up she was replaced by the steamer *Petoskey* on the Milwaukee – Grand Haven route (Door County Advocate 1904c). By 22 October 1904 she was out of dry dock and back on her regular route, apparently with the addition of a new engine according to the *Door County Advocate* (1904d).

The 1904-05 winter again saw strong westerly winds that pushed large amounts of ice onto the Michigan shoreline. Vessels operating along the Wisconsin shoreline experienced little or no trouble with ice all season, but the eastern shore was another matter altogether. On Saturday, 18 February 1905, the *Naomi* became locked in the ice four miles off Muskegon and her ten passengers, along with the ship's purser, were forced to walk across the ice to reach their destination. Nearly every shipping line operating on the lake that winter had one or more boats become trapped in the ice fields from two days to a week - all of them along the lake's eastern shore (Door County Advocate 1905).

In 1906, the *Naomi* again entered the shipyard, this time for a full overhaul that cost \$20,000. Ninety-two staterooms were added with accommodations for 200 passengers (Manitowoc Citizen 1907a). Following her overhaul, she sailed the lake for a full year before she encountered another incident, unfortunately, this one proved fatal. Around 1:30AM on 14 May 1907, a fire broke out on the *Naomi* while in the middle of Lake Michigan. The fire started in the freight hold below the main deck, just forward of amidships, and spread rapidly from there. Incredibly, the fire was not discovered by anyone aboard the *Naomi* but by a lookout on the passing steamer *Kansas*, who was running the opposite route from Milwaukee to Grand Haven. The *Kansas* brought the fire to the attention of the *Naomi*'s crew, but it had grown out of control and could not be extinguished. The seventy-five people aboard the *Naomi* were roused by Steward Phillip Rossbach and Purser William Hanrahan and ordered to the life boats (Manitowoc Citizen 1907a; St. Joseph Evening Herald 1907). Captain Traill sent up distress signals when he discovered the ship was ablaze and the steamer *W. H. Kerr* responded. The captain of the *W. H. Kerr* ran his vessel's bow up to the *Naomi*'s stern to allow passengers and crew to jump aboard his vessel. The fire quickly swept the *Naomi*, but all of the passengers and all but four of the thirty-five man crew were able to escape the burning vessel. Four of the crew, coal passers who were working below deck, were trapped by the flames and unable to escape. Those who had escaped the vessel, as well as those on responding rescue vessels, watched in horror as the four crewmen made desperate, but unsuccessful, attempts to squeeze through the port holes as all other means of escape had been blocked by flames.

Those who had departed the vessel in lifeboats were picked up by the *Saxonia* and the *Kansas* and were taken to Grand Haven and St. Joseph. One passenger, J.M. Rhodes, a lumber expert for the Detroit branch of the Diamond Match Company, died the following day at the Grand Rapids hospital from burns he received in his escape. Three of the coal passers were identified as Gordon, Miner, and Stanton. The lost cargo consisted of

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furniture, canned peas, general merchandise, and a \$6,000 automobile being shipped to a Milwaukee buyer (Manitowoc Citizen 1907a; St. Joseph Evening Herald 1907).

The *Naomi* was allowed to drift until the fire burned itself out and was then towed into Grand Haven by the *Kansas* (Milwaukee Public Library 1959). Following the fire, Captain Thomas Traill took command of the *Kansas* on the Chicago-Manistee route (Ludington Chronicle 1907). The wreck report filed with the Milwaukee Collector of Customs office declared the Crosby Transportation Company's losses from the accident after insurance to be \$35,000. According to the figures, the steamer was valued at \$155,000, covered by \$100,000 insurance. The loss on the vessel was placed at \$135,000, where the salvaged hull and machinery were valued at \$20,000. The entire cargo valued at \$25,000 was destroyed, but insured by Grand Trunk Railroad for \$23,000. Three sacks of U.S. Mail were saved from the vessel (Manitowoc Citizen 1907b).

Not long after the fire was out, lawsuits began piling up against the Crosby Line. The freighters *W.H. Kerr* and *Saxonia* each libeled the *Naomi* for \$25,000 for assistance rendered. Relatives of the four coal passers that perished in the fire presented claims of \$10,000 each. Each one of the fifty-six passengers also entered a claim. One female passenger alleged that she lost three suits of underwear valued at \$25 per suit. The Crosby Transportation Company surrendered the \$22,500 hull to the court for the benefit of the claimants (Manitowoc Citizen 1907c).

By August 1907, the Crosby Transportation Company gained undisputed possession of the *Naomi*'s burned hull. Company representatives filed \$22,650 in bonds, the hull's estimated worth. The company took advantage of a federal statute that limited the amount of salvage claims to the estimated value of the remaining hull, and the relatives of the crew members lost in the fire received little on their claims (Manitowoc Citizen 1907d). The salvage suits brought against the Crosby Line were presided over by Judge Knappen in United States District Court at Grand Rapids, Michigan. The owners of the steamers *Saxona* and *W.H. Kerr* were awarded \$500 each and the crew of each boat was given \$400 to be divided amongst them. Captain Doc Valentine and Second Mate Geel of the *W.H. Kerr* were presented \$50 each for special bravery (Manitowoc Citizen 1908).

Ironically, a fifth victim was discovered several months following the fire. While cleaning out the burned hull in early August 1907, workers discovered the burned remains of an unknown individual, presumed to be a stowaway that was trapped aboard the vessel (Door County Advocate 1907). The following month, with little fanfare and under the cover of darkness on 25 September 1907, the steamer *Illinois* of the Northern Michigan Line cleared Muskegon Harbor with the *Naomi*'s soot-covered hull in tow. The *Naomi* was bound for the Manitowoc Dry Dock Company for a complete rebuilding of the hull and an entire upper works. It was reported that the *Naomi* would come out of the rebuild a "much finer craft than formerly" and as fire proof as is possible.

The rebuild was scheduled to take five months for completion, but for unknown reasons was not completed until 1909 (Manitowoc Citizen 1907e). On 27 March 1909 the *Naomi*'s first new enrollment was entered following the fire. All information remained unchanged from previous enrollments with the exception that Edward Crosby himself was listed as the vessel's Master. The enrollment noted the vessel was resurrected after it had burned and was a total loss, and that her approximate number of crew was 36 (Bureau of Navigation 1909). Ironically,

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the remodeling plans were approved by the officers of the Crosby Transportation Company in Milwaukee on the same day as the new enrollment was entered - 27 April 1909. The repairs would cost \$200,000 and the ship would be ready by 31 July 1909. The Manitowoc Dry Dock Company was to modernize the boat in every way, increasing her passenger accommodations to 1,500, and following the rebuild the steamer would be renamed *E. G. Crosby*. The vessel was to return to the lucrative cross-lake route between Milwaukee and Grand Haven, replacing the steamer *Manistee* which the company had chartered in the *Naomi*'s absence (Manitowoc Citizen 1909).

