NPS Form 10-900
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Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 *America* **Shipwreck (Canaller)**
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Four miles offshore in Lake Michigan N/A **not for publication**
city or town Town of Carlton X **vicinity**
state Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Kewaunee **code** 061 **zip code** 54216

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title 5/9/13 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

America Shipwreck (Canaller)	Kewaunee 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 7.3.13

for

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)

- private
- public-local
- X public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- X site
- object

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

contributing	noncontributing	
		buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	total

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

Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/ Water-Related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/ Underwater

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER- Canaller/Schooner

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
walls N/A
roof N/A
other N/A

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

_ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

_ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

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

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

Property is:

_ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

_ B removed from its original location.

_ C a birthplace or grave.

_ D a cemetery.

_ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

_ F a commemorative property.

_ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHAEOLOGY / HISTORIC-NON-ABORIGINAL
MARITIME HISTORY
COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1873-1880

Significant Dates

1873

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Muir, Archibald

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):
- _ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- _ previously listed in the National Register
- _ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _ designated a National Historic landmark
- _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
X State Historic Preservation Office
- _ Other State Agency
- _ Federal Agency
- _ Local government
- _ University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	464327	4910871
2			
3			
4			

☐ See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Tamara Thomsen and Keith Meverden				
organization	Wisconsin Historical Society			**date**	12/05/2012
street & number	816 State Street			**telephone**	608.221.5909
city or town	Madison	**state**	WI	**zip code**	53705

Summary
Located four miles offshore and eight miles south southeast of Kewaunee, Wisconsin, in Lake Michigan, the *America* lies in 120 feet of water. The hull is somewhat broken up, but nearly all hull structure and rigging are extant. The *America* was constructed by shipwright Archibald Muir near Port Huron, Michigan, in 1873. A signature ship of the Muir shipyard, canallers were a unique schooner vessel type that developed on the Great Lakes and were designed to transit the Welland Canal locks while carrying the maximum amount of cargo possible. With only inches to spare while passing through the locks, canallers carried grain from ports on western Lakes Michigan and Superior to eastern ports on Lake Ontario (Oswego, New York and Kingston, Ontario). Canallers returning to the upper lakes were often loaded with coal that was used to power and heat Midwestern cities. The *America* provides archaeologists and historians with the unique opportunity to study the construction techniques unique to Great Lakes canallers and the grain trade and the role these vessels played in regional commerce. The *America* site has yielded significant information on Great Lakes canaller construction and has great potential to yield further information in future years.

Site Description
The *America* site lies in 120 feet of water 8 miles south southeast of the Kewaunee River entrance on Lake Michigan. Lying on a heading of 130 degrees, the deck has collapsed and both the port and starboard sides have broken at the turn of the bilge and fallen to starboard. Despite its broken condition, nearly all of the vessel's hull structure and standing rigging is extant, but scattered around the site.

The centerboard trunk remains upright, and both the stem and stern posts are partially upright but both list to starboard. The stem assembly is 1.1 feet sided by 2.8 feet molded and leans 2 degrees forward of vertical and lists 26 degrees to starboard. The keelson is 1.5 feet square with no sister or rider keelsons present. The rudder, fashion timber, and deadwood remain attached to the stern post, and the entire structure rests on the starboard side of the fashion timber.

Outer hull planks vary in width between 0.5 to 0.6 feet wide, but all are 0.3 feet thick. Ceiling planks are also 0.3 feet thick, but vary in width between 0.8 to 1.0 feet. The double frames amidship are constructed from futtocks 0.4 feet sided by 0.9 feet molded, with a space of 1.4 feet between frame sets. Frame futtocks near the port quarter are 0.4 feet sided by 0.85 feet molded, with a space of 1.0 feet between frame sets. Cant frames are also doubled, constructed of futtocks 0.4 feet sided by 0.85 feet molded, with a space of 1.2 feet between frame sets. Futtock lengths are 8.5 feet throughout the vessel.

The samson post has fallen toward the starboard quarter with the collapse of the deck, but remains somewhat upright with the top of the post located 14.7 feet aft of the stem. The samson post is 17.1 feet tall, 1.5 feet square, and protruded 6.7 feet above the weather deck. An iron crosshead, 3.0 feet in

length, is fastened to the front of the samson post 1.0 feet below the top of the post. The mortise for the bowsprit is 1.5 feet tall, 0.5 feet wide, and 0.8 feet deep; there is a space of 3.4 feet between the top of the samson post and the mortise.

The windlass barrel remains attached to the aft side of the samson post and is 12.8 feet in length. A norman pin protrudes from the windlass barrel on the starboard side, and a straight iron bolt protrudes 1.5 feet from the same location on the port side. Additionally, a chain stopper is fastened to the starboard side of the deck immediately aft of the starboard hawsepipe. A port-side chain stopper is not extant.

A large wooden bitt lies within the hull aft of the windlass on the starboard side. An iron norman pin penetrates the bitt near the top, and there is visible wear on the bitt from lines being tied to it and the norman pin. This bitt originally protruded from the weather deck aft of the windlass. The forecastle scuttle is intact, but has collapsed with the deck and now lies beneath the windlass. A quantity of anchor chain is piled on the weather deck aft and to starboard of the windlass.

The weather deck has collapsed within the hull, and most of the deck is broken up with the exception of an area between the center and aft cargo hatches. The center cargo hatch has become disarticulated from the deck section and lies inverted to starboard of the centerboard trunk. An iron capstan remains attached to the forward end of these beams and rests upside down within the hull, holding the deck section off the floor of the hull.

