

CLUE, 2009-08-01 – “Buried Tug”

On August 1, 2009, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee - all members of the Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE) - took Dave's boat *Sea Dragon* out into Lake Erie from Cleveland, OH, to dive a newly discovered shipwreck. Also aboard was underwater archaeology student Zack King from Flinders University, who was visiting his home in the Cleveland area. The sky was partly cloudy, and the temperature was a pleasant 75-80 deg F. It was windy, but the seas were only 1-2 feet with slight whitecaps due to the southwest direction of the wind. The wreck had been found the previous day on July 31, 2009, by Dave and Kevin while testing new software for their magnetometer. The new software, which was developed specifically for CLUE by Tim Dykes of Buffalo, NY, is an example of the many talents and generosity from different individuals that CLUE draws upon in its search for new shipwrecks. While testing the new software, a strong magnetic target was detected, and sidescan sonar confirmed a low-lying, mostly buried shipwreck off the Lakewood, OH, area in 40 feet of water.

The surface visibility was a good 8-10 feet with a 75 deg F water temperature, and this continued all the way to the bottom with a slightly cooler 73 deg F temperature on the bottom. Upon reaching the sandy silt bottom, a mostly buried wooden tug boat was discovered. The anchor hooked the bottom next to the wreck's stern on the port side. The stern stands only a couple of feet high and points in a southeast direction. The fantail is rounded with a small planked deck at the extreme end. There is an obvious open circular hole in this deck for the missing rudderpost. The sides quickly disappear into the bottom, but a large unidentified flat wooden structure sticks diagonally out of the bottom on the centerline 5-10 feet forward of the fantail. This unidentified piece is thin, rectangular in shape, stands approximately 3-4 feet high, and angles towards the stern. Heading in a northwest direction towards the bow, occasional small frames and stubs were found sticking out of the bottom, but otherwise the amidships is almost completely buried. A small H-shaped timber was found sticking out of the bottom in the middle. Upon reaching the bow, it was seen to stand 2-3 feet high with only the stem and starboard side intact. The bow leans heavily to the starboard side, and a lot of the structure appears to be folded upon itself. Due to the good visibility, the area around the wreck was examined, but nothing beyond some freshwater clam shells and golf balls were found.

Due to the complete absence of machinery, boiler, and even the rudderpost, it would appear to be a small wooden tug that was scuttled. This is similar to the many other scuttled wooden tugs found in this same area, which was common practice at the turn of the 20th century. Photographs were taken by Dave, but no measurements were taken due to the lack of enough features to produce a reasonable site plan.