An unknown difficulty arose in changing the ship's name from *Naomi* to *E.G. Crosby*, however. Reports from Washington said the company would not be given permission for the name change because the measure met with opposition for unknown causes. Permission was finally granted and Crosby sent word to the Manitowoc Dry Dock Company to have "*Crosby*" placed on the vessel's name plate. The vessel was still not completed by the beginning of August 1909, and work on the vessel was rushed to meet the 15 August launch date. The shipyard scheduled crews to work both day and night shifts in order to meet the deadline (Manitowoc Daily Herald 1909).

The newly-christened *E.G. Crosby* was powered by two Scotch boilers that fed a compound engine of 650 indicated horsepower that would propel the vessel at a speed of sixteen miles an hour (Manitowoc Citizen 1909; United States Department of Commerce 1929a). The steamer was described as having three decks - a main, cabin, and upper deck. A freight compartment was located on the main deck amidships with an aft social hall from which stairs lead to the upper cabins. The purser's and steward's offices and baggage and parcel rooms were located in the social hall. On the main deck forward were the galley, officers' mess, smoking room, and officers' quarters. The deck crew was housed forward below the main deck. Fifty-four staterooms and parlors were on the main deck, some of which were connecting. The upper deck was made up of forty-six staterooms in addition to the pilot house, texas deck, and captain's room. The passenger cabins and social halls were finished in curly birch. The staterooms were outfitted with hot and cold running water, open plumbing, electric call bells, and electric lighting. The vessel was designed with four gangways - three that were used for freight and one for passengers. The freight compartment was separated from the passenger rooms by a steel deck above and steel bulkhead at either end. The vessel was equipped with a steam-powered steering engine and windlass, and equipped with the latest improved lifeboats, rafts, and lifesaving appliances, including a wireless telegraph (Manitowoc Citizen 1909).

Although the vessel was launched as the *E.G. Crosby*, her official documentation did not reflect the name changed until 18 May 1910. This enrollment was marked that the vessel was rebuilt at Manitowoc in 1909 and was readmeasured at Milwaukee in 1910 with a change of approximate crew to 61. The enrollment was entered at Milwaukee by E.G. Crosby himself, the managing owner of the Crosby Transportation Company. Her hull was listed as 4 decks with two masts, a plain head and round stern, and measurements of 203.9 feet in length, 40.0 feet in beam, and 24.6 feet in depth of hold (Bureau of Navigation 1910). Her main deck had been widened and her hull bustled above the waterline (Milwaukee Public Library 1959). Surprisingly, her height is listed as 7.3 feet, a dimension not listed in previous enrollments. Her new tonnage was listed as 1,416.32 tons under the tonnage deck, 503.39 tons between decks above the tonnage deck, 223.23 tons of enclosures on the upper deck,

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and a gross tonnage of 2,142.0. A deduction of 685.74 tons was given for the propulsion machinery, giving a net tonnage of 1,457.00 (Bureau of Navigation 1910). The forty-seven year old Captain Frank Richardson of Milwaukee became the vessel's new Master (Bureau of Navigation 1910; United States Census Bureau 1910). Richardson had previously commanded the *F.C. Hall* and the steamer *Viking* of the F.W. Gilchrist fleet (Buffalo Evening News 1889). By 1910, the Crosby Transportation Company was operating four steamers out of Milwaukee: *Nyack*, *E.G. Crosby*, *Conestoga* and *May Graham* (Rick 1999).

On Wednesday, 10 April 1912, Edward Crosby, along with his wife Catherine Elizabeth Crosby and daughter Harriette Rebecca Crosby boarded the White Star Line's transatlantic passenger liner *Titanic* at Southampton, England. They boarded as first class passengers bound for New York. Captain and Mrs. Crosby occupied stateroom B-22 and Harriette was in B-26. On Sunday, 14 April, Edward retired about 9:00 PM and Catherine about 10:30 PM. Shortly thereafter, Catherine was awakened by a thump and the ship's engines suddenly stopped. At about 11:30 PM Captain Crosby dressed and went on deck to find out what was happening. He returned a few minutes later and said to Catherine, "You will lie there and drown" and then left the room. He then entered Harriette's cabin and said, "The boat is badly damaged; but I think the water-tight compartments will hold her up." He then left her cabin. Both Catherine and Harriette dressed and went up on the A Deck, where an officer sent them back to their B Deck staterooms to retrieve their life preservers. Once back on A Deck, they were shuttled to the port side of the ship and placed into the first or second lifeboat to be lowered. Joining them in the lifeboat were thirty-four first-class passengers, men and women alike, in addition to two ship's officers. There were no lights, lanterns, or provisions aboard the lifeboat, and they kept warm by covering themselves with a sail. The lifeboat was rowed a short distance away from the *Titanic* and they watched as distress signals were fired and the ship slowly settled and finally sank. Their lifeboat was eventually picked up by the steamer *Carpathia*. The day following the disaster, Edward Crosby's body was pulled from the water by the *MacKay Bennett*, a cable-layer hired by the White Star Line to recover the *Titanic*'s victims. In the pockets of his green tweed suit and overcoat was \$500, £80 in notes, £6 in gold within a purse, 8s. 6d. in silver, a pipe, and a memo book. His body was returned to Milwaukee on 3 May 1912 and funeral services were held aboard one of his lake steamers (Contract Ticket List 1912; Record of Bodies and Effects 1912; Rick 1999; United States Senate 1912).

Following the disaster, Captain Crosby's son Fred took over management of the Crosby Transportation Company. A new enrollment for the *E.G. Crosby* was entered on 14 June 1912 that listed Fred Crosby as the vessel's managing owner (Bureau of Navigation 1912). The vessel continued to sail as the *E.G. Crosby*, and in 1913 both of her Scotch boilers were rebuilt (United States Department of Commerce 1929b) A new enrollment was entered on 8 June 1914 for the purpose of a "new form issued", and the only information that changed from the previous enrollment was that the approximate number of crew was increased to 65 (Bureau of Navigation 1914). The vessel continued to sail without incident for several years, with only a minor incident on 17 January 1916 when the Crosby vessels *E.G. Crosby* and *Conestoga* became trapped in slush ice off Grand Haven, but were eventually able to free themselves without damage (Door County Advocate 1916).

The *E.G. Crosby* was readmeasured on 15 April 1916 and her new dimensions were entered as 209.0 feet in length, 40.0 feet in beam, and 20.9 feet in depth of hold. Capacity under the tonnage deck remained unchanged,

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but the capacity of enclosures on the upper deck increased to 504.76 tons, which included the anchor room at 6.01 tons, the boatswain's storage at .72 tons, the crew's quarters at 39 tons, passenger cabins and staterooms on the top deck at 441.34 tons, master's cabin at 15.99 tons, and the life preserver closet at 1.70 tons. Other deductions included a crew space of 132.88 tons, steering gear room at 32.78 tons, anchor gear at 37.45 tons, boatswain's stores at 3.01 tons, donkey engine and boiler room at 2.82 tons, engineer's stores at 10.65 tons, and propelling power space at 202.03 tons. Deductions totaled 353.55 tons for a net tonnage of 1,567.00. Spaces that were omitted from the tonnage calculations included "light and air" at 16.16 tons, the wheelhouse at 6.84 tons, water closets at 17.04 tons, and cabins at 204.70 tons. It is noteworthy that the Captain's quarters were three times larger than the wheelhouse. Captain John F. Johnson was entered as the vessel's new Master (Bureau of Navigation 1916).