A large section of deck remains intact from just forward of the mainmast to the aft coaming of the aftermost cargo hatch. This intact deck section lies within the lower hull aft of the centerboard trunk and to starboard of the keelson. The aft cargo hatch is 6.7 feet square on the outside of the coaming. The headledges are 1.9 feet tall by 0.3 feet wide and rise 1.3 feet above deck level. The coamings are notched on either side to produce a shoulder that extends 0.2 feet downward from the upper, inside edge of the coaming. Deck planks on this section are 0.35 feet wide by 0.2 feet thick. Deck beams are 0.9 feet sided by 0.6 feet molded, and have a space of 2.7 feet between beams. A double-acting bilge pump lies in the hull aft of the aft cargo hatch.

The vessel's rail is 1.0 feet wide by 0.3 feet thick and is supported by bulwark stanchions 1.6 feet in length from the covering board to underside of rail. The bulwark stanchions are extended top timbers of the frames. Each frame futtock is 0.45 feet sided by 0.55 feet molded where they abut the top timbers. Above the covering board, the bulwark stanchions are 0.4 feet sided by 0.5 feet molded, and have a space of 1.4 feet between stanchions. The bulwark has a single plank fastened on the inside, directly underneath the rail, that is 0.8 feet tall. An identical plank is also fastened beneath the rail on the outside of the bulwark; beneath this plank are five additional planks that are 0.3 feet wide by 0.05 feet thick. At the bottom of the bulwark planks is a freeing port, 0.05 feet high, that runs the length of

the bulwark between the lower bulwark plank and the covering board.

The covering board is 1.3 feet wide by 0.4 feet thick. There is a space of 0.45 feet between the covering board and the deck shelf. The deck shelf is 1.4 feet wide by 0.4 feet thick, and is notched for the deck beams with each notch measuring 0.2 feet deep by 0.8 feet wide. The deck shelf is supported by hanging knees that are fastened directly below the beam notches in the shelf. The space between hanging knees varies between 2.2 and 3.0 feet, depending on the location in the hull.

The centerboard trunk begins 47.1 feet aft of the stem. The trunk is 28.0 feet long, 9.1 feet tall, and 1.6 feet wide. Nine longitudinal planks cover each side of the trunk, and all are 1.0 feet in height. The center of the centerboard's kingpin is 6.3 feet aft of the trunk's forward edge and 8.4 feet from top of trunk. An unusual reinforcing timber is fastened atop the keelson on either end of the trunk. Forward of the trunk, this timber is fastened on the port side of the keelson; aft of the trunk it is fastened to the starboard side of the keelson. Each of the timbers is 6.0 feet long, 1.1 feet tall, and 0.5 feet thick with a radiused end. They are fastened to the keelson with iron bolts.

The sternpost lists 42 degrees to starboard and leans 26 degrees aft. The stern post is 1.1 feet sided, 0.8 feet molded, and 13.4 feet in length. The rudder blade is 10.3 feet tall and 3.0 feet in length at its widest point, curving forward near the bottom of the blade. The rudder is dislodged at the bottom gudgeon. The fashion timber is 23.3 feet in overall length port to starboard, and constructed from a timber that is 1.45 feet molded by 1.55 feet sided. The vertical timbers fastened to the ends of the fashion timber are 4.0 feet tall by 0.4 feet square.

The transom remains connected to the fashion timber on the starboard side, but the port side of the transom has separated from the fashion timber and has fallen away from the vessel. The transom is 22.4 feet in width and has a camber of 1.7 feet, measured at the transom's centerline. Four planks are extant on both the inside and outside of the transom. Individual planks on both the inside and outside are 0.7 feet wide by 0.15 feet thick. The vertical stern timbers within the transom are 3.4 feet tall. The traveler for the mizzen sheet block is 1.2 feet in length and 0.2 feet in diameter, and the double sheave block remains attached to the traveler. The transom rail is 0.6 feet wide by 0.3 feet thick. There are two iron fairleads fastened to the top of the rail on either side of the transom, 1.2 feet inboard from either quarter. Each of the fairleads is 1.8 long, 0.4 feet wide, 0.3 feet high and has a 0.2-foot opening for lines.

One of the unique features of the *America* site is the removable bowsprit that was designed to be unstepped and raised while transiting the Welland Canal locks. This feature was unique to canallers, and the *America* site is particularly significant for this feature and its bowsprit that has come unstepped and allows otherwise hidden features to be readily visible.

The bowsprit has unstepped from the samson post and pivoted forward at the top of the stem; the head of the bowsprit now rests on the lakebed at an angle to stem. The bowsprit is 29.8 feet in length; its housing is square in section at 1.4 feet sided by 1.2 feet molded. The bowsprit's hounded length is 20.0 feet, and a plank is fastened to the top of the bowsprit that is 2.0 feet wide by 0.3 feet thick. Beneath the plank the bowsprit is round in section with the exception of the upper surface that is planed flat to accept the plank. The tenon on the base of the bowsprit is 0.45 feet wide, 0.55 feet tall, and 1.3 feet in length. The tenon is rounded on its upper edge to allow the bowsprit to be raised vertically while the tenon remains stepped within the samson post.

