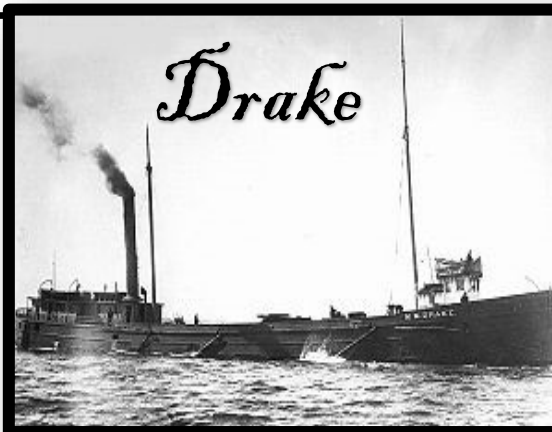
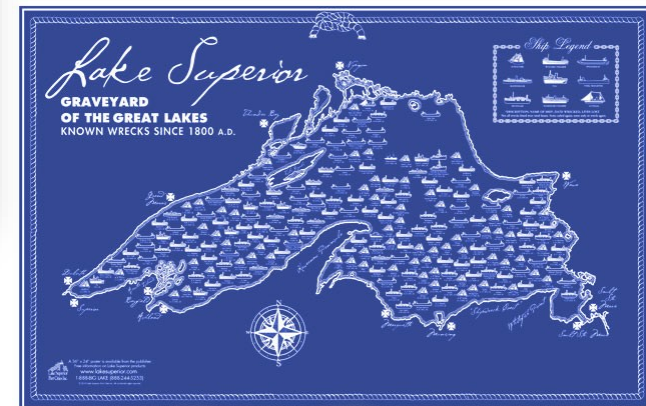


The SS M.M. Drake was a wooden steam barge that towed consort loaded with coal and iron ore on the Great Lakes. She came to the rescue of the crews of at least 4 foundering vessels in her 9 year career only to meet the same fate in her final rescue attempt. Drake sank in 1882 off Vermilion Point after a rescue attempt of her consort Michigan. Her rudder, anchor, and windlass were illegally removed from her wreck site in the 1980s. They are now the property of the State of Michigan. The rudder is on display as a loan to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum and the anchor and windlass are on loan for display to Whitefish Township Community Center. The wreck of Drake is protected as part of an underwater museum in the Whitefish Point Underwater Preserve.



Ship Wreck Coast



November is referred to as "The Month of Storms" on the Great Lakes. The storm that hit when the Fitzgerald went down was one of the biggest, and the worst that Captain McSorley said he had ever seen. In the Fitzgerald's storm, winds as fast as 45 knots were reported, with waves as high as thirty feet. Both water pumps on the Edmund Fitzgerald were damaged, and the lifeboats were destroyed by the force of the storm. While it is many times portrayed that ships were happy to return to the water in search for the Fitz that night, they were not. Though they were eager to help their friends, it was a hard decision to make. Crews had to make a choice to risk their lives in hopes of saving others, or staying sheltered by the safety of Whitefish



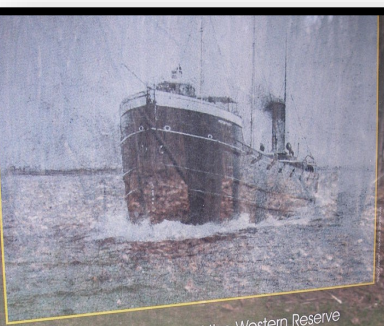
Edmund Fitzgerald



point. While many factors undoubtedly went into the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald, and no one can conclusively determine the cause, one thing is certain from testimony of other sailors that were on Lake Superior on November 10: the storm was a major factor to the ultimate demise of the Edmund Fitzgerald. Waves high enough to sweep across the deck, making it too dangerous to stand on the deck were a major factor in the Edmund Fitzgerald taking on water early in the day on November 10. Whatever the cause of the wreck itself, the storm of November 10 will never be forgotten by Great Lakes sailors.