As World War I wore on, the government searched out seaworthy vessels to aid in the war effort and the *E.G. Crosby* was pressed into coastal service on the Atlantic. On 24 January 1918 a temporary enrollment was issued at Grand Haven, Connecticut, for a change in trade. W. H. S. Griffiths of Brooklyn, New York, became the vessel's new Master, and the enrollment stated the vessel would be used in the coasting trade for one year from the entered date and no longer. The vessel's home port was entered as Milwaukee and she was listed in the passenger service with a crew of 59. The vessel was then sold to the United States Government Shipping Control Committee, 45 Broadway, New York, New York, on 29 July 1918. She was renamed the *General Robert M. O'Reilly* in honor of the first Surgeon General of the United States and took a role patrolling the Atlantic coast (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a; Bureau of Navigation 1918). Little documentation has been uncovered to further illuminate her career as the *General Robert M. O'Reilly* on the Atlantic, but there has been some speculation that she may have served for a short period as a convalescent hospital ship in New York Harbor (Van der Linden 1984).

Another temporary enrollment was entered on 18 November 1919 at New York to redocument the vessel following her government service. The enrollment was entered by Elwin W. Seymore, owner of the Seymore Line of Evanston, Illinois (Bureau of Navigation 1919; Elliott 1967). The vessel was returned the name *E.G. Crosby* with a new home port of Chicago. Her service was listed as freight with a crew of 38. F.A. Dority became the vessel's new Master. It was also noted that this enrollment was a temporary enrollment for the vessel to act in the coasting trade for no more than one year (Bureau of Navigation 1919).

A permanent enrollment was entered on 20 March 1920 at Chicago. James F. Gallaher of Michigan City, Indiana, acting as agent of the Chicago, Racine, & Milwaukee Line of Indiana, enrolled the *E.G. Crosby* of Michigan City, Indiana, with William T. Bright as the new Master. The vessel was entered in the freight trade and the ship was put into service running between Chicago and Milwaukee (Bureau of Navigation 1920a; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). A new enrollment was again entered on 17 June 1920 to document a name change to *Pilgrim* of Michigan City, Indiana. James Gallaher entered the enrollment at Chicago with himself listed as Master, but three days later Captain John E. Thorp became the vessel's new Master. Captain Thorp, Frank Haines, Thomas F. Petrosky, and George Hicks then rotated through the Master's position for the next two years.

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At the end of the 1920 season, the Chicago, Racine, & Milwaukee Line took out two fleet mortgages that included the *Pilgrim*. The first mortgage was taken out on 4 November 1920 for the amount of \$325,000 from the Central Trust Company of Illinois and William T. Abbott was trustee. The date of maturity was 1 October 1927. This mortgage included the *Pilgrim* and *Puritan*, and perhaps other vessels. A few weeks later, on 23 November 1920, a second mortgage was taken out on the *Pilgrim* and *Puritan* for the amount of \$100,000 with a date of maturity of 12 June 1922. This mortgage was discharged on 7 April 1922 (Bureau of Navigation 1920b).

In early June 1922, it was rumored that the *Pilgrim* would be purchased by the Goodrich Transit Company and used for package freight service later that season along the west shore of Lake Michigan that included stops in Sturgeon Bay (Door County Advocate 1922). On 26 June 1922, James Sullivan of Duluth, Minnesota, entered a new enrollment at Duluth, acting as agent for the Goodrich Transit Company. The vessel's home port was changed to Duluth and James Sullivan was entered as Master. Sullivan served in this position until 15 July 1922 when he was relieved by Captain E.E. Redner. Captain Redner, D.J. McGarity, and Charles E. Moody then traded the Master's position amongst themselves until 1924. Prior to the sale, the mortgage taken out by the Chicago, Racine, & Milwaukee Line was discharged on 10 July 1922 through a payment of the sum of \$1 in addition to "other considerations." The Goodrich Transit Company then took out a mortgage on the vessel from the Central Trust Company of Illinois on 20 July 1922 for \$150,000, with a date of maturity of 1 October 1927 (Bureau of Navigation 1922).

A new enrollment was entered on 14 May 1923 for a change in service from freight to passenger. James Sullivan was again entered as Master, but Captain Moody took over command soon after the enrollment was entered. Moody was relieved by Captain Morrison on 21 May 1923, and then Captain Morrison and Captain McGarity rotated through the Master position throughout the 1924 season (Bureau of Navigation 1923). In 1923, under the command of Captain McGarity, the *Pilgrim* became caught in a sudden storm while steaming from Chicago to Milwaukee. The seas were so large that the captain passed up his regular stop at Racine, and just before daybreak the vessel began taking on a heavy port list as water began entering the engine room, boiler room, and coal bunkers. Despite the list, she was able to navigate through the drawbridges along the Milwaukee River and make her regular berth. Upon inspection, it was determined that water had entered the hull through the forward portion of the bustle on the starboard side. Due to the vessel's natural tendency to sit lower in the water at the stern, the water worked its way aft to the boiler and engine rooms. Extensive welding was required to repair the bustle plates where they joined the hull (Elliott 1967). According to Captain Henry Erichsen, Assistant Inspector of Hulls at Milwaukee, the *Wisconsin's* bustle was vulnerable when docking and frequently the bustled out gangways would catch on the docks, causing the plates to spring and preventing the gangway shutters from closing properly (Meno 1929).

The *Pilgrim* was again extensively overhauled early in the 1924 season at Manitowoc, and at the same time her overnight passenger accommodations were improved. Once the repairs were finished, she was moved to Milwaukee on 26 April 1924 where she replaced the steamer *Indiana* to run opposite the *Illinois* on the Milwaukee-Chicago route (Door County Advocate 1924; Elliott 1967). Later that year, on 3 July 1924, the Goodrich Line returned the vessel to her original name – *Wisconsin*. She sailed under her original name for just

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over a month before it was made official by entering a new enrollment on 5 August 1924 by H.W. Thorp, President of the Goodrich Transit Company. The enrollment was entered at Duluth and Captain Dougal H. Morrison was entered as her Master (Bureau of Navigation 1924; United States Department of Commerce 1929a).

Captain Morrison sailed the *Wisconsin* for more than two years before he had his first mishap aboard her. As the *Wisconsin* was entering Manitowoc Harbor on 29 January 1927 a strong offshore wind exacerbated the dense fog that obscured the harbor entrance. The *Wisconsin* veered too far out of the channel and ran hard aground on the clay bottom and remained stranded there for over 31 hours. The *Wisconsin* was stuck midway between the harbor light and the harbor piers, and the tugs *Peter Reiss* and *Arctic* dug a thirteen foot channel with their propellers before they finally released the *Wisconsin*. The *Wisconsin* had no passengers aboard, only freight bound from Sheboygan to Manitowoc. Following her release, the *Wisconsin* discharged her cargo at Manitowoc, quickly loaded the cargo waiting for her there and departed for Chicago, passing up all scheduled stops enroute in order to not further delay her Chicago-bound cargo (Door County Advocate 1927).