To allow quick raising of the bowsprit, a removable iron clamp held the bowsprit to the top of the stem. The clamp consisted of an iron bar placed over the top of the bowsprit that was secured with an iron bolt on either side of the stem. Each bolt is 2.2 feet in length, and the top of each bar is threaded to accept a square iron nut. The two nuts allowed tightening of the clamping bar to hold the bowsprit securely to the top of the stem assembly. To raise the bowsprit for canal lock passage, the bowsprit's standing rigging was disconnected, the stem clamp loosened and removed, and the head of the bowsprit was then hoisted upward until the bowsprit stood nearly vertically from the front of the samson post.

Immediately forward of the stem clamp is the mounting base for the jibboom. Constructed from a wooden block 2.2 feet long and a diameter of 0.9 feet, the front of the block is mortised to accept the base of the jibboom. The jibboom, 49.5 feet in length, lies on the lakebed off the bow with its head nearest the hull and the base farthest away. The iron bowsprit cap remains attached to the jibboom.

Aft of the stem clamp, where the bowsprit passed between the stem and the rail, a timber is fastened to the top of the bowsprit that has identical dimensions to the rail and is the same width as the bowsprit, or 1.3 feet in width, 0.8 feet in length, and 0.2 feet thick. This timber is designed to make the rail continuous when the bowsprit is stepped in place, and allows the bowsprit to be easily removed when needed. This rail timber is fastened atop a wooden block fastened to the bowsprit that is 1.3 feet long by 0.5 feet tall; the purpose of this block is to provide an appropriate spacer that raises the rail timber to the appropriate height above the bowsprit.

Two bobstays remain connected to the underside of the bowsprit. The outer bobstay is fastened 4.0 feet from the head of the bowsprit, and the inner bobstay is fastened 8.0 feet from the head of the bowsprit. A wire rope bowsprit guy remains attached to either side of the bowsprit.

All three of the *America*'s masts are extant and lie next to one another on the lake bed south of the vessel's starboard side. All three masts are broken at approximately deck level, and a topmast lies beneath the two southernmost masts. The housing of the mizzenmast remains within the hull beneath where the stern cabin formerly stood, and the housing of the mainmast lies beneath the port side hull

alongside the centerboard trunk. The foremast partners and the housing of the foremast lie within the hull between the windlass and the centerboard trunk, and several wooden cleats remain attached to the foremast, which broke several feet above deck level.

The mizzenmast is the southernmost of the masts and lies parallel with the hull with its masthead facing west. This mast is 1.2 feet in diameter at the break, and 63.3 feet in length from the break to the masthead. The mast's top is located 53.0 feet above the break and is constructed from two swept cross trees that meet at each end to form an oval-shaped top with sharp ends. The topmast remains stepped to the mast, but is broken just above the masthead level. A number of wire shrouds remain connected to the masthead and extend toward the wreck's starboard quarter.

The mainmast lies parallel to the mizzenmast, but closer to the hull with its masthead toward the east. The mainmast is 72.5 feet in length from the break to the masthead, and is 1.7 feet in diameter at the break. The mainmast has nearly straight cross trees, with only a very slight sweep aft. Several wire shrouds remain attached to the mast head, and several wooden sail hoops are intact around the mast just below the cheeks. A boom lies nearly parallel to this mast near its break that is 42.3 feet in length from the jaws to a break in the aft end of the boom.

The foremast lies between the hull and the other two masts, but somewhat eastward of the other spars. The foremast is 67.3 feet in length from the break to the masthead, and 2.5 feet in diameter at the break. The fore topmast remains stepped to the foremast, but it has broken above the foremast's masthead and the upper portion now lies beneath the foremast. Both of the top's crosstrees remain attached to the trestle trees, and both are nearly straight with only a slight sweep aft. Several wooden sail hoops remain extant around the mast below the cheeks. A second boom is located off the port bow that is 43.9 feet in length.

The masts were supported via wire shrouds connected to chainplates that were 4.85 feet in length, 0.3 feet wide and 0.05 feet thick, and topped with deadeyes that are 0.55 feet in diameter by 0.35 feet thick. Four chainplates supported the foremast on either side. On the port side, there is a space of 2.3 feet between the first and second chainplates, followed by a space of 3.4 feet between the second and third, and 2.3 feet between the aft two chainplates. The mainmast was likewise supported by four chainplates on either side with spacing equal to the foremast chainplates. Mizzenmast chainplates could not be located due to the broken nature of the hull in the stern area.

Summary

Located eight miles south southeast of Kewaunee, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin, the *America* lies in 120 feet of water in Lake Michigan. Constructed in 1873 and lost in 1880, the *America* represents a vessel class, the canaller, which traveled the longest routes of any of the Great Lakes vessels while carrying Midwestern grain to eastern markets. Little historical documentation exists on canaller construction and operation. Much of our understanding of this vessel type has come from archaeological data recovered from wreck sites like the *America*. The *America* meets the registration requirements for Criterion 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 *America* was discovered in 1977 and documented by the Wisconsin Historical Society in 2012. Due to its remote location, the *America* remains lightly visited by divers. The *America* site has produced a wealth of archaeological knowledge on canal schooner (canaller) construction and use, and it will continue to produce important archaeological data in future years.

The Great Lakes Grain Trade

Discussion of Wisconsin's maritime economy often requires the inclusion of the eastern Great Lakes of Huron, Erie, and Ontario. Many of Wisconsin's commodities were shipped beyond Lakes Michigan and Superior to eastern Great Lakes ports such as Buffalo, New York, and Kingston, Ontario. These distant ports returned goods, supplies, and immigrants to Wisconsin, creating a diverse regional economic universe. Separating Wisconsin from the eastern Great Lakes frequently results in a fragmented understanding of Wisconsin's maritime heritage as a whole.

