

On Wednesday evening, August 22, 2007, after work at 6:00 p.m., about fifteen people, including Cindy LaRosa and Kevin Magee, gathered in Cleveland's Flats on the Cuyahoga River at Scranton Road next to the fireboat station. They were there for the second trip as part of Aqua Specialists' one-tank evening dives aboard Captain Wayne Bratton's 60'-boat "Holiday." About 10 were divers and 5 were "bubble watchers" who were there to enjoy the evening and watch the divers. Although it had been raining hard for many days during the week, there was miraculously no rain on Wednesday, and the seas were calm at less than 1'. Although there was a gray overcast, everyone enjoyed the scenery during the trip down the Cuyahoga River. After entering the lake, it was a quick trip to the planned dive site, the schooner "Mabel Wilson," which sank off Edgewater in 35' of water. The 4-masted schooner-barge sprang a leak and suddenly sank in May, 1906, while trying to make the harbor entrance in a spring storm.

Due to the previous heavy rains, however, the water didn't look very pretty, and the first divers entering the water reported not being able to see the "Holiday" even when swimming right next to it. Cindy and Kevin descended the anchor cable but quickly re-surfaced to report only 2' of visibility on the bottom, dark conditions, and the anchor not on the wreck. Everyone boarded the boat, and it was re-positioned in an attempt to hook the wreck. A second dive found a single timber at the end of the anchor, but it only had a few feet of length exposed, and no more of the wreck was found within arm's reach. An attempt to run a reel was made, but in the poor conditions it was impossible to navigate, and nothing more of the wreck was found.

In search of clear water, it was decided to motor down the length of the Cleveland breakwall to the east end. The breakwall parallels the shoreline for several miles along the Cleveland waterfront with the river at the west end. The east end is far from the exit of the Cuyahoga River, and the wall in this area is made of large jack-shaped concrete blocks that are notorious anchor catchers. Dive treasure and clear water were a possibility. John Norris suited up to check out the conditions, and he surfaced to report good visibility below 15'. It was 9:15 p.m. and dark at this point, so everyone geared up for a true night dive. Visibility was poor at just 2'-3' from the surface to 15' depth, but then 10' of visibility was present down to a depth of 25', where another layer of murky water was present all the way to the bottom at about 35'. Interestingly, one could look up during the dive to see a cloud layer above and down to see a murky floor below.

Swimming in this clear layer of water, one could examine the nooks and crannies of the wall and see fish. A 2' walleye came out of the darkness to check out Kevin, and also seen were three large sheephead, a catfish, and many perch. Schools of small fish fry were also seen close to the rocks. There were occasional patches of bad visibility, but then it would clear to reveal more clear water. Most divers surfaced after a 15-30 minute dive, and the people on the boat were treated to the eerie sight of lights moving back and forth in the water during the dive. The water temperature was a warm 70-75 deg F, requiring only

a 3-mm (1/8") wetsuit. Afterwards, a trip back to the river was done in the lake along the wall with everyone munching on the sub sandwiches provided as part of the trip and drinking various beverages available for sale. The sky cleared, revealing stars overhead, and Cleveland's downtown was lit up nearby. It was late getting back at about 11:00 p.m., but the pretty scenery, pleasant conditions, and interesting dive were worth it.