On 9 April 1929 during heavy weather, the *Wisconsin* struck a dock at Racine. Although the *Wisconsin* apparently escaped unscathed, the dock was not so lucky and received \$2,500 in damage. Soon after the collision, over 13-14 April 1929, the *Wisconsin* received her annual inspection at Milwaukee. The inspectors found no damage to the vessel's hull from the collision; by they did suggest a general overhauling of the passenger gangways due to loose rivets. A repair order from the Manitowoc Shipyard dated 16 April shows \$489.94 was spent renewing 156 pounds of rivets in the hull. The *Wisconsin* was re-examined on 23 May 1929 for an increase in the number of passengers she was allowed to carry (Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929).

On 7 June 1929, the *Wisconsin* again struck the Goodrich Dock at Racine, but this time got hung up on the dock and had some trouble freeing herself. No survey of the hull was completed following the collision, but the dock required replacement of four 30-foot piles, 10 feet of 3 foot x 3 inch x 30 foot sheathing, two 4 inch x 12 inch x 20 foot fir stringers, and one 12 inch x 12 inch x 24 foot fir stringer (Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929). An inspection of her hull and equipment did take place on 3 July 1929 while underway from Sheboygan to Milwaukee, but the only discrepancy found was her lifeboats, including the No. 5 lifeboat which had a metal sheath on the keel that had rusted and needed replacement (Meno 1929).

The *Wisconsin* was struck by lightning on 19 June 1929 while underway from Chicago to Racine. The lightning bolt only damaged one of her direction finding instruments, and it was repaired as soon as she arrived at Racine. Later that same day while navigating the Milwaukee River the *Wisconsin* struck the Clyburn Street Bridge on her port side. Damage to the vessel included her running light and screen, a twenty-foot oak wale strake, and a piece of iron sheathing that was carried away (Meno 1929).

Another inspection was performed on 17 September 1929 by the Milwaukee Assistant Inspectors while underway from Milwaukee to Sheboygan and the lifeboats were re-examined. The inspectors discovered standing water in the bottom of the No. 6 lifeboat that caused the paint to curl and the metal to corrode, and lifeboat No. 3 was rusted through around the automatic drain on the port side. Orders were given to immediately

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replace the No. 3 and 6 lifeboats and to have all other boats scraped and overhauled (Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929). The lifeboats were again inspected for proper maintenance at Sheboygan on 7 October 1929 (Meno 1929).

Following the *Wisconsin's* summer of minor mishaps, she went into the fall battling several ferocious storms. She was underway during the same October gale that claimed the SS *Milwaukee* and her entire crew, and she limped into Milwaukee Harbor following that storm with a pronounced port list. The list developed as she neared Milwaukee, and as she was so close to the harbor entrance no attempt was made to straighten up the list while on the lake. Instead she made for the shelter of the harbor. The Goodrich Line reported that the list was due to cargo shifting in the tremendous seas, a reportedly common problem. The *Wisconsin* was unloaded at Milwaukee and later steamed out on an even keel. When she arrived later that day at Racine she had considerable difficulty in securing herself to the pier, and three lines parted before she was finally made fast (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). In the process of tying up to the pier the *Wisconsin* struck a cluster piling near her coal bunker, just forward of amidships (Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929). The Racine dock was surveyed for damage, but the *Wisconsin* was not inspected. The collision had caused enough damage to require the replacement of ten 40-foot piles, one 12 inch x 12 inch x 20 foot fir top timber and two 12 inch x 12 inch x 40 foot fir top timbers. A full examination of the dock by the Globe & Rutgers Fire Insurance Company concluded that the dock was of such light construction that the impact could not have caused serious damage the *Wisconsin* due to her hull being protected by a heavy fender strake, and that was the only part of the vessel that came in contact with the dock (Meno 1929; Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929).

Early on Monday, 28 October 1929, the Milwaukee office of the Weather Bureau issued a gale warning that was to take effect on Lake Michigan that evening (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). By 7:00 PM, with storm warnings flying, a fresh breeze began blowing from the east combined with rain (Meno 1929; United States Coast Guard 1929g). As the evening wore on the wind velocity slowly climbed. By midnight, the wind had reached 39 miles an hour, and sea conditions along the Wisconsin shoreline were treacherous (Meno 1929).

Captain Morrison cleared the Goodrich Dock at Chicago at 7:45 PM that evening for his regular route to Milwaukee via Racine (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). Four passengers and sixty-four crew were aboard, with the exception of two of the *Wisconsin's* regular crew. Mrs. Mabel Davidson of Chicago, a maid on the ship, had never missed a single trip but that evening she was late to arrive at the Chicago dock and the *Wisconsin* left without her. Also missing was the nineteen-year-old cabin boy, Lawrence Hoop of Benton Harbor, Michigan. Captain Morrison sent Hoop ahead by train with freight bills for the Goodrich Company's Racine office (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The *Wisconsin* had a light load aboard of 135 to 140 tons of general merchandise and several automobiles, much less than her fully-loaded capacity of 500 tons (Meno 1929).

The steamer *Waukegan* had left Chicago Harbor just ahead of the *Wisconsin*. Although the *Waukegan* was slightly smaller than the *Wisconsin* she was able to make the same speed and kept ahead of the *Wisconsin* as the two worked their way northward in the building seas. The *Waukegan* struggled as she fought the seas, and a short time after leaving Chicago her cargo shifted, requiring her to turn her head into the seas to steady herself as the crew trimmed her load. Not long after that her rudder chains parted and she drifted helplessly to leeward

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for a short time while her crew repaired the chains. During this time the *Waukegan's* Master reported seeing the *Wisconsin's* lights off his stern, following on her course without any difficulty (Meno 1929; United States Coast Guard 1929f).

By 11:00 PM, the *Wisconsin* was off Waukegan, Illinois, when oiler Anthony Tillman discovered water coming up in the engine room bilges. He sped up the bilge pump to reduce the water level and informed the Chief Engineer Julius Buschman, who in turn notified Captain Morrison that the pumps were set in motion (Meno 1929). Even with the pumps working the water kept rising and soon word came that the water was rising faster and the stokers were now knee deep in water. As the rising water neared the boilers and threatened to extinguish the flames, every man turned their attention to stemming the flow of water at least long enough to make harbor at either Kenosha or Racine (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). At 11:30 PM, however, the vessels main bilge pump began failing. Assistant First Engineer Louis Larson cleaned the pump's intake and the pump resumed operation, but even with the pump running the water continued rising and large sheets of water were soon rolling back and forth across the decks (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). Once again, the main bilge pump began faltering, and the fire pump was redirected to help remove water from the bilges. The crew also tried putting the bilge suction on the sea cock as well as turning on the bilge injection pumps (Meno 1929).