Wisconsin's first encounter with a European sailing vessel occurred in 1679 when LaSalle's ill-fated *Le Griffon* landed on the Door County peninsula. LaSalle continued southward to explore the Mississippi valley. *Le Griffon*, loaded with furs bound for the European market, departed Washington Island on 18 September 1679, never to be seen again. Following *Le Griffon*, it was nearly 100 years before a sailing vessel again entered Lake Michigan. It is probable that ventures onto Lake Michigan were made by King George's Royal Navy in the 1760s, but the next confirmed sailing ship to enter the lake was John Askin's *Archange* in 1778, which sailed to Chicago and Green Bay in search of corn to supply Canadian fur traders (Quaife 1944). From the *Archange* of 1778 and others through 1815, most sailing vessels on Lake Michigan supported military outposts such as Fort St. Joseph and Fort Dearborn (present day Chicago). In 1818, the *Walk-in-the-Water* was the first steamer constructed on the upper lakes. It entered Lake Michigan one year later to sail to Green Bay (Mansfield 1899; Mills 1910).

By 1836, regularly scheduled steamship lines connected western Lake Michigan with eastern cities, and steam vessels were under construction at Milwaukee (Quaife 1944; *Milwaukee Advertiser* 1836). These steamers quickly pulled passenger traffic and high-dollar cargo from the schooners. On 21 May

1853 the Michigan Central Railway made the first rail connection with Chicago, and in 1855 the first all-rail connection between Buffalo and Chicago was established (Quaife 1944; Mills 1910). These railroads quickly stole the steamers' passenger and high-dollar cargo trade, resulting in even stiffer competition for sailing vessels. Unlike lake vessels, the rail lines could provide regularly scheduled shipments that were unaffected by weather, as well as year-round transportation unaffected by ice-covered water. Despite increasing competition, however, lake sail did not die easily. Sail's advantages were lower construction and operation costs, adaptability to many different trades, and the fact that sail technology was already at its zenith, having benefited from centuries of technological development. Sail required less capital investment, its propulsion cost nothing, and the smaller crews were inexpensive relative to steamers.

A unique vessel type developed on the Great Lakes designed to transit the Welland Canal locks while carrying the largest possible amount of cargo; these box-shaped vessels were called canallers. Designed to carry the maximum amount of cargo through the canal locks with only inches to spare, canallers had bluff bows, flat bottoms and sterns, short bowsprits, and highly-canted jibbooms. Some canallers were rigged with a hinged or shortened jib boom that could be folded, removed, or de-rigged for passage through the locks. The mainmast (on two-masters) and mizzenmast (on three-masters) booms were typically shortened so they would not overhang the stern. Due to their boxy shape, there were claims that canallers were notoriously poor sailors in heavy weather, a claim supported by the fact that one particularly violent storm in October 1873 sent six Oswego canallers to the bottom with all hands (Karamanski 2000; *Oswego Daily Palladium 1873*).

The Welland Canal opened on 30 November 1829. The first vessel through the canal was the British schooner *Ann and Jane* on a two-day up-bound transit from Port Dalhousie on Lake Ontario to Port Colburne on Lake Erie. The original Welland Canal (1829-1845) limited vessels to 110 feet in length, 22 feet in beam, and 8 feet in depth. It followed many natural water routes, beginning with Twelve Mile Creek from Port Dalhousie to Merritton, where vessels travelled through 40 locks over the Niagara Escarpment. The canal then followed the Welland River from Merritton to Port Robinson to avoid the Niagara Falls.

With increases in grain traffic and vessel size, the small canal locks were soon obsolete. The Canadian government purchased the Welland Canal Company and expanded the canal in 1846, reducing the number of locks to 27 and cutting a more direct route. The new locks were expanded to allow vessels of 150 feet in length, 26.5 feet in beam, and 9 feet in depth. The canal's original wooden locks became control weirs for the new canal, reducing the physical labor of towing ships from lock to lock (Aitken 1997; Mansfield 1899; St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation 2003).

The large number of immigrants that arrived on Lake Michigan's western shore during the early

nineteenth century soon began moving from the lakeshore to populate the rich Midwestern prairie lands. Under the industrious settlers' hands, the fertile Midwestern soil soon began producing a large surplus of grain that made its way to Lake Michigan's port cities for transport to eastern markets via the Great Lakes. The inland lake route greatly facilitated the grain trade's growth by providing cheap and ready transportation.

The brig *John Kenzie* carried the first Lake Michigan grain shipment from Grand River, Michigan, to Buffalo, New York, in 1836. Chicago followed suit two years later, sending 39 bags of wheat to Buffalo aboard the *Great Western* in 1838. In 1839 the brig *Osceola* carried Chicago's first bulk shipment of wheat, carrying 1,678 bushels from Chicago to Black Rock (Buffalo), New York (Mansfield 1899).

It was not until the 1840s, however, that the Great Lake grain trade began in earnest. Chicago grain exports between 1834 and 1840 totaled 13,765 bushels (Mills 1910). The year 1841 alone saw 40,000 bushels exported from Chicago. By 1847, Chicago was shipping more than two million bushels yearly. Milwaukee achieved an equal volume by 1853, and surpassed Chicago in grain exports by 1862 (Karamanski 2000). Due to a lack of adequate harbor facilities and grain elevators elsewhere on Lake Michigan, Milwaukee and Chicago were the dominant grain ports.

