

On Tuesday evening, September 25, 2007, at 6:00 p.m., 10 divers gathered in Cleveland on the Cuyahoga River at Scranton Road. They were there for the final trip this year of Aqua Specialists' one-tank evening dives aboard Captain Wayne Bratton's 60'-boat "Holiday." The evening was warm despite a recent stretch of cool fall weather, and the air temperature was 73 deg F with clear sunny skies. The divers included John Norris, Sue Greer, Mike Greer, Loretta Williams, Linda Carter, Chris Harbaugh, Patrick Mazur, Chris Pearson, Fred Lilly, and Kevin Magee. Jay McGrath and a guest of Fred Lilly were also aboard as bubble watchers. The trip down the river was pleasant, and while waiting for the railroad bridge to lift, CLUE founder and LEWD member David VanZandt and his friend Lorry Wagner were coincidentally seen also waiting to enter the lake aboard Lorry's boat. After entering the lake, it was noticed some clouds were moving in from the west, but conditions were calm at less than 1' seas. The dive site was the "Algeria," which sank about a mile off the Browns Stadium in 35' of water. The 3-masted schooner-barge was at anchor in May, 1906, due to a longshoremen's strike ashore. All of the crew except three people had gone ashore in the sole yawl boat when a spring storm arrived. The ship sprang a leak and began to founder in the storm. The "Algeria" signaled distress, and a nearby steamer managed to save the cook, but the captain and engineer lost their lives when the ship suddenly sank. Ironically, this was the same captain who had lost the "Dundee", another schooner-barge that sank off Cleveland six years earlier, and the "George W. Davis," a schooner that went ashore in eastern Lake Erie eleven years earlier. This was his last sinking.

The "Algeria" was a very large ship at 289' long and 45' beam. The remains were flattened to clear it from being a hazard to navigation, resulting in a site that sprawls over an enormous area with parts as high as 5' off the bottom. It lies east-west with the bow pointing east. The "Holiday" anchored near the bow just off the north (port) side of the wreck. It was already getting dark as the divers suited up, and they descended to find dark conditions and about 3'-5' of visibility on the bottom. A reel was used to navigate to the wreck from the "Holiday's" anchor cable, and a good light helped to see better in the dark low visibility conditions. The wreck sits on a hard sandy bottom rather than silt, allowing much of the wreck to sit exposed rather than buried. The sides of the wreck are splayed outwards with many pieces separated from the main wreck, requiring many dives to fully understand the layout of the wreck. The sides of the ship contain the frames, planks, and knees. From the standing knees, it can be seen that the ship seemed to have two decks levels that ran a considerable length of the wreck. The timbers are very large, and the bow is identifiable by the anchors' hawse pipes found among the debris.

The cargo of the ship was iron ore, and it is still aboard as gray gravel filling the middle of the wreck. Centerposts stick up from this cargo along the middle of the wreck with the ore appearing to be featureless bottom at a depth of 30'. Most divers surfaced after a 30-50 minute dive with the night punctuated by distant lightning from a passing storm to the north, which added to the feel of mystery. A

maximum depth of 36' was obtained with a water temperature of 68 deg F, requiring only a 3-mm (1/8") wetsuit. Afterwards, the trip back to shore was done with everyone munching on the sandwiches provided as part of the trip and partaking in various beverages. It was a great end to this season's trips aboard the "Holiday," and we can't wait until next year!