While the engineers worked feverishly in the bilges, First Mate Edward Halverson, along with the Second Mate, worked on the forward deck helping Quartermaster William Strand to close all hatches to prevent water from flooding the cargo hold. The deckhands manned the pumps to help rid the vessel of water but soon a hose broke off the main pump and they could no longer put the water out by that method (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

Believing they were about five miles off Kenosha, Captain Morrison ordered the radioman to send out a distress call. Twenty year-old wireless radio operator Kenneth Carlson had just received his wireless operator's license on 29 July 1929 and had only worked on lake ships since 19 August 1929, but he sent a distress call at 1:30 AM that was received by Elmer Webster of the Radio Marine Corporation at Chicago. Carlson indicated the *Wisconsin's* fire holds were flooded and the boat was in immediate danger. His first message stated "In serious trouble. Must make Racine Harbor" (Elliott 1967; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

With the rising water threatening the boilers, Captain Morrison ordered the portside mushroom anchor dropped in order to hold the vessel's bow into the seas, believing that his ship could float at anchor until assistance arrived (Meno 1929). He then ordered Fred Treuber to signal shore with the searchlight (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). About this same time, the *Waukegan* noticed the *Wisconsin* had headed up into the wind and it was thought that she, too, had experienced a cargo shift and had stopped to trim her load. The *Waukegan* continued on her course to Milwaukee and eventually lost sight of the *Wisconsin* off her stern. No one aboard the *Waukegan* saw nor heard any distress signals from the *Wisconsin* (Meno 1929).

Shortly after dropping anchor, a fireman reported the water levels were still increasing as water flowed from somewhere within the portside coal bunker into the fire hold; the water level was now so high that the fire in the port boiler was going out. The Chief Engineer went into the fire hold to inspect the conditions himself, and he reported to Captain Morrison that they could no longer hold or stoke the fires because of the high water

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(Meno 1929). At the same time, First Mate Edward Halverson reported that water was coming into the dining room through the scuppers. He went out onto the forepeak and looked down into the freight hold. The freight hold appeared dry, but disheveled as the cargo had shifted. He ordered several deckhands to straighten up the cargo in order to get a better look (Meno 1929).

Between 1:30 and 2:00 AM, the Kohler Emergency Lighting System was started as the steam came down in the boilers. There was nothing more that the engineers could do with the pumps, the engine room was abandoned and the men climbed up on deck (Meno 1929). At 2:00 AM, Kenneth Carlson received a message that that two Coast Guard boats - one from Kenosha and one from Racine - were being sent to assist them (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The Old Chicago Coast Guard Station telephoned the Kenosha Station at 2:15 AM to inform them that the *Wisconsin* had sent a radiogram indicating that they needed a towing tug sent to assist them as they were disabled off Kenosha. The Kenosha Station telephoned the Racine Station to notify them of the emergency and at 2:25 AM Kenosha's lifeboat got underway for the *Wisconsin* (U.S. Coast Guard 1929a; 1929g).

The steamer *Illinois* was in Racine Harbor and also received the *Wisconsin*'s distress message, but she had broken her rudder chains and was unable to get underway to assist. (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The *Illinois*' captain, however, was able to persuade the master of the seagoing tug *Butterfield*, also at the pier in Racine, to get underway to assist the stricken *Wisconsin*. The *Butterfield* left Racine but turned back after an hour and returned to the pier, stating they had turned back due to three feet of water in their bilge (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929b; Meno 1929). At dawn, the government tug *Elder* slipped her lines from the Racine pier and headed out to the *Wisconsin*. The tug's departure was noticed by the wife of Captain Olander, head of the Racine Life Saving Station. She had been left alone at the Racine Coast Guard Station and fearing the *Elder* would never survive the conditions out on the lake, Mrs. Olander signaled frantically from the Coast Guard's signal tower but she went unnoticed. As a last resort, she began blowing the station's foghorn and the hoarse signals finally brought the *Elder* back into the harbor (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

The *Wisconsin* fired twenty red flares into the air between 2:15 and 3:50 AM in order to aid the rescuing vessel in finding her (U.S. Coast Guard 1929a; Meno 1929). Two of these signals were faintly spotted by Kenosha Coast Guardsman Paul Berg, on beach patrol. He spotted the vessel with his field glasses moving slowly in the waves before her lights went out. He made it back to the station before the lifeboat got underway and he joined his fellow Guardsmen on the journey out onto the ferocious lake:

We set out for the vessel in distress and I want to tell you that I never saw such mountains of water in my life. I don't know how high they were. It seemed to me that they were rolling thirty to forty feet high. We reached the *Wisconsin*; it was still high out of the water, rolling perilously, and our crew tried to get alongside. (U.S. Coast Guard 1929b)

The Kenosha lifeboat arrived on the scene around 3:00 AM. A line was thrown to the *Wisconsin* from the lifeboat, but it was caught by the wind and fell into the water. On the second attempt the line fouled the lifeboat's propeller. A second line was thrown from the *Wisconsin* and it was caught by the men aboard the lifeboat. With the line secured the wind and waves brought the lifeboat alongside the *Wisconsin* but the waves

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eventually forced the lifeboat under the *Wisconsin*'s stern and threatened to crush the lifeboat as the *Wisconsin* rolled in the heavy seas (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

As the Kenosha lifeboat was tying up, the crew began lowering the *Wisconsin*'s lifeboats under the direction of wheelman George Richardson. The *Wisconsin* was now taking on a heavy list and the lifeboats swung far out from the vessel and threatened to smash onto her hull as she rolled (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). First lowered was the No. 1 lifeboat followed by the No. 2, 4 and 6 (Meno 1929). The No. 5 lifeboat was dropped bow first into the heavy seas and was smashed to pieces, throwing three men into the water who were quickly picked up by the Kenosha lifeboat (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

Two brothers, Joseph and John Rogers, were both crew members aboard the *Wisconsin*. As they waited on deck for rescue they agreed that they would go together - whether it was to the bottom of the lake or to safety in Kenosha. Joseph led the way into a lifeboat but the moment he climbed aboard, the *Wisconsin* heaved in the heavy sea and swung the small boat far away from the side of the steamer. "Jump for it Johnny!" Joseph yelled to his brother and John made a leap for it. He didn't leap quite far enough, but he was grabbed by those already in the lifeboat just before he fell into the water (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

The Racine lifeboat was the next rescue boat to arrive on the scene. As they arrived more lifeboats were lowered from the *Wisconsin*. The Chambers Brothers' 52-foot diesel-powered fish tug *Search*, under the command of Captain Clifford Chambers, arrived soon after the Racine lifeboat and joined in the task of picking up those abandoning ship (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Public Library 1959; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

There was no panic or excitement aboard the *Wisconsin* and most of the men kept their cool. Some told jokes while they awaited rescue while others prayed, found a dry place to sit down, packed up their belongings, or smoked cigarettes. Fireman Fred Hoffman of Chicago, who especially enjoyed telling stories, told of a shipwrecked passenger from years ago who sold his watch when his boat was going down because he "couldn't take it with him to the world beyond." Hoffman then began buying up watches from his fellow crewmembers - one he purchased for 98 cents, one for a quarter, and another for a nickel (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). Only two of the crew crumbled emotionally during the event and reportedly sought safety beneath their bunks, too frightened to realize their shelter offered little more than certain death. Tractor Man B.C. Placeway twice pulled one of these men out of his cabin before physically preventing him from returning; the other man had to be carried onto the deck (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