Freight rates for grain were subject to supply and demand, dropping during summer months and peaking during the fall harvest time. Freight rates for the 1837-1838 seasons were eight cents a bushel, with an additional two cents per bushel surcharge for elevator service. During the 1850s, rates from Chicago to Buffalo remained steady between 10 and 15 cents per bushel, with steamers earning a fraction of a cent more than steamers. During the 1860s, rates dropped to between 4 and 7 cents per bushel. From 1874 onward, rates began a constant decline, reaching 1.53 cents per bushel by 1898 (Cooper 1988; Mansfield 1899; Mills 1910).

The Lake Michigan grain trade consisted of mostly wheat until 1848, when corn began shipping in increasing quantities. Oats, barley, and rye were also shipped in small quantities (Cooper 1988). Buffalo and Oswego were early rivals for Lake Michigan grain, with Buffalo capturing a larger share of the trade during the early years. Oswego's disadvantage was that to reach Oswego from Lake Michigan, vessels were required to transit the Welland Canal and were charged a toll of six dollars per thousand bushels, a toll not required to reach Buffalo. By the 1870s, however, canal tolls from Buffalo to Syracuse equaled or exceeded the Welland Canal tolls, and with a shorter route from Oswego to eastern sea ports, Oswego's grain traffic swelled (*Oswego Daily Palladium* 1897). Vessels returning to Lake Michigan were often loaded with coal from ports on Lakes Erie and Ontario, used for heating Midwestern cities and powering steam-powered factories. Coal tonnage grew with transportation improvements between the mines to eastern lake shipping ports (Mansfield 1899).

Ships carrying grain made the Oswego-Chicago round trip in thirty to thirty-five days, and six to seven trips were completed seasonally (*Oswego Daily Palladium* 1897). The heyday of the canallers and the grain trade was short lived. By the late 1870s, the railroad was gaining ever-larger shares of Lake Michigan grain, and in 1880 rail tonnage finally exceeded lake tonnage (Mansfield 1899). The *America* operated between 1873 and 1880, during the period of transition from lake to rail transportation.

Operational History

Three schooners named *America* operated on the Great Lakes in the 1870s. Each of these vessels received frequent mention in contemporary newspapers, making a difficult task to differentiate which vessel was which, in historic accounts. The Canadian-built two-masted schooner *America* was cut down to a tow barge in the mid-1870s, likely 1873, leaving only a small overlap with the other two others schooners *America*. The most confusion comes from the barkentine *America* (Official Number US355), originally built in 1853 by famous shipwright, John Oades in Clayton, New York, also as a canaller, of similar dimensions, tonnage and lines, but was rebuilt as a three-masted schooner in 1872. In the 1870s she was also owned by parties from Chicago, Charnley Bros. & Co., who ran a lumber mill at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. It is believed that during this time period, the vessel exclusively served the Lake Michigan lumber industry and sailed only on Lake Michigan. By closely examining the lists of arrivals and clearings in news reports, it was possible to differentiate with a high degree of certainty which vessel was which in these historic documents, and only those believed to belong to the canaller schooner *America* which is sunk off Kewaunee, Wisconsin, are included here (ADGNFPL 2012a; 2012b; 2012c).

The *America* was launched at 3:25 PM on 31 May 1873 from the Port Huron, Michigan, shipyard of Archibald Muir & Co. on the Black River. She was issued the Official Number 105244, but that number was cancelled and a new number, 105337 was assigned. The *America* was the product of Master carpenter, James Perry. The *America* had one deck and carried three masts, and was painted black. D. Robeson of Port Huron made her sails, renowned for his reputation for "fit and quality of his work". The vessel measured 137.3 ft. long, with a 26-foot beam and 11.8-foot depth of hold capable of hauling 341.67 gross tons. Built to the dimensions of the locks of the Welland Canal, her bluff bow and square lines defined her boxy hull shape as a canaller. She was built to the same lines and similar dimensions as the schooner *Groton* launched from the Muir yard in 1868. The *America* was considered a sister ship to that vessel. This pattern of vessels continued after the launch of the *America* as well. The next vessel launched from the Muir yard 7 October 1873, the *Pulaski,* was an exact counterpart as far as size and build were concerned (ADGNFPL 2012a; Bureau of Navigation 1873a; *Detroit Free Press* 1873; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1873a; 1873b).

The *America* was initially enrolled at Port Huron, Michigan, on 11 June 1873 and Chicago, Illinois, was listed as her homeport. One-third of the ship was owned by her builder Archibald Muir; one-third was owned by David Muir of Chicago; and one-third was owned by Thomas Hood of Chicago (ADGNFPL 2012a; Bureau of Navigation 1873a; *Detroit Free Press* 1873; *Port Huron Daily Times* 1873a). Captain William Bronley was named her Master at the vessel's launch, but by the time of her first trip, Captain James Cornell was at her helm. The *America*'s maiden voyage departed Port Huron on 18 June 1873 carrying lumber through the Welland Canal on 21 June to Clayton, New York (*Detroit Free Press* 1873; *Daily News* 1873a). A trip to Milwaukee was made in July to pick up 18,000 bushels of wheat which was discharged at the Montreal Transportation Company wharf in Kingston, Ontario on 2 August. A trip to Chicago followed in late August to load wheat destined for Oswego, New York (*Daily News* 1873b; 1873c). On 1 October 1873, her enrollment was surrendered indicating that the *America*, despite having made several trips that season, had simply been a new vessel in transit and had now arrived at her new homeport. Thomas Hood became the vessel's managing owner and Captain James Cornell remained in command (ADGNFPL 2012a; Bureau of Navigation 1873a; 1873b).