Luce County Newberry Michigan

THERE ARE OVER 6,000 SHIPWRECKS IN THE GREAT LAKES, HAVING CAUSED AN ESTIMATE LOSS OF 30,000 MARINERS' LIVES. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 550 WRECKS IN LAKE SUPERIOR, MOST OF WHICH ARE UNDISCOVERED. AT LEAST 200 LIE ALONG LAKE SUPERIOR'S SHIPWRECK COAST, A TREACHEROUS 80-MILE STRETCH OF SHORELINE WITH NO SAFE HARBOR BETWEEN MUNISING, MICHIGAN, AND WHITEFISH POINT. THE FAMOUS EDMUND FITZGERALD LIES JUST 15 MILES TO THE NORTHWEST OF WHITEFISH POINT. THE LAKE SUPERIOR SHORELINE IN LUCE COUNTY IS PART OF THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL AND HIKING ON WHICH YOU CAN SEE REMNANTS OF THE PAST SUCH AS SHIPWRECKS, LIGHTHOUSES, LIFESAVING STATIONS, HOMESTEADS, LOGGING CAMPS, AND HISTORIC COMMUNITIES ARE IN EVIDENCE ALL ALONG THE WAY.



The Foundering of the Western Reserve

On August 30, 1892, the 301 foot steamer "Western Reserve" broke in two and sank about 35 miles northwest of the Deer Park Life-Saving Station. As the freighter came apart at the seams, the 27 souls aboard managed to abandon ship safely in two small life boats. Within minutes one of the life boats capsized leaving 19 sailors to do battle for ten long hours with the fury of Lake Superior. At about 7:00 a.m., the second life boat capsized in breakers about a mile from shore. Only the ship's wheelsman reached the beach alive.

Most of the bodies came ashore about two weeks later along a 12 mile stretch of beach at Deer Park. Several of the bodies were in good condition including the 12 year old daughter of the ship's cook. She was described by the station's keeper, "...the little girl, 12 years of age, was found in a perfect state of preservation and beautiful even in death. I was filled with joy to see her and I could scarcely see her for tears. She was found on that desolate shore with her hair and hair partly covered with sand."

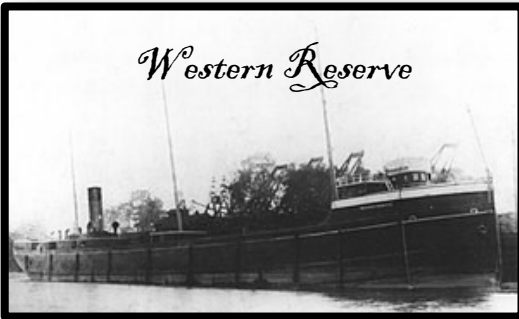
The SS Western Reserve was a propeller that was lost on August 30th 1892 off Deer Park, Michigan. The ship was 301 feet long, had a beam of 41 feet, and was one of the first lake freighters made out of steel plate. Out of the 27 people on board, only one man survived, wheelsman Harry Stewart, who managed to make land on a desolate stretch of shoreline between Grand Marais and Deer Park.

At the time of the incident, the ship was heading to Two Harbors, Minnesota, for a load of iron ore. During a relatively mild gale, she broke in two and sank.

Steward's report on the ship's metal fatigue led to the conclusion that the Western Reserve had been improperly built using brittle steel contaminated phosphorus and sulfur.

Her loss due to hull failure caused a great deal of controversy and ultimately led to the creation of new laws for the testing of steel used in ship-building.

Western Reserve



The owner of the ship, the famous financier Peter Minch, was onboard the ship with his family when it went down. Strangely, Captain Truedell of the Great Lakes Life-Saving Service dreamed about the accident in great detail before it happened. As a matter of fact, he dreamed it in such detail, that he recognized the body of Peter Minch when he found it washed up on shore.

The ship still makes ghostly apparitions around Deer Park, where Lake Superior produces gigantic waves, in all seasons of the year. It is said that on warm, calm nights the sounds of voices and laughter can be heard across the gentle waves.