Radio operator Kenneth Carlson remained at his post and continued to send and receive radio messages until the electricity failed. The final order was given to abandon ship around 4:00 AM. On his final transmission, Carlson called Chicago to inform them all were leaving the ship just as the auxiliary power failed and the ship went black. Carlson then took his place in the No. 4 lifeboat (Meno 1929). After all the lifeboats were launched, the officers that remained on deck threw three life rafts into the water. Seventy-two year-old chief engineer Julius Buschman had 39 years of service with the Goodrich Line, and the salty old engineer had fought off his fellow shipmates as they tried to persuade him to get into one of the lifeboats. Buschman remained on deck until only Captain Morrison was left on the ship, telling everyone "I'm staying with the Captain. When he goes I'll go

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with him. If he goes down I'll go with him." Captain Morrison finally persuaded Buschman to take a place on a life raft, but as Buschman tried to climb aboard a large wave lifted the raft high into the air and slammed it down with terrible force. Buschman did not have the strength to hang onto the bouncing raft and slid into the water, where he drowned (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). Captain Morrison had told his First Mate he would get onto the last raft, but when the last raft was launched with eleven people aboard Captain Morrison was not among them – he remained aboard the ship and returned to the bridge (Meno 1929).

Sometime during the rescue the shutters on the starboard quarter passenger gangway gave way, allowing a flood of water to enter the ship. As the stern settled into the water the bow rose up high up into the air as the *Wisconsin* slipped beneath the surface shortly after 6:30AM. As she descended, her after-cabin and pilot house blew off from the air pressure building in her hull. After she disappeared beneath the waves, Captain Morrison was spotted about 25-30 feet away from one of the *Wisconsin's* lifeboats, clutching a life ring and calling out to them. The lifeboat was difficult to paddle and they were unable to catch Captain Morrison, who was rolling in the heavy seas along with a large amount of debris from the *Wisconsin*. As they were trying to reach him, Captain Morrison's head was struck by part of the boat's wreckage, rendering him unconscious. He was later found by the Racine lifeboat, but Captain Morrison was dead (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). Also floating amongst the wreckage in a life ring was the black cook I.B.H. Decassagas. He was tied up to a raft with the First Mate, but later died of exposure after being pulled from the water. On one of the rafts a coal passer was twice knocked off by the waves and twice was pulled back aboard. Two deck hands floated on a mattress before being pulled from the water by the Kenosha lifeboat (Meno 1929). Slowly, the two Coast Guard lifeboats, along with the fish tug *Search*, made their way through the water and picked up everyone they could find, overloading their boats with survivors. Severely overloaded with nineteen survivors, the Kenosha lifeboat headed for Kenosha with their gunwales barely out of the water when a large wave broke over the boat as they entered Kenosha, nearly swamping them. Captain Olander reported that the crew "expected to do some swimming," but they were able to make it safely back to the station (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

Expecting a large number of survivors, Kenosha Chief of Police John T. Sullivan called to service every police officer, ambulance, and police car, as well as additional private vehicles, to wait at the dock for the arrival of the rescue boats. At the Kenosha and St. Catherine's Hospitals, beds were made ready and nurses, physicians, and surgeons reported to duty in preparation of receiving the survivors. Every street between the Coast Guard station and the hospitals was closed to traffic as the first rescue boat arrived at the dock (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a).

After the Kenosha lifeboat unloaded its survivors they got underway to make a second trip to the wreck site to pick up more survivors.

Going back the second time, I saw the *Wisconsin* for just an instant and then it disappeared. When we reached the scene there was nothing left but a mass of wreckage and men yelling and begging to be saved. It was a terrible sight. These poor fellows were about done for and we ploughed through the debris to give them a helping hand. (U.S. Coast Guard 1929b)

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One man was spotted clinging to a mattress, but was too weak to catch the line thrown to him or grab the pike pole offered by the Kenosha lifeboat. As the lifeboat was brought alongside so the crew could pull the man aboard, his mattress was pulled into the lifeboats propeller just as he was free of the water. Unfortunately, the man later died from the exposure (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The Racine lifeboat, under command of Officer Alfred E. Kristofferson, rescued twenty-five survivors on their first trip, and also returned and rescued several more survivors in addition to a number of bodies (Meno 1929; United States Coast Guard 1929a). On their second trip, the Kenosha lifeboat was able to rescue three additional survivors from a life raft (United States Coast Guard 1929a).

When the search was finally called off, fifty-nine men had been rescued, nineteen of whom required hospitalization. Nine men had perished in the accident. Most of the casualties were the result of exposure, and only one, Chief Engineer Buschman, died from drowning (Meno 1929). The list of dead included:

Captain D.H. Morrison of Chicago
Chief Engineer Julius Buschman of Manitowoc
Deckhand Victor Jocius
Deckhand Stanley Rickus
Deckhand Joseph Metz
Cook I.B.H. Decassagas
Third Cook "Old Joe"
Watchman Walter Rein
and an unidentified deckhand

The list of injured included:

Steward Thomas Lange, of Chicago
Lookout Fred Treuber of Milwaukee
Deckhand Frank Pellows
Deckhand Hans Olson
Deckhand William Vargo
Deckhand Jack McGuigan
Watchman Robert Loring
Watchman Peter Peterson
Oiler Thomas Krause
Fireman Reinhard Strehmel
Watchman Thomas Wilson
Tractor man George Sandow
Deckhand Victor Kazor of Chicago
Deckhand Joseph Doherty of Chicago
Deckhand William Strahan

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First Mate Edward Halverson of Chicago
Sailor Mike Larsen of Milwaukee
Fireman William Kopez of Chicago
Deckhand Stanley Eckert of Chicago

Other survivors included:

Deckhand Gilbert Hansen of Chicago
Thomas Stevenson of Chicago
Peter Bell of Chicago
Zigmunt Szosteski of Chicago
Vincent McPhee of Chicago
Charles Shimkus of Chicago
Joseph Karosas of Chicago
Frank Miller of Chicago
John Smith of Chicago
Deckhand "Uncle" Tom Siranovic of Chicago
Frank Barnard of Chicago
Tony Madas of Chicago
Ben Switzer of Lake Forest, Illinois
Joseph Stephens of Chicago
Oiler Albert Landry of Chicago
Deck watchman Tony Eizen of Milwaukee
Tractor man B.C. Placeway of Chicago
Passenger Carl H. Sjostrand of Eckelson, North Dakota
Passenger Sanders Grant of Sycamore, Illinois
Passenger Frank Chlebowski of Chicago
Passenger John Crane of Pittsburgh
John Black of Chicago
Tony Tillman of Saginaw, Michigan
Louis Lesperance of Two Rivers, Wisconsin
Assistant First Engineer Louis Larson of Milwaukee
Radio Operator Kenneth Carlson of Madrid, Iowa
Robert Nash of Aberdeen, Washington
Paul Duarte of Glendale, California
Deckhand Peter Lumas of Chicago
Vern Myers of Chicago
James C. James of Fresno, California
Joseph Rogers of Chicago
John Rogers of Chicago
Purser Harvey C. Lyon of Chicago

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Fireman Fred Hoffman of Chicago
Deckhand John Stincl of Chicago
Napoleon Babbitt of Chicago
Fred Miller of Chicago
Second Mate Arthur F. Behl of Manistee, Michigan
Quartermaster William Brand of Chicago
(Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a; Meno 1929)

Complications arose over the body of Cook I.B.H. Decassagus. On the evening of 29 October 1929 a woman stating she was June Decassagus, his wife, claimed the body. The following night, 30 October, a second woman arrived, Clara Decassagus, who also claimed to be his wife. Questioning her identity, Clara produced an insurance policy made out to her as his wife. The body had already been released to Chicago with June, and Clara was instructed to contact June in order to settle the matter (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929b).