Captain A.P. Christensen took command of the *America* on 22 April 1874 (Bureau of Navigation 1873b). The 1874 season got off to an uneventful start, but by season's end her luck would not hold out. On 20 October, with 23,000 bushels of wheat onboard, the *America* went ashore on the south side of Long Point in Lake Erie. She loaded wheat at Chicago for Bruce & Chambers of Buffalo and was enroute when the accident occurred. On 21 October, the tug *Orient* was dispatched from Port Rowan, Ontario, with steam pumps and a hawser aboard to assist in her release. By the time the tug arrived on the scene, four feet of water was in her hold. It took nearly two days of work to release her. Only 8,000 bushels of her grain was saved and lightered onto the schooner *Emeu*. The *America* was then taken in tow of the tugs *Orient* and *Bryant* and brought to Buffalo where she was thoroughly gone over. The damage to her hull was estimated at $5,000 and the loss of her cargo cost the owners $31,000 (*Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* 1874a; 1874b; 1874c; *Chicago Inter-Ocean* 1874).

On 21 May 1875, a new enrollment was issued for a change in ownership of the canaller. Thomas Hood and David Muir of Chicago each retained their shares in the vessel, but Archibald Muir sold this portion to Colin McLachlan of Port Huron, Michigan, who owned 3/24, and David Robson also of Port Huron who owned 5/24 of the vessel (ADGNFPL 2012a; Bureau of Navigation 1873b; 1874). Only two accounts of the *America*'s travels have been located for 1875. On 15 October, the *America* arrived at the St. Lawrence & Chicago Forwarding Co. dock in Kinston, Ontario, Canada with 18,000 bushels of wheat from Milwaukee (*Daily News* 1875a). The ship passed through the Welland Canal on 26 October upbound with coal from Charlotte (Port of Rochester), New York, on her way to Racine, Wisconsin (*Daily News 1875*b). No record of the *America*'s service history has been found in newsprint for the 1876 season.

The 1877 season proved difficult for the *America*. Around midnight on 23 June, the Northern Transportation Company's steamer *City of New York* collided with the *America* in a dense fog seven miles west of Whitefish Point on Lake Superior. Both captains claimed that the collision was the fault of the other. The *America* was struck on her starboard quarter crushing through her side. The canaller was bound for Kingston, Ontario, with a cargo of square timber from Munising, Michigan. It was theorized that the lumber cargo aboard was all that kept the *America* afloat. Captain Warren sailed the waterlogged *America* to Sault Ste. Marie. The *City of New York*, carrying railroad iron and general merchandise intended for Duluth, was so badly damaged that to save his vessel Captain Leonard ran the ship up on the beach seven miles west of the point, 600 feet from shore. The northwest wind carried the steamer further onto the beach and a tug was sent the next day from Sault Ste. Marie to lighter the vessel and pull her free. Incidentally, the fog was so dense that a few hours after the *America/City of New York* collision the schooner *William B. Ogden*, loaded with iron ore from Marquette to Cleveland, ran ashore just three miles west of the *City of New York* (*Detroit Tribune* 1877).

On 19 October 1877, the *America* struck the scow schooner *St. Joseph* near Beach Island in Lake St. Clair. The extent of damage to the scow was so severe that she was determined a total loss and abandoned (*Cleveland Herald* 1877).

The *America* was one of the first vessels out on the lakes in the spring of 1878. She arrived at Port Colborne, Ontario, at the head of the Welland Canal on Lake Erie on 7 May 1878 and arrived at the port of Oswego, New York, with corn from Chicago on 15 May 1878. The *America* was the first ship to arrive at Oswego that season. She returned to Chicago light passing through the canal on 21 May (*Daily News* 1878a; 1878b; 1878c). The only other mention of the *America* in newsprint during the 1878 season was a notification of arrival at the Holcomb & Stewart wharf in Kingston, Ontario, on 10 August with 15,000 bushels of corn from Chicago (*Daily News* 1878d).

Several arrivals and passages were noted for the 1879 season. On 3 June 1879, the *America* arrived at the Kingston & Montreal Forwarding Co. wharf in Kingston, Ontario, with 14,000 bushels of wheat from Chicago. The grain was not unloaded and she departed the same day for Montreal (*British Whig* 1879). In early June there was fair wind and good weather allowing the *America* to make a rapid trip back to Chicago to take on another cargo of corn. On 11 June she was noted passing downbound at Port Colborne, Ontario, through the Welland Canal on her way to Kingston. It took one day to pass through the canal clearing Port Dalhousie, Ontario, at the other end on 12 June (*Daily News* 1879a; 1879b). After discharging her cargo at Kingston, she took on coal at Charlotte (Port of Rochester), New York, and passed through the canal again on 25 June bound for Michigan City, Indiana (*Daily News* 1879c).

