

Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE) is proud to announce the existence of yet another new wreck off Cleveland. The wreck is described for the first time, and an account is given on attempts to identify it. Further details are also given of the investigation of the new wreck announced earlier on May 22.

About CLUE

CLUE was founded by David VanZandt and Kevin Magee in 2003. The team added Chief Researcher Jim Paskert in May, 2004. Our purpose is to research, locate, and explore the shipwrecks of the Great Lakes with an emphasis on Lake Erie. The team consists of individuals experienced in archival research, Great Lakes history and ship construction, underwater survey techniques and equipment, mechanical and electrical engineering, and recreational and technical scuba diving. The team is dedicated to finding, exploring, and documenting the submerged history found on the bottom of the Great Lakes.

CLUE, 2005-05-28 - "CSU Wreck" and "117th Tug" Dive Report

On Saturday, May 28, 2005, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee once again went diving in Lake Erie off Dave's boat "Sea Dragon" out of Cleveland, OH. The purpose was to measure, videotape, and further investigate the new 45' deep wooden wreck first dove and reported on May 22 (CLUE, 2005-05-22). The wreck is located roughly off Cleveland State University, so it has been dubbed the "CSU Wreck." The day was sunny with 2' seas and a pleasant air temperature of 73 deg F. The water temperature was 55-56 deg F, warmer than the previous weekend, and visibility was just as good at 5'-8'. Upon entering the water, a fairly significant surface current from the west was encountered, requiring a vigorous swim to the anchor line.

The wreck was measured at 92' in length, although +/- 10' should be considered since the wreck is highly broken and neither the bow nor stern can be definitely distinguished. The measurement line was along a 0 deg magnetic heading. A beam measurement was not obtained since one side is completely buried or missing.

Examination of the brown ceramic jug found earlier revealed no distinguishing marks at all, and the same was true for the two red bricks. Another piece of broken crockery was found near the north end (suspected bow), and a small piece of machinery, possibly a gear or winch spool, was found trapped almost completely under the wreck at the north end. A piece of what appears to be burned wood was found near the south end. The style of construction of the wooden hull is robust with two layers of planking, an inside and outside layer,

sandwiching the ribs. Metal spikes are used in the construction, and what appears to be collapsed decking is folded up against the west side of the hull in some places. Overall, however, no further clues or significant information was obtained. Because of its highly buried and broken state, it is felt significant work and excavation would be required at this point to proceed any further in identifying this wreck.

Upon surfacing the seas were found to have calmed to 1'. Since it was such a beautiful day, it was decided to videotape and measure another new wreck found earlier by CLUE. This was the second wreck located by CLUE, and it was originally found on October 1, 2002, but not dove until June 14, 2003. It is a wooden tug off Lakewood in 45' of water in the general vicinity of the currently known "117th Street Wreck." Unlike the previous new wreck, the bow and stern are easily identified. The bow stem points west and stands about 8' high off the bottom. Although the primary structure of this wreck is wooden, the bow is clad in metal to aid in ice breaking duties, a common practice of early tugs. The metal cladding extends along the stem post and sweeps along the sides towards the stern near the keel. The stem is tilted to the port side by about 30-40 degrees, and wooden ribs are visible along the entire starboard side standing about 3' off the bottom. However, no port side of the wreck is visible and is assumed to be either buried or missing.

Proceeding aft, a respectably large boiler is found amidships. It stands 8' high off the bottom with its face pointing towards the bow. There are two side-by-side fireboxes at the bottom and a large partitioned opening above them that allows a partial examination of the interior. On top along its length are two small openings. Forward of the boiler is what appears to be a large metal cradle that stretches from starboard to port with two hollow box ends. The boiler itself is not aligned along the centerline of the ship but is instead rotated with its forward starboard corner touching near the ribs on that side.

Aft of the boiler is a large wooden slab near the ribs. The ribs continue in a large sweeping arc to the stern, which stands about 5'-8' off the bottom. The stern is a sharply raked, tapered structure that comes to a single point and seems to be undercut for a propeller and rudder, although neither of these items can be seen. Four stone blocks can be found in the interior of the ship in this area.

Although this wreck is also unidentified, several things can be deduced about it. First, the engine and all useful items except the boiler are missing, suggesting the vessel was either scuttled or salvaged. Second, no artifacts of any type were found on this wreck, and there is some netting at the bow that appears to have been tied down to the ribs. These are signs of previous diver activity and suggest the wreck is not "virgin." The wreck was measured at 90' +/- 5' in length with a 270 degree magnetic heading towards the bow. A beam measurement

was not obtained since the port side is completely buried. The boiler measures 14.6' x 8' and starts 33' from the bow. The metal cradle measures 16' in total length with the block ends being 1.5' square.

Towards the end of the dive, the bright ambient lighting conditions suddenly turned dark. Flashlights were required to see, and the visibility was effectively reduced to 3'. Upon approaching the anchor line, it was discovered to be completely taut. After struggling to free the anchor from the wreck, it took off and immediately got caught again to the west. After freeing it again, it took off at a high rate of speed and required steering around obstacles until it was clear of the wreck. The anchor line continued to fly along during the ascent, requiring a tight hold of the anchor line. Upon surfacing, a violent thunderstorm was seen to be in progress, complete with drenching rain, lightning strikes, 3' seas, and strong winds. The boat continued to drift in the strong west current and wind, and eventually the anchor caught about a third mile away from the wreck. It was decided in the future the anchor doesn't really need to be released under such conditions. Strangely enough, within half an hour after surfacing and collecting everything, the storm had blown itself out, the seas were calm at 1', and the sun was shining again like nothing had happened.