“Old Joe,” the *Wisconsin*'s third cook, was identified several days after the accident as Joe Lucas of Chicago by his cousin, who took the body to Chicago for burial. Four victims remained unidentified and unclaimed and were buried on 2 November 1929 in Kenosha's Green Ridge Cemetery. The Goodrich Company announced they would pay the cost of burial and erect a headstone on each grave marked with numbers on the tombstones - No. 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929c). It is uncertain if Goodrich actually paid for the burial services, but they never installed headstones. The graves remained unmarked until a single headstone was installed by the Kenosha Historical Society more than 70 years later.

The *Wisconsin* sank with approximately \$200,000 worth of cargo, including two new high-priced automobiles. Shippers in Milwaukee and Chicago were immediately notified by the Goodrich offices that the ship was lost in order that they might duplicate their lost shipments (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The vessel itself was valued at approximately \$250,000 (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929a). The *Wisconsin*'s hull and the cargo were insured for nearly \$90,000, divided amongst twelve insurers. Glen Falls Insurance Company insured the hull for \$13,454.51; United States Fire Insurance Company, Aetna Insurance Company Union Marine Insurance Company, Globe & Rutgers, and Home Insurance Company each insured the hull for \$8,969.67; Fireman's Fund Insurance Company and Switzerland Insurance Company each insured for \$5,381.81; Public Insurance Company insured for \$4,484.85; Automobile Insurance Company insured for \$2,690.89; Universal Insurance Company and Eagle Star & British Dominions Insurance Company each paid out \$5,727.27 (Schmorrow v. *Wisconsin* 1936).

An investigation of the sinking was conducted by Captain Fred J. Meno, Supervising Steamboat Inspector for the Great Lakes, reporting to the Federal Steamboat Inspection Service in Washington D.C. The first part of the federal inquiry centered in Kenosha, where Captain John A. Olander of the Racine Coast Guard Station reported that he had heard rumors that the tug *Butterfield* failed to respond to the rescue calls because of a troublesome crew, a charge that the *Butterfield*'s captain fervently denied (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929b). The *Butterfield*'s captain claimed to have turned back because he had three feet of water in his bilge, but the investigation concluded, after interviewing both the *Butterfield*'s Captain and Engineer, that both the reports of

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mutiny and water in the bilge were false. They determined that a lack of courage and confidence in the Captain's own ability, and not that of the tug, had caused him to turn back when he thought there was greater chance of losing his own boat and crew than saving the *Wisconsin* or rescuing her crew. The investigators did point out that had the *Butterfield* been able to go to the rescue, it was likely the entire crew of the *Wisconsin* would have been saved (Meno 1929; Milwaukee Sentinel 1929b).

By the first of November the investigation had shifted to Chicago where investigators questioned the captains of the *Alabama*, *Illinois* and the *Bainbridge*, all Goodrich Line steamers that had also sailed Lake Michigan the night of the *Wisconsin* disaster (Milwaukee Sentinel 1929b). Soon after the official investigation was concluded: it was determined that the SS *Wisconsin* sank due to a serious leak from an undetermined location and origin within the hull. The report went to say that the leak was likely caused by striking a floating object from the extensive damage along the Lake Michigan shoreline during the severe storms of 22-23 October that damaged property, piers, and lighthouse docks, and floating driftwood and timbers likely pierced the *Wisconsin*'s hull. No fault was assigned to any licensed officer in the accident and the case was dismissed (Meno 1929).

Because there was little explanation in the sinking of the *Wisconsin*, the inspectors went as far as to send a sample of the coal to the U.S. Bureau of Mines to test for impurities that could result in the production of sulfuric acid when wetted. It was found that the sample of coal was of low sulfur content and contained only 5.3 percent ash. The laboratory suggested that although the clean coal sample did not give sulfuric acid when wetted, it did not necessarily follow that the coal in the bunkers would not liberate acid if wetted. They added that the bunker coal most likely contained more impurities than the sample provided them (Supervising Inspector Eighth District 1929).

Several safety recommendations were made as a result of the accident. It was suggested that on lake steamers over 100 gross tons, floatable life rafts be carried in addition to lifeboats and that these rafts carry an approved water light capable of burning for forty-five minutes. In case of foundering at night, it was suggested that persons in life preservers would be able to locate and reach the raft while the water light was burning. With regards to water ballast systems, it was suggested to have high suction to ballast and other pumps that might be used to keep the vessel afloat. The suction intake should have been low enough to keep the fires going in the boilers, but high enough to be kept free of coal ash and dirt that could plug the intake (Meno 1929).

On 8 November 1929, the Superintendent of the Lighthouses, Twelfth District, Milwaukee, announced that the master of the steamer *Penobscot* had passed wreckage of what was presumed to be the sunken steamer *Wisconsin* 4¾ miles southeast of the Kenosha Pierhead. One mast remained above the water, attached to the hull by rigging (U.S. Coast Guard 1929b; Door County Advocate 1929). Over the next week, lifeboats, life rafts, and other debris were recovered from the lake and brought to the Kenosha Coast Guard Station (U.S. Coast Guard 1929c; 1929d; 1929e). The *Wisconsin*'s final enrollment was surrendered at Duluth, Minnesota on 12 November 1929 (Bureau of Navigation 1924).

Nearly five years following her loss, on 23 July 1934, Chicago salvage diver Frank Hefling received information from Kenosha fishermen on the location of a common net hang in the area that the *Wisconsin* was lost. Hefling

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began sweeping and grappling operations in the area and soon located the sunken *Wisconsin*, buoyed the location, and moved his diving operation from Chicago to Kenosha. On 12 October 1934, he entered into an agreement with financial backer Francis Holtenhoff to "locate and salvage" the SS *Wisconsin's* merchandise and cargo. Holtenhoff's share of the profit was to be five percent after the locating and salvage expenses were paid. In the agreement, Hefling was to be sole property owner of any currency, silver, or gold found aboard (Hefling 1934). In December 1934, Hefling chartered the steamer *M. H. Stewart* from the Roen Steamship Company of Sturgeon Bay to use in his salvage operations (Door County Advocate 1934).