On the evening of 28 September 1880, the tugs *A.W. Lawrence* and *M.A. Gagnon* with two loaded stone scows in tow were enroute from Two Rivers, Wisconsin, to Ahnapee (Algoma), Wisconsin. The scows belonged to George O. Spear of Sturgeon Bay and were hauling stone to build the government pier at Anhapee. The *M.A. Gagnon* was in the lead with a line running to the *A.W. Lawrence* and the scows were towed approximately two hundred feet behind. There were no lights on the scows. The *America* was running light from Chicago to Escanaba where she was to pick up iron ore bound for Michigan City. She was under the command of Captain Fred Gunderson. The *America*'s mate on watch spotted the tugs around 11 PM. Captain Gunderson saw the red and green navigational lights on the tugs as well as sparks releasing from the smokestacks and concluded that they were fishing because of the absence of tow lights. The Master of the *A.W. Lawrence* noticed the *America* approaching and sounded two sharp whistles to keep the vessel away but the warning was not heard. Additionally, he altered his course to pass to the leeward of the *America*, but the altered course brought the scows directly in the path of the canaller. A seaman on the jibboom of the canaller called out that there was an object dead ahead. Collision was imminent and unavoidable. The corner of the first scow astern of the *A.W. Lawrence* struck the *America* just before midnight with such force with her starboard bow had a large hole torn in her hull. The collision parted the line between the tug and deeply laden scow. She filled immediately and sank nine miles north of Two Rivers Lighthouse (Rawley Point Lighthouse) and about four miles from shore. The crew was able to scramble quickly aboard their yawl. No lives were lost. Captain Fred Gunderson was said to have lost a great sum of money and the crew lost all of their personal effects. When they rowed from the scene, the *America* was completely submerged with her head down and stern up and only the top of her main and mizzenmasts remained above the water. The crew arrived at Two Rivers Point on the morning of 29 September and a telegram was sent to the vessel owner Thomas Hood in Chicago (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1880; *Door County Advocate* 1880a; 1880b; J.W. Hall 1880; Hirthe and Hirthe 1986).

A contract was made with Stephen B. Grummond of Detroit, owner of the tug *Winslow*, to drag the vessel ashore, send divers down to patch the break, and raise her. The owner of the tug would receive $3,500 for the job or nothing if they failed. The tug left Detroit on 3 October and on the morning of 6 October the *Winslow* along with the *Gagnon*, went to the wreck of the *America*. A diver descended 50 feet to her main cross tree and unfurled the gaff top sail, and a line to the mast. The tugs pulled on her for some time only succeeding in turning her stern toward shore and breaking the line. The *Winslow* departed for Manitowoc to employ lighters and find another line. On the morning of 7 October, Grummond telegraphed the Chicago underwriters indicating that they had abandoned the *America* in deep water and the *Winslow* departed a few days later (*Manitowoc Pilot* 1880; *Door County Advocate* 1880a; 1880b; J.W. Hall 1880; Hirthe and Hirthe 1986).

Acting on behalf of the insurance underwriters, Captain John Prindiville Jr. visited the wreck on the afternoon of 13 October. He reported that she had settled to the bottom. He also surmised that *America*'s centerboard was down when she was struck and that was the reason the *Winslow* was unable to move her. Captain Prindiville stated, "She is gone for good, there is no doubt of that. Any further effort to recover the vessel would be by outside parties." The *America* could not be raised and the underwriters were unwilling to continue the expedition (*Door County Advocate* 1880b; Hirthe and Hirthe 1986).

The *America* was rated B1, valued at $12,000 and insured for $10,000, $2,500 by Lloyds of New York, $2,500 by Manhattan, $2,000 St Paul Fire & Marine Insurance Co., $1,000 Union of Philadelphia and $2,000 Great Western of New York. An investigation of the accident followed, which determined that the *A.W. Lawrence* was at fault and Captain Hood, owner of the *America*, received $6,500 from the insurance companies and $4,500 from the tug's owner (*Door County Advocate* 1881a; 1881b; *Manitowoc Pilot* 1881; Hirthe 1986). Considered an obstruction to navigation, her spars were removed in June of 1881 (*Cleveland Herald* 1881). In June 1882, another unsuccessful attempt was made to raise the *America* (*Door County Advocate* 1882).

Archaeological Significance

Nearly all of the *America*'s hull components are represented within the wreck site; wreck sites such as the *America* present a ripe opportunity to study and learn about historic wooden vessel construction and the roles they played in the commercial transportation network. An advantage of broken hulls is that they offer many construction details that are hidden in more intact vessels. The *America* represents the best of both worlds – she is intact enough to have nearly all hull components represented, but is broken up enough to allow thorough examination of many intricate construction details that would otherwise be hidden were the *America*'s hull completely intact.

Many opportunities remain for future archaeological research on the *America* site that may significantly add to our understanding of Great Lakes sailing vessels in general, and to canallers specifically. While it is common knowledge that canallers were boxy vessels compared to the sleek clipper-type schooners, little comparative work has been conducted between archaeological remains of the two vessels types. A more detailed archaeological survey of the construction features specific to canallers, such as construction of the stem and stern, the turn of the bilge, and hull lines, would offer significant opportunities to add to our limited knowledge of canallers. Nineteenth-century wooden vessels were rarely built to drawn plans. Today, little documentation exists that illustrates how wooden sailing vessels were constructed and the differences in hull lines and construction techniques between different schooner types, such as canaller and clipper-type models.

Because of their boxy hull shape it has been suggested that canallers were poor sailers, particularly in heavy weather. The fact that a single Great Lakes storm claimed six of Oswego's canallers and crew lends credibility to this claim. With no surviving historical documentation that details canaller hull lines, it is only archaeological sites such as the *America* that can answer the question of whether or not the canaller was an inherently dangerous craft. Further research and documentation at the *America* site has the potential to answer these questions. The *America*'s large size, coupled with the fact that she is somewhat broken and scattered, creates an incredibly complex site. The site's complexity and depth create opportunities for higher levels of documentation in the future.