Around 7:45 pm, in darkness and rolling seas, the Cyprus suddenly rolled to port, turning turtle and started sinking. Four men, a wheelsman, a watchman, the first mate, and her second mate Charles Pitz, managed to board the ship's emergency life raft originally located behind the pilothouse. For the next six hours, the men hung on. In frigid, violent seas, they began to encounter breaking waves near the shore. The raft turned over and over four to five times, and all managed to get back aboard. Finally, close to the beach, the raft turned once more, but this time, only one of the frozen, exhausted, men stayed with the raft. Charlie Pitz wasn't able to climb back on, but he had tied himself to the raft, and held on until he reached shallow water, stumbling literally half-dead to a spot where he collapsed unconscious on the beach. Pitz would have died of exhaustion and hypothermia in a very short time – but he had landed just one-half mile east of the Deer Park Life-Saving Station! Here is an excerpt from the Deer Park Station's Wreck Report for October 11: State of wind and weather:

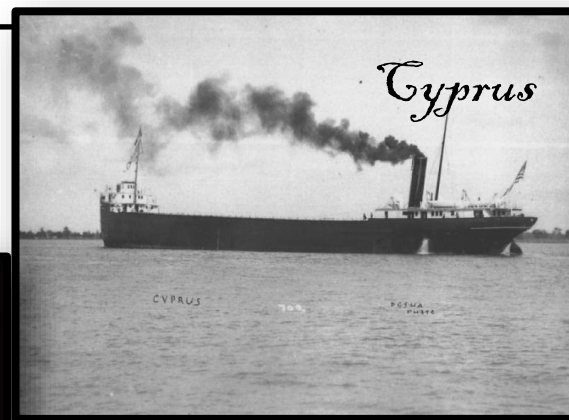
North / High / Raining State of tide and sea: No tide, sea high Time of discovery of wreck: 2 am

By whom discovered: Surfman Ocha

Time of arrival of station crew at wreck: 230 am Twenty-two men were not as fortunate as Pitz; their bodies washed ashore over the next couple of days. Pitz revived over several hours and assisted in identifying his fellow crew. All had life jackets on bearing the name Cyprus and all but two were eventually found east of the Deer Park Life-Saving Station. The story of the Cyprus is just beginning to be told. Her story first ran in the Winter 1999 issue of Shipwreck Journal, followed by another story written by Pitz's great-niece, Capt. Ann Sanborn of the U.S. Maritime Service, also known as the merchant marine. Capt. Sanborn is an Admiralty Attorney, Master Mariner, and Associate Professor at the United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY. She has been notified of the discovery and plans to visit the Shipwreck Museum very soon. She, as well as Great Lakes author Fred Stonehouse, have compiled much information on the Cyprus. Charlie Pitz went back to sailing immediately and did not openly discuss the loss. He did not list the Cyprus on his sea service resume provided to GLSHS by Capt. Sanborn. What caused the sinking of the



Cyprus? At the time, mariners were suspicious of the new type of Mulholland sliding hatch covers – but Capt. Sanborn explains that building of the Cyprus was interrupted by a serious labor riot in Lorain, Ohio that could well have led to basic construction flaws in the vessel.



SS D.M. Clemson was a 468-foot (143 m) long steel hulled Great Lakes freighter that went missing on 1 December 1908, on Lake Superior. The ship was last seen coming through the Soo Locks, onto Lake Superior. The ship was built in 1903 for the Provident Steamship Company. She is known for sinking on Lake Superior, on the night of 1 December 1908 with all hands; 24 men lost their lives. The wreck of D.M. Clemson is still missing, and the cause of her sinking remains a mystery to this day.

There were no survivors to tell what happened to the ship. However, for weeks debris and some bodies from the 24 crew members washed ashore from the ill-fated ship between Crisp Point and Grand Marais. One of the bodies found was the body of the Clemson's watchman, Simon Dunn of Dublin, Ireland, which washed ashore at Crisp Point. Dunn was wearing a life jacket with D.M. Clemson written on it. Later, pieces of the ship's cabin, 23 of the ship's wooden hatch covers and at least three more bodies were seen floating further west. Only one other body was recovered, and was identified as second mate Charles Woods of Marine City, Michigan.

Historical Collection of the Great Lakes
Bending Coosa State University

Clemson