About this same time, Art Schmorow claimed to have independently discovered the vessel on 12 November 1934 (Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1935a), and entered into a partnership with William Kluender and Joseph Kretz of Kenosha, and Captain D. Davis of Chicago. Captain Davis agreed to give 50% of the contents of the safe and ten percent of the net profits from the salvaged cargo to Schmorow, Kluender and Kretz in exchange for the *Wisconsin's* location (Schmorow et. al. 1934). Curiously, in January 1935, Art Schmorow also approached Hefling to enter into a partnership and offered to disclose the *Wisconsin's* true location. The proposed agreement gave 33 1/3 percent of the earnings of the contents of the ship's safe to Schmorow in exchange for his labor and use of his tug *Winnie* in the salvage operations. Also, ten percent of the salvaged equipment and cargo from the *Wisconsin* was to go to Schmorow. Twenty-five percent of the balance was to be paid to Harney B. Stover for legal services and the balance to be divided equally among Captain D. Davis, Basil Davis and Joseph Koretz. Hefling refused to sign the agreement (Schmorow 1935). Court testimony by Frank Hefling revealed that Schmorow was not in possession of the location of the wreck at the time of the proposed agreement, as he was grappling for the wreck in the general vicinity of Hefling's salvage operation during a period from 15 to 21 May 1935 (Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1935a, 1935b).

Hefling's first dive to the *Wisconsin* was conducted on 21 May 1935, when he positively identified the vessel by her nameplate. During this dive he took legal possession of the vessel by removing a portion of the stern rail and signal box. Hefling, with associates Wilfred Behrens and Clair Graham, inspected the *Wisconsin's* hull and gangways on dives conducted between 21 May and 4 July 1935. On 4 July 1935, Hefling blasted open the hull and began inspections to determine how best to remove the cargo, but problems arose with his crew and Behrens employment was terminated on 6 July, and on 11 July Graham asked for ten days leave (Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1935b; Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1936).

In search of further funding for his project, on 26 July 1935 Hefling contacted the insurance agents Osborn & Lange, Inc., of Chicago, Illinois, representatives of the *Wisconsin's* cargo underwriters, and proposed to salvage the vessel's cargo and provide them with ten percent of the gross proceeds arising from the sale of goods (Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1935b; Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1936). That same day, however, both Behrens and Graham joined with Schmorow, and on 29 July 1929, while Hefling was salvaging the *Wisconsin's* cargo, Schmorow's team set off a charge of dynamite over the hole originally created by Hefling. The charge closed Hefling's hole with deck wreckage, halting his salvage operations. Hefling's boat, which was moored over the site, was also damaged in the blast (Schmorow v. *Wisconsin* 1936).

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Schmorrow then entered an admiralty claim on the *Wisconsin* and her cargo in the United States District Court on 15 August 1935 (Schmorrow v. *Wisconsin* 1935a). Frank Hefling answered Schmorrow's claim on 13 September 1935 with contrary testimony, and further entered an intervening petition on behalf of the insurance underwriters on 8 February 1936 (Schmorrow v. *Wisconsin* 1935b, 1936). Despite the tensions between the two salvors, an agreement was reached by March 1936 through insurance agents for Osborne and Lange, Inc. According to the agreement, the parties would compromise and settle out of court and Schmorrow's admiralty case would be dismissed. Schmorrow released and relinquished all claims for salvage rights against the *Wisconsin* and her cargo, giving Hefling exclusive rights to salvage. Additionally, Schmorrow and his partners were prohibited from interfering in any way with Hefling's operation. In exchange, Schmorrow and his partners would receive five percent of the gross sales from salvage each month payable in a check submitted to their lawyer, Harney B. Stover (Hefling 1936).

Frank Hefling succeeded in recovering a small amount of cargo from the *Wisconsin*, but much of it proved to be unsalable and of little value, and all salvage operations ceased shortly after the agreement was made between Hefling and Schmorrow. No serious commercial attempts to recover either the hull or her cargo were further made (Stover 1963).

Significance Statement

The *Wisconsin* meets the registration requirements for Criteria C and D at the state level, as established in the Multiple Property Documentation *Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin* (Cooper and Kriesa 1992). The *Wisconsin* is a rare example of a vessel type that was vital to Great Lake's economy. Year round steamers like the *Wisconsin* were an important link for railroad freight traffic connecting Wisconsin's communities economically with wider regional and national markets. Mostly intact, the *Wisconsin* retains excellent physical integrity. Information gathered from the *Wisconsin* site has produced a wealth of archaeological knowledge and has increased our understanding of the engineering of iron hull ship construction, and unique architectural features such as the double bottom, ice breaking forefoot, and movable water ballast systems still used on the Great Lakes today. The *Wisconsin* site retains the potential to yield even greater insight into this vessel type in future years.

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Boundary Description

The boundary for the *Wisconsin* site is marked by a circle with a 500 foot diameter centered on the UTM coordinates 0441796 Easting, 4709143 Northing, Zone 16.

Boundary Justification

The site boundary was chosen to encompass the wreck site and associated debris field.

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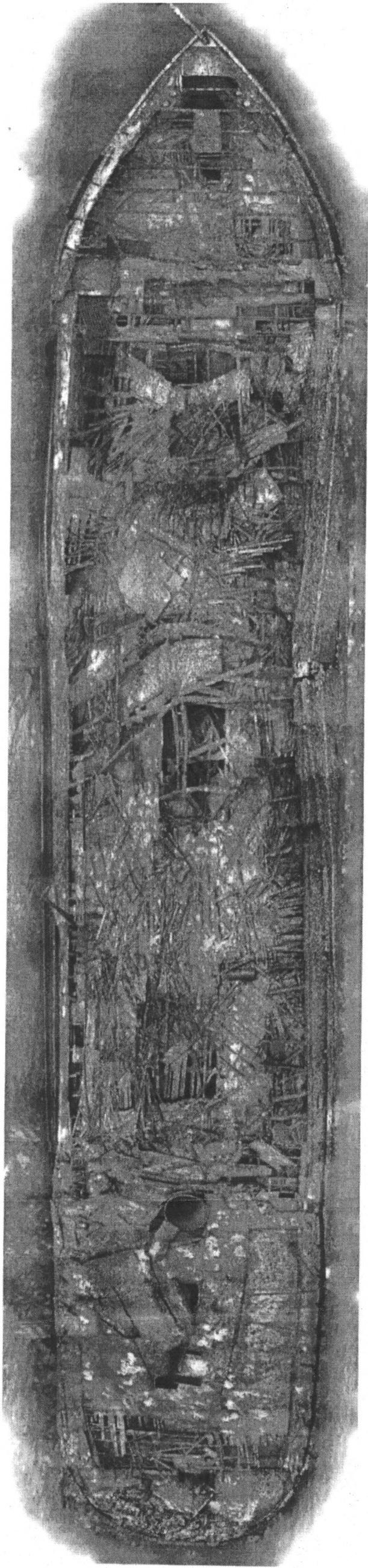
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Wisconsin Shipwreck
Lake Michigan, Kenosha County, Wisconsin

Photo #1 of 1

Wisconsin Shipwreck
Kenosha County, Wisconsin
Photographer Unknown
Negatives at the Wisconsin Historical Society
Ca. 1923
Starboard Side View



**FIGURE 1:
WISCONSIN SHIPWRECK
LAKE MICHIGAN, KENOSHA COUNTY, WI**