The *America* meets the registration requirements for Criterion D at the state level, as established in the Multiple Property Document *Great Lakes Shipwrecks of Wisconsin* (Cooper and Kriesa 1992). The *America* is a rare example of a vessel type that was vital to Wisconsin's economy, the economy of the Midwest, and transportation infrastructure prior to the development of road and rail networks. Canallers like the *America* were an important link in the development of the Midwest, connecting the region economically and culturally with the larger eastern markets. Although somewhat broken, the *America* site retains excellent archaeological integrity. Due to its remote location, the *America* remains lightly visited by divers. No historical record of canaller ship construction exists today, making archaeological examples like the *America* particularly significant. Information gathered from the *America* site has increased our understanding of canal schooner construction and use on the Great Lakes, and the *America* site retains the potential to yield even greater insight into this vessel type in future years.

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1878d *Daily News*, 10 August.
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Verbal Boundary Description:
The boundary for the *America* site is marked by a circle with a radius of 100 feet centered on the UTM coordinates 464327 Easting, 4910871 Northing, Zone 16.

Boundary Justification:
This site boundary encompasses the wreck site and associated debris field.

Photo #1 of 1
America Shipwreck
Kewaunee County, Wisconsin
Photographer Tamara Thomsen
August 2012
Bow looking aft

Sea Grant
University of Wisconsin
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HISTORICAL
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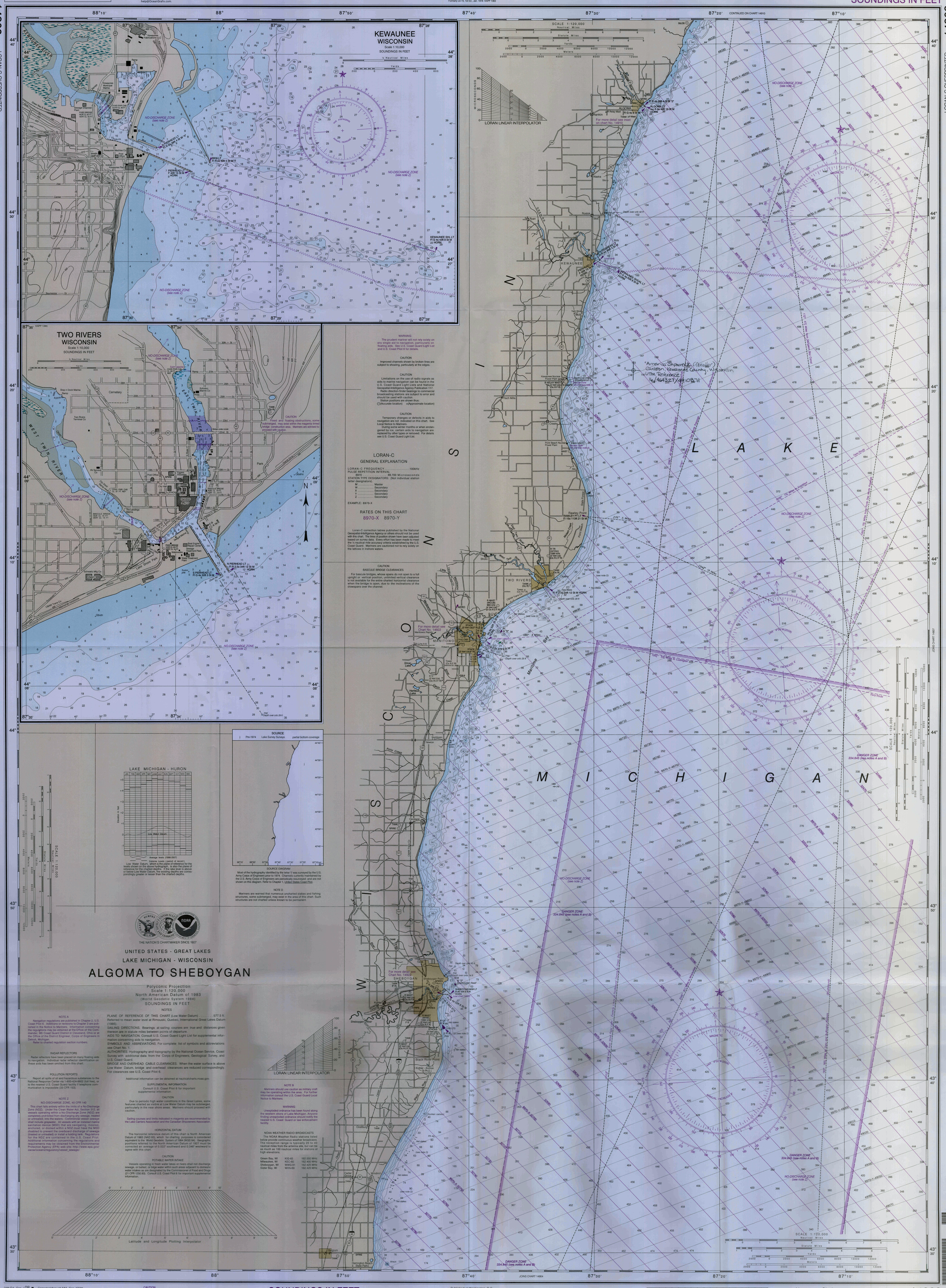

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FATHOMS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
FEET	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84	90	96
METERS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16

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